



Supporting Sustainable Inclusive Blue Economy Transformation in AIO SIDS

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10865

Countries

Regional (Cabo Verde, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles)

Project Name

Supporting Sustainable Inclusive Blue Economy Transformation in AIO SIDS

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

3/10/2023

Review completed by PM

4/14/2024

Program Manager

Andrew Hume

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

**PIF
CEO Endorsement**

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): Partly.

1) See comment below on needing further elaboration on how the LD focal area STAR investment in Sao Tome and Principe is aligned with national priorities and contributes to the implementation of UNCCD agenda.

2) The duration of the project seems to be 51 months instead of 42. Please request the agency to review and correct where necessary.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

1) How the LD focal area STAR investment in Sao Tome and Principe is aligned with national priorities and contributes to the implementation of UNCCD agenda has been further elaborated under Baseline Scenario section (see last paragraph on page 27 and 4 first paragraphs on page 28 of the CEO ER. Also more details on land degradation especially in Sao Tome and Principe have been added under section 1a. Project Description, the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (See the before last paragraph on page 10, second and third paragraphs on page 13 and fifth and sixth paragraphs on page 16) of the CEO ER.

2) Duration of the project has been updated to 42 months across the documents.

Project description summary

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No. Overall the project design needs significant work. There are too many proposed assessments, SWOTs, inventories, etc. This suggests very little stakeholder engagement was conducted during project development to articulate all these national and regional baselines. The project design also largets a compelling regional element to align with IW. Lastly, the narrative incorrectly makes many references to limited GEF resources, but the project amount has been known since PIF approval and should no longer be a surprise nor a factor for full project design. Please note of the below:

- 1) The project objective states, "... support the development... in Atlantic and Indian Ocean SIDS through improved governance..." - Governance of what? Please revise objective to provide a more tangible objective. Also note the objective in Table B differs from the longer project objective listed in the narrative.
- 2) In Table B of the Portal, the components are out of order. Why is Component 2 presented before Component 1?
- 3) It is unclear how the national pilots identified in each country map back to Component 1. Only three countries are noted as the target of the Outputs in Component 1, so it is impossible to know exactly how each national pilot is furthering the evidence-based instruments noted in Component 1. Can the countries not already be identified in Component 1? How come all seven targeted countries are not identified in the outputs for Component 1?
- 3) Please remove references to a "GEF-imposed cap on project management costs" throughout the text.
- 4) The rationale for Output 1.2 suggests this output was not developed based on stakeholder consultations but rather on an assumption it was an issue and that NICs have "... been a frequent action point for many GEF-funded IW projects for well over a decade...". Please provide evidence based on stakeholder consultations specific to this project that this output is appropriate in this context. This is not to say that NICs are not important, but rather this is to ensure that stakeholders have identified the need. Further, Activity 2 discusses "Engagement of the NICs" but the project also specifically states it will not use funds to create or operate NICs. This suggests an assumption that countries will successfully create and operate NICs on their

own during the life of the project. What happens if this assumption proves false during implementation?

5) The narrative in the Portal for Output 1.3 is blank. How is Activity 2 on SWOT on financing different than the SWOT in Activity 1 from Output 1.1? Why can't financing be part of the assessment done in Output 1.1?

6) On Output 1.4, it's unclear why an "inventory" of capacity development needs again differs from the SWOT activities also in this component? Please explain how assessing capacity to develop/implement BE strategies is not part of the two other proposed national BE assessments that are being proposed? How will this output build on capacity building support to SIDS in the current phase of GEF [IW:LEARN](#) as well as the GEF-8 Blue and Green Islands IP, not to mention other global SIDS capacity building efforts?

7) Component 2 is presented as operating almost entirely as independent national projects, with several of the national activities suggesting national BE assessments or capacity building that overlaps with what is proposed in Component 1. There needs to be a more closer integration of the proposed activities in Component 1 with the national pilots in Component 2. Further, as a regional IW project, what are the mechanisms to facilitate coordination among national pilots since Component 3 is capturing knowledge/experiences and not on institutional coordination/cooperation. Why are existing regional entities tasked with this not part of the project?

8) It appears Output 3.2 is simply developing and disseminating communication products for UNDP. What specific mechanisms will actually scale up any innovations that may be presented to participating SIDS? How does this align with the private sector activities in Component 1?

9) For Output 3.3, again how is doing an inventory of existing BE exchange networks and SWOT different than the other assessments, inventories, and similar terms all being proposed in this project? Please explain why this is not part of these other proposed activities and must be uniquely separate under another output?

10) There seems to be differences between the total amounts for the components provided in Portal Table B vs. those in the budget table in Annex E. Please request the agency to review and correct where necessary.

