



Strengthening Climate Adaptation, Biodiversity Conservation, and Combating Land Degradation through Ecosystem-based Adaptation in Samoa

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11700

Countries

Samoa

Project Name

Strengthening Climate Adaptation, Biodiversity Conservation, and Combating Land Degradation through Ecosystem-based Adaptation in Samoa

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

9/18/2024

Review completed by PM

9/28/2024

Program Manager

Katsumasa Tanaka

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

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

9/27/2024

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

9/27/2024

SCCF:

Not yet.

- Please update the project summary to strengthen the rationale and description, as requested below.
- In doing so, please make sure to clarify the community context, including mention of the climate and non-climate risks and challenges the targeted communities/beneficiaries face. (Please refer to the comments in 4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS and 5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE.)

10/30/2024

SCCF:

Yes - thank you for your revision.

Agency's Comments

10/22/2024, UNDP:

- The project summary has been updated as recommended to include "biodiversity conservation and combating land degradation".

To address the comment we added subsection **Key Threats and Vulnerabilities of Targeted Communities in Samoa** to the PIF with a brief analysis of local community exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity.

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

9/27/2024

SCCF:

a) Yes.

b) Not yet.

•Overall, the PIF is well structured, but please address GEF Sec's comments below (especially the comment in 5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE - b) on "Blue Carbon projects") and update the Indicative Project Overview as relevant.

•Please explain how the trust fund will be managed and how will it be ensured that the projects are delivering community adaptation benefits.

GEF TF:

a) Not yet.

•Please include language to make it clear that this is a BD and LD project in addition to adaptation. Perhaps something like ?climate resilience and health of natural ecosystems and productive systems?.

b) Not yet.

•Trust fund - We very much welcome the initiative to create a trust fund. We've seen them provide an important bridge between large funding and communities and support needs at an appropriate scale. However, we are concerned that insufficient resources and bandwidth have been devoted to this within the project to be successful.

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•It is unclear if the intention is to raise an endowment or be a sinking fund or something else.

- There are also some very important points related to good practice, such as majority non-government board membership, that have not been committed to.

- Will any of the resources here be used to make grants or just in the set-up costs? If not, where will the resources to grant come from?

- Would the fund be anticipated to manage any of the activities in component 2 by the end of the project?

•2.3 ? If these are activities to be supported with GEFTF funds, they should have BD or LD as the primary objective rather than as the secondary objective. For example, it's hard to see that a hybrid seawall would improve globally significant biodiversity but does have real adaptation value. While we welcome the focus and attention to NbS, we note that these projects often don't generate global environmental benefits. Some of the activities of 2.1 may be more appropriate for STAR. We do not want to overcomplicate the design, but the supported activities need to deliver GEBs their area(s).

•Minor correction (no response needed): When shortening Critically Endangered species status, it should be CR.

10/30/2024

SCCF & GEF TF:

a) & b) Yes - thank you for your revision.

Agency's Comments

10/22/2024, UNDP

Comment: **SCCF:**

a) Yes.

b) Not yet.

- Overall, the PIF is well structured, but please address GEF Sec's comments below (especially the comment in 5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE - b) on "Blue Carbon projects") and update the Indicative Project Overview as relevant.

Responses: Thank you! All the comments below have been addressed as recommended.

Comment: Please explain how the trust fund will be managed and how will it be ensured that the projects are delivering community adaptation benefits.

Responses: The trust fund will aim to create a sustainable financial mechanism for EbA and associated community adaptation initiatives in Samoa.

The project will conduct a feasibility study to assess the potential sources of funding, governance models, and operational structures for the Trust Fund based on the successful experience of similar national funds in the world, including the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation (BT FEC), the Amazon Fund in Brazil, the Conservation Trust Fund of Namibia (CTFN), Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT), Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF), etc.

Comment:

GEF TF:

a) Not yet.

- Please include language to make it clear that this is a BD and LD project in addition to adaptation. Perhaps something like ?climate resilience and health of natural ecosystems and productive systems?.

Response:

- Thank you! The title of the project has been changed as the following:

- **Strengthening Climate Adaptation, and Biodiversity Conservation, and Combating Land Degradation through Ecosystem-based Adaptation in Samoa**

- Additionally, the Project Summary has been updated to include ?biodiversity conservation and combating land degradation?.

- The project Objective has been updated as the following:

To enhance climate resilience of Samoa's ecosystems and communities through integrated Ecosystem-based Adaptation approach, that promotes biodiversity conservation and combats land degradation.

- Titles of the Components 1-3 and Outcome 1 have been edited to include ?biodiversity conservation and combating land degradation?.

- Barrier 1 was edited to include ?combating land degradation?.

Comment:) Not yet.

- Trust fund - We very much welcome the initiative to create a trust fund. We've seen them provide an important bridge between large funding and communities and support needs at an appropriate scale. However, we are concerned that insufficient resources and bandwidth have

been devoted to this within the project to be successful.

