

Scaling Up Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Resilience in Ecuador's Tropical Dry Forests and Southeastern Andes through Local Community Empowerment

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

12372

Countries

Ecuador

Project Name

Scaling Up Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Resilience in Ecuador's Tropical Dry Forests and Southeastern Andes through Local Community Empowerment

Agencies

CAF

Date received by PM

6/10/2026

Review completed by PM

Program Manager

Sarah Wyatt

Focal Area

Biodiversity

Project Type

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

6/16/2026

Yes. Thank you for these important clarifications.

6/12/2026

No, On the description overview table: The Ministry of Environment and Energy is included as one of the executing partners - however, it is not included in the LoE. Please remove any mention to the Ministry of Environment and Energy in the table and throughout the text (it can be included during preparation).

Agency's Comments

06/15/2026

The PIF has been revised as requested. The Ministry of Environment and Energy has been removed from the General Project Information table as an anticipated executing entity, leaving GGGI as the anticipated executing entity consistent with the OFP Letter of Endorsement. Related references were also revised in paragraphs 18, 57, 60, 76, the Capacity for Implementation risk entry, and the in-kind co-financing description, to clarify that the Ministry of Environment and Energy will participate as the national policy authority and government counterpart, not as an executing entity.

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

6/12/2026

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

6/12/2026

Yes.

b. During PPG, please revise these to address issues such as overreach or lack of clarity. For example, 2.1 should end at "through" as the rest is the explanation that should be articulated by the outputs and activities under it. General component 2 needs some real expansion to ensure that the proposed activities actual lead to the desired results.

In addition, training indicators are output-level. "600 persons trained (40% women)" is a completion indicator, not a results indicator. The framework does not include any indicator of whether trained individuals subsequently apply new skills or change their practices ? a consistently flagged weakness in reviews of the GEF biodiversity portfolio. Financial mobilization indicator needs a baseline and verification methodology. Outcome 2.3 targets "at least USD 18 million mobilized" through formal partnerships with financial institutions. This is the closest the results framework comes to a systems-change indicator and is worth retaining. However, the document does not define what counts as "mobilized" (committed, disbursed, or invested?), what the baseline is, or how the project will independently verify that mobilized funds are genuinely directed toward biodiversity-positive activities rather than being re-labelled existing flows.

Agency's Comments

06/15/2026

Duly noted. This will be addressed during PPG and reflected, as appropriate, in the CEO Approval package

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

Secretariat's Comments

6/12/2026

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

6/16/2026

Yes.

6/12/2026

No, Please request the agency to allocate cofinancing to the PMC in a proportional manner. If the PMC remains at 5.0% and cofinancing is \$33,042,872 the corresponding PMC amount should be approximately \$1,652,144 instead of \$170,000, which represents 0.51%

Agency's Comments
06/15/2026

The Indicative Project Overview table has been revised as requested. Co-financing allocated to PMC has been increased from USD 170,000 to USD 1,652,144, corresponding to approximately 5.0% of the co-financing subtotal, with corresponding adjustments to the co-financing allocations for Components 1?3 and M&E. Total co-financing remains unchanged at USD 33,212,874.

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
6/12/2026

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
6/12/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments
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

6/12/2026

Yes.

During PPG, this work needs to consider the barriers to adoption of specific practices and needs of bioeconomy business to ensure that the project is actually addressing the particular challenges of the circumstances. Assumptions should focus on testable hypotheses of how the project activities lead to results. The causal link between Component 1 governance outputs (coordination mechanisms established, SBSAPs endorsed) and conservation outcomes is not specified. An if-then test reveals a gap: the document does not explain how these mechanisms change the behavior of landowners, producers, or governments in ways that reduce threats to ecosystems. Assumptions are generic and not tied to specific causal links. The critical assumption that SBSAPs will actually be implemented and funded after project endorsement is absent.

Agency's Comments Duly noted. This guidance will be incorporated during PPG and reflected in the CEO Approval package

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

6/12/2026

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

6/12/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

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

6/16/2026

Yes. We look forward to receiving this information at CEO Endorsement.

6/12/2026

No. An EXACT tool should be uploaded for any land use based carbon calculations. Even with the small information provided, it appears to be calculated incorrectly. We recommend removing the value for core indicator 6 in the PIF and putting in the text that it will be calculated during PPG. Please reach out to GEF Secretariat for guidance if confusion remains.

Agency's Comments

06/15/2026

The PIF has been revised as requested. The indicative value of 808,814 tCO₂e for Core Indicator 6 has been removed from the Core Indicators table and from paragraphs 4, 17 and 66. The Core Indicators table now states "To be calculated during PPG" for Core Indicator 6, and paragraph 66 confirms that the calculation will be carried out during PPG using the EX-ACT tool, with the assumptions and results to be submitted with the CEO Approval package.

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

Secretariat's CommentsNA

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

6/12/2026

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

6/12/2026

Yes.

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

6/12/2026

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

6/12/2026

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

6/12/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments

6/12/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

6/12/2026

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

6/12/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments

6/12/2026

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
6/12/2026

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
6/12/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments
Annex B: Endorsements

8.4 Has the project been endorsed by the country's(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
6/12/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments
6/12/2026

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
6/12/2026

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
6/12/2026

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
6/12/2026

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
6/12/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments
6/12/2026

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

6/16/2026

Yes.

6/12/2026

Not at this time, please revise the remaining issues and resubmit.

Agency's Comments

06/15/2026

PIF Reviewed following the advices and comments of the GEFSEC.

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

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

Review Dates

PIF Review

Agency Response

First Review

Additional Review (as necessary)

Additional Review (as necessary)

Additional Review (as necessary)

Additional Review (as necessary)