3/7/24 (ahume): The overall project objective and structure has been significantly improved and now better reflects the individual country and regional baselines and alignment with IW and LD focal areas.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

The overall project design has been updated based on the latest consultations with national and regional stakeholders ? this exercise also ensured the updating of the baseline. Activities in Output 1.1 have been updated: Activity 1.1.1 to focus on harmonisation of data collection, analysis and reporting; also a clear focus on private sector engagement and LDN target implementation in Sao Tome and Principe. With regards to the regional element ? the link between the SIDS blue economy and other regional efforts has been explained in Section 1.a Project Description, 1) Global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed showing how the proposed project is coming into address transboundary problems identified in the LMEs. Furthermore, in analysing the regional baseline ? the work carried out under the Conventions managing the LMEs links have been made as to hope the project will build on this work ? the Regional Seas Programme, Nairobi Convention and Abidjan Convention have been identified as partnerships that need to be strengthened to work with the SIDS and follow-up on transboundary issues identified in the LMEs. In terms of strengthening regional cooperation and collaboration for SIDS at the continental level AUC, AUDA-NEPAD and AfCTA has been elaborated (see pages 9-10 of the CEO ER), and new text has been added to provide the context of working with AUDA-NEPAD. Activities have also been included in Component 1 on working with the AUC to strengthen policy advice and domestication of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy. References on GEF resources have been updated ? and project is designed according to approved funding (see details under the multi year work plan in the CEO ER).

- 1) The project objective has been updated under Table B. Project Description Summary of the CEO ER (see page 2)? to make it tangible and has been made consistent in all Sections
- 2) Noted ? Corrected in Portal
- 3) The link between Component 1 and 2 ? the country development/updating of baselines and instruments will be linked to supporting the pilot projects in Component II. The proosed activities under output 1.1 are supporting the implementation of the Component 2 pilots through strengthening intersectoral coordination and building capacity. Component 3 ? will drive the regional knowledge sharing and learning. With regards, to Component 1 the project has now been redesigned to cover all 6 African SIDS (see details under the alternative scenario section and the multi year work plan).
- 4) Output 1.2 on intersectoral coordination has been clarified and builds directly on the national baseline assessments carried out for each country linked to implementation of Output 1.1 and Component 2. The assessment also builds on the consultations that have been done to update the project design see details under the alternative scenario section and the multi year work plan (see details under the alternative scenario section and the multi year work plan).
- 5) Activities on financing mechanisms have been clarified ? to show the need of conducting a feasibility study on innovative mechanisms under Activity 1.3.2 in the countries (see details under the alternative scenario section and the multi year work plan). The information also added in the Portal.
- 6) Output 1.4 on capacity development ? has been redesigned to link it better to Output 1.1, 1.2. To ensure output 1.3 builds on other on-going capacity building initiatives Activity 1.4.3 has been designed to link to other capacity building initiatives such as IW:LEARN and other GEF IPs and projects (see details under the alternative scenario section and the multi year work plan).
- 7) Link between Component 1 and 2 ? has now been elaborated in the activities as explained in point 3 above. Institutional mechanisms to support knowledge management and learning have been identified ? partners have been identified under Output 3.3 (IW:LEARN, AUC Blue Economy Division, AUDA-NEPAD) to provide the institutional mechanism to drive knowledge management (see details under the alternative scenario section and the multi year work plan).
- 8) Output 3.2 has now identified specific mechanisms that will scale up innovations that may be presented to participating SIDS ? work done through WIOMSA, the Nairobi and

Abidjan Conventions, IW:LEARN SIDS Platform, AUC Blue Economy Division ? are the candidate initiatives that will be engaged (see details under the alternative scenario section and the multi year work plan).

9) Output 3.3 has been redesigned to focus on development of a information system working closely with identified networks and African SIDS this will be done in collaboration with IW:LEARN. Key in Output 3.3 is that there is a consolidated repository of knowledge that the SIDS can access working with identified information exchange networks (see details under the alternative scenario section and the multi year work plan).

10) Budget amounts updated in the Portal.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 3/14/2023 (ahume): N/A

Agency Response

Co-financing

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): Please note the following:

1) Biosfera (Cabo Verde) and Lantuna CoFi letters are in EUR. Please provide the exchange rate used below Table C.

2) In Table C, Comoros Minist?re de l'Agriculture, de la P?che, de l'Environnement, du Tourisme et de l'Artisanat lists \$2,100,000 as in-kind but the letter states this is grant. Please revise.

