

Enhancing biodiversity considerations and effective protected area management to safeguard the Cook Islands integrated ecosystems and species

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10780

Countries

Cook Islands

Project Name

Enhancing biodiversity considerations and effective protected area management to safeguard the Cook Islands integrated ecosystems and species

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

7/25/2022

Review completed by PM

9/19/2022

Program Manager

Sarah Wyatt

Focal Area

Biodiversity

Project Type

FSP

PIF ☐

CEO Endorsement ☐

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Project description summary

2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Co-financing

4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

GEF Resource Availability

5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Project Preparation Grant

6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9/19/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Core indicators

**7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E?
Do they remain realistic?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9/19/2022

Yes. It is worth noting that the comment is not in reference to changing the activities of the project but rather than land-based sources of pollution can be a significant threat to marine ecosystems and in some cases the most significant. It may make sense to accurately reflect the benefits of a project by counting the marine areas as well as terrestrial. Areas can have received GEF support before. The GEF-7 project in FSM did some accounting in this way.

8/24/2022

Yes. However, please consider whether there are marine areas that can or should be counted for mainstreaming because of actions on land that will address a significant threat or cause of degradation. In some cases, projects have used the area of an MPA or KBA to define a number of hectares that will receive direct improvements in condition because of terrestrial actions.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, October 6, 2022:

We acknowledge and understand the positive downstream impacts on the marine space that will be generated as a result of the planned upstream project activities on land within the proposed catchment areas. We are therefore happy to follow the advice of GEF Sec and have included some conservative figures to reflect marine areas abutting the catchments that are identified for project interventions, which will benefit from these activities. We emphasize however that no direct activities are planned to occur within these added marine areas, in order to focus our efforts on the land-based sources of degradation. Maps have also been included in Annex 13 to the Project Document to reflect these abutting marine areas.

The 157.5-ha end target added under GEF-7 Core Indicator 5 (*Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity*) includes the estimated coastal areas adjacent to the four priority catchments in Rarotonga that will benefit from improved

management practices. The target is broken down as follows: Avana: 97.5 ha; Avatiu: 13 ha; Takuvaine: 35 ha; and Turangi: 12 ha. These coastal areas are technically part of the Marae Moana Marine Protected Area, measured from the coastline and 50 nautical miles outwards across all islands in the country; however, the primarily land-based management measures emphasized on this project are not oriented towards improving management of the expansive Marae Moana MPA, but rather expected to benefit biodiversity within the near-shore environment. The catchment management plans will have elements similar to those of a typical integrated coastal zone management plan, reflecting the interactions between terrestrial and coastal ecosystems.

NOTE: GEF guidelines indicate that Three additional Sub-Indicators are available to provide context in case they are relevant to the project under indicator 5. However, sub-indicators for Core Indicator 5 are only contextual, thus we are not using any of the sub-indicators for Core Indicator 5. Also, the Core Indicator Worksheet is missing a space to provide information on Core Indicator 5. Thus, we added a space to report the expected end target for Core Indicator 5 both in Annex 22 and in the CEO ER. The added space is shaded in pale yellow.

UNDP Response, September 8, 2022:

During the conceptualization of the project, consideration was given to whether marine areas should be indicated as benefitting from the planned improvements to terrestrial ecosystems in the selected catchments. Marine areas were not designated because some of the results achieved in the GEF-5 R2R project (GEF ID 5348) overlap with these same areas. Moreover, building on the lessons learned from the GEF-5 project, the Executing Agency made an informed decision to focus on the terrestrial ecosystems of the selected catchments. This is consistent with the project concept approved at PIF stage.

Part II ? Project Justification

1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

9/19/2022

Yes.

- Grant program - the response on the grant program seems to misunderstand the comment. The concern raised by the GEF is that in a very small country it may be particularly hard to follow a standard UNDP procedure to avoid conflict of interest and will need to work through an approach that is appropriate for the country.

- Monitoring technology - Please make sure there are reasonable assessments of the resources needed to maintain any selected technologies particularly in harsh and remote environments included in the decision making process.

8/24/2022

No, while overall good there are a few issues to address:

- Grant program - Please provide more information about how these will be selected and managed, recognizing that these processes are expensive and challenging especially across long distances. Is there an existing initiative that this could be a part of? With such a small population potential conflict of interest is basically inevitable and may need to be addressed differently than standard UNDP procedures where a simple avoidance just isn't possible, how will rules/procedures be set for this?

- Agrochemical management - It would be good for the project to coordinate with the GEF ISLANDS program on agrochemicals activities.

- NEIS - How will this database coordinate/work with/support the Cook Islands existing biodiversity database? It holds a wealth of information and it will be important to make use of it, not duplicate, and support its long term continuation.

- Coordination with other ministries - Coordination is obviously important for a number of reasons, so it was a bit surprising to see the table that stated that outputs don't reflect their activities. We want to ensure that despite this project activities are incorporated into ministry workplans rather than having project activities be "extra". Can you please provide this?

- PA Monitoring technology - It is unclear what technologies are envisioned for the monitoring of remote protected areas. The project seems to favor technology over community based monitoring, which may not be a sustainable/durable approach to monitoring. What types of technologies are being considered? How will they be managed and maintained especially given long distances to Rarotonga much less mainland places for repair or maintenance? How will community based monitoring be integrated/supported by these technologies?

Agency Response

UNDP Response, October 6, 2022:

The points made regarding the grant program and monitoring technology are well noted.

UNDP Response, September 8, 2022:

- During PPG all potential ongoing or recent low value grant initiatives in CKI were considered (i.e., the Redd Cross, bilateral donor mechanisms, CKI Government mechanism, etc.) and the Executing Agency chose to use the Government mechanism. As described in the narrative description of Output 2.3: ?The low-value grant process will follow the Grant Management Policies and Procedures of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) that are presented in **Annex 32**. Grant agreements will be reviewed by UNDP prior to signature by the Implementing Partner and the grantees. The project team will monitor and evaluate the activities in the field for compliance with UNDP SES, as well as other specifications described in the grant agreements. Progress and completion reports submitted by the grantees will document compliance.?

A detailed protocol on how conflicts of interest will be identified and managed is provided in Point **No. 16** of the *UNDP Checklist for Projects Pending GEF Approval* (see **Annex 26** to the Project Document).

- The CER and Project Document sections on planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and initiatives have been updated with the following entry: ?GEF-UN Environment-SPREP. Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in SIDS (ISLANDS) (GEF ID 10267). The project will coordinate with the Pacific Child Project (To prevent the build-up of POPs and mercury materials and to manage and dispose of existing harmful chemicals and wastes across Pacific SIDS) of the GEF-financed ISLANDS programme.?

- The narrative description of Output 1.2 has been updated with the following entry: ?The feasibility assessment will also prioritise collaboration and coordination with other information systems, including the biodiversity database managed by the Natural Heritage Trust.?

- The roles and responsibilities of NES, the Lead Implementing Partner (Executing Agency) and the other key agencies (namely, MOA, CIT and ICI) and coordination among these institutional partners at the output level are outlined in the table below which has been added to the stakeholder engagement sections in the CER and Project Document.

Stakeholder	Role in project outputs
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National
Environment
Service
(NES)

Output 1.1

NES will coordinate the creation and/or amendment of national legislation, policies, strategies, and plans by the four institutional partners, including developing and implementing protocols to ensure coordination in policy development and implementation. Within its own mandate, NES will lead development of EIA (permitting and consent) regulations and Protected Area (PA) regulations under the new Environment Act. NES will coordinate the four institutional partners to delivery capacity building and awareness raising on relevant legislation, policies, regulations, and strategies to stakeholders.

Output 1.2

NES will coordinate the development and institutionalisation of the National Environment Information System (NEIS), including leading a gender-sensitive feasibility assessment, providing technical expertise for the development and delivery of the system, and assisting other agencies to utilise the system appropriately.

Output 1.3

NES will lead the development of Island Environmental Management Plans (IEMPs) and their integration into Island Development Plans, including facilitating *Pa Enua* consultations and socialising the IEMPs among stakeholders. NES will also lead the integration of regulatory and policy frameworks to safeguards KBAs and ecosystem services into catchment management plans. (See also Outputs 2.2 and 3.1.)

Output 2.1

NES will lead the design and delivery of catchment audits, including training stakeholders to interpret results and providing communication of results at the community level. NES will provide technical and investment assistance on strengthening capacities and will coordinate the other agency partners to provide expertise within their mandates.

Output 2.2

NES will lead the development of intersectoral catchment management plans for priority catchments on Rarotonga, and a management plan for the Manuae Managed Area. NES will lead awareness-raising of management plans to stakeholders and will train the other three GEF-7 institutional partners on implementation of the management plans. NES will work closely with MOA on the development and implementation of agriculture-related management actions. NES will also directly implement specific management measures in the Manuae Managed Area, according to the management plan as agreed with stakeholders. (See also Outputs 1.3 and 3.1.)

Output 2.3

NES will coordinate and deliver capacity building on innovative natural resource management practices, alongside the GEF-7 institutional partners and other stakeholders. NES will lead the development of MOUs between the GEF-7 institutional partners, landowners, and other stakeholders relating to the implementation of management plans. NES will coordinate and deliver the provision of technical and low-value grant assistance for implementing innovative practices and develop and disseminate case studies and lessons learned.

Output 3.1

NES will lead the development of gender responsive management plans for the

Ministry of
Agriculture
(MOA)

Output 1.1

MOA will have input into the creation and/or amendment of national legislation, policies, strategies and plans by the four institutional partners. Within its own mandate, MOA will lead the redevelopment of updated agrichemical regulations under the Pesticides Act 1987. MOA will collaborate with the other three institutional partners to delivery capacity building and awareness raising on relevant legislation, policies, regulations, and strategies to stakeholders.

Output 1.2

MOA will provide appropriate information to NES for the development of the NEIS, including access to relevant datasets and providing technical expertise when necessary. MOA will participate fully in training on how to utilise the NEIS for its own management decisions, including leading sector-specific training for stakeholders as necessary.

Output 1.3

MOA will contribute expertise to the development of Island Environmental Management Plans (IEMPs) and catchment management plans, as appropriate and when requested by NES. (See also Outputs 2.2 and 3.1.)

Output 2.1

At the request of NES, MOA will contribute technical expertise to the design and delivery of catchment audits, including communication of results and capacity building.

Output 2.2

MOA will contribute expertise to the development of intersectoral catchment management plans for priority catchments on Rarotonga, and a management plan for the Manuae Managed Area. MOA will participate in trainings with other GEF-7 institutional partners on implementation of the management plans. MOA will work closely with NES on the development and implementation of agriculture-related management measures, according to the relevant management plans. (See also Outputs 1.3 and 3.1.)

Output 2.3

MOA will participate in (and in some cases, deliver) capacity building on innovative natural resource management practices. MOA will participate in the development of MOUs between the GEF-7 institutional partners, landowners, and other stakeholders relating to the implementation of management plans. MOA will contribute expertise within its mandate towards a programme of technical and low-value grant assistance for implementing innovative practices, as requested by NES.

Output 3.1

MOA will contribute expertise to the development of gender responsive management plans for the target protected areas, as requested by NES. (See also Outputs 1.3 and 2.2.)

Output 3.2

Selected MOA staff will participate in or contribute to capacity building activities to selected stakeholders on the application of PACS, PAMP, emerging approaches to gender in protected area management, and management and monitoring of protected areas.

Output 1.1

CIT will have input into the creation and/or amendment of national legislation, policies, strategies and plans by the four institutional partners, including updating its own internal strategies to reflect the evolving national environmental policy context. CIT will collaborate with the other three institutional partners to delivery capacity building and awareness raising on relevant legislation, policies, regulations, and strategies to stakeholders.

Output 1.2

CIT will provide appropriate information to NES for the development of the NEIS, including access to relevant datasets and providing technical expertise when necessary. CIT will participate fully in training on how to utilise the NEIS for its own management decisions, including leading sector-specific training for stakeholders as necessary.

Output 1.3

CIT will contribute expertise to the development of Island Environmental Management Plans (IEMPs) and catchment management plans, as appropriate and when requested by NES. (See also Outputs 2.2 and 3.1.)

Output 2.1

At the request of NES, CIT will contribute technical expertise to the design and delivery of catchment audits, including communication of results and capacity building.

Output 2.2

CIT will contribute expertise to the development of intersectoral catchment management plans for priority catchments on Rarotonga, and a management plan for the Manuae Managed Area if appropriate. CIT will also participate in trainings with other GEF-7 institutional partners on implementation of the management plans. (See also Outputs 1.3 and 3.1.)

Output 2.3

CIT will participate in (and in some cases, deliver) capacity building on innovative natural resource management practices. CIT will participate in the development of MOUs between the GEF-7 institutional partners, landowners, and other stakeholders relating to the implementation of management plans. CIT will contribute expertise within its mandate towards a programme of technical and low-value grant assistance for implementing innovative practices, as requested by NES.

Output 3.1

CIT will contribute expertise to the development of gender responsive management plans for the target protected areas, as requested by NES. (See also Outputs 1.3 and 2.2.)

Output 3.2

Selected CIT staff will participate in or contribute to capacity building activities to selected stakeholders on the application of PACS, PAMP, emerging approaches to gender in protected area management, and management and monitoring of protected areas.

Output 3.3

Infrastructure
Cook Islands
(ICI)

Output 1.1

ICI will have input into the creation and/or amendment of national legislation, policies, strategies and plans by the four institutional partners. In particular, ICI will collaborate with NES to develop the EIA (permitting and consent) regulations under the new Environment Act and have input into training on EIA best practices. CIT will collaborate with the other three institutional partners to delivery capacity building and awareness raising on relevant legislation, policies, regulations, and strategies to stakeholders.

Output 1.2

ICI will provide appropriate information to NES for the development of the NEIS, including access to relevant datasets and providing technical expertise when necessary. ICI will participate fully in training on how to utilise the NEIS for its own management decisions, including leading sector-specific training for stakeholders as necessary.

Output 1.3

ICI will contribute expertise to the development of Island Environmental Management Plans (IEMPs) and catchment management plans, as appropriate and when requested by NES. (See also Outputs 2.2 and 3.1.)

Output 2.1

At the request of NES, ICI will contribute technical expertise to the design and delivery of catchment audits, including communication of results and capacity building.

Output 2.2

ICI will contribute expertise to the development of intersectoral catchment management plans for priority catchments on Rarotonga, and a management plan for the Manuae Managed Area if appropriate. ICI will also participate in trainings with other GEF-7 institutional partners on implementation of the management plans. (See also Outputs 1.3 and 3.1.)

Output 2.3

ICI will participate in (and in some cases, deliver) capacity building on innovative natural resource management practices. ICI will participate in the development of MOUs between the GEF-7 institutional partners, landowners, and other stakeholders relating to the implementation of management plans. ICI will contribute expertise within its mandate towards a programme of technical and low-value grant assistance for implementing innovative practices, as requested by NES.

Output 3.1

ICI will contribute expertise to the development of gender responsive management plans for the target protected areas, as requested by NES. (See also Outputs 1.3 and 2.2.)

Output 3.2

Selected ICI staff will participate in or contribute to capacity building activities to selected stakeholders on the application of PACS, PAMP, emerging approaches to gender in protected area management, and management and monitoring of protected areas.

Output 3.3

- The narrative description of Output 3.2 has been updated. PA monitoring technology will be confirmed during the process of updating PA management plans. For some of the PA's and managed areas, such as the Suvarrow National Park and Manuae, the islands/atolls are uninhabited. The remote surveillance system proposed for Suvarrow (and possibly other PA's) is to provide NES with additional capability to control unauthorized anchoring of vessels, particularly during the six months of the year when the rangers are not stationed on the atoll. Other monitoring equipment, for both the NES managed PA's and the community-managed areas, may include cameras, acoustic recording devices, camera traps, etc. Deployment of the equipment will include training in operation and maintenance. For community-managed areas, the selection of equipment will be consistent with local capacities, durability, etc. in other words, the project aims to complement and enhance community based monitoring through appropriate technology.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

No, while overall good there are a few issues to address:

- Eradication - One of the criteria for GEF support for eradication is missing from the descriptions which is the low likelihood of reintroduction. Please include the methods will be employed and/or existing strategies to prevent the movement of rats. Will there be support (technical or otherwise) from any international NGOs with deep experience on the subject such as BirdLife or Island Conservation?

- Eradication - Please name at least a few species with their IUCN Red List status that will directly benefit from eradication.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, September 8, 2022:

- The descriptions of Outputs 2.2 and 3.1 have been updated. The likelihood of reintroduction at the target sites is considered low. Access to the islands/atolls of Manuae and Takutea is only by small boats, in which inadvertent transport of rats is unlikely. Larger boats can travel to Suvarrow; however, there are limited numbers of vessels travelling there due to the remoteness of the atoll. Moreover, there are rangers stationed at Suvarrow six months out of the year. One of the objectives of the remote surveillance systems planned under Output 3.2 is to support NES in controlling unauthorized travel to Suvarrow and other protected areas. Proposed methods and existing strategies are described in **Annex 16** to the Project Document (Rat eradication background information). The GEF funding provides the opportunity to implement locally appropriate and innovative methods, including application of eradication agents that are specifically relevant for Pacific rats, e.g., utilizing natural lures (such as coconut oil), using baits that are not attractive to land

crabs, and possibly using drones to deliver baits when rats are most active, such as during the nighttime.

The eradication activities will be implemented in collaboration and/or in partnership with enabling stakeholders, such as the Department of Conservation or Landcare Research in New Zealand, University of Newcastle in Australia, Te Ipukarea Society (a local environmental NGO that collaborates with BirdLife International and has extensive experience in rat eradication in the Cook Islands).

- A few species that are expected to benefit from the rat eradication activities -now listed under output 2.2- include but are not limited to the following: Atiu Swiftlet (*Aerodramus sawtelli*; IUCN Red List: Vulnerable VU); K?ker?ri-Rarotonga Flycatcher (*Pomarea dimidiata*; IUCN Red List: VU); and Rarotonga Starling (*Aplonis cinerascens*; IUCN Red List: VU).

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Project Map and Coordinates

Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response
Child Project

If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
NA

Agency Response
Stakeholders

**Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase?
Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
8/24/2022

Yes, some of the changes made were based on community stakeholder engagement/interest or lack thereof.

Agency Response
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Private Sector Engagement

If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes, we note that the impacts of COVID have made it hard for private sector actors to commit resources at this point but the project can and should seek to document co-financing during the project.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, September 8, 2022:

As mentioned in multiple sections of the CER and ProDoc package, private sector companies will be closely engaged throughout the implementation phase of the project. The PMU and IP will proactively seek co-financing contributions from private sector companies and other key stakeholders.

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Coordination

Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed ?Knowledge Management Approach? for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9/19/2022

Yes, thank you for sharing where the information is.

8/24/2022

No, it would be helpful to have more information about how the project will document and share lessons learned.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, September 8, 2022:

The knowledge management and communications strategy framework prepared during the PPG phase (**Annex 33** to the Project Document) provides guidance on how the project will document and share lessons learned. These include documenting success stories, lessons learned and good practices, and disseminating these through email distributions, uploading to the project website as well as the National Environment Information System, posting on social media platforms, distributing to stakeholders during seminars and conferences, and sharing with national and regional media outlets.

This new KM and communications framework has been annexed to the ProDoc and relevant information has been added to the Knowledge Management sections of the CER and Project Document.

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately documented at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Monitoring and Evaluation

Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Benefits

Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/12/2022

Yes.

9/23/2022

No, please address the following:

- Include the Project Results Framework in Annex A in Portal
- Please provide a response to the comments from the Council member from Canada in Annex B (Responses to Project Reviews).

Agency Response

UNDP Response, October 6, 2022:

The Project Results Framework in Annex A in Portal entered.

The comments from the Council member from Canada are concurred with, as the council member outlines how Canada ?believes that healthy and stronger ecosystems will enhance the Cook Islands? ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change.? The approach of the project is indeed to strengthen biodiversity conservation and management of scarce natural resources through multiple stakeholder collaboration among key sectors, including infrastructure, agriculture and tourism.

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes. However, we would like to note that the comment about adaptive management is in regards to changing project activities and approaches based on changing circumstances, limitations, or opportunities rather than COVID measures. An example of this we've shared comes from CI with the end of the R2R project putting greater focus on supporting sustainable agriculture and nurseries in the face of reduced incomes from a lack of tourism.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, September 8, 2022:

Thanks for pointing this out and contextualizing the comment. The response to this comment has been expanded to emphasize the importance of adaptive management in a broader context, and how the project will be using this approach as part of its M&E and KM frameworks.

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9/19/2022

Yes, thank you for the addition.

8/24/2022

No, it would be good to acknowledge that Germany's comment about the regulations indicator is highlighting that the *number* of regulations is not a great indicator of success. For example, one integrated policy might be better than three separate policies. This gets at the challenge of developing qualitative indicators.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, September 8, 2022:

The response to this comment has been expanded in Annex B to the CER. Indicator No. 7 in the project results framework includes specific regulations that the project plans to support the development of, rather than targeting the number of regulations. This indicator was formulated taking into consideration Germany's comment.

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9/19/2022

Yes.

8/24/2022

No, please address the following:

- Adaptation - Please provide more detail in describing how the project activities will result in adaptation benefits. It would be good connect the dots between concrete adaptation needs/challenges (e.g. provision of fresh water or changing fish migration) and how the project activities address them (e.g. maintaining upland forests for greater water infiltration of the aquifer or protected area refuges to support fish populations through unknown CC caused changes). This is also important for the project to have Rio Marker of 1 for climate change adaptation.

- KM - These are addressed in previous review sheet comments. No need to respond here.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, September 8, 2022:

The response to the subject STAP comment has been updated in Annex B of the CER as follows:

?Protection of scarce freshwater resources in Rarotonga is one of the main priorities with respect to climate change adaptation in the Cook Islands. The target catchments in the project cover a cumulative area of 2,513 ha, representing more than 35% of the total terrestrial area of the island. The catchment audits and management plans under Outputs 2.1 and 2.2 will provide scale-able frameworks for the other catchments in the country. Implementation of sustainable land management practices and reduction in the use of agrochemicals will generate substantive adaptation benefits. Moreover, improved and intersectoral management of priority catchments will contribute to the low carbon development priorities of the country, safeguarding important ecosystem services, increasing awareness, and increasing resilience and coping capacities of local communities.?

The Benefits sections of the CER and Project Document have also been updated with the information presented above.

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

8/24/2022

Yes.

Agency Response

Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

NA

Agency Response

Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/12/2022

Yes.

9/23/2022

No, please address the issues under the question on the annexes.

8/24/2022

No. While the overall project is quite good, please address the issues raised above.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	8/24/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)	9/19/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations