

# GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Project Summary .....	4
Indicative Project Overview .....	4
<b>PROJECT COMPONENTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PROJECT OUTLINE .....</b>	<b>9</b>
A. PROJECT RATIONALE .....	9
B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION .....	19
Project description .....	19
Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project .....	25
Core Indicators .....	25
Risks to Project Preparation and Implementation .....	27
C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES .....	33
D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS .....	34
Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: .....	34
Stakeholder Engagement .....	34
Private Sector .....	36
Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks .....	36
E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS .....	36
Knowledge management .....	36
<b>ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES .....</b>	<b>36</b>
GEF Financing Table .....	36
Project Preparation Grant (PPG) .....	37
Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation .....	38
Indicative Focal Area Elements .....	38
Indicative Co-financing .....	38
<b>ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS .....</b>	<b>39</b>
GEF Agency(ies) Certification .....	39
Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s): .....	39
<b>ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET .....</b>	<b>41</b>

## General Project Information

### Project Title

Recovering the Sustainability of Ecosystems Affected by Drought in Northeastern Argentina

Region	GEF Project ID
Argentina	11336
Country(ies)	Type of Project
Argentina	FSP
GEF Agency(ies):	GEF Agency ID
UNDP	9651
Executing Partner	Executing Partner Type
Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS, Spanish acronym)	Government
GEF Focal Area (s)	Submission Date
Land Degradation	10/13/2023

### Project Sector (CCM Only)

### Taxonomy

Influencing models, Demonstrate innovative approaches, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Stakeholders, Communications, Awareness Raising, Behavior change, Beneficiaries, Private Sector, SMEs, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Local Communities, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Non-Governmental Organization, Type of Engagement, Partnership, Participation, Information Dissemination, Consultation, Indigenous Peoples, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Innovation, Learning, Theory of change, Adaptive management, Indicators to measure change, Capacity Development, Knowledge Exchange, Focal Areas, Land Degradation, Land Degradation Neutrality, Land Productivity, Land Cover and Land cover change, Carbon stocks above or below ground, Sustainable Land Management, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands, Sustainable Pasture Management, Sustainable Livelihoods, Drought Mitigation, Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Forest, Ecosystem Approach, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Women groups, Gender-sensitive indicators, Gender results areas, Participation and leadership, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Knowledge Generation

Type of Trust Fund	Project Duration (Months)
GET	72
GEF Project Grant: (a)	GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)
2,913,700.00	0.00
Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)	Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)
276,800.00	0.00
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)	Total Co-financing
3,190,500.00	20,000,000.00

PPG Amount: (e) 100,000.00	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f) 9,500.00
PPG total amount: (e+f) 109,500.00	Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f) 3,300,000.00
Project Tags CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No	

## Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? (iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. The explanation and justification of the project should be in section B “project description”. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

## Project Summary

1. The project’s objective is to strengthen sustainable land management (SLM) of degraded ecosystems in accordance with land degradation neutrality (LDN) in drought-affected areas in northeastern Argentina. The project will support transformational change through four interrelated components: i) SLM practices to avoid, reduce, and mitigate Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought (DLDD) in accordance with the LDN framework; ii) Innovative financing to address DLDD; iii) Knowledge management (KM) and communication to support options to address DLDD with local benefits; and iv) Monitoring and evaluation (M&E).
2. The project prioritized three landscapes affected by DLDD in the dry and humid Chaco in the Chaco, Formosa, and Santa Fe Provinces in northeastern Argentina. These landscapes were strategically identified based on their potential for SLM and ecosystem restoration, the importance of providing ecosystem services for local social and economic development, the potential for Global Environment Benefits (GEBs) associated with land degradation and climate, and a solid baseline and projected co-financing by a diverse group of stakeholders.
3. In the Argentinian humid Chaco, the average annual rainfall is between 500 and 800 millimeters (mm), while the semi-arid Chaco has a marked winter dry season and average annual rainfall between 300 and 500 mm. This area has no wet months and the average number of dry months ranges from 7 to 12. Ecosystem degradation is widespread in both regions as result of land use change, lack of SLM, overgrazing, misuse of fire, invasion of woody plants, and climate change.
4. The project will benefit the dry-arid and semi-arid forest, humid and flooded savannas, as well as agroecosystems, which comprise 5,100 hectares (ha) of land and ecosystems under restoration and 45,900 ha of landscapes under improved SLM practices. In addition, a total of 4,070 people (60% women) will benefit from this GEF-financed investment. The project will have a duration of 72 months.

## Indicative Project Overview

### Project Objective

To strengthen SLM of degraded ecosystems in accordance with LDN in drought-affected areas in northeastern Argentina

## Project Components

### 1. SLM practices to avoid, reduce, and mitigate desertification, land degradation, and drought in accordance with the LDN framework

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,250,000.00	8,730,000.00

Outcome:

1.1. Regenerative production practices that rely on dryland ecosystems reduce land degradation

Indicated by:

- a) 54,000 ha under SLM practices to avoid degradation
- b) Reduction by X% in annual rate of land degradation in the prioritized landscapes by project's end (measured by the national indicator, which has three sub-indicators: 1) trends in land cover, 2) trends in land productivity, and 3) trends in carbon stocks)  
(The targets will be determined during the PPG phase)
- c) 5,100 ha of degraded and drought-affected areas under restoration
- d) Change in capacity of key stakeholders to implement SLM practices (as measured with the UNDP capacity development scorecard and/or survey)  
(The target will be determined during the PPG phase)

1.2. Resilient drylands reduce the impact of climate change (droughts and flooding) and prevent the worsening effects of land degradation and desertification

Indicated by:

- a) Three landscape-level plans that include land-based interventions for drought mitigation
- b) Number of land users (including women and indigenous peoples [IPs]) with management strategies to face drought and flooding  
(The target will be determined during the PPG phase.)

Output:

1.1.1. SLM practices implemented in degraded areas

1.1.2. SLM strategy for key dryland ecosystems and related services implemented in participatory manner that includes women and IPs

1.1.3. Water resource management guidelines in drylands developed and implemented in participatory manner that includes women and IPs

1.1.4. Capacity-building and extension services program for key stakeholders (national and local government, civil society, private sector, women, and IPs) executed to support the implementation of SLM practices

1.2.1. Landscape and comprehensive local land use plans designed and technically adopted by the prioritized provinces

1.2.2. Participatory climate-smart strategy defined to mitigate and reduce the impact of drought and floods in drylands

## 2. Innovative financing to address DLDD

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
538,585.00	3,429,000.00

Outcome:

### 2.1. Financial mechanisms support Drought-Smart Land Management (D SLM) (croplands, rangelands, and ecosystems management)

Indicated by:

a) Number of people (including women and IPs) with access to financial mechanisms to address DLDD

b) Increase in X% in financing to support SLM and LDN in the prioritized landscapes, ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes

(The target will be determined during the PPG phase)

Output:

2.1.1. Economic valuation methodology defined and implemented to assess drought and land degradation-related losses and damages by sector to inform decision-making

2.2.2. Innovative financing mechanisms designed with respect to land tenure conditions (e.g., public and private bank loans; incentives such as subsidies, low-interest loans, etc.; public-private partnerships; and women-oriented financial schemes)

2.2.3. Capacity building and technical assistance support program implemented and facilitates access to financial mechanisms

2.2.4. Awareness and communication strategy developed to inform about existing and new financial mechanisms

## 3. KM and communication

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
850,000.00	5,936,000.00

Outcome:

3.1. KM supports options to address DLDD with local benefits

Indicated by:

a) Increase in the level of awareness among key stakeholders about SLM and LDN (measured using a Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice [KAP] Index)

b) At least five KM products developed and shared (e.g., publications, web-based platforms, webinars, and videos) for replicating and scaling-up successful project experiences

(Indicators and targets to be confirmed during the PPG phase)

3.2. Social and environmental safeguards (SES) minimize, mitigate, and manage risks and ensure effective stakeholder engagement

Indicated by:

a) 4,070 (60% women) people benefiting from the GEF-financed investment

b) 100% of plans related to UNDP's SES are implemented

c) > 80% of Gender Action Plan targets are met

(Indicators and targets to be confirmed during the PPG phase)

Output:

3.1.1. Awareness/ communication strategy implemented to inform key stakeholders about existing land degradation-related information, mechanisms, and tools available nationally and locally

3.1.2. Drylands environmental monitoring system and databases optimized with information at the local level, including:

a) Local level information for landscapes/environmental units identified under the project

b) Network of key informants for monitoring the impact of drought events consolidated for the project's prioritized landscapes

c) National land cover map built and formalized, with institutionalization for continuity and monitoring changes

3.1.3. Knowledge and lessons learned, including on gender mainstreaming, systematized and disseminated, contributing to institutional and local knowledge with the participation of women, and supporting SLM in line with LDN

3.2.1. Gender Action Plan, Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and other management plans related to the SES implemented

## M&E

Component Type

Trust Fund

Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
136,367.00	952,620.00

Outcome:

M&E assesses the project's impact and guides its adaptive management

Indicated by:

- a) 100% of the M&E targets are met
- b) Satisfactory or better MTR, TE, and PIR quality ratings

Output:

M&E Plan implemented

## Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1. SLM practices to avoid, reduce, and mitigate desertification, land degradation, and drought in accordance with the LDN framework	1,250,000.00	8,730,000.00
2. Innovative financing to address DLDD	538,585.00	3,429,000.00
3. KM and communication	850,000.00	5,936,000.00
M&E	136,367.00	952,620.00
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2,774,952.00</b>	<b>19,047,620.00</b>
Project Management Cost	138,748.00	952,380.00
<b>Total Project Cost (\$)</b>	<b>2,913,700.00</b>	<b>20,000,000.00</b>

Please provide justification



## PROJECT OUTLINE

### A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

## A. Project Rationale

5. Argentina is the second-largest country in Latin America with 278 million ha of land area<sup>[1]<sup>1</sup></sup> and has the fourth-largest population with 45 million inhabitants, 8% of whom live in rural areas<sup>[2]<sup>2</sup></sup>. The country has one of the largest economies in the region and is a leading food producer with large-scale agricultural and livestock industries accounting for 6% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP)<sup>[3]<sup>3</sup></sup>. Argentina has 18 ecoregions distributed throughout a variety of tropical, subtropical, temperate, and montane humid and dry environments.<sup>[4]<sup>4</sup></sup> Northern Argentina includes two-thirds of the Gran Chaco American Ecosystem, which is the second-largest forest in South America after the Amazon rainforest. The Gran Chaco forests are home to unique vegetation and wildlife, including 3,400 plant and 500 bird species and hundreds of mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.<sup>[5]<sup>5</sup></sup>

6. The Argentinian drylands cover approximately 70% of the country's land area and are among the most impacted by desertification, which affects approximately 22% of the country and is increasing at a rate of 650,000 ha per year.<sup>[6]<sup>6</sup></sup> The drylands account for 50% of agricultural production land use and 47% of livestock and are home to nearly 30% of the country's population, which is experiencing a decrease in quality of life because of increasing desertification.<sup>[7]<sup>7</sup></sup> In addition, 40% of Argentina's lands are degraded. The drylands are the most affected, with 81.5% of this area showing some level of degradation. The drylands include the Chaco region that covers 60,000,000 ha (20% of the country's land area) with average annual temperatures between 18 degrees Celsius (°C) and 26°C and an annual rainfall between 300 and 1,300 mm. These climatic differences allow the region to be subdivided into the sub-humid Chaco, the Serrano Chaco, the arid Chaco, and the semi-arid Chaco. About 11% of the country's population lives in the Chaco region, including 33% in rural areas.<sup>[8]<sup>8</sup></sup>

7. In the Argentinian humid Chaco, the average annual rainfall is between 500 and 800 mm<sup>[9]</sup>; is mostly covered by grasslands and savannas, some of which are permanently or seasonally flooded, with natural or planted forest patches.<sup>[10]</sup> The semi-arid Chaco has a marked winter dry season and an average annual rainfall between 300 and 500 mm. This area has no wet months and the average number of dry months ranges from 7 to 12.<sup>[11]</sup> The vegetation is mostly woody and xerophytic, with forests and shrublands showing large fragmentation.<sup>[12]</sup> Ecosystem degradation is widespread in both regions as result of land use change, the lack of sustainable land management (SLM), overgrazing, the misuse of fire, the invasion of woody plants, and climate change.

8. Argentina is among the 10 countries in the world with the highest net loss of forests; between 2008 and 2018 the country lost 2.8 million ha of its native forests with 87% of the deforestation occurring in Argentina's Chaco region.<sup>[13]</sup> A total of 25% of the Gran Chaco in Argentina has been deforested for the purpose of agriculture and livestock production, mostly in the last 20 years,<sup>[14]</sup> driving land degradation in the region and contributing to the loss of biodiversity, native forests, and ecosystem services.

### **Climate change**

9. Argentina is highly vulnerable to climate change, especially related to its agriculture and livestock sectors and ecosystems. The country is considered a top emitter from its agriculture, forestry, and other land use sectors, contributing to 2.1% of global emissions. Domestically, the country's emissions are 21.6% from livestock, 5.8% from agriculture, and 9.8% from land use change and forestry.<sup>[15]</sup> Most of Argentina's climate is subtropical. The mean annual temperature for Argentina is 14.3°C with average monthly temperatures ranging between 7°C in July and 17°C in January. Its mean annual precipitation is 541 mm with year-round rainfall, and the highest rainfall occurs from October to April. Argentina has experienced temperature increases since the 1960s; in the majority of non-Patagonia areas of Argentina, temperature increases were observed at an average of 0.5°C between 1960 and 2010. While average temperature increases were below the global mean increase, strong trends were observed for increases in extreme temperatures as well as heat waves over the past decades.<sup>[16]</sup> Temperatures across Argentina are projected to continue rising, with mean median annual temperatures projected to rise +1.6°C by the 2050s and 3.3°C by the end of the century under a high emissions scenario (Representative Concentration Pathway [RCP] 8.5). Although the Patagonian region is expected to see some of the most significant increases, semi-arid regions will continue to experience temperature spikes over the summer months.<sup>[17]</sup>

10. Between 1960 and 2010, the mean annual precipitation rose in Argentina with significant increases in precipitation in subtropical areas. Although this favored agriculture yields and the extension of crop lands into the country's semi-arid regions, these increases were derived from more frequent heavy

rainfalls and consequent flooding. In northern Argentina, the winter dry periods have become longer and drier, which has generated problems around water availability for some populations.<sup>[18]<sup>18</sup></sup> Although precipitation trends are highly variable across the country, most scenarios point to an average projected decrease in annual precipitation by the end of this century under a high emissions scenario for the entire country (RCP8.5).<sup>[19]<sup>19</sup></sup> Extreme rainfall is also expected to increase in frequency and intensity.

11. Argentina has also been adversely affected by increased aridity and drought events. Over the past two decades, the country has experienced severe droughts (e.g., 2006-2007, 2008-2009, and 2011-2012) in multiple regions, including northern Argentina, which more recently suffered from drought after experiencing consecutive La Niña conditions (2016-2019 and 2020-2022) that significantly affected its ecosystems, human health, and the economy.<sup>[20]<sup>20</sup></sup> An estimated 60% of natural disasters in Argentina are floods, which have resulted in 95% of economic losses for affected populations. The majority of regional flooding has been linked to warm phases of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon.<sup>[21]<sup>21</sup></sup> Heavy rainfall has also resulted in landslides and mudslides.

### **Project Area**

12. Three landscapes affected by DLDD in the humid and semiarid Chaco in the Chaco, Formosa, and Santa Fe provinces in northeastern Argentina are prioritized for this project. These landscapes were strategically identified based on their potential for SLM and ecosystem restoration, the importance of providing ecosystem services for local social and economic development, the potential for GEBs associated with land degradation and climate, and a solid baseline and projected co-financing by a diverse group of stakeholders.

13. In the Chaco province, the project will be implemented in the “Tres Quebrachos” forest landscape where the dominant vegetation is xerophytic forest and savanna. The “Tres Quebrachos” ecosystem extends to the Formosa and Santa Fe Provinces and is dominated by evergreen quebracho trees that grow to a height of 30 meters and are known for their commercially important hardwood timber and tannin extracts. The ecosystem owes its name to the presence of three species: the red quebracho (*Schinopsis lorentzii*), the willow-leaf red quebracho (*Schinopsis balansae*), and the white quebracho (*Aspidosperma quebracho-blanco*). In the savanna portion of the landscape, *Elionurus muticus* and *Cenchrus pilcomayensis* are among the most common grasses.<sup>[22]<sup>22</sup></sup> The landscape has rich soils where the main economic activity is medium- to high-technology farming for growing cereals and oilseed crops, and to a lesser extent cattle ranching with non-native grasses, which are responsible for the high fragmentation and degradation of forests and the land. The landscape is also threatened by permanent scarcity of water and recurring droughts. The “Tres Quebrachos” forest landscape prioritized by the project in the Chaco province covers 519,730 ha and is located in its western portion, 6,000 ha of which (the pilot sites<sup>[23]<sup>23</sup></sup>) will benefit from the implementation of SLM practices and restoration. The Chaco province has historically been among Argentina's poorest regions, and currently ranks last both by per capita GDP and in the Human Development Index. The province is home to the Toba, Mocovi, and Wichí Indigenous Peoples (IPs).

14. In the Formosa Province, the project will be implemented in two distinctive areas. The first area includes a portion of the “Tres Quebrachos” forest covering 400,000 ha in the southern portion of the province that, like most of the “Tres Quebrachos” ecosystem, is highly fragmented because of agricultural expansion. The second area covering 100,000 ha includes unproductive lands of the semi-arid Chaco in northern Formosa known as *peladares*. These are bare-soil, open spaces within a matrix of quebracho forest where cacti of the genus *Opuntia* may be present. Although originally they constitute natural formations due to the death of plants that have been covered with sediments after a flood, many of them have been severely degraded because they are preferred sites for human settlements and have increased in size from clearing trees around the houses to make room for human activities.<sup>[24]<sup>24</sup></sup> Within these two areas, 15,000 ha (the pilot sites) will be selected to implement restoration activities and SLM practices. Half of the population in the province is considered poor with the Wichí and Toba IPs representing 6% of the total population.<sup>[25]<sup>25</sup></sup>

15. Finally, in the Santa Fe Province, the project will be implemented in a landscape that includes a highly fragmented quebracho forest area and submeridional lowlands that include grasslands and savannas of the Gran Chaco American Ecosystem. Characterized by cycles of floods and droughts, the submeridional lowlands are among the largest wetland areas in Argentina and are threatened by hydrological alterations such as the draining of surface waters and changes in land use related to agricultural and livestock production.<sup>[26]<sup>26</sup></sup> Distributed in a landscape of approximately 700,000 ha in the Department of 9 de Julio (northwestern corner of the Santa Fe Province), the project will implement specific activities to reduce land degradation in 30,000 ha of forest and lowland areas (the pilot sites) and mitigate the effects of drought. A third of the population in the province is considered poor and there is no IPs present in the project implementation area.

16. Overall, the project aims to address land degradation in these landscapes by implementing SLM practices and restoration actions to avoid, reduce, and mitigate DLDD by making innovative financial mechanisms available to producers and indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) to support strategies to face the impact of drought on croplands, rangelands, and ecosystems. This will deliver multiple GEBs, including the rehabilitation of native forest, savannas, and wetlands of the Gran Chaco American Ecosystem, as well as more sustainable drylands with increased productivity, enhanced ecosystem services, and more drought-resilient human populations and agricultural and livestock production systems. These environmental benefits align directly with the GEF’s vision of achieving healthy and resilient ecosystems by promoting SLM and supporting the achievement of LDN and its strategy for the GEF 8 Land Degradation Focal Area.

## Baseline

17. Argentina has a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for ecosystem conservation and that addresses DLDD. This includes Law 26331 on Minimum Standards for the Environmental Protection of Native Forests, which establishes the minimum standards for the conservation and sustainable use and management of native forests and ecosystem services. It mandates the provinces to develop land-use planning and zoning of their native forests through a participatory process, and to classify different uses of forestlands. Related norms include the National Plan for Native Forests Restoration (PNRBN, Spanish acronym; SGAyDS Resolution 267/2019), which has the goal of restoring 20,000 ha per year by 2030 and contributes to the National Strategy for Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change. The National Forest

Management Plan with Sustainable Cattle Ranching (2015) aims to conserve native forest and its biodiversity by adopting technologies with low environmental impact. The National Monitoring System for Native Forests provides updated information on the country's native forest resources and monitors the implementation of Law No. 26331.

18. Argentina published the National Action Program to Combat Desertification (NAP) in 2003 through Resolution SAyDS No. 250/03, which also created the Advisory Commission to the NAP to advise the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS, Spanish acronym) in the execution of the NAP and to suggest measures and courses of action for developing policies to prevent and combat desertification. The objective of the NAP is to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought to contribute to the sustainable development of the affected areas, while improving the well-being of the population. Argentina has recently updated the NAP to achieve LDN within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The country has voluntarily committed to achieve LDN and has set the following targets: (i) By 2030 establish 200,000 ha of native forest under forest restoration process; (ii) By 2030 reduce the loss of native forest to maintain the area covered with forests included in conservation categories I and II of the Forest Act (high and medium); (iii) By 2030 implement 140,000 ha under Integrated Livestock Forest Management (ILFM) (Land Management of Native Forests Categories II and III, medium and low); (iv) By 2030 strengthen the Federal Fire Management System for prevention and early warning of forest, rural, and interface fires; (v) By 2030, improve irrigation efficiency in 1,000,000 irrigated hectares nationwide; and (vi) By 2030, maintain, through rotation practices, the ratio between the area under cereal cultivation and the area under oilseed cultivation in the same land management unit.<sup>[27]<sup>27</sup></sup>

19. MAyDS, through the National Directorate of Land Use and Environmental and Planning, periodically conducts land degradation assessments and produces maps of the drylands in Argentina based on an aridity index. In addition, it publishes periodic drought and land degradation and desertification reports. The country also established a National Drought Monitoring Board (MNMS, Spanish acronym), which is in charge of analyzing and evaluating drought and generating quality information to support related decision-making. The MNMS is coordinated by the Agricultural Emergency Monitoring Office (OMEGA, Spanish acronym) of the Ministry of Finance. In addition, through the National Observatory for Land Degradation and Desertification (ONDTyD, Spanish acronym), information on the status, trends, and risk of land degradation and desertification is collected and made available periodically to government and private decision-makers throughout the country to develop and implement prevention, control, and mitigation measures, and to raise public awareness about land degradation and desertification.

20. Law no. 27520/2019 on Minimum Budgets of Adaptation and Mitigation to Global Climate Change regulates the international commitments undertaken by the country, and strengthens the national climate policy and sub-national planning by establishing minimum environmental protection standards to ensure appropriate actions, instruments, and strategies for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change across the country. The National Plan of Adaptation and Mitigation to Climate Change (2022) details the means and actions in order to achieve the adaptation and mitigation goals outlined in the Second Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) that was submitted in 2021. Argentina has the goal of not exceeding the net emission of 359 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2030, equivalent to a total decrease in emissions of 19% by 2030. During COP26 (2021). Argentina further raised its mitigation target by not exceeding the net emission of 349 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030, representing a reduction of 27.7% compared

to the first NDC submitted in 2016. The adaptation and resilience areas in the NDC include agriculture, disaster risk management, and land use, land use change and forestry.

21. At the provincial level, the provinces may issue their own specific regulations, reflecting the minimum standards determined at the federal level. As such, there are Provincial Laws of Land Management of Native Forests (for example, Law 1.762-R, Chaco Province) and provinces may have their own laws and regulations related to land degradation (for example, Law 1060/93: General provisions for the preservation and conservation of soils and Provision 1052/11: Conditions and requirements for Land Use Change projects, Formosa Province; Law 10552/94: Control and prevention of soil degradation, Santa Fe Province). Environmental management and enforcement is the responsibility of provincial ministries as follows: Ministry of Production and Environment, Formosa Province; Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Territorial Development, Chaco Province; and Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Santa Fe Province. In addition, and as part of their efforts to address DLDD, the provinces are actively developing guidelines for the conservation of native forest (for example, *Guidelines for native forest best management practices for the production of goods and ecosystem services*) and environmental education (for example, Environmental Education Manual – Formosa Province, Ecoregion of the Great American Chaco). Provinces also invest in reducing land degradation and desertification, including developing financial mechanisms to promote the sustainable use of ecosystems and in monitoring the impact using satellite information (Chaco Province) and restoring areas degraded by overgrazing (*peladares*; Formosa Province). The project baseline will be fully assessed during the PPG phase.

22. Despite the country's efforts to face DLDD, the following barriers remain:

23. Barrier 1: Limited experience in SLM and planning for LDN, particularly at the local level. Despite the fact that the provinces where the project will be implemented are among the most affected by DLDD in Argentina, there are few experiences in the implementation of SLM practices that make it possible to address this problem with benefits for producers and native forests and other ecosystems. Limitations persist in the ability of provincial environmental authorities to provide guidance and technical assistance regarding LD at the local level. In addition, there is little participation of local stakeholders, in particular women and IPLCs, in defining strategies to manage land, ecosystems, and water resources in such a way that their perspectives and needs are considered. There is also limited technical capacity and knowledge on the part of producers and IPLCs, including women, about SLM best practices and technologies that will facilitate their adoption and improve the productivity of their lands and generate environmental benefits. Finally, participatory planning for SLM at the landscape and local levels considering different land uses is deficient in mitigating and reducing the impact of drought and floods in drylands using climate-smart strategies.

24. Barrier 2: Lack of financial and economic incentives to address DLDD. The implementation of successful strategies to address DLDD through SLM and drought-smart sustainable land management (D-SLM) requires financial incentives for producers and other local stakeholders; however, there are very limited incentives available and limited capacities to access or make use of them. New incentives need to be developed, and local stakeholders need to be made aware about them and provided with technical assistance for adopting them and improving the management of their croplands, rangelands, and local ecosystems. There is also a lack of methodologies to assess the impact of damages and economic losses for the agriculture and livestock sectors due to drought and desertification and to inform decision-making regarding the most appropriate financial mechanisms for enabling investments for more sustainable and resilient food production systems.

25. Barrier 3: Limited opportunities for awareness-raising and KM regarding DLDD and their solutions. At the landscape level there is lack of awareness among stakeholders about existing land degradation-related information, mechanisms, and available tools. This reflects a disconnect between progress made



at the national level on how to address DLDD and what is being done locally; because information does not flow to where it is most needed, there is a missed opportunity for KM and learning. In addition, there is limited information about DLDD at the local level, which makes it difficult to effectively monitor these threats and to propose locally-based solutions.

26. To overcome the above barriers and address the drivers of DLDD, funding is requested from the GEF for a project that will strengthen existing collaboration mechanisms between national and province-level stakeholders for implementing SLM strategies that will improve the productivity and ecosystem services and the resilience of drylands affected by drought and desertification. Through best SLM practices, increased access to information at different scales, improved monitoring systems, and enhanced technical capacity-building, provincial governments and local stakeholders will be better positioned to address DLDD after project completion. Furthermore, the project will put in place financial mechanisms, including public-private financing and incentives, to ensure the sustainability of project outcomes.

27. This strategy will be implemented in collaboration with a variety of public, private sector, and local stakeholders, including women and IPs, who will be instrumental in delivering the GEBs as follows.

Stakeholders	Relevant Roles / Participation in project preparation
National Level	
Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS)	MAyDS will be the National Executing Agency collaborating with the provinces, and houses the GEF Operational Focal Point in Argentina. The agency is responsible for developing and implementing national environmental policies. Through the National Directorate of Environmental and Land Use Planning (NDELUP) of the Secretariat of Environmental Policy in Natural Resources, MAyDS implements the national policy to promote environmental land use planning and the conservation and sustainable management of lands. NDELUP/MAyDS will lead the development of the project on behalf of the Government of Argentina.
UNCCD Focal Points	The UNCCD Technical Focal Point, housed within the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS), was fully involved in the elaboration of the PIF and will be part of the implementation. The UNCCD Political Point, housed within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, was informed as were the other institutions who are involved in the National Advisory Commission of the National Action Plan at its second annual meeting held in October 11.
The National Observatory for Land Degradation and Desertification (ONDTyD)	ONDTyD administers the National System for Monitoring and Evaluation of Land Degradation and Desertification to better inform decision-making and policy development to address DLDD. Currently, the agency involves more than 30 institutions in Argentina from across political, scientific, and technological sectors. ONDTyD will play a key role in providing technical assistance and information regarding land degradation in the project target sites, as needed.
National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA)	INTA is a decentralized government agency within the Ministry of the Economy. The institute contributes to the sustainable development of the agricultural, agri-foods, and agro-industrial sector through research and extension services, and to improving competitiveness and sustainable rural development. It also provides agroclimatic information to support decision-making within the agriculture sector. INTA has presence across the country and its technical capabilities will support the implementation of SLM practices in the prioritized landscapes.
National Directorate for Agricultural Risk and Emergency/Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (DNRyEA-SAGyP)	DNRyEA-SAGyP, within the Ministry of the Economy, brings together the monitoring and assessment of drought impacts at the national level and coordinates the National Drought Monitoring Table. It will support efforts for monitoring drought in the prioritized landscapes.
Technical Commission on Droughts/National Comprehensive Risk Management System (CTS-SINAGIR)	In 2022 CTS-SINAGIR was created with the objective of generating and coordinating the procedures and institutional mechanisms necessary to reduce the risk of droughts in Argentina. The DNRyEA of the SAGyP and the DNPoAT of the MAyDS jointly coordinate CTS-SINAGIR, which will support efforts to reduce drought-related risks in the prioritized landscapes.

	In addition, Argentina has a Drought Technical Commission (Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries [SAGyP, Spanish acronym], the National Meteorological Service [SMN, Spanish acronym], the School of Agriculture of the University of Buenos Aires [FAUBA, Spanish acronym], among others), which will be part of the Steering Committee of the project and also responsible for drought mitigation in the context of the project. This Commission is under the National System of Risk Reduction Management (Law 27.287), coordinated by the National Directorate of Risk and Agricultural Emergencies (SAGyP) and co-coordinated by the National Directorate of Environmental Land Use Planning
Local and Provincial Levels	
Provincial Governments of Chaco, Formosa, and Santa Fe	Institutions with an environmental mandate within the provincial governments will play an active role in the project and will be responsible for supervising its implementation in the prioritized landscapes. Provincial governments will provide co-financing funds and will coordinate execution.
IPLCs	As project beneficiaries, IPLCs will have special consideration in the implementation of SLM practices, access to financial mechanisms to address DLDD, capacity building, and awareness-raising activities. In the case of IPs, they are present in the target landscapes in the Chaco (e.g., Toba, Mocovi, and Wichí) and Formosa (e.g., Wichí and Toba) Provinces; no IPs are present in the Santa Fe Province. Appropriate information, communication, and participatory procedures will be ensured in accordance with UNDP's SES requirements, and in the case of IPs, particularly with Standard 6: Indigenous Peoples.
Private sector	The private sector will be engaged at the provincial level through public-private partnerships for collaborative planning and financing. In the Santa Fe Province there is high potential for leveraging the meat, dairy, and agriculture production sectors (e.g., bean, corn, sunflower, and meat); these include companies and cooperatives such as the <i>Asociación Quebracho de Pequeños Productores Agropecuarios</i> (AQPEPROA), <i>Asociación de Apicultores de El Potrillo</i> , <i>Asociación Civil Perla Formoseña</i> , and the women's group <i>Asociación Civil Hinaj</i> , in the Formosa and Chaco Provinces. The project will upscale efforts to align private finance flows with public sector-facilitated mechanisms. The potential for private sector co-financing will be fully assessed during the PPG phase in complete alignment with UNDP's private sector due diligence policy.
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)	NGOs such as Argentina's Association of Regional Consortia for Agricultural Experimentation (CREA, Spanish acronym) and Argentina's Association of Direct Seed Producers (AAPRESID, Spanish acronym) will provide technical assistance for the implementation of SLM and D-SLM practices. As part of the stakeholder analysis to be conducted during the PPG, additional NGOs will be identified.

28. The project will build on the baseline and ongoing investments as well as lessons learned from previous projects in the country. The project will build on the GEF 7/CAF Project *Comprehensive land management in forestry and agri-food systems of three water basins in Argentina to contribute to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and to mitigation and adaptation to climate change* (GEF Project ID 10866), currently under implementation. The project aims to strengthen the territorial implementation of actions that simultaneously increase climate resilience and improve productivity, guaranteeing social equity and environmental quality in forestry and agri-food systems in three watersheds in the Tucumán, Entre Ríos, and Santiago del Estero provinces. The project will exchange information regarding the implementation of communication strategies to improve local access to quality information about land degradation, LDN, and adaptation to and mitigation of climate change; the implementation of SLM practices; and the adoption of innovative financing to promote LDN. The executing agency is MAYS, which will facilitate the exchange of information and experiences between the two projects.

29. The project proposed herein will also build on the GEF 6/UNDP Project *Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and SLM into Development Planning: Making Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) Operational in Argentina* (GEF Project ID 9583), also currently under implementation. This project will generate multiple biodiversity and land degradation benefits by developing a system of policy, economic,



financial and technical instruments and governance mechanisms for ELUP to mainstream socioeconomic and environmental evaluation of ecosystem goods and services in decision-making at different government levels and sectors. Information management regarding LD, capacity building, SLM practices, coordination with provinces, and consultation with local stakeholders including the private sector and IPLCs are among the relevant topics to be considered. The executing agency is MAYDS with the collaboration of the provinces (Buenos Aires, Jujuy, and Mendoza).

30. Lessons learned from the GEF 5/UNDP Project *Sustainable Land Use Management in the Drylands of North-west Argentina* (GEF Project ID 5044) will also be considered. This project aimed to build an SLM framework to alleviate land degradation, maintain ecosystem services, and improve rural livelihoods in the drylands of northwestern Argentina. In particular, lessons learned regarding SLM practices implemented in drylands/critical LD hotspots, working with small farmers to support SLM in priority areas using financial incentives such as revolving funds and microcredit, and strengthening provincial government institutions to the lead the implementation of SLM practices will be considered. The executing agency was MAYDS in coordination with the Catamarca, Jujuy, La Rioja, Mendoza, Salta, San Juan, San Luis, and Tucumán Provinces.

31. Lessons learned from the GEF 4/UNDP and UNEP Project *Establishment of Incentives for the Conservation of Ecosystem Services of Global Significance* (GEF Project ID 3623) completed in December 2019 will also be taken into account. The project aimed to test and replicate payment for ecosystem services (PES) mechanisms to ensure the protection of Argentinian natural ecosystems and their services. The project provided valuable experiences at the provincial level (Formosa and Chaco Provinces) in the use of incentives to promote the conservation of habitats for species of global and national importance, SLM, and reduction of GHG emissions. This experience will be considered when developing financial mechanisms to support SLM and D-SLM.

32. The GEF 4/UNDP and UNEP Project *Sustainable Forest Management in the Transboundary Gran Chaco American Ecosystem* (GEF Project ID 2505) was completed in March 2019. Its objective was to reverse land degradation trends in the Gran Chaco by supporting SLM in the productive landscape. Lessons learned regarding the adoption of SLM practices (e.g., integrated agroforestry-pasture management practices and water harvesting and management) and restoration of degraded dryland forests working with local producers will be considered.

33. The project will also exchange information with the UNDP/GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) in Argentina, which provides funding for projects to reduce land degradation. Through projects such as *Production of carob flour for the food security of indigenous women in the west of the province of Formosa* and *Carob: valorization of carob production for food security and livestock production of IPLCs in the province of Formosa*, the SGP in Argentina is contributing to addressing land degradation in Formosa drylands through enriching native forest, promoting sustainable livestock production, and contributing to the food security of IPLCs.

34. The Adaptation Fund 5-year Project *“Increasing climate resilience and enhancing sustainable land management in the Southwest of the Buenos Aires province”* 2014-2019, contributed to reducing climate and human-made vulnerability of agroecosystems by increasing the adaptive capacity of key local institutions and stakeholders and piloting and disseminating climate-resilient and SLM practices. An information and early warning system on climate change and desertification (“IEWs”) was consolidated to reducing institutional and community-level vulnerability. The system collects and processes data that are used to generate and disseminate relevant threat and hazard information to farmers and other stakeholders on a timely basis.

35. The Green Climate Fund 6-year Project *Argentina REDD-plus RBP for results period 2014-2016* was approved in 2020 and will be executed by MAYDS and FAO; the total project value is USD 82 million. It will

reduce land-use emissions, combat deforestation and forest degradation, and promote sustainable forest management, conservation, and enhancement of forest carbon stock through regeneration and restoration of native forests. This includes sustainable livestock practices that protect native forests and strengthen local and national forest governance. Collaboration between the projects will be achieved through MAyDS and their implementation teams.

36. The project also responds to the country's priorities. Argentina ratified the UNCCD in 1996 and updated the NAP in order to achieve LDN within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular in line with target 15.3: "By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world." The project is fully aligned with the NAP and LDN and will directly contribute to the 2030 voluntary targets related to native forest under restoration, reducing the loss of native forest, and promoting ILFM.

37. Argentina signed and ratified the Paris Agreement on September 21, 2016. It developed the National Plan for Adaptation and Mitigation (PANyMCC, Spanish acronym) to 2030, where the actions to implement its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) are outlined. This plan calls for developing a long-term strategy under the Paris Agreement as well as delineating the revision, improvement, and monitoring of the Sector Action Plans for the main emitting sectors. This project has the potential to contribute to NDC implementation through SLM that will result in reduced GEI emissions in the target landscapes and increase resilience of agricultural and ecological systems, particularly those facing significant climate risk.

38. Since 2021, Argentina is a state party of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is better known as the Escazú Agreement. Adopted in Escazú, Costa Rica, on March 4, 2018, it aims to ensure the full and effective implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in the environmental decision-making process and access to justice in environmental matters, and the creation and strengthening of capacities and cooperation, contributing to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development. Through Component 3, which details KM and information sharing, the project will contribute to fulfilling Argentina's obligations under the Escazú Agreement.

---

[1] Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development. 2019. National Action Program to Combat Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought Mitigation: Updated to the 2030 Target.

[2] <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/w/country/argentina>

[3] Climate Risk Profile: Argentina (2021): The World Bank Group.

[4] <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/latin-america/argentina/>

[5] <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/latin-america/argentina/gran-chaco/>

[6] Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development. 2019. National Action Program to Combat Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought Mitigation: Updated to the 2030 Target.

[7] Evaluación de la Desertificación en Argentina, resultados del proyecto LADA/FAO. In: Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development. 2019. National Action Program to Combat Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought Mitigation: Updated to the 2030 Target.

[8] Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development. 2019. National Action Program to Combat Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought Mitigation: Updated to the 2030 Target.

[9] Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development. 2019. National Action Program to Combat Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought Mitigation: Updated to the 2030 Target.

[10] Torrella, S., et al. 2011. "Structure, composition and state of conservation of the woody-plant community of the 'Tres Quebrachos' forests in the Subhumid Central Chaco." In *Ecologia Austral* 21(2): 179-188.

[11] Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development. 2019. National Action Program to Combat Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought Mitigation: Updated to the 2030 Target.

[12] Torrella, S., et al. 2011. "Structure, composition and state of conservation of the woody-plant community of the 'Tres Quebrachos' forests in the Subhumid Central Chaco." In *Ecologia Austral* 21(2): 179-188

[13] Monaco et al. 2020. Causas e impactos de la deforestación de los bosques nativos de Argentina y propuestas de desarrollo alternativas. Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible.

[14] <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/latin-america/argentina/gran-chaco/>

[15] <https://www.fao.org/in-action/scala/countries/argentina/en>

[16] Argentina. 2015. Third National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Climate Risk Profile: Argentina (2021): The World Bank Group.

[20] Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development. 2019. National Action Program to Combat Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought Mitigation: Updated to the 2030 Target.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Chaco Province, personal communication.

[23] Project pilot sites can also be categorized as Homogeneous Environmental Units (*Unidades Ambientales Homogeneas*), a category used in the country that allows to zone land uses based on some level of uniformity regarding their biotic and physical characteristics.

[24] Caracterización de Ambientes de la Reserva Natural Formosa. 2012. Administración de Parques Nacionales - Delegación Regional NEA.

[25] Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL). 2018. "Territorio y desarrollo en la Argentina: las brechas estructurales de desarrollo en la provincia de Formosa," Documentos de Proyectos (LC/TS.2019/12), Santiago, CEPAL.

[26] Santa Fe Province, personal communication.

[27] Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible. 2020. Reporte Final sobre el Programa de Establecimiento de Metas Voluntarias de Neutralidad de la Degradación de la Tierra.

## B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Project description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

### Project Description

39. **The project objective is to strengthen SLM of degraded ecosystems in accordance with LDN in drought-affected areas in northeastern Argentina. The GEF investment will reduce threats to native ecosystems and the land in three landscapes affected by drought and desertification. The project will support transformational change through four interrelated components:**

40. Component 1: SLM practices to avoid, reduce, and mitigate DLDD in accordance with the LDN framework. Through this component, the project will implement regenerative production practices that rely on dryland ecosystems to reduce land degradation in three selected landscapes in the Chaco, Formosa and Santa Fe Provinces in northeastern Argentina. This will be achieved by working closely with national and provincial level stakeholders, including women and IPLCs, to implement SLM practices and strategies to address land degradation and restore key dryland ecosystems and related services. Similarly, water resource management guidelines in drylands will be created and implemented to enhance water use, particularly during droughts. To support the implementation of best SLM and water management practices, capacity-building and extension services will be made available to national and local governments officials, the private sector, women, and IPs. Women and men will be trained and the impact of the program will be assessed using the UNDP capacity development scorecard and/or survey, and possibly a capacity needs assessment during the PPG phase.

41. This component will also create landscape and local comprehensive land use plans for adoption by the project that will reduce DLDD and develop a participatory climate-smart strategy to mitigate and reduce the impact of drought and floods in drylands. This will contribute to building climate resiliency and reducing effects of land degradation and desertification in 51,000 ha of drylands, and reduce the annual rate of land degradation in the target landscapes.

42. Component 2: Innovative financing to address DLDD. This component will provide producers, selected companies from the agriculture and livestock sectors, and IPLCs (including women) with access to innovative financial mechanisms to encourage investments in D-SLM. These may include incentives such as subsidies and low-interest loans. In addition, public-private partnerships will be established, which will include the participation of private companies and organizations (e.g., *Asociación Quebracho de Pequeños Productores Agropecuarios (AQPEPROA)*, *Asociación de Apicultores de El Potrillo*, *Asociación Civil Perla Formoseña*, and the women's group *Asociación Civil Hinaj*). In the case of women and women's groups to be identified during the PPG phase, specific financial schemes will be made available that make use of existing experiences in the country. In addition, it will allow national and provincial environmental authorities to improve their assessments of drought and land degradation-related losses and damages by sector and to increase their level of investment, including the use of government funds, to support SLM and LDN in the target landscapes. A key aspect to the implementation of using innovative financing to address DLDD is building awareness at the local level about the availability of financing opportunities and providing technical support to local stakeholders during the application process to access them as well as providing training in financial management and recordkeeping.

43. Component 3: KM and communication to support options to address DLDD with local benefits. This component will generate, manage, and exchange knowledge and capture lessons learned to benefit future projects within the country and elsewhere, **including aspects related to gender mainstreaming.** To this end, an awareness and communication strategy will be implemented to inform key stakeholders, **including women,** in the three target landscapes about existing land degradation – related information, mechanisms, and tools available nationally and locally to address DLDD. The baseline indicates that producers, IPLCs, and in some instances provincial environmental authorities are not fully knowledgeable about actions at the federal level that will help them to address drought and desertification. This component is designed to share information and coordinate actions at all levels more efficiently. In addition, the project will optimize the national drylands environmental monitoring system and databases with information at the local level. Although information about DLDD at the national scale is available and reliable, information at finer scales, such as the

local level, is still widely unavailable, thereby limiting local decision-making, implementation, and monitoring. Accordingly, the project's prioritized landscapes will serve as pilot sites for generating information at the landscape scale about DLDD, feeding into national information systems and maps and generating knowledge that will allow replication in other dry landscapes in the country. Optimizing existing monitoring systems will also include strengthening local-level information for landscapes/environmental units and the network of key informants, **including women**, for monitoring the impact of drought, as well developing a national land cover map to monitor changes; this will be based on the results of a Performance Review and Implementation System (PRAIS4) that will be available in October 2023. Finally, knowledge and lessons learned will be systematized and disseminated through different networks and platforms such as the National Drought Monitoring Board, the ONDTyD, the Drought Information System for Southern South America (SISSA) platform, Panorama – Solutions for a Healthy Planet, and Initiative 20x20, among others. The project may also use the UNCCD's Global Mechanism (GM) and the Drought Initiative to share information regarding LDN and SLM and for lessons learned. The project's KM will be updated during the PPG phase and budgeted for.

44. Component 4: M&E. This component will implement the project's M&E Plan, which will be developed during the PPG phase and properly budgeted for, in accordance with UNDP and GEF policies and requirements for project M&E. Project implementation will be launched through a project inception workshop to familiarize key stakeholders with the project strategy and to review the PRF and monitoring plan, among other things. The project will deliver regular monitoring of its progress and gaps, including the implementation of all SES-related plans, and weaknesses identified will inform adaptive management. This includes but is not limited to the preparation of quality and timely annual GEF Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), and full transparent support to the independent Mid-term Review (MTR) and the independent Terminal Evaluation (TE) with all required core indicators and financial indicators assessed.

45. The project's Theory of Change (ToC) is presented in Figure 1. If SLM practices are adopted by local communities and producers, and they have access to innovative financing to address DLDD, and there is increased and better knowledge about LD; then, the level of degradation and desertification of drylands and ecosystems in Northern Argentina that result from inadequate management of agriculture and livestock, aggravated by more frequent and prolonged droughts associated to climate change, will decrease, resulting in more resilient landscapes and local communities and the delivery of GEBs. The project's TOC consists of three impact pathways: 1) SLM pathway; 2) financing pathway; and 3) KM pathway. A central aspect to achieving the project development objective will be to directly collaborate with key public, private sector, and civil society (including women and indigenous peoples) stakeholders; this aspect of the project is embedded throughout all the impact pathways and will be particularly addressed through the Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan that will be developed during the PPG phase. The three barriers described herein and the causal pathways are as follows.

46. Barrier 1: Limited experience in SLM and planning for LDN, particularly at the local level. *Causal pathway 1:* The implementation of SLM and best management water practices in production drylands, jointly with enhanced landscape and local land use planning and climate-smart strategies to mitigate and reduce the impact of drought and floods, leads to regenerative production practices that rely on dryland ecosystems reduce land degradation in the target landscapes and to drylands resilient to climate change and to effects of land degradation and desertification.

47. Barrier 2: Lack of financial and economic incentives to address DLDD. *Causal pathway 2:* The availability of financial and economic-based tools to assess land degradation-related losses and damages by sector and access to innovative financing mechanisms by multiple local stakeholders (with training and technical support for their use), allows the sustainable D-SLM of croplands, rangelands, and ecosystems.

48. Barrier 3: Limited opportunities for awareness-raising and KM regarding DLDD and their solutions. *Causal pathway 3:* Improved awareness of local stakeholders and communication mechanisms for relaying information about DLDD and how to address it, together with an updated drylands environmental monitoring system and databases and the dissemination of information through different national and global networks and platforms, is conducive to knowledge-sharing for replicating and scaling-up project outcomes.

49. This desired change will be possible to the extent that the following assumptions are met: (i) Sufficient and ongoing political will and coordination at national and provincial levels to address DLDD; (ii) The threat of DLDD is understood and recognized by multiple stakeholders at the provincial and local levels; (iii) Public/private funding and investment to support SLM and achieve LDN is maintained or increased; (iv) Stable national macroeconomic environment; and (v) Environmental variability, including climate change/drought within normal range.

50. The identified pathways are based on the analysis of threats/root causes and barriers, which will be further assessed during the PPG phase. The supporting outputs and outcomes for each pathway, and the assumptions that they are built upon, will properly address the problems and barriers described above, allowing DLDD to be addressed in the three target landscapes in northeastern Argentina. The project's ToC considers the active participation of public, private, and civil society stakeholders, as well as actions to contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women and the active participation of IPs in the drylands they inhabit. The ToC is a dynamic framework that will be further appraised during the PPG and project implementation.<sup>[31]<sup>28</sup></sup> This strategy will deliver GEBs as well as social and economic benefits at the local level. The interrelated components described above will be the means through which this is achieved.

51. The expected GEBs to be delivered are:

- 5,100 ha of land and ecosystems under restoration
- 45,900 ha of landscapes under improved practices
- 4,070 people benefiting from GEF-financed investments (60% women and 40% men)



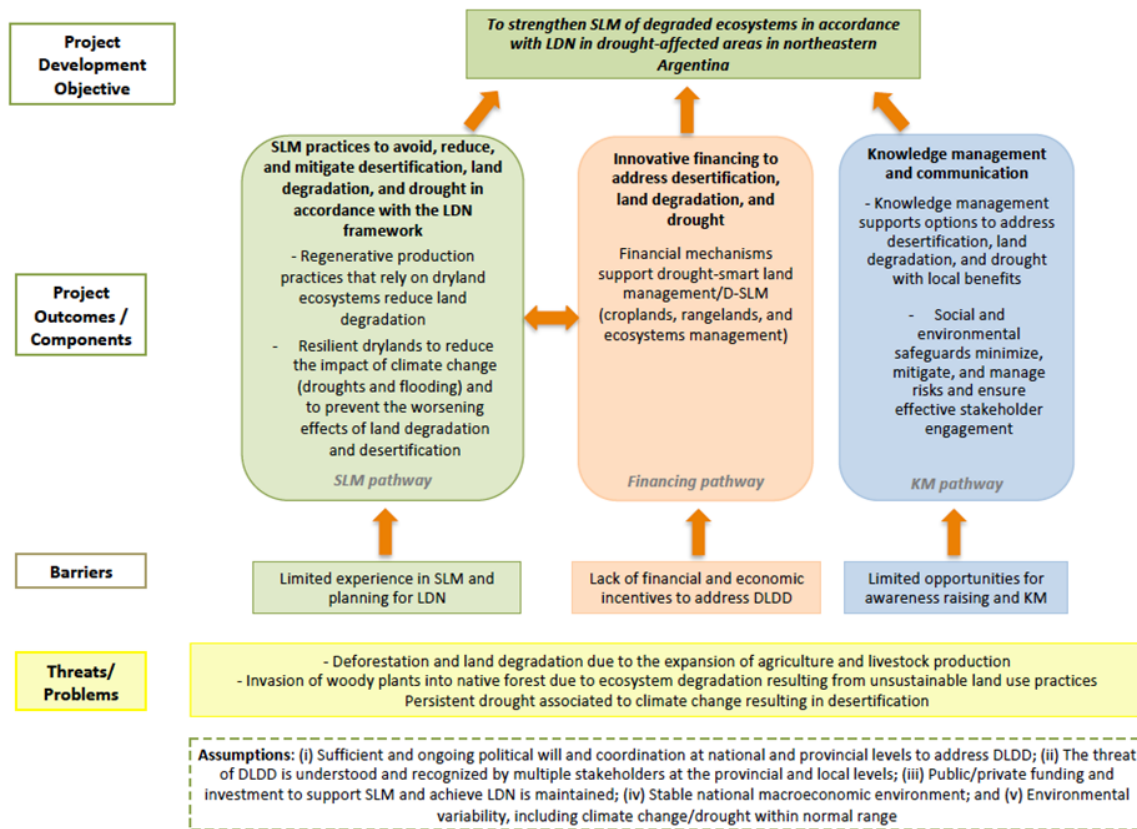


Figure 1: Theory of Change

## Gender Equality

52. According to the UNDP Gender Marker Rating, the project is categorized as GEN2: gender equality as a significant objective; results address differential needs of men or women and equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, and rights, but do not address the root causes of inequalities in their lives. The project will contribute to gender equality by improving women's participation and decision-making and generating socio-economic benefits for women, for example by supporting SLM practices and facilitating access to innovative financing for their implementation, which will contribute to improving land productivity and environmental sustainability with benefits for women and their families.

53. During the PPG, a gender analysis for the target landscapes (drylands in northeastern Argentina) and a detailed Gender Action Plan will be developed to ensure gender mainstreaming in the project. The Project Results Framework includes gender-sensitive indicators (disaggregated by sex), which will be further analyzed during the PPG, and specific gender-based indicators will be used for monitoring. Women will be involved in project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Technical and financial resources will be allocated to ensure gender mainstreaming during project implementation.

## Incremental cost reasoning

54. The proposed project will build on baseline projects and programs to deliver GEBs. Under the business-as-usual scenario for Component 1, SLM strategies to address DLDD in Argentina will continue to exist but they will not be widely known or available and would not be integrated into landscape-level and local land use plans by the target provinces (Chaco, Formosa, and Santa Fe). As a result, without the GEF alternative, DLDD will persist, and there will be limited opportunities for implementing regenerative production practices that rely on dryland ecosystems and reduce land degradation and for building resilient drylands to reduce the impact of droughts and flooding resulting from climate change. The GEF funds will support SLM and best management water practices and strategies in selected areas of drylands that will contribute to avoiding, reducing, and mitigating DLDD in accordance with the national LDN framework.

55. Under Component 2, without the GEF alternative, D-SLM of croplands, rangelands, and ecosystems will continue to be limited. Under the business-as-usual scenario, producers and IPLCs, including women, will continue to have limited access to, and knowledge about, innovative financing to invest in SLM and D-SLM. The GEF alternative will overcome these limitations by developing an enabling environment in which local stakeholders will have access to new financing mechanisms to address DLDD and the skills and technical support necessary for their effective and efficient use and the delivery of GEBs. In addition, funding from different sources (public and private) would be available to support SLM and LDN in the target landscapes, ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes.

56. The GEF's investment in Component 3 will raise awareness about land degradation and how to address it, and strengthen the national drylands environmental monitoring system using local level data and improving the decision-making process for achieving LDN. In addition, it will share knowledge and lessons learned resulting from the project for replicating and scaling-up in other drylands in the country and elsewhere. None of these outcomes would be achieved under the baseline scenario.

57. Overall, the proposed project's incremental cost is justified by the potential to achieve important GEBs by addressing DLDD in three landscapes in northeastern Argentina. These benefits include the restoration of native forest, savannas, and wetlands that are key for providing ecosystems services, the restoration of degraded lands that support the livelihood of rural IPLCs, and the sustainable use of drylands that are affected by drought and desertification and that are essential for promoting sustainable development. The outcomes and longer-term impact of the project would also contribute to the achievement of national and global environmental objectives, including national voluntary targets LDN (restoration of native forest, reducing the loss of native forest, and ILFM); NDC targets (reduced GEI emissions); Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets (1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 22, 23); and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs: 1, 5, 8, 12, 13, 15).

58. The project's main innovative approach lies in the implementation of actions to address land degradation at the landscape level with clear links to national-level priorities and information management needs. More specifically, landscape-level investments will provide information on trends in land cover, land productivity, and carbon stocks; this information will feed into national-level indicators so the country may report trends in land degradation at finer scales for the first time. This approach has very high potential for replication in other landscapes in the country where 70% of the land area are drylands affected by drought. Innovative financing designed to address DLDD, including financial schemes specifically for women, will facilitate the sustainability of project outcomes and upscaling. The project will also innovate by raising awareness among local stakeholders about SLM and LDN. Locally there is limited knowledge about land degradation; although there are related information, mechanisms, and tools available nationally, there is very little knowledge at the local level to reduce and/or stop land degradation. This includes the use of Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) Index for the first time to evaluate beliefs and behaviors related to DLDD.



[28] <https://sisso.crc-sas.org/>

[29] <https://panorama.solutions/en>

[30] <https://initiative20x20.org/restoring-latin-americas-landscapes>

[31] The ToC was constructed following the recommendations of the Theory of Change Primer (STAP document 2019).

### Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

If so, please describe that role here. Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing

59. The project will cooperate with the following ongoing initiatives and projects:

- GEF 7/CAF Project *Comprehensive land management in forestry and agri-food systems of three water basins in Argentina to contribute to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and to mitigation and adaptation to climate change* (GEF Project ID 10866). Cooperation regarding information exchange about communication strategies to improve local access to quality information on land degradation, LDN, and adaptation to and mitigation of climate change; the implementation of SLM practices; and the adoption of innovative financing to promote LDN.
- GEF 6/UNDP Project *Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and SLM into Development Planning: Making Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) Operational in Argentina* (GEF Project ID 9583). Cooperation regarding land degradation information management, capacity-building, SLM practices, coordination with provinces, and consultation with local stakeholders, including the private sector and IPLCs.
- UNDP/GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) in Argentina. Cooperation regarding addressing land degradation in drylands through the enrichment of the native forest and promotion of sustainable livestock production in drylands.
- Green Climate Fund Project *Argentina REDD-plus RBP for results period 2014-2016*. Collaboration regarding sustainable livestock practices that protect native forests and strengthen local and national forest governance.

### Core Indicators

#### Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
5100	0	0	0

### Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
---------------------	----------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------	---------------------

### Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
3,400.00			

### Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
Natural grass	850.00			

### Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
850.00			

### Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
45900	0	0	0

### Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

### Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

### Type/Name of Third Party Certification

### Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
45,900.00			

### Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

### Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
-------------------	---------	----------------------------	--	----------------------------	---------------------------

### Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title
-------

### Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
<b>Female</b>	2,442			
<b>Male</b>	1,628			
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,070</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

\* Sum of degraded native forest and drylands restored in: 1) Chaco Province (600 ha), 2) Formosa Province (1,500 ha), and 3) Santa Fe Province (3,000 ha).

\*\* Sum of drylands under SLM and D-SLM (croplands, rangelands, and ecosystems): 1) Chaco Province (5,400 ha), 2) Formosa Province (13,500 ha), and 3) Santa Fe Province 27,000 ha).

\*\*\* Sum of: 1) people benefiting directly from SLM activities and restoration living in rural areas, which have low population densities, and training – Component 1 (885 people, 66% women); 2) people benefiting from innovative financing to address DLDD and training – Component 2 (1,088 people, 49% women); and 3) people benefiting directly from the awareness and communication strategy to inform key stakeholders about land degradation and solutions available – Component 3 (2,097 people, 63% women).

### Risks to Project Preparation and Implementation

Summarize risks that might affect the project preparation and implementation phases and what are the mitigation strategies the project preparation process will undertake to address these (e.g. what alternatives may be considered during project preparation—such as in terms of consultations, role and choice of counterparts, delivery mechanisms, locations in country, flexible design elements, etc.). Identify any of the risks listed below that would call in question the viability of the project during its implementation. Please describe any possible mitigation measures needed. (The risks associated with project design and Theory of Change should be described in the “Project description” section above). The risk rating should reflect the overall risk to project outcomes considering the country setting and ambition of the project. The rating scale is: High, Substantial, Moderate, Low.

Risk Categories	Rating	Comments
Climate	Moderate	Project activities and outcomes may face vulnerability and potential undermining due to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters. The project's targeted regions are highly susceptible to both droughts and

		<p>flooding, stemming from heavy rainfall. Argentina has witnessed temperature increases since the 1960s, with most non-Patagonian areas experiencing an average temperature rise of 0.5°C between 1960 and 2010. While the average temperature increase remains below the global average, significant trends indicate rising extreme temperatures and prolonged heatwaves over recent decades. Projections indicate that temperatures across Argentina will continue to rise, with median annual temperatures expected to increase by +1.6°C by the 2050s and 3.3°C by the end of the century under a high emissions scenario (Representative Concentration Pathway [RCP] 8.5). In northern Argentina, there has been an observed lengthening and drying of winter dry periods, leading to water availability issues for certain populations. While precipitation trends vary across the country, most scenarios point to a projected decline in annual precipitation by the end of the century under a high emissions scenario (RCP8.5) for the entire nation. In the past two decades, Argentina has faced severe droughts, such as in 2006-2007, 2008-2009, and 2011-2012, affecting multiple regions, including northern Argentina. More recently, northern Argentina experienced drought following consecutive La Niña conditions (2016-2019 and 2020-2022), significantly impacting ecosystems, human well-being, and the economy. Projected temperature increases and decreased rainfall affirm that drought will continue to pose a challenge in northern Argentina, where the project is set to be implemented. This risk will be managed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The design of the project; it will be examined in the course of targeted assessments and included in the ESMPs as determined necessary.</li> <li>• The project through all its components will address the impact of drought as a main objective and climate-smart practices will be promoted.</li> </ul>
Environment and Social	Substantial	<p>Subnational governments (provincial and municipalities) and local communities may not have the capacity to implement project activities successfully. Addressing DLDD in the target landscapes requires coordinated and synergistic action between multiple stakeholders with specific mandates, interests, and responsibilities. This risk will be managed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Stakeholder analysis and the Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan to be developed in the project design phase, where key stakeholders, including</li> </ul>

indigenous peoples, will be identified and which will describe how strong, constructive and responsive relationships should be developed for project design and implementation. • Components 1 and 2 of the project include capacity building and technical assistance for the successful implementation of the project. In addition, Component 3 includes awareness-raising and communication mechanism to inform stakeholders about available resources nationally and locally to address DLDD. • This risk will be included in the ESMF during the PPG and will be examined in more detail at the beginning of the project through targeted assessments and will be included in the Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) to outline further mitigation measures for this risk, as determined necessary. Stakeholder consultations may not be fully inclusive, especially of marginalized groups and other vulnerable individuals, or special interest groups, or may not be culturally appropriate, and this could result in grievances or objections from these stakeholders. FPIC has not yet been applied. There may be marginalized groups and other vulnerable individuals, or special interest groups, who are not fully involved and cannot participate and/or claim their rights due to their own limitations of knowledge/capacity/power/cultural norms, etc., actions that limit their participation in the project. This risk will be managed through: • The Stakeholder analysis and Comprehensive Stakeholder Participation Plan, which will include participation, consultation, and complaint mechanisms so that all stakeholders are consulted and participate in the design and implementation of the project. • During the PPG phase of the project, the full extent of indigenous people’s presence in the target landscapes and interests will be assessed. • A Grievance and Redress Mechanism to be developed by a SES Expert during the PPG. The project may limit the participation and involvement of women. Women’s input, knowledge and guidance are indispensable to any productive, sustainable efforts to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought. However, gender inequality still plays a significant role in land-degradation related issues. Women farmers often have less access to land, decision-making processes and leadership, credit, information, technology, and extension. This risk will be managed

through:

- A gender analysis to be conducted during the PPG to better understand this risk and identify specific mitigation measures, which will be included in the Gender Action/Mainstreaming Plan that will also be developed during the PPG.
- Gender-based indicators that are included the Project Results Framework (PRF) and that will be further considered during the PPG. The Gender Action Plan will also include specific gender-based indicators that will allow monitoring and analyzing the gender mainstreaming in the project and related information will be integrated into progress reports and evaluations. A specific budget will be designated to monitor and implement the Gender Action Plan, which will be developed by a Gender Specialist during the PPG.
- The Stakeholder Analysis and Comprehensive Stakeholder Participation Plan to identify women's groups and women's needs and to ensure their participation in project design and implementation.
- This risk will be further examined in the ESIA's and will be included in the ESMPs as deemed necessary. Some of the project activities will take place within or adjacent to critical habitats and / or environmentally sensitive areas, and may inadvertently affect them (e.g., introducing invasive alien species through ecological restoration); the project may also involve significant agricultural production inadvertently affecting biodiversity and natural resources. The project will restore ecosystems (e.g., forest, savannah, and wetlands) and lands within production landscapes with high level of degradation in the Gran Chaco American Ecosystem; thus, the likelihood of affecting ecologically important areas is limited. SLM practices will be implemented in medium conservation value forest areas of forest with (Category II according to Argentina's Forest law). Only native species will be used in restoration activities and the risk of introducing invasive species is very low. The landscape in the Chaco Province has rich soils that include large-scale farming for growing cereals and oilseed crops. SLM practices to be promoted by the project could include existing large farms. SLM activities will primarily include regenerative agriculture practices that rely on natural ecological processes increasing species diversity in agricultural farms, improving soil quality, increasing crop yields, and improving habitat connectivity and flow of ecosystem services. This risk will be managed

through: • The design of the project; it will be examined in the course of targeted assessments and included in the ESMPs as determined necessary. The outputs of the project will potentially have impacts on the rights, lands, natural resources and traditional livelihoods and practices of indigenous peoples. There is presence of IPs (e.g., Toba, Mocovi, and Wichí) in the project's target landscapes. Presence of IPs in the region triggers FPIC, which has not yet been applied. This risk will be managed through: • The Stakeholder analysis and Comprehensive Stakeholder Participation Plan, which will include participation, consultation, and complaint mechanisms so that all indigenous peoples are consulted and participate in the design and implementation of the project. • During the PPG phase of the project, the full extent of indigenous people's rights, lands, natural resources and traditional livelihoods and practices will be assessed. • FPIC is a mandatory requirement; thus, consultations will be carried out during the PPG with the objective of achieving initial consent from the specific rights-holders, as appropriate and in line with Standard 6 requirements. FPIC would then be continued during project implementation, following the measures summarized in the ESMF, which will include an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF), and an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) that is prepared during implementation as part of the subsequent ESMP. • A Grievance and Redress Mechanism to be developed by a SES Expert during the PPG. Project activities such the implementation of SLM practices and restoration could inadvertently support child labor and other violations of international labor standards. In Argentina, all forms of child labor are banned by law and, although employers' and workers' organizations as well as the Government at the national, provincial and local levels make great efforts to progressively eradicate it, its incidence is still believed to be high. In all cases, a greater percentage of child labor is found in the rural environment (source: International Labor Organization: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---ilo-buenos\\_aires/documents/publication/wcms\\_224517.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---ilo-buenos_aires/documents/publication/wcms_224517.pdf)) This risk will be managed through: • Targeted assessments and related measures will be included in ESMPs and IPPs as deemed necessary. The required measures to avoid supporting child labor, directly or



		indirectly, will be identified and implemented via implementation-stage work. There is the potential for the generation of non-hazardous waste as a result of project activities. Non-hazardous waste may be generated during the implementation of SLM practices and restoration activities. Training activities related to the implementation of SLM will include the management and disposal of non-hazardous waste that might be generated. There is the potential of economic displacement. This risk is considered low as project activities will be directed to implement SLM and climate-smart practices in lands that have been degraded and are already experiencing low productivity. In addition, the adoption of SLM and climate-smart practices by land users will be voluntary.
Political and Governance	Substantial	There is substantial consensus among all levels of government in Argentina (National, Provincial, and Local) about the threats of DLDD and the need to address them. There is, however, a risk of lack of coordination and synergistic action between multiple stakeholders with specific mandates, interests, and responsibilities. In addition, general elections will be held in Argentina in October 2023, which may bring political changes. In order to minimize this risk, the project will follow a participatory and consensus-building approach during its design.
Macro-economic	Substantial	Argentina's economy is experiencing a contraction affected by strict import controls, a historic drought, and high inflation. To mitigate this risk, the project will support partnerships with lending institutions and the private sector for financing small producers and investment locally to support the adoption of D-SLM practices. The project will also provide technical support and training to stakeholders to access innovative financing mechanisms. During the PPG phase, the use of low-value grants as seed funding will be explored.
Strategies and Policies	Low	Strategies and policy risks are related to the possibilities of diversion from national strategies and priorities. In this respect, the project has already established strong cooperation with the different relevant ministries to ensure the project's goals and approaches are aligned to the national goals and international commitments. Additional efforts to engage the new administration after presidential elections planned for October of 2023



		will be conducted during the PPG phase and during implementation, as needed.
Technical design of project or program	Low	Technical design risks are identified as poor-quality design. UNDP has an extensive quality assurance mechanism to ensure projects are designed appropriately and in line with GEF standards.
Institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability	Moderate	Institutional capacity risks are correlated to the lack of potential project support from the national counterparts. At the provincial level, efforts will be made during the PPG and during implementation to enhance the level of ownership and capacity for project implementation; this may include HACT and PCAT assessments and mitigation measures, as needed. At the central level, national counterparts have extensive experience implementing with GEF-funded projects and have worked extensively with UNDP.
Fiduciary: Financial Management and Procurement	Low	Financial Management and Procurement risks correspond to any potential mismanagement of funds. The project will ensure that UNDP and GEF financial rules are followed during the entire lifespan of the project. In addition, financial audits will be carried out on a regular basis to avoid any potential change in the use of project funding.
Stakeholder Engagement	Moderate	The project will reduce the potential risk of stakeholder detachment by contacting all relevant stakeholders identified in the PIF document and developing in cooperation with them a Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan, in line with UNDP's and GEF's guidance during the PPG stage.
Other		
Financial Risks for NGI projects		
Overall Risk Rating	Substantial	Through the combination of all identified risks, this assessment concludes that this project risk rating is substantial. However, close monitoring of risks (identified or upcoming) will guarantee adequate risk identification, management, and adaptation.

### C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Describe how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

60. The project is fully aligned with GEF requirement under the Land Degradation Focal Area (LDFA) that has as goal to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation, desertification and mitigate the effects of drought. The LDFA strategy aligns with GEF's vision to achieve healthy and resilient ecosystems by promoting sustainable land management and supporting the achievement of LDN. In addition, the project is aligned with the GEF-8 LDFA strategy to mainstream gender considerations by applying UNCCD-related guidelines in order to: (i) enhance understanding, and to advance gender-responsive LDN plans and programs; and (ii) include gender considerations in LDN assessments.

61. The project is aligned with all four objectives of the LDFA: 1. Avoid and reduce land degradation through sustainable land management (SLM) of the LDFA; 2. Reverse land degradation through landscape restoration; 3. Address desertification, land degradation, and drought (DLDD) issues, particularly in drylands; and 4. Improve the enabling policy and institutional framework for LDN.

62. Project activities to restore degraded ecosystems and implement SLM in the target landscapes will also have an impact on the consolidation of the ecological corridors of the Argentinian Chaco and biodiversity conservation in the Gran Chaco American Ecosystem, 52.6 million ha of which are in Argentina. Accordingly, the project will contribute to the following Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets: 1. Reducing threats to biodiversity (Targets 1, 2, 5, 6, and 8); 2. Meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing (Targets 9, 10, and 11); 3. Tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming (Targets 16, 22, and 23).

#### D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

##### **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:**

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

##### **Stakeholder Engagement**

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during PIF development as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes and plan to develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan before CEO endorsement has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

No

Consultations will be conducted during the PPG phase in coordination with local stakeholders. IPLCs were not consulted during project identification phase due to the current political uncertainty derived from the general elections to be held on October 22 October 2023, to elect the president, vice president, members of the national congress and the governors of most provinces. Consequently, priority will be given to consultations with IPLCs during the PPG phase of the project as soon as the new administration is elected, and resources will be properly allocated as part of UNDP's Initiation Plan to program the project's PPG to be received from the GEF.

**Were the following stakeholders consulted during project identification phase:**

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities:

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector:

**Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations**

63. Consultations will be conducted during the PPG phase in coordination with local stakeholders. IPLCs were not consulted during project identification phase due to the current political uncertainty derived from the general elections to be held on October 22 October 2023, to elect the president, vice president, members of the national congress and the governors of most provinces. Consequently, priority will be given to consultations with IPLCs during the PPG phase of the project as soon as the new administration is elected, and resources will be properly allocated as part of UNDP’s Initiation Plan to program the project’s PPG to be received from the GEF.

Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations:

Stakeholder	Summary	Dates (2023)
Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS)	Periodic discussions during PIF development with the National Directorate of Land Use and Environmental and Planning, Secretariat of Environmental Policy in Natural Resources. The MAyDS houses the UNCCD OPF, who was periodically informed about the progress of the PIF.	June 8, 13, 20, 22, 27 July 5, 11, 18, 25, 31 August 1, 4, 8
Ministry of Production and Environment, Formosa Province	Direct consultations to define the project strategy, baseline, target landscapes, core indicators, and cofinancing, among other topics.	July 6, with follow-up e-mails and personal communications.
Centro de Validación de Tecnologías Agropecuarias (CEDEVA)	Local government agency consulted through the Ministry of Production and Environment (Formosa Province) regarding the participation of CSOs (e.g., <i>Asociación Quebracho de Pequeños Productores Agropecuarios [AQPEPROA]</i> , <i>Asociación de Apicultores de El Potrillo [PROAPE]</i> , and women organizations <i>Asociación Civil Perla Formoseña</i> and <i>Asociación Civil Hina</i> )	August 14
Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Territorial Development, Chaco Province	Direct consultations to define the project strategy, baseline, target landscapes, core indicators, and cofinancing, among other topics.	July 7, with follow-up e-mails and personal communications.
<i>Asociación Pampa Iporá Guazú</i>	CSO consulted through the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Territorial	August 23

	Development (Chaco Province) regarding its interest in the project	
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Santa Fe Province	Consultations to define the project strategy, baseline, target landscapes, core indicators, and cofinancing, among other topics.	E-mail and personal communications.

(Please upload to the portal documents tab any stakeholder engagement plan or assessments that have been done during the PIF development phase.)

### Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in the section B project description?

Yes

### Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program and any measures to address such risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex D).

Yes

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
High or Substantial			

## E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

### Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Project Description (Section B)

Yes

## ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

### GEF Financing Table

Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non-Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
UNDP	GET	Argentina	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-1	Grant	617,794.00	58,690.00	676,484.00
UNDP	GET	Argentina	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-2	Grant	617,794.00	58,690.00	676,484.00
UNDP	GET	Argentina	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-3	Grant	1,060,319.00	100,730.00	1,161,049.00
UNDP	GET	Argentina	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-4	Grant	617,793.00	58,690.00	676,483.00
<b>Total GEF Resources (\$)</b>						<b>2,913,700.00</b>	<b>276,800.00</b>	<b>3,190,500.00</b>

### Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

100000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

9500

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
UNDP	GET	Argentina	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-1	Grant	18,750.00	1,782.00	20,532.00
UNDP	GET	Argentina	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-2	Grant	18,750.00	1,782.00	20,532.00
UNDP	GET	Argentina	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-3	Grant	43,750.00	4,156.00	47,906.00
UNDP	GET	Argentina	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-4	Grant	18,750.00	1,780.00	20,530.00
<b>Total PPG Amount (\$)</b>						<b>100,000.00</b>	<b>9,500.00</b>	<b>109,500.00</b>

Please provide justification

## Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
UNDP	GET	Argentina	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	2,815,435.00
UNDP	GET	Argentina	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	484,565.00
<b>Total GEF Resources</b>					<b>3,300,000.00</b>

## Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
LD-1	GET	617,794.00	4200000
LD-2	GET	617,794.00	4200000
LD-3	GET	1,060,319.00	7200000
LD-4	GET	617,793.00	4400000
<b>Total Project Cost</b>		<b>2,913,700.00</b>	<b>20,000,000.00</b>

## Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	11000000
Recipient Country Government	Chaco Province	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3000000
Recipient Country Government	Formosa Province	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3000000
Recipient Country Government	Santa Fe Province	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3000000
<b>Total Co-financing</b>				<b>20,000,000.00</b>

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

N/A

## ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

### GEF Agency(ies) Certification

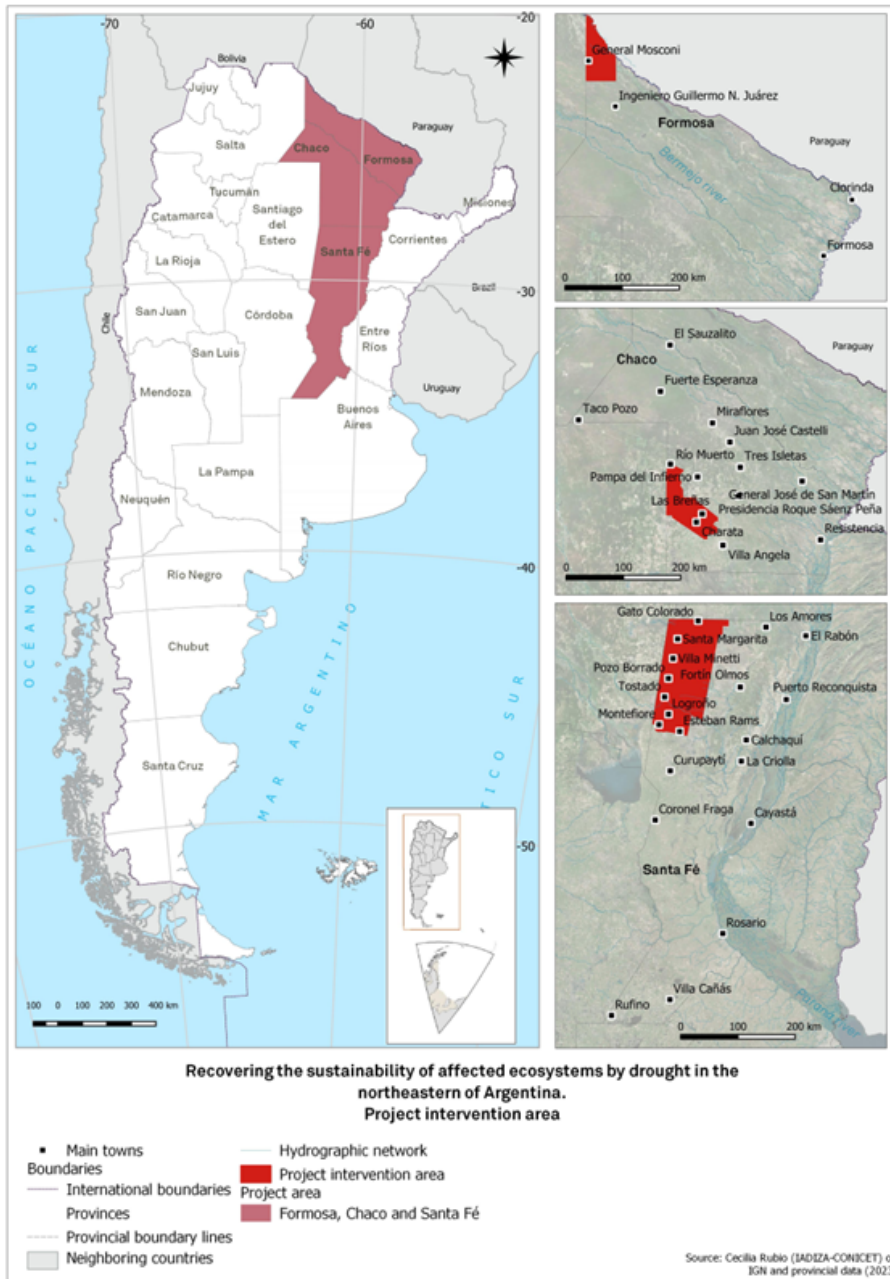
GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
Project Coordinator	UNDP		Alexandra Fischer, Senior Regional Technical Advisor		alexandra.fischer@undp.org
GEF Agency Coordinator	UNDP		Pradeep Kurukulasuriya		pradeep.kurukulasuriya@undp.org

### Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Name	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Martin Manuel Illescas	Dirección General de Proyectos con Financiamiento Externo y Cooperación Internacional	Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible	11/8/2023

## ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place



## ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

(PIF level) Attach agency safeguard screen form including rating of risk types and overall risk rating.

Title

PIMS 9651 Argentina LD ANNEX D Safeguards PreScreening Updated

## ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
Principal Objective 2	Significant Objective 1	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2



ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Influencing Models	Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making Convene multi-stakeholder alliances  Demonstrate innovative approaches		
Stakeholders	Indigenous Peoples  Private Sector  Beneficiaries  Local Communities  Civil Society  Type of Engagement  Communications	SMEs  Individuals/Entrepreneurs  Community Based Organization  Non-Governmental Organization  Information Dissemination  Partnership  Consultation  Participation  Awareness Raising  Behavior Change	
Capacity, Knowledge and Research	Capacity Development  Knowledge Generation and Exchange  Learning  Innovation  Knowledge and Learning  Stakeholder Engagement Plan	Theory of Change  Adaptive Management  Indicators to Measure Change  Knowledge Management  Innovation  Capacity Development  Learning	
Gender Equality	Gender Mainstreaming  Gender Results Areas	Beneficiaries  Women groups  Sex-disaggregated indicators  Gender-sensitive indicators  Participation and leadership  Capacity development	

		Awareness raising Knowledge generation	
Focal Area/Theme	Land degradation	Sustainable Land Management  Land Degradation Neutrality	Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands  Ecosystem Approach  Sustainable Livelihoods  Sustainable Agriculture  Sustainable Pasture Management  Sustainable Forest/Woodland Management  Drought Mitigation/Early Warning  Land Productivity  Land Cover and Land cover change  Carbon stocks above or below ground