3) All the co-financing has been categorized as Investment mobilized. Please note that, in general, in-kind co-financing is categorized as "recurrent expenditures". Please request the agency to review all and correct where necessary.

4) Some co-financing letters (Oiko, BioGuinea) do not provide information on the type of co-financing. It mentions to which components it will contribute but not in which form (Grant, in kind, loan, etc?). Please request the agency to get confirmation from the co-financier on how this co-financing will materialize.

5) The co-financing from governmental entities should be categorized as "Recipient Country Government" (several are currently listed as "Other"). The source of co-financing from WFP should be categorized as from "Other" to "Donor Agency".

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

- 1) The Exchange rate used added below Table C (page 46 of the CEO ER)
- 2) In Table C, the type of co-financing of Comoros Minist?re de l'Agriculture, de la P?che, de l'Environnement, du Tourisme et de l'Artisanat has been changed from in-kind grant
- 3) Correction made: in-kind co-financing is now categorized as "recurrent expenditures"
- 4) The letters of Oiko and BioGuinea indicates that co-financing is grant.
- 5) The Government co-financiers are now categorized as "Recipient Country Government" and the source of co-financing from WFP is now categorized as "Donor Agency".

GEF Resource Availability

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): Partly. Please see comment on LD focal area alignment.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

The comment has been addressed above (on LD focal area alignment)

Project Preparation Grant

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No.

- 1) Please add table to Annex C in Portal and not just refer to other parts of document.
- 2) The PPG table needs to include much more detail per line item. For example, how many and what was role of each consultant or workshops? Please update all rows with additional detail.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

1) Table has been added to Annex C in Portal.

2) The PPG table has been updated to include much more detail per line item.

Core indicators

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): This section is incomplete. The Portal Core Indicator table and the submitted CER document do not match. For example, in Indicator 2 on MPAs, the Portal shows no values at CEO Endorsement while the uploaded CER shows 112,025 (million) ha. It is also unclear if this value of 112,025 (million) ha is indeed presented in million ha or is 112,025 ha. Likewise for Indicator 3, 4, and 11. Indicator 5 and 8 are shown in the Portal but not in the uploaded CER. More comments may follow after this is addressed and it is clear what the Core Indicator Targets will be at CEO Endorsement.

The Agency needs to make sure data on Core Indicators internally consistent across the Core Indicators section in the Portal, their justification in the template, the Annexed Results Framework and the separate uploaded Core Indicator sheet. There are currently gaps in the data entered on Core Indicators through the Portal compared to other references.

3/7/24 (ahume): Still not addressed. In the Portal CEO Endorsement table, several Core Indicators noted at PIF do not have an update at CEO Endorsement, including CI 5 and CI 7. Also for CI 5.1 (which I thought was removed from the project), there is different data listed in Annex F (Portal): a reference to 400 million Ha and a footnote noting this is the total area of the participating LMEs. Please again check that ALL documents, narratives, annexes, and tables are consistent.

3/28/24 (ahume): Still not addressed. The Core Indicator values in the Portal do not align with the CEO ER. For example, CI-5 still notes 113,225 Ha but the cell CI-5 in the CEO ER document is empty. CI-5 notes 1 at PIF and is empty at CEO. CI-7.3 notes "Gedaref" as an Shared Water Ecosystem but this is not a LME nor mentioned in the CEO ER (which instead mentions the third water body as the Guinea Current but this is not identified in the Portal. CI 7.4 is missing the third water body entirely. Additionally, Annex 15 Core Indicator table states the total number of people for CI-11 is 27,692, which is significantly different than the Portal and the CEO ER. As noted in previous comment, check again that **ALL** documents are consistent.

4/14/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response

3 April 2024

Comment addressed in the Portal. The 113,225 ha under CI-5 in the CEO ER deleted. CI-5 brought back in the Core Indicators sheet to reflect the figures 1 at PIF stage. "Gedaref" removed from CI-7.3 and the Guinea Current has been added in the portal under CI-7.3 and CI 7.4. The total number of people for CI-11 has been corrected under Annex 15 Core Indicator table.

19 March 2024

Core Indicators have been updated and adjustments made in all documents. See pages 4-5 of the CEO ER.

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

Data in the Portal Core Indicator table and the submitted CER document have been adjusted to match. ?(million)? has been removed. Figures under Indicator 5 and 8 have been removed in the Portal.

Part II ? Project Justification

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): Partly. The text presenting threats, root causes, and barriers lacks references that demonstrate how AIO SIDS have identified what is listed. For example, what is the evidence that an absence of trust is a barrier for AIO SIDS? Please include references to backup the identified threats, root causes, and barriers. What is currently presented is highly generalized.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

The barriers have been updated with references included to better articulate the root causes and barriers starting with the root causes. All root causes have now been referenced appropriately to make issues more specific to the African SIDS and also building on LMEs issues identified. The barriers have been refined to provide more clarity on the issues on the ground (see pages 13-16 of the CEO ER).

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): Partly. The baseline scenario in each country on existing BE plans - and also existing regional SIDS efforts, is weak. The Table 5 is largely empty and where there is text, it's largely hyperlinks. Table 6 is just a list of mainly GEF projects and their objectives. There is no assessment of LD related efforts. The national baselines do not reflect the long list of cofinancing partners (following GEF incremental reasoning). Please revise this section to integrate all this information into a regional and then national set of coherent and project-related baselines that highlight the planned activities during the project's duration which are aligned with the cofinancing partners that are identified in Table C.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

The baseline has been updated including the regional and national analysis. The following aspects of the Blue Economy (i) BE Policy/ Law(s) (ii) BE Action and/or Investment Plans

(iii) the institutional framework and status of national intersectoral ocean coordination mechanisms (iv) Blue Economy Scoping Assessments (v) blue economy financing instruments (vi) Natural Capital Accounting/ Ecosystem Services Assessment (vii) Status of Marine Environment Reporting (viii) Marine Spatial Planning (ix) programmes/initiatives have been used to assess the National Baseline for each country. The identified co-financing partners and projects have been highlighted in the baseline now. LD efforts have also been assessed especially for Sao Tome and Principe and added under the baseline scenario. The regional and national baseline are covered on page 16-25 of the CEO ER.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

3/14/2023 (ahume): No. See Comment #2 on Table B above.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

The alternative scenario section has been revised to provide more details on the strategy, theory of change and the project components, outcomes and outputs have been updated and presented to better articulate the project description and the achievements planned (see pages 26-42 of the CEO ER).

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No. Please elaborate on how the LDFA STAR investment in Sao Tome and Principe is aligned with national priorities and contributes to the implementation of UNCCD agenda.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

Clarity has been made on the LDFA Star Allocation ? clearly showing how this is supporting the LDN Targets in Sao Tome and Principe (see pages 42-43 of the CEO ER). Added paragraphs show how the Activities proposed in Component 2 for Sao Tome and Principe are linked to the implementation of the UNCCD agenda.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No. See above comment on elaboration of baseline scenario and associated baseline projects.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

These sections have been refined to show how the baseline investment and co-financing are critical to the project as explained above

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No. See above comments on lack of consistency on GEF Core Indicators, which persists in this section here. Several Core Indicators mentioned lack numerical values and others are widely different than what is in Core Indicator Table (e.g. narrative stating 323,733 beneficiaries for Core Indicator 11 versus 23,178 in the Table).

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

Necessary adjustments have been made in the Portal

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): Yes.

Agency Response

19 March 2024

Core Indicators have been updated and adjustments made in all documents. See pages 4-5 of the CEO ER.

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

A table has been added with all the coordinates as requested.

Project Map and Coordinates

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No. Please provide coordinates for each national pilot. If unknown, provide coordinates for the country.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

Child Project

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): N/A

Agency Response

Stakeholders

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume):

1) A dedicated Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement Plan was developed (Annex 9). This annex suggests that national stakeholders were consulted, but it is unclear which, if any, regional organizations or specific other groups were consulted even though the document states that more than 24 bilateral consultations were held. Please include a table of ALL stakeholders that were engaged, including who, date, type of engagement, number of participants, and the outcome of the discussion.

2) Please select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase: in portal section on stakeholder engagement.

3/7/24 (ahume): Not addressed. Annex 9 cannot be located in the ProDoc nor the Portal. Please include Annex 9 to these and also add a table of all the stakeholders that were consulted in the main Portal CEO Endorsement (and in documents) under the stakeholder engagement section.

3/28/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

19 March 2024

Annex 9 has been indicated in the ProDoc as a separate document and it is now uploaded in the Portal. A table of all the stakeholders that were consulted is already under annex 9 and has been added in the main Portal CEO Endorsement (and in documents) under the stakeholder engagement section (see CEO ER pages 52-60).

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

1) Table of the stakeholder consultations conducted and the outcome of the consultations has been added in Annex 9 (see pages 27-35 of Annex 9)

2) The stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase have been selected in portal section on stakeholder engagement.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume):

1) A Gender Analysis and Action Plan is included (Annex 11). The Action Plan states gender will be integrated into project activities, but in the narrative of the project description gender is only mentioned in two national pilots in Component 2. The Action plan also highlights promoting gender equality in the Project Coordination and Management Unit but nothing is mentioned about this in the description in the Institutional Arrangements section.

2) The Agency is also requested to specifically mention in the section on Project description summary, specific entry points for gender-responsive interventions, in particular, in the following outputs 1.4, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

Gender equality and social inclusion issues have been integrated into all the Components of the project activities ? and this is also reflected in the monitoring plan. The PMU has a Gender Expert that will support on gender mainstreaming under all project activities.

Private Sector Engagement

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No. Given the focus on blue economy, the private sector should be a key player. There is limited information on engagement with private sector actors/industry. The provided information is too general. As noted in the stakeholder engagement comments, please identify which, if any, private sector entities that were consulted during the project development. Why is UNDP's Ocean Innovation initiative not featured here given its role in promoting ocean startups? Please revise this section to better reflect the specific actors and sectors that will be the focus of the project.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

One of the key barriers identified is the lack of business models for public and private sector participation ? and this builds on the national baseline that has now been strengthened. Component 1 has been updated Activity 1.1.1 will also focus on strengthening private sector engagement in the updating/development of the instruments. Activities under Output 1.2 will promote private sector engagement in intersectoral platforms that will be supporting implementation of BE. In Output 1.3 the feasibility study for innovative mechanisms will also analyze the involvement of private sector. Component 2 pilot projects will be designed to test business models that will engage and involve private sector. Private sector engagement has also been elaborated (see pages 56-58 of the CEO ER).

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): Yes. However, please add the risk highlighted by the Stakeholder Analysis that stresses the importance of continued stakeholder engagement given the complications/challenges of the multi-country nature of the project.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

Noted ? risk has been added (See risk 23 under the risks table on page 78)

Coordination

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No.

1) It is noted that letters of support have been emailed by UNDP for UNDP country offices to support execution in San Tome and Principal and Comoros. Please upload these letters to the Portal. The GEF policy on such requests requires that ALL countries provide letters of support for the role of the GEF Implementing Agency providing executing services, not just the countries where the support is being provided. Please provided the additional letters from

the other countries so this request can be considered. It is suggested that a standard letter us used for all countries that includes a table of all the countries where UNDP is proposing to provide executing support. Lastly, it is noted in the text that UNDP Maldives will operate under a DIM model and in the budget UNDP Maldives is receiving funding to execute parts of the project, so why is it not included in the list of countries requesting GEF Implementing Agency to provide executing services?

2) It is noted that UNOPS states, "...UNOPS does not control the management, planning and progress of activities, the management of associated budgets, nor the quality of the national outputs to be delivered by the national IP?s, nor their rules, regulations or procedures, UNOPS shall not be held accountable, or otherwise carry any liability, for the performance of tasks and the delivery of the corresponding project outputs by national IP?s (including the responsible parties they select/engage), which remain the responsibility of the relevant national IP." Please add a sentence after this stating UNDP's responsibility on these issues.

3) Figure 7 (project governance arrangements) does not show in the Portal. Please upload again.

4) Please upload Annex 8 to the Portal.

5) The role and justification for a deputy Project Manager is unclear. Given the many references to the limited funds available for this project, this position seems unnecessary given the TOR of the PM and the LTA.

3/7/24 (ahume):

1) Addressed.

2) Addressed.

3) Addressed.

4) Annex 8 is not found. Please upload again and also ensure it is included as part of the Portal CEO Endorsement (this is true for all requested annexes).

5) Addressed.

3/28/24 (ahume): Thank you for providing Annex 8 TORs. However, the TORs do not mention the percentage of time each is contributing to the project. The Agency has noted that only 1 of the 11 positions will be full time. Please update the TORs to reflect this. Further, please update the TORs to reflect the percentage of time each if being charged to the components and PMC.

4/14/24 (ahume): Addressed. TORs have been updated.

Agency Response

3 April 2024

The TORs have been updated to mention the percentage of time each staff is contributing to the project and to reflect the percentage of time each is being charged to the components and PMC.

Corrections have been made on the number of full time positions: They are two (Project Coordinator and the Policy Advisor). Where errors were made showing 100% time of other staff under other positions have been corrected.

19 March 2024

Annex 8- ToR of PMU staff uploaded in the Portal

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

- 1) The Project Execution will now be supported by Global Water Partnership ? Southern Africa and this has been reflected in the project management structure. The Maldives component is no longer part of the project.
- 2) GWP-SA will support the national execution working with national responsible Parties. Details are under the Institutional Arrangement and Coordination section (pages 82-87)
- 3) Figure 2 (project governance arrangements) uploaded in the Portal
- 4) Annex 8 providing an overview of project staff and consultancies uploaded in the Portal
- 5) The deputy Project Manager post has been removed.

Consistency with National Priorities

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No. Please address the following:

- 1) Currently all that is provided is a generic table (Table 12) (also incorrectly referred to as Table 3 immediately above it) that lists "some of those most relevant" multi-lateral agreements. Consistency with national priorities should be articulated for each country and specific to this project, not just a general list.
- 2) Further elaboration is needed on how the LD focal area STAR investment in Sao Tome and Principe is aligned with national priorities and contributes to the implementation of UNCCD agenda.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

- 1) A section on 'Consistency with global, regional and national priorities' has now been revised to include international MEAs, regional baseline and national baseline (which articulate the national priorities). The Table has been removed (pages 87-95 of the CEO ER).
- 2) The LDFA STAR investments has now been elaborated for Sao Tome and Principe under this section as well.

Knowledge Management

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No. Please address the following:

- 1) The section is poorly written with redundant paragraphs referring to an information exchange network for AIO SIDS. Given UNDP is also co-implementing [IW:LEARN](#), please explain in the project how the KM activities here will complement and not overlap with the SIDS component of the phase of [IW:LEARN](#) that is just starting.
- 2) A KM Work Plan is provided. However, in Output 3.1 it mentions a project website but no activity nor deliverable date is provided.
- 3) Please also explain the difference between lower case and upper case "A" in the table.
- 4) Please justify the differences between Activity 3.3.1, 3.3.2, and 3.3.3 proposing to conduct more respective inventories, inventories, and SWOT.
- 5) Please justify the differences between Activity 3.3.4 and 3.3.5 that, respectively, propose "Development of a blueprint" and "Support... for the development/enhancement... of the proposed blueprint."
- 6) The agency should include a communications plan/strategy and clarify the timeline for activities associated with the project's participation in IW:Learn (activities 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3). The KM section should also include a simple summary table showing the breakdown of the budget allocated to knowledge, learning and communications related activities/deliverables mentioned in Component 3 as well as in other components.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

- 1) The KM section has been updated ? and the link to the IW:LEARN African SIDS page also coordination will be done to link to the Marine Hub ? this will ensure that the project feeds into the IW:LEARN website without creating another platform.
- 2) Under Output 3.1 ? the development of a project website is aligned to feeding into the IW:LEARN so coordination with their Coordination Team in UNESCO will be facilitated.
- 3) Addressed - The lower case and upper case ?A?s? have been removed from the Multi-Year workplan in Annex 3
- 4) Activities 3.3.1, 3.3.2, and 3.3.3 have been updated to facilitate the development of a information system to address the needs for the SIDS to implement the African BE Strategy ? this will be facilitated working with AUDA-NEPAD and AUC
- 5) Activities under Output 3.3 now reflects identifying information exchange networks and building an information system that will assist the SIDS. The deployment will focus on strategic elements that will ensure capacity is built in using the system and institutionalization with national institutions.
- 6) The development and implementation of the Communication Strategy and Plan has been included under Activity 3.1.6

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): A SESP has been provided that has categorized the project as "Substantial". Please provide the following:

- 1) In the CER text, please provide a brief explanation of the requirements of the SES that are triggered (per the ESSS Supporting Document Question 5).
- 2) In the ESSS Supporting Document, it notes that the ESMF (Environmental and Social Management Framework) is completed. Please upload this document to the Portal.
- 3) Lastly, please provide additional justification in the Agency response to the following statement made in the ESSS Supporting Document, "Indigenous Peoples are not present in any of the AIO SIDS."

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 20024

- 1) Added
- 2) The ESMF is now uploaded in the Portal
- 3) All project demonstration sites have been identified. National stakeholders and available online reports show that there are no Indigenous Peoples present (See Annex 24 for details on the national project sites).

Monitoring and Evaluation

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No. Please address the following:

- 1) It appears the Project Results Framework (RF) has been included here. Please move this to the Annex per the CER template. The Project M&E Plan should focus on the mechanisms and processes for project monitoring and evaluation, such as the PIR, MTR, and TE. The RF should be incorporated into these project M&E tools.
- 2) Please ensure the M&E budget in the table presented in this the M&E section is consistent with Table B (Component 4) and the budget.

3/7/24 (ahume): Partly Addressed. The budget total identified in the M&E Budget Table under the M&E section is \$280,695, which is different than the Component 4 M&E total in Table B of \$270,114. Please explain this difference and/or revise for consistency.

3/7/24 (ahume): Not fully Addressed. The Portal still shows \$280,695 for the total M&E cost. As noted multiple times, please check **all** documents for consistency.

4/14/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

19 March 2024

The figures under the M&E Budget table under the M&E Section has been adjusted to match the figure under Component 4 M&E total in table B. See Page 130 of the CEO ER.

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

- 1) Project Results Framework (RF) has been included now as Annex A.
- 2) M&E budget in the table presented in this the M&E section is consistent with Table B (Component 4) and the budget.

Benefits

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No. This section currently lists five bullet points. This section needs to be revised to present a coherent narrative that discusses the project benefits to all seven participating countries.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

The section on benefits has been rewritten from Paragraph 119 ? it now provides a clear overview of the benefits (page 116 of CEO ER).

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): No. Please upload all annexes to the Portal, not just a reference them in other documents. Please also address the following specific issues:

Annex A (Results Framework): See comments below.

Annex B (Response to Reviews): In the Portal, please organize this into a table format so it is readable. It is noted that many of the comments provided by STAP and GEF Council are also reflected in the above GEF review (need to improve national baselines, . Please be sure to update the

Annex C (PPG): See PPG comment above regarding the need for more detail.

Annex D (Map): See comments below.

Annex E (Budget):

1) The GEF budget is incomprehensible. For example, it is unclear if cell B43 under International Consultants lists the costs for just a communication specialist or also a number of other staff described in the cell with other costs. Each of these staffing (and all costs) should be their own row in the budget. Please revise accordingly to allow a proper initial review of the budget.

2) All costs related to audits must be charged to the PMC. Please request the agency to review.

3) Several positions (technical advisor, technical coordinator, operations support manager) are being charged across components and PMC. Per Guidelines, the costs associated with the project's execution have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to PMC. Please request the agency to review.

3/7/24 (ahume): Partly Addressed.

1) Please ensure ALL annexes are uploaded to the main Portal CEO Endorsement page (not just uploaded as separate documents). Many annexes referenced in the revised submission cannot be found in Portal CEO Endorsement.

2) Budget:

- The budget table cut and paste under Annex E is nearly impossible to read and review. Please upload a budget table preferably in excel format in the Document section of the Portal.

- From what can be discerned with the budget table, it appears the comment on audit (to be charged to PMC only) has been addressed but comment on management positions being charged to both project components and PMC has not yet been addressed.

- Additional budget comments may be provided once the GEF budget template can be properly reviewed.

3/28/24 (ahume): Not addressed.

- No budget can be found in the Portal CEO Endorsement nor the most recent uploaded CEO Endorsement document. A full review of budget cannot be completed until the GEF budget template is uploaded as previously requested.
- Under the budget notes in the ProDoc, there are positions named that are not included in the TORs. For example, a "Admin and Logistics Officer" with a 100% time allocation to the project. Why is there no TOR for this position?
- Similarly, there are at least four positions noted as 100% allocated to the project (and none of the four are the Project Coordinator) however the project notes in the CEO ER that, "The Project Coordinator and the Policy Advisor will be only the full time positions while other positions will be part time shared with other GWP-SA projects as described above under the Project structure notes."
- Also under the PMU description, why does the CEO ER call the position both the project manager or project coordinator? For clarity, please be consistent with the title of this position. This is the paragraph I am referring to:

The Project Manager (PM) (also called project coordinator) is the senior most representative of the Project Management Unit (PMU) and is responsible for the overall day-to-day management of the project on behalf of the Implementing Partner, including the mobilization of all project inputs, supervision over project staff, responsible parties, consultants and sub-contractors. The project manager typically presents key deliverables and documents to the board for their review and approval, including progress reports, annual work plans, adjustments to tolerance levels and risk registers.

4/14/24 (ahume): Partly addressed.

1. The GEF Budget Template has been uploaded. However, for the GEF Budget tab, the staff positions are lumped together making it impossible to understand individual staff costs and total number of staff. Please disaggregate all staff positions into individual budget line items to match the TORs and rest of project documents.
2. The CEO ER (document and Portal) still states that the "The Project Coordinator and the Policy Advisor will be only the full time positions while other positions will be part time shared with other GWP-SA projects as described above under the Project structure notes. Annex 8 includes the Terms of Reference for the PMU positions." However, the TOR shows 8 staff as 100%: 6 National Project Managers, 1 Policy Advisor, and 1 Project Coordinator. Please update the CEO ER to ensure consistency with the TORs and rest of project documents.

5/8/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

18 April 2024

1. Staff positions in the GEF Budget tab have been disaggregated into individual budget line items to match the TORs and rest of project documents.
2. Correction made. Now the CEO ER (document and Portal) states that the "The Project Coordinator, the Policy Advisor and the 7 National Project Managers will be the full time positions. See pages 95 and 98 of the CEO ER.

3 April 2024

-The budget has been added in the Portal CEO Endorsement Request.

- The documents include ToR for all positions. Corrections have been made where 100% time allocation to the project was indicated under the budget notes.

- Corrections made. The Project Coordinator and the Policy Advisor will be only the full time positions while other positions will be par- time shared with other GWP-SA projects.

- The day-to-day project management will be ensured by the Project Coordinator under the PMU. Adjustments have been made where this position was indicated as Project Manager. A text has been also made to clarify further that each Responsible Party will hire a National Project Manager to support the implementation of demonstration projects. Sao Tome and Principe will have two National Project Managers: One for the marine demonstration project and another for land restoration demonstration project.

19 March 2024

1) All annexes are now uploaded to the main Portal CEO Endorsement page.

2) Budget:

- The budget table in excel format is now uploaded in the Document section of the Portal.

- Details have been added under the budget notes in the TBWP and Annex 7: Overview of Project Staff and Technical Consultancies in the Prodoc to show% of technical responsibilities and % of Project Management Functions of PMU staff.

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

- 1) Budget has been reworked and project breakdowns have been made clearer for all outputs and activities.
- 2) Corrected
- 3) The budget has been revamped ? and breakdowns have been made clearer. Project management costs are covered under PMC

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): The sub-indicators 2.2 is incorrectly within Core Indicator 3. The aggregate values of sub-indicator 4.1 and 4.2 do not add up to the combined value - which is different than the values presented in the main Core Indicator table. Likewise the total value for Core Indicator 11 is different in the Portal. Lastly, it is unclear how the project level Outcome Indicators will feed up into the GEF project core indicators. For example, how will the number of land and marine hectares be measured? Likewise, the beneficiary indicators at the project outcome level are % woman (which is important) but in isolation, will not provide a total measure of people supported by to project per Core Indicator 11.

3/7/24 (ahume): Not addressed. Please provide an agency response to the above review comment that explains what revisions have been made. Specifically, please identify how the RF was revised so that the project level indicators feed up into the GEF Core Indicator targets. For example, the project level results do not seem to mention any spatial results that would sum to Core Indicator 2, 3, or 4.

3/28/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

19 March 2024

The Core Indicator Worksheet and the indicators across the documents have been updated and new text added under the RF to show how indicators under Outcomes contribute to Core Indicators. See pages 4-5; pages 132-136; and pages 186-188 of the CEO ER

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

The information has been provided.

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): See Annex B comment above.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

Addressed.

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): See Annex B comment above.

3/7/24 (ahume): Addressed

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

Addressed.

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 3/14/2023 (ahume): See Annex

B comment above.

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 14 February 2024

Addressed.

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 3/14/2023 (ahume): No

comments provided

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 3/14/2023 (ahume): No

comments provided

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 3/14/2023 (ahume): No

comments provided

Agency Response
Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 3/14/2023 (ahume): According to the CER, \$169,693 of \$200,000 has been spent, with the remaining \$30,307 committed.

Agency Response
Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 3/14/2023 (ahume): While the maps provided are helpful, many of the national maps lack helpful identification of where in the country the national demos will occur. For example, it is not clear where Fig 13 is located based on the other maps of Comoros. Same for Fig 15, 17, 18, and 21.

3/7/24 (ahume): Not addressed. Please ensure the maps that are presented are consistent across all the final documents (ProDoc, CEO Endorsement Document, and Portal CEO Endorsement). Please also provide an agency response to the above comment showing what revisions we taken.

3/28/24 (ahume): Addressed.

Agency Response

19 March 2024

Only the map showing all African SIDS has been kept in the documents.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/14/2023 (ahume): N/A

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 3/14/2023 (ahume): N/A

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 3/14/2023 (ahume): N/A

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/3/2023 (ahume): No. The project still requires significant work. Please address the above initial comments so a full review can be conducted.

3/7/24 (ahume): No. The project has been significantly improved but is not yet recommended. Please address the above comments, especially ensuring that all documents are consistent, all annexes are included in the documents AND included in the Portal version of the CEO Endorsement.

3/28/24 (ahume): No. Please address the above comments, especially ensuring consistency across all documents and uploading the GEF budget as previously requested.

4/14/24 (ahume): No. Please address the final budget comments.

5/8/24 (ahume): Yes, the project is being recommended for CEO Endorsement.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	4/3/2023	
Additional Review (as necessary)	3/7/2024	

**Secretariat Comment at
CEO Endorsement**

**Response to
Secretariat comments**

Additional Review (as necessary)	3/28/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/14/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/8/2024

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations