



Conserving Biodiversity and Natural Resources through Spatial Planning and Integrated Landscape Management

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11693

Countries

China

Project Name

Conserving Biodiversity and Natural Resources through Spatial Planning and Integrated Landscape Management

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

9/20/2024

Review completed by PM

9/25/2024

Program Manager

Hannah Fairbank

Focal Area

Biodiversity

Project Type

FSP

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET

1. General Project Information / Eligibility

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

b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?

Secretariat's Comments

HF September 24, 2024:

Yes

Agency's Comments

2. Project Summary

Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected results?

Secretariat's Comments

HF September 24, 2024:

Yes

Agency's Comments

3 Indicative Project Overview

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

b) Are the components, outcomes and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?

Secretariat's Comments

HF Nov 1, 2024:

Cleared. I have inserted some of the text in the box on issues to address by CER below.

HF October 31, 2024:

3.1 a) Cleared.

b.)i.) Cleared.

ii.) Again, in order to align with the GEF-8 biodiversity strategy, please rework 2.2.3 to focus on key actions to address the drivers of loss of globally significant biodiversity in the landscapes which should be designed based on a situational analysis and clearly fit into the theory of change. The use of the general term and definition of NBS and the example activities provided, some of which in urban or highly-modified/damaged areas, does not demonstrate that nor is it included in Outcome 1-1 of the GEF-8 biodiversity strategy, whereas objective 1 of the BD strategy has a myriad examples and framing for well-aligned conservation, sustainable use and restoration of **natural and high biodiversity ecosystems and landscapes**. This is an important design reframe given the mandate of the GEF to conserve globally significant biodiversity by addressing the drivers of loss in landscapes through a variety of approaches, including mainstreaming whereas NbS are solutions to societal challenges (e.g. sea level rise, erosion etc). Please address this at PIF stage and more deeply through PPG as the design progresses which is normal and expected, but needs to go beyond these categorical labels.

2.2.1 and 2.2.3 ?actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously benefiting people and nature? ? under the IUCN Global Standard[1]¹ for NbS.

HF September 24, 2024:

3.1 a) Project objective: please revise the project objective to ensure it is SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound). The current objective is overly broad (e.g. achieve transformational changes) and not measurable.

b.) i.) Overall these are a strong set of components outcomes and outputs that will be implemented in four key landscapes, but the total package seems very ambitious given the diversity and holistic nature of the components. Please address in the project description how activities within components 2-3 in each of the 4 sites will be selected and prioritized based on the context and revise where possible for simplicity and realism where possible.

ii.) Output 2.2.1/2.2.2 etc includes "nature based/climate solutions" but it isn't clear what this is or why since NBS/NCS are a set of "solutions" but it isn't clear what these are and what problems they are meant to address in this project, what they are and whether/how they will address the

drivers of biodiversity loss (and have climate co-benefits). Please instead describe what (activities and results) are envisioned in these outputs and why this is being proposed rather than using somewhat generic terms. These outputs/activities should be designed based on a situational analysis and clearly fit into a theory of change for the landscape interventions. This should be addressed at a general level at PIF stage and more deeply through PPG as the design progresses which is normal and expected, but needs to go beyond these categorical labels.

Agency's Comments

1 November 2024

3.1 b.) ii.) Thank you for your feedback. We have deleted all references to NbS and changed the mentions of NbS to 'biodiversity mainstreaming and integrated management-restoration approaches' across the PIF in order to better reflect the focus on the objectives of the GEF-8 biodiversity strategy and the specific strategies that the project will implement in order to address the drivers of biodiversity loss and achieve conservation, sustainable use and restoration of natural and high biodiversity ecosystems and landscapes.

As for the specific interventions in each target landscape, we have added the explanation that currently, there is no sufficient information on specific BD threats and land use conditions in each target landscape. Hence, at the PPG, the project will conduct a comprehensive situational analysis to assess threats and drivers of biodiversity loss and degradation in the target landscapes. Based on this situational analysis, appropriate BD mainstreaming and integrated management-restoration strategies, tailored to each landscape, will be developed.

We have added the following narratives in the PIF:

Page 11:

'During the PPG, the project will conduct detailed situational analyses to verify specific drivers of biodiversity loss and degradation in the landscape, to determine appropriate biodiversity mainstreaming and landscape management-restoration strategies for each target landscape.'

Page 38 ? Annex C:

'During the PPG, the project will conduct detail situational analyses to verify specific drivers of biodiversity loss and degradation in the landscape that we identified in the ToC, to determine appropriate biodiversity mainstreaming and landscape management-restoration strategies for each target landscape.'

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF September 25, 2024:

Yes

Agency's Comments

3.3 a) Are the components adequately funded?

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF October 31, 2024:

Cleared.

HF September 25, 2024:

b.) Please amend the PMC to make it proportional relative to the levels of GEF vs co-financing either by increasing the co-financing portion and/or by reducing the GEF portion.

Agency's Comments **3.3.b** We have adjusted the allocation of co-financing to technical components and PMC so that the contributions from co-financing and from GEF financing to the PMC are respectfully 5.26% and 5%

4 Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

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

b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 24, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT

- a) **Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?**
- b) **Does it ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers?**
- c) **Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?**
- d) **are the relevant stakeholders and their roles adequately described?**

Secretariat's Comments

HF November 1, 2024

Cleared

HF October 31, 2024

Cleared.

c.) See previous comment on NBS and revise accordingly.

d.) Cleared.

HF Sept 24, 2024:

Please include a description of how landscapes are defined for the purposes of this project and how this interacts with the planning and decision-making structures and government jurisdictions. How and where in this will the project support/intervene for positive results?

- c.) Please describe how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country in the 'project based reality.'
- d.) MNR is currently named as the executing entity for this project. Therefore how will this project support integrated planning, decision-making and landscape management across sectors at the national, provincial and landscape scales? What other ministries and government departments (and other stakeholders) across sectors need to participate for true integration and how will they be involved? Including those outside the NRM sector that have the power to make decisions with direct impacts on land use with implications for ecosystems and GHG emissions (for instance Ministry of Finance, planning, infrastructure, agriculture etc) and without whom transformation of drivers/systems won't be attainable nor sustainable. Please describe/address.

Agency's Comments

1 Nov 2024

Thank you for your feedback. We have removed all the references to NbS, and re-narrated that the project will focus on "biodiversity mainstreaming and integrated management-restoration approaches."

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Thank you for your feedback. We have added the following definition of landscapes as well as the planning and decision-making structures in part B.1 after the objective's statement (please kindly see p. 16-17):

Landscapes are defined based on the principles of landscape ecology[1],[2],[3], referring to areas that encompass both natural ecosystems (such as forests, wetlands, and grasslands) and managed ecosystems (such as agricultural lands and urban areas). These areas include various land uses but are not limited to specific functions. They are also dynamic spaces where natural and human systems interact, with spatial patterns that influence ecological connectivity, biodiversity outcomes, and the provisioning of ecosystem services.

References:

[1] Forman, R.T.T., & Godron, M. (1986). *Landscape Ecology*. Wiley. A landscape is "a heterogeneous land area composed of a cluster of interacting ecosystems that is repeated in similar form throughout."

[2] Antrop, M. (2000). "Landscapes are areas of land as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. "

[3] Naveh, Z., & Lieberman, A.S. (1994). *Landscape Ecology: Theory and Application*.

"Landscapes are open, dissipative systems that are in a constant state of flux due to interactions between their biotic and abiotic components and human activity."

In each target landscape, a Biodiversity Coordination Group will be established, consisting of key stakeholders such as the Bureau of Natural Resources and Planning, Ecology and Environment Bureau, Bureau of Water Resources, Bureau of Forestry and Grassland, Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Bureau of Finance. These groups will coordinate efforts to align the project's activities with local and provincial planning frameworks, ensuring an integrated approach to biodiversity and landscape management. The project will support the development of individual plans for four target landscapes under Outcome 2.1, working closely with local planning authorities (e.g. Bureau of Natural Resources and Planning at the city level) to ensure that landscape-level spatial plans are integrated into the broader Spatial Planning System.

The project will prioritize engagement with non-governmental actors for the implementation of the landscape management plans in the four target landscapes. The project will engage with

IPLCs and incorporate their indigenous and traditional knowledge in specific NbS interventions, including in conservation and restoration efforts. Moreover, NGOs like The Nature Conservancy (TNC), National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) will be actively engaged in OECM piloting. The project will collaborate with these NGOs for data sharing, information exchange, and joint development of guidelines, strengthening the capacity for integrated landscape management. Academic institutions and universities will jointly work on data collection, laboratory analysis and data process for biodiversity monitoring. Additionally, partnerships with private sector actors like Ant Group will focus on green product traceability certification and contributions to ecological branding, enhancing the visibility and marketability of sustainable products. Local businesses, including ecotourism corporations and bed-and-breakfast owners, will also be engaged to partner with IPLCs in the restoration of terraced landscapes, creating opportunities for sustainable tourism and contributing to local economic development.

c.) Thank you for your feedback. We have added the following texts into the 'Project-based Reality' (please see p. 15):

The GEF alternative will build on previous and ongoing investments, both GEF and non-GEF funded, by integrating lessons learned from past projects into the design of the currently proposed project. For example, the project will draw on the experiences from previous and ongoing initiatives in China that focused on biodiversity conservation, land degradation, and integrated landscape/habitat/ecosystem management-restoration. This includes best practices in engaging local communities and scaling up NbS. Moreover, it will leverage ongoing non-GEF projects to strengthen cross-sectoral policy coherence and the institutional capacity required for long-term sustainability. Please refer to 'planned cooperation with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives' table (p. 27-28). These efforts will ensure that the current project not only benefits from the foundation laid by previous investments but also adapts to the evolving landscape of biodiversity governance in the country.

d.) Thank you for your feedback. We have added the following narratives in the PIF's 'Coordination, as well as policy strengthening and coherence' section (please see p.25-26):

- ? With regard to the incorporation of biodiversity protection, management and restoration into Spatial Planning: the MNR is the entity responsible for revising and approving the Spatial Plans (national, provincial and mega-cities). The districts / counties, and townships will refer their spatial plans to the provincial spatial plans.
- ? National and provincial level 'spatial planning' committees and coordination groups, led by MNR's Spatial Planning Bureau, will be used as the coordination platforms/mechanisms to ensure inter-sectoral coordination, planning and decision-making. Building on these existing platforms/mechanisms, the project will also activate biodiversity coordination mechanisms / groups at the national, provincial and/or city levels to ensure better biodiversity governance.

- ? Regulatory Frameworks and Guidelines/Plans: the MNR will facilitate the formulation and approval of the regulatory frameworks and guidelines/plans in coordination with other relevant ministries and entities.
- ? Knowledge Sharing (including local/traditional knowledge)

We have also added the relevant ministries involved:

- ? MOF, Ministry of Finance
- ? MEE, Ministry of Ecology and Environment
- ? MWR, Ministry of Water Resources
- ? NFGA, National Forestry and Grassland Administration? MARA, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
- ? MOHURD, Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development
- ? MOT, Ministry of Transport

Other stakeholders include the local governments and communities in Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces, media, students, academic institutions, private sectors, etc. The project has undertaken several consultations with local government and communities, such as in Yunnan. After the PIF is approved, more comprehensive consultations will be organized during the PPG phase.

Please kindly note that we also added those ministries above into **Table 2 - Stakeholder Analysis** of Annex J ? Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

Pathways:

The project will leverage the national framework of the National Territory Spatial Planning Outline (2021?2035), which integrates various types of spatial plans (e.g., land-use, urban-rural, and ecological protection) into a cohesive approach known as "multi-plan integration."

Planning is the main duty of MNR.

The project will support the development of cross-sectoral collaboration between different government levels (national, provincial, and local), ensuring that biodiversity conservation goals are embedded within the planning processes. For example, the steering committee will include the relative ministries.

This will support the alignment of biodiversity objectives with national and regional land use, enabling cross-sectoral decision-making at multiple scales and engage stakeholders besides NRM departments such as MOT, MARA and etc.

5 B. Project Description

5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF October 31, 2024:

Cleared

HF Sept 24, 2024

a.) Please simply state the theory of change for this project in narrative format. "If...then" statements can be used if helpful. The current graphic is quite comprehensive but doesn't depict the causality assumed between actions proposed and results predicted, nor does it capture the underlying assumptions on which the TOC and project design depend (e.g. for example that 'investing in 'alternative' livelihood activities at that scale will displace resource overexploitation and result in improved biophysical condition in these landscapes' for instance; or that 'integrated land use planning and landscape management will reduce actions being taken in landscapes that cause nature loss and GHG emissions'-this is a big underlying assumption that needs to be monitored and evaluated.) Please revise throughout the description of the TOC. This should also be a central effort to be undertaken during PPG and used to inform M&E and approach to adaptive management for this project and should also be addressed on a deeper level during the design/PPG phase.

Agency's Comments

UNDP responses, 28 Oct 24

a). Thank you for your feedback. We have revised the ToC diagram's Immediate Outcomes to better align the causality (please see the diagram on p.19). We also have edited the ToC narratives. We have also added the 'if...then' statements. (Please see p. 18-19).

The team recognizes the importance of capturing the environmental additionality of investing in alternative livelihood activities. Please note that among the assumptions, we have included the proposed assumptions corresponding to Component 2's Outcome 2.2. Please refer to assumption V of Component 2.

MNR and UNDP will make certain during PPG to include a project-specific indicator to capture this important aspect among others.

5.2 INCREMENTAL/ADDITIONAL COST REASONING

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 24, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

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

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

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF November 1, 2024:

Cleared

HF October 31, 2024:

Please mark "NO" (or remove "YES" to execution support). At this early stage, it is too premature to indicate that an exception is being sought for self-execution by the GEF agency. If an exception to the GEF policy against dual execution due to extraordinary and exceptional circumstances is sought by the OFP, the Agency would submit full information and justification for a request for policy exception that that time. But this should not be planned for and isn't routinely expected.

HF Sept 24, 2024

a.) Please see previous comment/question on executing entity and scope of project regarding integrated planning and decision-making.

b.) "Yes" is marked under Agency dual-execution. There is currently no indication at concept stage that this would be necessary nor justified, since dual execution is only to be considered as an exceptional and last-case resort measure in extenuating circumstances. GEF policies, explained in the Guidelines on Project and Program Cycle, require that the separation of implementation functions performed by GEF Agencies and execution functions performed by Project Executing Entities is a key feature of the governance of the GEF Partnership and an important aspect of the GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards. See pages 44-

45: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_Guidelines_Project_Program_Cycle_Policy_20200731.pdf

At PIF stage, Agency (?dual?) execution should not be included in the Agency's proposal. Once the Agency has sufficiently progressed in project preparation and if it anticipates a need for Agency execution due to exceptional circumstances, the Agency would submit full information and justification for a request for policy exception. Please redact accordingly.

c & d.) Yes, clear.

Agency's Comments

1 Nov 2024

5.3. We have unticked the "Yes" box for execution support services.

The potential execution support and rationale to seek an exception to the policy will be assessed during the PPG phase, following a detailed evaluation and the completion of the HACT micro-assessment of MNR as the Implementing Partner. During this phase, the project will explore all available options, including the possibility of third-party support, to determine if execution support can be requested on an exceptional basis.

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UNDP responses, 28 Oct 24

a). Thank you very much for your feedback. We have added the texts as requested under "**Coordination, as well as policy strengthening and coherence**" section.

b). We have removed the Yes Box under Execution Support for now. This will be further assessed during the PPG phase. We also added the following explanation (please see p. 26):

The potential execution support will be assessed during the PPG phase, following a detailed evaluation and the completion of the HACT micro-assessment of MNR as the Implementation Partner. During this phase, the project will explore all available options, including the possibility of third-party support, to determine if execution support is required.

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF October 31, 2024

Cleared.

HF Sept 24, 2024

1.) Please ensure that hectare targets include the entire area of the target landscapes and revise where needed.

2.) The inputs and outputs of the EX-ACT tools are fully aligned with the parameters in Table C (GHG mitigation estimates for the target geography), however, the EX-ACT inputs of area sizes for PA, OECM and outside redline for each provinces are broadly consistent with the core indicators 1 and 4, with minor issues noted: (1) 54,000 ha PA for Yunnan in EX-ACT vs 70,000 ha landscapes within the Dali Mount Cangshan, Global Geopark Cangshan, and Erhai National Nature Reserve in Yunnan (as part of core indicator 1); (2) 64,838 ha PA for Zhenjiang in EX-ACT vs 50,000 ha landscape in the Baishanzu National Park in Zhejiang (as part of core indicator 1); (3) 160,000 ha OECMs in EX-ACT vs 180,000 OECMs (as part of core indicator 4, which also notes that the specific area and name of the OECMs will be identified/designated during implementation. These minor inconsistencies lead to slightly more conservative GHG impacts, please revise where needed.

Agency's Comments

UNDP responses, 28 Oct 24

1). And 2). Thank you for your feedback. We have included in the PIF as annex the calculation of GHG emission avoidance using the FAO-Ex ACT tool. At the PIF stage, we are not certain on the coverage of the entire landscape area and specifically in terms of CI6, especially when specific NbS have not been decided upon. Further evaluation/assessment will be conducted during PPG, due to limited data we currently have at the PIF stage.

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

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

5.6 RISKS

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

b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 24, 2024

Yes.

Agency's Comments

5.7 Qualitative assessment

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

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 24, 2024

Yes. This is an exciting project, and we need to ensure that the M&E framework and plans for adaptive management are based on the right questions which will require getting the TOC right. With that we will be able to learn a lot about the extent to which increased integrated planning and decision-making at the landscape scale, and policy coherence at the national and sub-national level will have concrete positive biodiversity and climate impacts at this scale, over time. This needs to be directly addressed during PPG and built into the project from the start.

Agency's Comments

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 24, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

6.2 Is the project alignment/coherent with country and regional priorities, policies, strategies and plans (including those related to the MEAs and to relevant sectors)

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 24, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e. BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?

Secretariat's Comments

HF November 1, 2024

Cleared.

HF October 31, 2024

- 1.) Please redact reference to Aichi targets throughout the PIF (may need a word search). At PPG please: include a more elaborated explanation of which and how this project contributes to specific KMGBF targets.
- 2.) The PIF currently reads: "**Global Environment Framework: China pledges to contribute \$233 million to the global biodiversity fund, and improve relevant laws, regulations, policies, and systems to mainstream biodiversity.**" Shouldn't this read: Global Biodiversity Framework (rather than environment)? And is this in reference to the Kunming Biodiversity Fund (rather than global biodiversity fund)? If so, please correct both of these for clarity in the PIF text. (Further, this part of the PIF is specifically referencing government commitments domestically, not internationally, which I understand the KMGBF fund is aimed at foreign/international biodiversity support rather than domestically within China).

HF Sept 24, 2024

1. Please clearly indicate how this project will contribute to the identified KMGBF targets (and redact Aichi).
2. It is unclear why China's "pledge to contribute \$233 million to the global BD fund" is included in the PIF table on "ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES". Please clarify or revise.

Agency's Comments

1 Nov 2024

1. Thank you for your comment. We have thoroughly reviewed the document to remove all mentions to the Aichi targets and will elaborate on the contributions to specific KMBGF during the PPG

2. Thank you for pointing this out as it needs further clarification.

We have clarified the wording on p.13 under the section relating to 'the country's global and national pledges and efforts' to the following:

Kunming Biodiversity Fund: China pledges to contribute \$233 million to the global biodiversity, and improve relevant laws, regulations, policies, and systems to mainstream biodiversity internationally.

We have edited the narratives in the PIF table under '**ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES**' as below (please see p. 30-31):

These interventions are also aligned with national commitments related to the Territorial Spatial Planning System, Master Plan 2021-2035 Red Line, and the Shan-Shui initiative. At the same time, they will directly contribute to the achievement of the overall GBF targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 14, 20, 21, and 23. By implementing integrated spatial planning and landscape-level management across target provinces, the project will address land use change, restore critical habitats, and strengthen ecological connectivity. This will reduce the fragmentation and degradation of landscapes, contributing to ecosystem resilience and conservation of biodiversity hotspots. Additionally, landscape interventions will mitigate 33 MtCO₂e, helping to combat climate change and enhance ecosystem resilience as well as livelihood interventions aligning economic activities with environmental sustainability. The project will also strengthen the management effectiveness of 320,000 ha of protected areas (PAs) and enhancing management practices in an additional 680,000 ha of landscapes, which will ensure sustainable use of biodiversity resources. This will directly support the conservation of globally significant species and habitats, benefiting both biodiversity and local communities. Lastly, the project emphasizes multi-stakeholder engagement, including IPLCs, and promoting equitable participation and sustainable livelihoods through biodiversity-friendly practices. Capacity strengthening and knowledge management efforts will raise public awareness of biodiversity's importance, fostering cross-sectoral learning and long-term stewardship of natural resources.

2. Thank you for pointing this out as it needs further clarification. We see this project and China's pledge working for the same greater cause. China's pledge of \$233 million to biodiversity conservation reflects a strong political commitment to international biodiversity conservation efforts. This pledge demonstrates China's leadership in global biodiversity governance, reinforcing its commitment to reduce the finance gap in line with the work of the GEF as a whole.

This information was put under **Part A.2's ?Government's commitments?** as background information. It will not be the co-finance of this project, so we did not include it in the "Project Contribution" Column of **ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES** Table.

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF October 31, 2024

Cleared.

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes. It is well noted that further consultations about the project design will be conducted during PPG with IPLCs, CSOs, and the private sector. Please provide some additional details on the plans and approaches to consult and engage these important stakeholders to inform project development during PPG.

Agency's Comments

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

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

STAR allocation?

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex B: Endorsements

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments

Annex C: Project Location

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex D: Safeguards Screen and Rating

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex E: Rio Markers

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments

HF Sept 25, 2024

Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to

assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. Is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments

9 GEFSEC Decision

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

Secretariat's Comments

HF, November 1, 2024:

Yes, recommended for clearance and inclusion in WP.

HF October 31, 2024:

No, not yet. Please address comments in review sheet and revise PIF and documentation accordingly prior to resubmission. This needs to be done in the next 1-2 days maximum in order to have a chance of being eligible for the December 2024 work program.

HF Sept 25, 2024

No, not yet. Please address comments in review sheet and revise PIF and documentation accordingly prior to resubmission.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

For PPG and at CER stage:

1. Additional consultations about the project design will be conducted during PPG with IPLCs, CSOs, and the private sector.
2. Please include a more elaborated explanation of which and how this project contributes to specific KMGBF targets.
3. Once the gender analysis has been conducted and the Gender Action Plan developed, the Agency is requested to incorporate the findings to strengthen the reflection of gender perspectives in the project components. The agency is also requested to provide some

indicative budget for the Gender Action Plan and related gender-specific activities/outputs.

4. During PPG, the project will conduct a comprehensive situational analysis to assess threats and drivers of biodiversity loss and degradation in the target landscapes. Based on this situational analysis, appropriate BD mainstreaming and integrated management-restoration strategies, tailored to each landscape, will be developed. We have added the following narratives in the PIF: Page 11: "During the PPG, the project will conduct detailed situational analyses to verify specific drivers of biodiversity loss and degradation in the landscape, to determine appropriate biodiversity mainstreaming and landscape management-restoration strategies for each target landscape." Page 38 ? Annex C: "During the PPG, the project will conduct detail situational analyses to verify specific drivers of biodiversity loss and degradation in the landscape that we identified in the ToC, to determine appropriate biodiversity mainstreaming and landscape management-restoration strategies for each target landscape.?"

Agency's Comments

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	9/24/2024	10/28/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/31/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		