- It is unclear if the intention is to raise an endowment or be a sinking fund or something else.

- There are also some very important points related to good practice, such as majority non-government board membership, that have not been committed to.

- Will any of the resources here be used to make grants or just in the set-up costs? If not, where will the resources to grant come from?

- Would the fund be anticipated to manage any of the activities in Component 2 by the end of the project?

Response:

Thank you for your comments.

The limitations in resources and time for this output are well understood. However, the following timelines are envisaged to ensure effective initiation of the trust:

? **During the PPG phase: conduct Feasibility Assessment and review of CTFs in the region and SIDS.**

? **Year 1 (4 months): Stakeholder consultations on Trust Fund**

? **Year 1-2 (20 months): Design governing and operational structures ? including the Board of Trustees and Technical Secretariat ? are in place with their associated governing documents; the strategic and operational documents developed and approved, including the design of the sinking-fund component. Set-up includes Trust Fund location, Trust Deed, Operational and Financial Management Manuals including grant strategic directions and management, selection of Independent Board Members and Trustees Manual.**

? **Year 3: (12 months): Develop and implement capitalisation strategy ? fundraising/resource mobilisation.**

? **Year 4-5 (24 months): Operationalisation through Sinking-fund - GEF grant funds disbursed as pilot projects to test the Trust Fund operations and grant mechanisms, monitoring and reporting in support of communities/Government/NGOs protected areas, nature-based interventions and climate adaptation initiatives.**

The project will design the Trust Fund a capitalization strategy to secure initial and long-term funding from a mix of public, private, and philanthropic sources and will explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as green bonds, impact investments, and payment for ecosystem services, International Visitor Levy (IVL) (PES policy framework and IVL mechanism will be developed by BGI IP Project).

The project will design the Trust Fund following Conservation Trust Fund Standards of practice on location ,Trust Deed, Operational and Financial Management Manuals, Independent Board Members and Trustees Manual. To enhance the Trust Fund's design and implementation, the project will leverage the expertise of organizations operating in similar contexts. The Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT)

and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) have experience guiding new funds through establishment processes and will provide valuable insights for the Trust Fund in Samoa. Additionally, countries with similar legal systems (e.g., Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, etc.) will be consulted to obtain helpful templates and support for the Trust Fund establishment and operationalization. Collaborations will also be sought with SeyCCAT and the Antigua & Barbuda Sustainable Island Resource Framework (SIRF) Fund, both of which have adaptation mandates. The International Conservation Corps will assist in securing low-cost legal support for the establishment of conservation trust funds, based on their successful work in the Caribbean.

The Trust Fund will have an independent Board of Trustees with representatives from government, civil society, and other stakeholders. The board representative will be identified in the PPG based on feasibility study, however, based on experience with similar Trust Fund it is foreseen that most representation will be from non-government.

The Fund will have a grant-making mechanism to distribute funds to eligible adaptation and conservation projects related to EbA, including criteria for selection, application processes, and oversight procedures. The intention is to design a hybrid Trust Fund model to include part endowment and part sinking fund, in addition to the set-up costs. The Trust Fund can provide co-financing for implementation of some activities of the Output 2.1-2.3 (as well as to the relevant outputs of the BGI IP project) during the project lifetime (at least \$300,000 by the end of the project).

Comment: - 2.3 ? If these are activities to be supported with GEFTF funds, they should have BD or LD as the primary objective rather than as the secondary objective. For example, it's hard to see that a hybrid seawall would improve globally significant biodiversity but does have real adaptation value. While we welcome the focus and attention to NbS, we note that these projects often don't generate global environmental benefits. Some of the activities of 2.1 may be more appropriate for STAR. We do not want to overcomplicate the design, but the supported activities need to deliver GEBs in their area(s).

Response: Thank you! Agree. The Output 2.3 has been changed to be funded by SCCF and Output 2.1 ? by GEF.

Comment: - Minor correction (no response needed): When shortening Critically Endangered species status, it should be CR.

response: Thank you! Changed to CR.

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

Secretariat's Comments

9/27/2024

SCCF:

Not yet.

•Please include and mainstream gender considerations in the Components 1 & 2. We note that Components 3 and 4 have considered gender well.

10/30/2024

SCCF:

a) Yes - thank you for your revision.

Agency's Comments

10/22/2024, UNDP:

Thank you! We incorporated gender considerations in the titles of the project Components 1,2, and 4 and Outcomes 1, 2, and 4

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

9/27/2024

Yes.

Agency's Comments

4 Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

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

b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?

Secretariat's Comments

9/27/2024

SCCF:

a) Not yet.

- Although the PIF provides a good overview of climate trends and variability on a national level, it lacks sufficient detail regarding the actual climate change related risks and challenges faced by the targeted communities/beneficiaries. Please elaborate more on the community context, for example, by examining the exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity of the communities/beneficiaries. An analysis on the risks and vulnerabilities is appreciated, not only from a climate change perspective, but also from socio-economic perspectives (e.g. poverty, livelihood, habitual land, etc.). (Ref: STAP (2022) A Typology of Climate Change Adaptation Benefits: Exposure, Sensitivity, and Adaptive Capacity)

- These are very minor points, but please 1) provide SLR prediction in the RCP 4.5 scenario (p.13) and 2) modify the paragraph on the economic damages caused by past disasters (p.14). (It seems one sentence is missing before "In 2012, Tropical (...)").

b) Not yet.

- As mentioned above, please consider mentioning socio-economic barriers on the ways to address climate impacts.

10/30/2024

SCCF:

a) & b) Yes - thank you for your revision. We appreciate the additional information provided on the community context.

Agency's Comments

10/22/2024, UNDP:

- Thank you! We incorporated gender considerations in the titles of the project Components 1,2, and 4 and Outcomes 1, 2, and 4

- Thank you! To address the comment we added subsection **Key Threats and Vulnerabilities of Targeted Communities in Samoa** to the PIF with a brief analysis of local community exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity.

After that the project will design the Trust Fund structure, including its legal status, governance framework, operational guidelines, and financial management procedures. The Trust Fund will

have a Board of Trustees with representatives from government, civil society, and other stakeholders. The project will design the Trust Fund a capitalization strategy to secure initial and long-term funding from a mix of public, private, and philanthropic sources and will explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as green bonds, impact investments, and payment for ecosystem services, International Visitor Levy (IVL) (PES policy framework and IVL mechanism will be developed by BGI IP Project). The Fund will have a grant-making mechanism to distribute funds to eligible adaptation and conservation projects related to EbA, including criteria for selection, application processes, and oversight procedures. The intention is to design a hybrid Trust Fund model to include part endowment and part sinking fund, in addition to the set-up costs. Potentially, if established successfully, the Trust Fund can provide co-financing for implementation of some activities of the Output 2.1-2.3 (as well as to the relevant outputs of the BGI IP project) during the project lifetime (at least \$300,000 by the end of the project).

- Thank you! SLR projections for RCP4.5 has been added to the Project Rationale section.

Regarding the economic damage comment we did not find anything wrong. The sentence you are referring to sounds like "In 2012, Tropical Cyclone Evan caused a similar size economic damage?".

- Thank you! The socio-economic barriers are described in the subsection Key Threats and Vulnerabilities of Targeted Communities in Samoa. Please, see our response to the (a) comment above

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

9/27/2024

SCCF:

a) Not yet.

•Please add a short explanation about the comparative advantage of EbA/NbS over other potential options in the context of Samoa.

b) Yes.

c) Not yet.

•Please refer to the comments in 5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK in relation to GCF, Adaptation Fund, and CIF projects.

d) Yes.

10/30/2024

SCCF:

a) & c) Yes - thank you for your revision.

Agency's Comments

10/24/2024, UNDP

A) Thank you! The following paragraph has been added to the Project Description:

EbA/NbS approach offers **significant comparative advantages** over traditional engineered approaches to climate adaptation in Samoa. Unlike hard infrastructure solutions, which often involve high costs and can disrupt natural ecosystems, EbA/NbS leverage the restorative and protective functions of natural habitats to mitigate climate impacts. This approach is particularly advantageous in Samoa due to its rich biodiversity and the cultural importance of natural resources to local communities. EbA/NbS proposed by the project (ecosystem restoration, Community Protected Areas, agroforestry, blue carbon projects and hybrid infrastructure) are cost-effective and sustainable, providing multiple co-benefits such as biodiversity conservation, improved livelihoods, and enhanced ecosystem services like carbon sequestration and water purification. Moreover, EbA/NbS are inherently more adaptable to changing climatic conditions than hard infrastructure, increasing the resilience of both ecosystems and communities over time. They align closely with traditional Samoan practices and knowledge systems, facilitating community engagement and ownership of adaptation measures. By restoring and protecting ecosystems like mangroves, coral reefs, and forests, EbA/NbS not only serve as natural barriers against climate-induced hazards such as storm surges and erosion but also support fisheries, agriculture, and tourism sectors vital to the nation's economy. This holistic approach addresses the root causes of vulnerability by enhancing the health of ecosystems upon which communities depend, making EbA/NbS a more effective and culturally appropriate option compared to conventional engineering solutions in the context of Samoa. Additionally, studies indicate a cost-benefit ratio of EbA between 1:3 to 1:5, meaning every dollar invested in EbA yields multiple times the value in ecosystem services and community benefits. In comparison, cost-benefit ratios of hard adaptation infrastructure range between 1:1 to 1:2, depending on the project's location and scale.

C) Thank you! While we found on-going GCF project in Samoa, there are currently no other implemented or planned AF or CIF projects in the country. So, we added the GCF Project ?Integrated Flood Management to Enhance Climate Resilience of the Vaisigano River Catchment in Samoa?, 2017-2025 to the PIF section **Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Projects.**

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

9/27/2024

SCCF:

a) Not yet.

- The ToC is well structured, but please address and reflect the comments in 4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS and b) below and update the ToC accordingly.
- Please explain the value-add of SCCF-A funding for this project. How will SCCF-A resources help build in the additional dimension of climate change resilience that GEFTF funding of ecosystem restoration alone would not be able to do? (This does not have to be mentioned in the ToC part. Please identify the most relevant part in the PIF.)

b) Not yet.

- In relation to the comments in 4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS, please elaborate more on how this project, especially Component 2, contributes to supporting the targeted communities/beneficiaries in the project area in adapting to changing climate in view of climate risks and their interaction with non-climate risk drivers.
- With regard to the sixth activity on "Blue Carbon project" listed in the Output 2.1, please shift the focus from mitigation to adaptation. Reduction of GGE/sequestration of carbon can be a co-benefit of the SCCF-funded activities, but cannot be the primary objective. Please update the Indicative Project Overview accordingly.

10/30/2024

SCCF:

a) Yes - thank you for your revision.

b) Not yet.

Thank you so much for the additional information below - it looks all good. However, it appears that the suggested paragraph on Component 2 is not properly reflected on the PIF itself. Please make sure to include it.

10/31/2024

SCCF:

b) Yes - thank you for reflecting the changes.

Agency's Comments

10/31/2024, UNDP:

Noted and this paragraph has now been included in the PIF on page 22.

10/22/2024, UNDP:

A)

- Thank you! The ToC diagram and description was updated with changes to Objective, Components and Outcomes.

- Thank you! We added subsection **Value Addition of SCCF-A Funding for the project** to the Project Description section.

B)

- Thank you! We strengthened both Components 1 and 2 with the explanation of project support to targeted communities to address climate and non-climate risks effectively. The following paragraph has been added to the description of the Component 1:

Component 1 enhances the adaptive capacity of the targeted communities by strengthening national technical and financial resources essential for effective EbA. By establishing a multi-sectoral institutional framework (Output 1.1), the project ensures coordinated efforts among government agencies, communities, and the private sector. This coordination enables the integration of local needs into national policies and plans, overcoming institutional limitations

that previously hindered adaptation efforts. The creation of the Ecosystem Conservation and Adaptation Trust Fund (Output 1.2) provides sustainable financial mechanisms to support community-led adaptation initiatives. This fund empowers communities to invest in resilience-building measures such as restoring protective ecosystems and adopting sustainable land management practices, directly addressing climate risks like increased storm intensity and non-climate drivers like limited financial resources. Upgrading operational tools and infrastructure (Output 1.3) directly benefits communities by enhancing their capacity to implement EbA practices effectively. By improving field stations, nurseries, training centers, and early warning systems, the project equips communities with the technical support and resources needed to restore degraded ecosystems that serve as natural barriers against climate-induced hazards like floods and storms. Enhanced capacity building enables communities to adopt sustainable practices, reduce vulnerability to climate impacts, and break the cycle of vulnerability reinforced by the interaction of anthropogenic threats and climate change.

The following paragraph has been added to the description of the Component 2:

Component 2 of the project directly supports the targeted communities in Samoa by implementing specific EbA measures that address both climate risks and non-climate risk drivers. By restoring and protecting critical ecosystems such as mangroves, coral reefs, riparian forests, and upland areas the project enhances natural defenses against climate-induced hazards like sea-level rise, storm surges, flooding, erosion, and droughts. These actions not only reduce vulnerability to climate risks but also support livelihoods through improved fisheries and agriculture, contributing to food security and income diversification. Additionally, Component 2 addresses non-climate risk drivers such as deforestation, over-exploitation of resources, poverty, and limited livelihood options by promoting sustainable practices like agroforestry and establishing community-led protected areas (CPAs). By involving communities in the planning and implementation of these initiatives, the project builds local capacity, empowers stewardship of natural resources, and fosters sustainable land and marine management. The development of public-private partnerships and Blue Economy projects under this component also brings investment and innovation to the region, enhancing economic opportunities while reinforcing climate resilience.

- Thank you! Thank you: we changed description of the Blue Carbon projects under Component 2 as the following:

(7) Blue Carbon projects focused on conservation and restoring mangroves and seagrass meadows to protect communities from storms and floods and support marine biodiversity and fishery productivity while capturing and storing carbon providing additional sources of income to communities.

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

9/27/2024

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

9/27/2024

SCCF:

a) Not yet.

- The LoE from the OFP says the project will be implemented by MNRE. However, the Agency has checked ?Yes? on the PIF for the questions: "Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?" Please change this to ?No?.

- Agency (?dual?) execution should not be included at PIF stage . Once project preparation has sufficiently progressed, if a need for Agency execution is anticipated, the Agency would submit full information and justification for a request for policy exception.

b) Not yet. Please see the comment above.

c) Not yet.

- It appears that there are several on-going projects funded by GCF, Adaptation Fund, and CIF's Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR). Please briefly mention the potential coordination

and cooperation with them and provide detailed discussion in this regard by CEO endorsement.
"META INFORMATION ? SCCF" relating to collaboration with other adaptation funds needs to be revised accordingly.

GEF TF:

c) Not yet. (GEF welcomes the strong alignment with the BGI IP child project with outputs of the child project meant to feed into this project.)

•Recently, GEF approved a PIF of a new GBFF project in Samoa (GEF ID: 11582). Please include the potential coordination and cooperation with the project.

10/30/2024

SCCF:

a) & b) Not yet.

•For the question, "Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?", under the "Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project", it is still checked "Yes". Please change it to "No".

c) Yes - thank you for your revision.

GEF TF:

c) Yes - thank you for your revision.

10/31/2024

SCCF:

a) & b) Yes - thank you for the revision.

Agency's Comments

10/31/2024, UNDP:

The GEF portal does not have a "No" option. The check on the "Yes" box has now been removed to adhere to the reviewer's comment. However, reiterating that while the project will be executed as NIM by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment as the Implementing Partner, any

support role from UNDP is expected to be assessed in the PPG stage, as required, and justification submitted to the GEF Secretariat accordingly.

10/22/2024, UNDP:

A)

The Implementation Arrangements subsection was corrected as the following (CO Supported NIM was removed):

This project will be executed as a NIM by the Ministry of the Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) as an Implementing Partner. Any support role will be assessed in the PPG stage, as required.

C)

Thank you! While we found on-going GCF project in Samoa, there are currently no other implemented or planned AF or CIF projects in the country. So, we added the GCF Project "Integrated Flood Management to Enhance Climate Resilience of the Vaisigano River Catchment in Samoa", 2017-2025 to the PIF section **Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Projects**.

GEF TF:

C) Thank you! We added the FAO/GBFF Project "Advancing Integrated Participatory Spatial Planning to Enhance Samoa's Globally Significant Biodiversity at a National Scale", 2024-2027, to the PIF section **Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Projects**
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

9/27/2024

SCCF:

a) Yes.

b) Not yet. Please revise the following "META INFORMATION - SCCF".

•National Adaptation Plan (NAP): Please explain why "true" has been selected. As Samoa does not have a NAP yet, the project cannot support its implementation. NAP formulation would be supported by GCF Readiness funding.

•Collaboration with activities funded by other adaptation funds: As mentioned in the comment in 5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK - c), it appears there are ongoing GCF, AF, and CIF projects in Samoa. Please double check and meta-indicator values accordingly.

GEFTF:

a) Not yet.

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•With regard to the land degradation related indicators, please ensure that the core indicator the Agency has selected for LD related GEBs aligns with the LDFA objective chosen. LD-2 usually speaks to interventions which are working to restore/reverse degraded landscapes and would typically align with Core Indicator 3. While LD-1 looks at avoiding and reducing land degradation through SLM and typically aligns with sub-indicator 4.3. The project appears to be doing the former and so would ideally be aligned CI 3. If so, please confirm and make it more explicit in the project description.

•With regards to the GHG emission reductions calculation under ExAct. Thank you for the provided justifications and materials, and please see comments below:

1. In Module 2 (land use change)

1. Line 13, an area of 29 ha is computed as avoided deforestation ? however, while the initial land use is computed (Mangroves), the final land use is not set (the cell appears as ?please select?). Please clarify and complete the final land use like was done for line 11 and 12 above.
2. Same issue in line 37 for afforestation/reforestation, where the final land use is set to Tropical moist deciduous forest, but the initial land use is not computed ? please also fill this one like was done for the above line (36).
3. And also line 62 for land use change, where annual cropland are selected as final land use, but no hectares nor initial land use are associated with this ? perhaps this one is just a typo and can be simply deleted?

2. Module 3 (croplands) is not filled. Given that module 2 is filled for interventions pertaining to land use change, as prompted by the ExAct tool, the cropland module should be filled for the corresponding initial/final uses as initiated in module 2. Module 3 is pre-filled with the selections made from module 2 for ease of finalization of the parameters > See for example lines 14 and 58 in module 3.

3. Finally, the justification under the core indicator table refers to 500 ha of Mangroves and seagrass under conservation, which will be put under the Blue Carbon project.

Understanding is that this corresponds to line 13 of Module 2, noted above. Could you please clarify what this blue carbon project entails ? in particular, is it expected that the carbon benefits from this intervention would be monetized as credits and transferred to a third party? If yes and if these credits are not retired, then this should be subtracted from the total GEB reported, given that the GEF only accounts for net GEBs per results guidelines. Therefore, if such is the case, then line 13 of Module 2 can simply be deleted

from the calculation and results. If not and if these results will not be transferred, then please just correct the calculation as noted above.

10/30/2024

SCCF & GEF TF:

a) & b) Yes - thank you for your revision, especially on the GHG emission indicators.

Agency's Comments

10/22/2024, UNDP:

A-B)

-Thank you for your comment. Agreed. The "true" selection was deleted.

-Thank you! While we found on-going GCF project in Samoa, there are currently no other implemented or planned AF or CIF projects in the country. So, we added the GCF Project "Integrated Flood Management to Enhance Climate Resilience of the Vaisigano River Catchment in Samoa", 2017-2025 to the PIF section **Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Projects**

- Adaptation Fund Project "Enhancing Resilience of Samoa's Coastal Communities to Climate Change" (2013-2018) has been added to the Project Description section, in the discussion on lessons learned applied for the GEF/SCCF Project

GEF TF

A)

Thank you for the comment! We should clarify that the project has activities and expected results that contributes to both LD-1 and LD-2 Objectives:

LD-1: **GEF Indicator 4.3.** Area of landscapes under improved practices (outside PAs): under the Output 2.1 the project will put at least 500 ha in the project districts under sustainable agroforestry as a climate adaptation and food security measure.

LD-2: **GEF Indicator 3.** Area of land ecosystems under restoration: under the Outputs 2.1 and 2.3 the project will support restoration of 990 ha of riparian (CI 3.2) and 10 ha of mangroves (CI 3.4) ecosystems of high adaptation value.

The LD -1 was added to the **ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES**

Comments on GHG emission reduction calculation under ExACT:

Thank you! The Final Land-Use after Deforestation was set as Degraded Land for the Line 13.

Thank you! The Initial Land-Use was set as Degraded Land for the Line 37.

Thank you! Correct! We removed annual cropland from the Line 62. It was a mistake.

- Comment 2. Module 3

Thank you! You are right! The Line 14 was set as a Root Crops (Taro is mainly growing in Samoa right after deforestation), Full Tillage, Low C Input.

The Line 58 was set as Multi-strata (most common agroforestry system in Samoa), Reduced Tillage, High C input with manure.

- Comment 3

Yes, the first option is correct: the primary objective of the blue carbon intervention (after adaptation) is to generate revenue through carbon markets, then the carbon benefits would be sold and transferred to third parties. This is common for blue carbon projects developed under voluntary or compliance carbon markets, where carbon credits (often termed Verified Carbon Units or VCUs) are traded to support project costs and generate economic benefits. Thus, the line 13 was removed from carbon gains calculations as recommended. The carbon gains by the project have been recalculated accordingly based on the edits above and updated in the PIF

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

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

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

9/27/2024

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

9/27/2024

SCCF:

- a) Not yet. Please refer to the comments in 4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS and 5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE - b) and add a short explanation how the project produces durable and transformative change against the climate and non-climate challenges and risks the communities/beneficiaries face.
- b) Yes.
- c) Yes.

10/30/2024

SCCF:

- a) Yes- thank you for your revision.

Agency's Comments

10/22/2024, UNDP:

Thank you! The following paragraph has been added to the **Transformative, innovation and scaling-up section** of the PIF:

Thus, the project aims to produce durable and transformative change against climate and non-climate challenges through its integrated Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) approach as an alternative to hard adaptation infrastructure. This transformative approach directly benefits the target communities by reducing vulnerabilities through the restoration and protection of ecosystems like mangroves and coral reefs, which act as natural barriers against climate impacts, including storm surges and coastal erosion. Restoring and protecting these ecosystems mitigates immediate risks such as flooding and erosion, thereby safeguarding homes, agricultural

land, and critical infrastructure in coastal areas. Additionally, the project transform community resilience by building local capacity to adapt to climate variability through targeted training programs and resource provision. The Ecosystem Conservation and Adaptation Trust Fund will transform the way to support community-led initiatives, enabling the continuity of adaptation actions beyond the project's lifespan. The trust fund model allows communities to plan for and implement long-term initiatives that address both immediate and future climate risks. Furthermore, the project promotes community-led conservation and cooperation with private sector, engaging local stakeholders in the active management of natural resources and fostering sustainable land management practices, like agroforestry, Blue Carbon projects, and Community Protected Areas. By integrating traditional knowledge into scalable EbA measures, the project strengthens community ownership and stewardship of natural resources. Collectively, these actions help reduce exposure to climate risks, improve food security and livelihood options by bolstering agricultural productivity and fisheries, and enhance biodiversity conservation. This strategic approach ensures that the positive impacts on ecosystem health and community resilience endure, offering a replicable model for other regions and significantly improving the adaptive capacity and socio-economic stability of the target communities.

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

9/27/2024

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

9/27/2024

SCCF:

Not yet.

•Samoa's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) mentions adaptation objectives, and this project is well aligned with them. Please make sure to mention the adaptation elements in the table on p.37.

GEF TF:

Not yet.

•Please indicate whether or not the project is aligned with Samoa's national plans under the UNCCD. We note that Samoa has a National Action Programme-NAP (although it is currently outdated).

10/30/2024

SCCF:

Not yet.

•I might have misplaced my comment on NDC - my apologies. The text I wanted the Agency to revise was indeed in the 'Conformity with national strategies and plans' section. Since the current text mentions the mitigation aspect only, could you consider revising it to something like 'By focusing on the conservation and restoration of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems, the project contributes to climate change adaptation as well as the enhancement of carbon sinks.?'

GEF TF:

Yes.

10/31/2024

SCCF:

•Yes - thank you so much for revising the text.

Agency's Comments

10/31/2024, UNDP:

The change has been made as per suggested text on page 36

10/22/2024, UNDP:

SCCF:

The project contribution to the NDC Samoa is described in the section **Conformity with national strategies and plans**, p.33. So, we do not repeat it again in the Alignment with Country and Regional Priorities section due to the word limit.

GEF TF:

Yes, the project is aligned with the Aligned National Action Programme (NAP) to Combat Land Degradation and Mitigate the Effects of Drought, 2015-2020. It was added to the section **Conformity with national strategies and plans**, including project alignment with the NAP.

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

9/27/2024

Yes.

Agency's Comments

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments

9/27/2024

Yes.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

9/27/2024

Yes.

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

9/27/2024

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments

9/27/2024

Yes.

Agency's Comments

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's Comments

9/27/2024

Yes. Samoa is a non-LDC SIDS and is eligible to access \$3 million from SCCF-A.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's Comments N/A

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

9/27/2024

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

9/27/2024

GEF TF:

We're encouraged to see substantial cofinancing, but are the entirety of those projects co-financing to this project specifically or only part?

10/30/2024

GEF TF:

Not yet. It appears that the Agency's Comments are not properly uploaded. Please share the comments.

10/31/2024

GEF TF:

Yes - thank you for your feedback.

Agency's Comments

The comment had been uploaded and emailed as well as the portal seems to have had an issue with this. The following response has been uploaded again.

Thank you! Yes, the entirety of these co-financing commitments is directly aligned with and dedicated to supporting this specific GEF/SCCF project. The Government of Samoa, through its District Development Budget, has committed US\$10,000,000 to fund initiatives in the project districts, including Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA), ecosystem conservation and restoration, and sustainable agriculture efforts. This co-financing ensures that local adaptation and resilience-building measures are fully integrated into district-level planning and implementation.

Additionally, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is contributing a total of US\$24,300,000 through various programs directly supporting this GEF/SCCF project. This includes US\$11,800,000 from the Alaoa Multipurpose Dam Project, specifically targeting flood management, biodiversity conservation, and community-based preparedness, with a focus on developing biodiversity management and offsetting plans, environmental restoration strategies, and natural habitat protection. Another US\$10,000,000 from the ADB Pacific Disaster Resilience Program, Phase 4, is dedicated to strengthening Samoa's resilience to climate, disaster, and health emergencies. Furthermore, ADB's US\$2,500,000 contribution from the "Promoting Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Blue Economies" project supports investments in climate-resilient blue economy initiatives in Samoa, enhancing ocean health and sustainable use of marine resources. Lastly, the European Union is providing US\$2,724,000 through the Samoa Water Sector Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation program, focusing on improving access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services, as well as enhancing resilience to climate change. These co-financing contributions from both government and international partners are critical to the successful implementation of the GEF/SCCF project and will complement the core objectives of strengthening ecosystem resilience, climate adaptation, and sustainable development in Samoa.

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

9/27/2024

Yes.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

9/27/2024

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

9/27/2024

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 Comments N/A

Agency's Comments

Annex C: Project Location

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

Secretariat's Comments

9/27/2024

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

9/27/2024

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

9/27/2024

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments

9/27/2024

GEF TF:

Not yet.

- Please tag relevant LD keywords.

10/30/2024

GEF TF:

Yes - thank you for your revision.

Agency's Comments

10/22/2024, UNDP:

Thank you! Relevant keywords under the Land Degradation category have been checked.

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 CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

9 GEFSEC Decision

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

Secretariat's Comments

9/27/2024

SCCF & GEF TF

Not yet. Please address the review comments.

10/30/2024

SCCF & GEF TF:

Not yet. Please address a few review comments. In addition, could you please remove all the yellow highlights as you finalize the PIF?

10/31/2024

SCCF & GEF TF:

Yes - this PIF is recommended for technical clearance from the program side.

Agency's Comments

10/31/2024, UNDP:

Noted and all highlights have been removed from the final version.

10/22/2024, UNDP:

The comments above have been addressed.

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

Secretariat's Comments

9/27/2024

SCCF:

- SCCF echoes GEF TF's comments below on the Ecosystem Conservation and Adaptation Trust Fund.
- As repeated earlier, climate change adaptation needs to take into consideration in the interlinkage between climate change, ecosystem including biodiversity, and most importantly human society. It would be highly appreciated if the Agency could include more information about the human society aspect of adaptation in the CEO endorsement document.
- Please provide some indicative budget for the Gender Action Plan and related gender-specific activities/outputs.

GEF TF:

•1.2

- During PPG, as setting up a fund can be a highly technical and challenging process with numerous steps, we strongly encourage the project to engage relevant partners. We would very much welcome even contracting for services/consulting from these groups. MCT and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) operate in similar contexts and have experience guiding new funds through the processes. In particular, there are countries with similar legal systems that can provide helpful templates and support SeyCCAT (Seychelles) and the Antigua & Barbuda SIRF fund may be another helpful group to exchange with as they have also have adaptation mandates. The International Conservation Corps has also secured low-cost legal support for conservation trust funds in the Caribbean.

•3.2

- While we would typically have concerns about generic 'awareness' raising goals, we see that this goal reflects a common misconception that could cause long term problems for the outcomes. We know that often people want to see gray infrastructure built in response to challenges and don't recognize the role of green infrastructure. The protection offered by the natural world is often invisible. This means that support for natural infrastructure and the regular community effort likely needed to maintain it won't happen without changing people's understandings. Notably NbS provide a no-regrets adaptation approach often with numerous co-benefits. However, this does require a significant mindset shift. Given the Fa Samoa, such a shift is likely quite possible but will require targeted effort.
- It might be good to engage specific expertise in communications, marketing and/or behavior change to work on this. Often environmentalists aren't the best to communicate to 'normal' people.

10/30/2024

SCCF & GEF TF:

Thank you for all the additional information provided. It would be appreciated if the Agency could consider and reflect these points in the CEO endorsement document too.

Agency's Comments

10/22/2024, UNDP:

SCCF:

- Please see our responses on GEF TF comments.

- Thank you! As we mentioned above, we strengthened the PIF with we added subsection **Key Threats and Vulnerabilities of Targeted Communities in Samoa** to the PIF with a brief analysis of local community exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity.

Also, we strengthened Component 1 and 2 with the explanation of project support to targeted communities to address climate and non-climate risks effectively. Additional information will be added at the PPG stage and included in the CEO ER and ProDoc.

- The indicative budget for the gender mainstreaming activities of the project includes the following: \$54,000 of salary of the Gender Mainstreaming and Safeguards Officer at the PMU (50% time employment for 5 years of the project) (budgeted under Output 3.1): development and coordination of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy; \$120,000-150,000 ? implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy through the project Outputs, including capacity building and training on gender inclusion, gender-sensitive communication and awareness activities, ensuring gender equality among project participants and beneficiaries (all project Outputs); ~\$40,000 - Gender-sensitive M&E activities: (Output 4.1). So, the total project budget for the gender mainstreaming activities will be \$214,000-244,000 distributed through all project Outputs. The title of the Output 3.1 was changed as: Comprehensive Gender Mainstreaming Strategy is developed and coordinated to incorporate gender equality into EbA initiatives to avoid confusion about the gender mainstreaming budget allocated to all project Outputs.

GEF TF:

1.2) Thank you! The Output 1.2 for the Trust Fund was strengthened with your recommendations:

To enhance the Trust Fund's design and implementation, the project will leverage the expertise of organizations operating in similar contexts. The Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) have experience guiding new funds through establishment processes and will provide valuable insights for the Trust Fund in Samoa. Additionally, countries with similar legal systems (e.g., Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, etc.) will be consulted to obtain helpful templates and support for the Trust Fund establishment and operationalization.

Collaborations will also be sought with SeyCCAT and the Antigua & Barbuda Sustainable Island Resource Framework (SIRF) Fund, both of which have adaptation mandates. The International Conservation Corps will assist in securing low-cost legal support for the establishment of conservation trust funds, based on their successful work in the Caribbean.

3.2) Thank you! Agree. The Output 3.2 was strengthened with the following:

?Recognizing the common misconception that grey infrastructure is the only effective response to climate challenges, the campaign aims to shift mindsets and foster a deeper understanding of the role of nature, and the effectiveness of NbSas a no-regrets, win-win and even low-cost solution to climate change. To achieve a significant and lasting impact, the project will engage specific expertise in communications, marketing, and behavior change. This specialized approach acknowledges that traditional environmental messaging may not always resonate with the general public or lead to behavioral change. By employing professionals skilled in influencing perceptions and actions, the campaign will more effectively convey the benefits of EbA and NbS and the critical role of natural ecosystems in climate adaptation?.

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	10/4/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/30/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/31/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		