

Groundwater for Deep Resilience in Africa (G4DR in Africa)

Basic Information

GEF ID

10970

Countries

Regional (Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda)

Project Title

Groundwater for Deep Resilience in Africa (G4DR in Africa)

GEF Agency(ies)

FAO

Agency ID

FAO: 721583

GEF Focal Area(s)

International Waters

Program Manager

Astrid Hillers

PIF

Part I – Project Informatic

Focal area elements

1. Is the project/program aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements in Table A, as defined by the GEF 7 Programming Directions?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/12/2022)

1. Yes, the project is *overall* aligned with objective 3 on water security in transboundary freshwater systems. Please note and aim to address in the PIF as possible and the endorsement request.

Throughout the PIF/project description please focus though on the IW and GEFTF mandate on water security and resilience and addressing intersectoral trade-offs of water uses (along the water-food-energy- environment Nexus) which includes the the need to involve cross-sector players instead of what looks for now an overlap with the LDCF/SCCF and focus on climate and revising adaptation plans. These intersectoral trade-offs and especially with regard to agricultural uses and plans exist already now and groundwater can be both a solution and a victim of overuse by agriculture and urban development. Future trends - including climate change, population growth, urbanization and related demands on resources - will add to these pressures. The PIF is also silent about the role of groundwater and water security and land degradation as risk multipliers for local conflicts and displacement which will be aggravated by climate change and providing another reason for sustainable management of this resource.

(5/6/2022) The comments have been adequately addressed for the PIF stage. During project preparation it will be important to make these cross-sectoral linkages and need for consistent policies and aligning incentives concrete by involving e.g. key agriculture and urban entities in the preparation process. Also, at endorsement stage, please be specific and detailed how the project will do so during implementation.

Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

Additional text has been added to address this comment. This includes new text to emphasize the contribution to the IW objectives, especially on water security, resilience and addressing intersectoral trade-offs of water uses, the role of groundwater and water security, and land degradation.

Indicative project/program description summary

2. Are the components in Table B and as described in the PIF sound, appropriate, and sufficiently clear to achieve the project/program objectives and the core indicators?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/12/2022) The project structure is overall clear but please address the following:

1. Please consider to modify the PDO and replace 'adaptation planning' with 'planning for resilience'. This would better align with the project title and activities, the AMCOW mandate and strategies linking water security to resilience and the GEF TF programming directions.
2. Please include a component or sub-component on M&E (incl. funds for it).
3. Please include a sub-component on knowledge management and include within this 1% of GEF grant for participation in IW-learn (incl. participation in the IWCs, regional learning events, drafting of experience notes and knowledge exchange, project website)
4. Given the importance to communicate the role of groundwater for development (and avoiding over-abstraction and pollution) a communications strategy and products seems important; can this be included in component 4 or otherwise a component 5 that may e.g. communication as well as KM, and M&E needs?
5. There are several slide 'odd' wording/formulation issues in table B that could benefit from editing and clarification:
 - i.) Component 1: please clarify "groundwater-based policy and planning". I assume that this is AMCOW support to strengthen the consideration of groundwater in cross-sectoral policies, strategies and planning on national and regional levels. As written the meaning of 'groundwater-based policy and planning' is unclear.
 - ii.) Outcome 1.2: What is "demand and reporting on tools...?" would it be "increased capacity to and use of tools to assess groundwater quality and quantity and support greater resilience to shocks" (incl. extreme climate events, pandemic, etc.)? In addition, 'reporting on

quality and quantity and support greater readiness to ensure (when extreme climate events, pandemics, etc.) in addition, reporting on tools' is unclear: what will be reported and why and to who? Seems an editorial item.

iii.) Please reread outcome 1.3 and reword to clarify what is meant here. We would be happy to discuss if this aids in clarification.

iv.) Output 1.2: the annual knowledge sharing event is appreciated. Please assure that it does not duplicate but enhance, e.g. the SADC yearly event on groundwater and the 'Africa Water week'. It is less clear what the origin of a "reporting framework among basins and other stakeholders" is and what "deliverable to AMCOW and AU" means and who the user of this will be. Is there such a requirement? Please consider and balance effort with usefulness (see also comments under part II, question 3).

v.) Please revise output 3.3 to better align with the component text. The component defines two pilots that include modeling approaches while the other pilots (tbd) will be based on other criteria and not necessarily "evidence based groundwater inclusive planning ..." which seems to be 'code' for a more modeling approach versus on the ground pilots.

vi.) Please clarify the *wording* for outcome 4.1 to make clear what the youth players will be expected to engage in and what they will be their capacity needs to what exactly? i.e. what is the objective. Also, how is youth supporting financing, and what are they networking on - again on the youth side one would hope that this engagement aims at a view that addresses the role of water and groundwater specifically in terms of social and cross-sectoral dimensions. Please find wording to formulate an outcome statement for the youth network. The component name of component 4 is better suited here than the outcome statement.

(4/12/2022) The above comments have been addressed. In the formulation of the project document please take care to use practical language throughout that expresses what will be done and avoid jargon.

Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

1. 'Adaptation planning' was replaced with 'planning for resilience'.
2. 3. and 4. A new component 5 has been added to target M&E. Funds were allocated to the purpose. This includes knowledge management, the 1% of GEF grant for participation in IW-learn and the development of a communications strategy.
5. Table B has been reviewed and reformulated to address GEF SEC the comments of GEF SEC.

Co-financing

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, with a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022)

1. Please delete the text under the table as non of the co-finance is classified as investment mobilized.
2. During project preparation, please explore further co-finance e.g. from other partners supporting AMCOW and ANBO especially those engaged in groundwater support to AMCOW directly or indirectly by supporting tools used by countries and promoted by AMCOW such as e.g. BGR, Swiss support, WB managed CIWA trust fund, UNESCO, IGRAC, and others. Second, please have a closer look with AMCOW at their in-kind support which via staff time and office support is likely to exceed 100 K over the four years.

(4/12/2022)

Comment addressed under 1 and the agency response on 2. noted. Agree that is best being done in the wider consultation process during PPG.

Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

1. Done
2. The team will target this during the PPG phase. Coordination meeting will be held with AMCOW and all the relevant subregional organizations to raise the ownership of the project and to mobilize additional co-financing.

GEF Resource Availability

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022) Yes, the resources are currently available.

Cleared.

Agency Response NA

The STAR allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A

Agency Response NA

The focal area allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Yes.

Agency Response NA

The LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A

Agency Response NA

The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A

Agency Response NA

Focal area set-aside?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A

Agency Response NA

Impact Program Incentive?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A

Agency Response NA

Project Preparation Grant

5. Is PPG requested in Table E within the allowable cap? Has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated? (not applicable to PFD)

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022)

The requested PPG is within the allowable cap.

1. Please change the Country entry from "Africa" to "Regional" in each table and all other sections as appropriate, incl. PPG request and programming of funds tables.

(4/12/2022)

Noted. Please submit LOEs for additional countries that may/will be part of the additional pilots at endorsement stage and the add these in the list of countries in the portal.

Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

1. Done. The project was labelled as "Regional" with the three countries where the pilots will take place (component 3), plus Africa for the PAN-African dimension of components 1, 2, 4 and 5.

Core indicators

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022) Please discuss with us to explain the way indicator 7 (incl. sub-indicators 7) were used and during project preparation refine e.g. the estimate of direct beneficiaries via the pilot and capacity building interventions. The pilots *alone* have a budget of USD 3 million (not counting training efforts, youth engagement etc.) and 1000 beneficiaries therefore appears low for the overall project.

(4/12/2022) Comments addressed incl. the explanation on stakeholders.

Cleared

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

Re to CI7: CI7 was set to 1 - global because the project has a PAN-African dimension, i.e. will benefit all the aquifers in the continent.

CI 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 were all set to 1 because, globally, all these elements need to be developed by the project.

Re to CI11:

The figure was increased to 1,200.

The indicated for the PIF stage, is assuming that component 1 one will target 150 direct beneficiaries, component 2 will target 200, component 3 will target 400 and component 4 will target 450.

Additional direct beneficiaries will be identified during the project development phase in parallel with the definition of additional national pilots. Also if the project manages to improve the policy/governance, potentially the direct beneficiaries can increase hugely.

Project/Program taxonomy

7. Is the project/program properly tagged with the appropriate keywords as requested in Table G?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022) Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response NA

Part II – Project Justification

1. Has the project/program described the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers that need to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022) There is valuable information provided but still some key points that need refinement and addition.

1. Please across the document balance the concept of creating resilience to a range of shocks with assessment of existing water needs and use trends and the expected increase in demands on surface and ground- water. Groundwater presents opportunities to sustain water supplies for people, nature, and economic sectors given these trends AS WELL AS (but not only) in the face of increasing climate variability and change (and e.g. extended droughts). There is not clear enough attention given to highlight the major current and future uses and users of groundwater in the context of Africa's major water intensive sectors (e.g. including agriculture, increasing urban uses, and mining), attention to barriers to sustainable management, incl. e.g. incentives - or lack thereof - to enhance more efficient use of water and groundwater nor discussion on root causes (incl. governance related). The White Paper presented by AMCOW at the World Water Forum this March could be helpful here to draw from.

2. Water quality threats - incl. natural and anthropogenic - would need clearer highlighting as relevant especially to the region. A good overview is provided e.g. in the recent publication from the World Bank on groundwater quality and accompanying sampling guidance

overview is provided e.g. in the recent publication from the World Bank on groundwater quality and accompanying sampling guidance released at the time of the World Water Forum in Dakar this year: "Seeing the Invisible: A strategic report in groundwater quality", Peter Ravenscroft and Lucy Lytton, 2022.

(4/12/2022) Additional text and references noted and adequate at this stage. Please expand on this and maintain these aspects as important to the project during project preparation.

Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

New text has been added or paragraphs reformulated to address the comments of GEF SEC.

2. Is the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects appropriately described?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022)

1. The baseline should be clearer on the ongoing initiatives and strategies on water and development in Africa. Again, the AMCOW white paper is useful for this (as well as in the PIF section on the regional policy context). The mention of ANBO is appreciated which BTW received GEF support via UNDP as implementing agency and addressed both transboundary basins and aquifers.

CIWA and GEF are also supporting the SADC groundwater work including SADC-Groundwater Management Institute (SADC-GMI). SADC-GMI deserves some attention in the baseline hosting a yearly knowledge exchange event on groundwater as well as the SADC water sector doing the same among RBOs. SADC-GMI lessons on how to include groundwater in basin management as well as various pilots in the region will be highly relevant for the project (incl. design and budget of pilots) and knowledge exchange efforts as well as SADC-GMI's successful engagement to bring in finance via providing expertise to RBOs.

Similarly, OSS is an important center of expertise in West Africa and IGAD yet emerging in its role on groundwater management in the Horn of Africa (with current support e.g. by CIWA to IGAD and a number of countries in the Horn of Africa).

Furthermore, the Africa GEF portfolio is important beyond the projects mentioned already, as well as GEF support to countries and RBOs by

BGR, UNESCO and its GRETA program, IGRAC, Swiss etc. all of which also work with AMOW and/or ANBO.

There is also a relatively recent update of a groundwater map for Africa /WHYMAP from 2018 and the Africa groundwater atlas to be mentioned in the baseline.

2. As mentioned earlier, there is a need to link groundwater uses with ongoing use in agriculture (as the major employment in most countries across Africa) , expanding urban development and other relevant uses and identify the levers and links that AMCOW needs to bridge to change the trajectory towards greater attention to sustainable management and protection of groundwater.

Climate risks will increase threats for extreme events and groundwater resources and recharge will be impacted but also provide great opportunities for these major uses and users to lessen the impacts of e.g. extended droughts. The link from climate models to surface and groundwater uses across sectors will be addressed in component 2 - among other - which is extremely useful to support and Africa Strategy on Groundwater and is building on the work on ISWEL to highlight x-sector hotspots and threats to groundwater quality and quantity. Limits on available and reliable data and information are an obvious limitation and it would be important to provide an idea on such limitation now and/or during PPG.

3. Please throughout the PIF be conscious that the project and the GEFTF is accessed here and not the LDCF/SCCF (which would directly link with the UNFCCC and support to NAPs).

4. Youth networks and national youth parliaments on water or other networks active or emerging would be worthwhile mentioning as component 4 will aim to build on existing efforts and momentum (incl. initiatives that *may* emerge from the Dakar Forum in this direction).

(4/12/2022) The next text is noted and we hope that this will be further paid attention to during project design. Collaboration and building synergies across development partners and ongoing efforts will be essential to increase attention to improved governance and valuing groundwater across sectors. Please also document consultations with youth networks during the project preparation process to reflect their voices and ideas in project design.

Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

New text has been added and relevant paragraphs reformulated to address the comments of GEF SEC.

3. Does the proposed alternative scenario describe the expected outcomes and components of the project/program?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022)

1. For the most part this is done, but the intervention logic (initial Theory of Change) narrative (and supported by a schematic) needs strengthening.
2. Component 1: during project preparation it will be important to take stock of ongoing regional and continent-wide knowledge sharing fora (incl. e.g. Africa Water week; SADC groundwater and RBO region-wide meetings; IGAD Forum; etc.) and devise a strategy with these organizers that strengthen these as well as enable cross-regional exchanges and twinnings, but does not duplicate events which would be costly and hard to sustain. Exchanges of experiences lessons from outside the region on conjunctive management and regulatory and incentive structures for protection of soil and groundwater from contamination may be of interest to explore as well during PPG and project implementation.
3. Component 2: The illustrative data sources are very useful. Obviously, FAO is another source of data on groundwater and e.g. possible areas of high fertilizer and pesticide uses; other partners to mention here are BGR and UNESCO, IGRAC, and the WB report on groundwater quality and its references contained therein mentioned earlier (by Ravenscroft and Lytton, 2022).
4. Component 3 is an important attribute to demonstrate opportunities, innovative approaches and benefits via improved groundwater governance and management. The two pre-identified pilots are well placed to expand ongoing work and demonstrate what is framed as "evidence based planning" to support impacts on the ground. Other pilots which will be based on criteria to be developed with AMCOW and regional and national member country expertise to e.g. address and locally pilot improved governance and co-management with users (such as farmers associations), innovative technical approaches, and partnerships e.g. with specific private sector partners to avoid groundwater contamination, etc.. IWMI's expertise and experience in Africa and around the globe will be excellent to bring into bare here. Initial types of criteria for selection of other pilots would be important to indicate here as the majority of GEF funds is directed towards component 3. Furthermore, will there be a pilot or pilots that specifically targets women's groups/ entrepreneurs?
5. Component 4: Please develop the logical reasons of this intervention better. Groundwater overuse and pollution will have intergenerational impacts and legacies that impact future generations as e.g. salinization and pollution or depletion of fossil aquifer reserves are there to stay in one form or the other. This is one reason to activate the voice of younger people to engage in this agenda. Yet, the logic of the specific focus on youth versus little other communications and awareness raising efforts is not entirely well explained.

(4/12/2022) Comments addressed at PIF stage. Agree that the intervention logic as a whole of the project - across components and stakeholders - will need to be updated to enhance the project logic in a more cohesive manner. At PIF stage this is clear enough but details to be developed with partners at various levels and across sectors during PPG.

Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

New text has been added or reformulated for each of the five components to address the comments of GEF SEC.

The ToC was updated. It will be further developed at PPG stage.

4. Is the project/program aligned with focal area and/or Impact Program strategies?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022) Yes, the project is aligned with international waters strategy and the emphasis on water security and resilience well aligned with it. The cross-sector and ecosystems dimensions of groundwater could use better elaboration in the Theory of Change and project description (as already mentioned earlier; please refer back, no need to replicate a response here).

Cleared

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

Addressed by responding to the comments made under point 3.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022) Please strengthen this section and the benefits of the GEF increment compared to purely national efforts as well as the GEBs associated with strengthening sustainable groundwater use from a regional, pan-African approach and greater economies of scale of developing policy guidance, deploying expertise and knowledge exchanges on a regional scale.

(4/12/2022) Comment addressed. Cleared.

Agency Response New text was included to strengthen this section and address GEF SEC comments

6. Are the project's/program's indicative targeted contributions to global environmental benefits (measured through core indicators) reasonable and achievable? Or for adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022)

1. This section seems to try to add more ideas and activities to the project and could use some more clarity. It raises issues of building central/consistent groundwater database (?) , and identifying adaptation solutions - neither of which seem to be part of the project scope.
2. Please also revise the language of "G4DR will engage with ... ". The project while executed by IWMI (components 1, 3, and 4) and IIASA (Component 2) and we understand is intended to serve and drive forward the AMCOW Africa agenda, support the AMCOW groundwater desk (together with other partners) and with the administrative capacity of AMCOW being enhanced to house the PMU by the mid-term of the project. It seems odd that it reads as if the project is a separate entity and dissociated from AMCOW.

(4/12/2022) Comment addressed with revision of the section in the resubmission.

Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

1. the global environmental benefits section has been restructured completely.
2. the Coordination section was rearranged and restructured completely.

7. Is there potential for innovation, sustainability and scaling up in this project?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022) Yes. The project is an essential contribution to provide the factual base to drive forward the development of cross-sector strategies realizing the role of groundwater as an essential asset for drinking water, health, agriculture, urban development and a number of industries and an essential asset for resilience to climate change as well as other shocks. The pilots will aim at being developed based on criteria that aim at innovation and scale-up.

1. The text in the PIF could use some more clarity. It is unsure what and how the project provides a 'commercially viable model among the involved actors', or what actions will truly be targeting 'various groundwater related value chains'. One of the pilots will address 'borehole drillers and water procurement distribution', but it is less clear for the wider project and the text should be clear when it refers to the specific pilot. The text goes on to mention improved WASH practices, blended finance for carbon sequestration and carbon offsets etc. etc. and leaves the reader frankly a bit lost on how to relate this to the project.

2. Further, it reads somewhat ambitious that the project is not only targeting policy making across Africa but also seems to aims to be "crucial" to development of GEF strategies (see PIF). We certainly hope that the findings will have great relevance across sectors, but may want to see and maintain some real focus on the client/region.

(4/12/2022) The substantial revision is noted. Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

New text has been added or paragraphs reformulated to address the comments of GEF SEC. The Innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up was restructured completely

Project/Program Map and Coordinates

Is there a preliminary geo-reference to the project's/program's intended location?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022) Yes. While components 1,2 and 4 are continent wide, two pilots have been identified at PIF-stage and building on demand and efforts. The other on the ground interventions will be identified during PPG.

Cleared.

Agency Response NA

Stakeholders

Does the PIF/PFD include indicative information on Stakeholders engagement to date? If not, is the justification provided appropriate? Does the PIF/PFD include information about the proposed means of future engagement?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022)

The PIF includes a description of a range of stakeholders and their current roles.

1. Please describe who has been involved in the formulation of the PIF (i.e. to date), how and when.
2. Please spell out acronyms when first uses, e.g. what are MSs? Ministries?
3. Please rename the last column in the table on stakeholders to be involved during PPG: instead of "Role in project engagement" which is

... The last column in the table on stakeholders to be involved during PPG was renamed to focus on the project preparation phase here in the PIF: Which groups will participate in the design process and how will they be involved ?; which groups will be consulted - when and by what means?; etc. This could be an important step to developing a rough work plan for the process of *project preparation*.

4. For now the text in the last column tends to be somewhat generic and vague in outlining roles as "knowledge generators, uptake partners, etc. ". If you prefer you could start populate a fourth columns that starts to indicate the envisioned/potential roles of players in *project implementation*. AMCOW, and the three regional centers on groundwater with respective RECs clearly will be important during project preparation.

(4/12/2022) The revisions have been noted and we have evidence through conversations that the stakeholders listed as having been consulted with and contributed to the PIF development have done so. Please, for future reference and during the project preparation process, please document when and where you consulted with who and annex to the prodoc. At that stage, the role of the listed stakeholders plus additional ones to be identified during PPG need to be specific and clear for each. Please do not forget to involve the water and youth networks on regional and some of the national ones in project development. Same for key sector actors in agriculture and urban development as without these cross-sector actors policies and guidelines on groundwater management (quantity and pollution prevention efforts) will have little chance to have any practical application and impact. Please address in much more detail during project preparation.

Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

1. indication on who was involved in the formulation of the PIF has been included.
2. The acronyms have been spell out when first uses
3. The last column in the table on stakeholders to be involved during PPG was renamed to focus on the project preparation phase
4. The table on stakeholders was slightly reorganized to provide more clarity.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Is the articulation of gender context and indicative information on the importance and need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, adequate?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022)

- There could be a more practical set of considerations considered such as the rights of women to land and water, and often related to this their opportunities to access credits and finance for entrepreneurial activities including those that require groundwater for irrigation, food processing or other and related investments. This potentially could also be a factor in the design of a pilot/s.
- While the write-up is written in progressive terms ('challenging social norms, cultural values and social life in terms of decision making power that reinforces gender and intergenerational equity' ... etc.), it would be useful to inject tangible and measurable actions that are reflected in project design. Please revise the text.
- In addition, and outline relevant steps for project design, e.g. provide some additional information on project analysis / assessment to be carried out during project preparation and plans to address gender dimensions in the pilots.

(4/12/2022) Thank you for addressing the comments in the resubmission. During project preparation it is therefore extremely important to see gender aspects addressed throughout the document and made explicit within the component design, including but not limited to the pilot interventions.

Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

The gender section has been reviewed and expanded to address GEFSEC comments

Private Sector Engagement

Is the case made for private sector engagement consistent with the proposed approach?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022) Please be more specific in what types of private sector partners will be most relevant in Africa to advance sustainable use of groundwater and approaches in the project design (such as, e.g. to promote voluntary actions; appeal to a consumer base (which by national or international) by commitments to responsible use of inputs to production; or private sector dialogues to influence policies and regulations; ... other). Are there any known champions that could lead a peer dialogue in key sectors?; is there an option to work via existing industry roundtables? and/or influence sustainable supply chains which were mentioned in the PIF? Will there likely be a pilot specifically designed to target private sector partners either via soft (commitments, labeling, regulations, ..) or physical investments.

(4/12/2022) The revised text is noted. During project preparation, please identify specific actors from the private sector or those regulating private sector entities and work with them to identify what voluntary or regulatory means and incentives can and need to be advanced to avoid groundwater over-abstraction and pollution.

Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

The Private Sector Engagement section has been reviewed completely and expanded to address GEFSEC comments.

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Does the project/program consider potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved or may be resulting from project/program implementation, and propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022)

1. The PIF explicitly addresses climate risk and climate impact on regional development.

2. Please expand consideration of risks with regard to e.g. ownership and interest of countries and/or private sector partners in the development of policy guidelines.

3. What if e.g. the second phase of APAGrop is not getting started? Would the AMCOW groundwater desk continue to advance the project ?

3. Capacity risks: The additional pilots may be more likely local or national than regional. Lessons can be learned from the SADC project to work in low capacity environments and building on local knowledge and working with local stakeholders on relevant pilots that could be replicated or scaled -up.

3. The table entries referencing component 3 need update as the former component 3 was dropped.

(4/12/2022) Comments addressed. Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

The Risk section has been reviewed completely and expanded to address GEFSEC comments. This will be further strengthened during PG phase.

Coordination

**Is the institutional arrangement for project/program coordination including management, monitoring and evaluation outlined?
Is there a description of possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project/program area?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022) Yes, this is outlined in the PIF.

1. IWMI has an immense experience in Africa and across the globe to bring to the effort and linking water-food-land-ecosystems. This will be strengthened and broadened within the new configuration of an integrated CGIAR system.

be strengthened and broadened within the new configuration of an integrated CGIAR system.

2. The combination of IIASA and IWMI to support AMCOW and the wider AU development agenda holds great promise and is a pilot in itself to link world-class modeling expertise in IIASA with applied research within the CGIAR system to directly serve client countries in addressing challenges and opportunities.

While this has been practice in the CGIAR institutions, component 2 spearheaded by IIASA adds best available data and intersectoral modeling to underpin regional AU policy and strategy formulation. IIASA also scales these efforts down to provide proof-of-concept in one of the pilots to link a highly sophisticated institution and modeling capacity with the national and local clients in Uganda. Successful implementation of that pilot could open a wider vision of collaboration and applied science within the IIASA network of members for the benefit of countries.

3. During project preparation/PPG please explore concrete/measurable synergies and collaboration platform across partners - including GRIPP partners - in support of AMCOW and member states on groundwater. AMCOW had previously voiced a strong interest for a collaboration platform of partners aligning behind Africa's strategies and support needs for water, incl. groundwater, spearheaded by AMCOW.

4. The transfer of the PMU to AMCOW and successive building of AMCOW's project management capacity is well noted. This will be essential to maintain ownership within AMCOW and to support sustainability.

5. During PPG develop a clear plan of the AMCOW groundwater desk and APAGRoP 2 to collaborate and work through the three regional REC supported centers on groundwater in Africa (via SADC, IGAD, and ECOWAS).

(4/12/2022) Noted. Please reassure during project preparation that the goal is to transfer the PMU to AMCOW well before the finalization of the project to assure continuity and sustainability. Please formulate clear plan to strengthen AMCOW admin capacities and transparent path and conditions to be met to enable that transfer.

Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

The coordination section has been completely restructured. This will be further strengthened during PG phase.

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project/program cited alignment with any of the recipient country's national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022)

Yes. The project is aligned with the regional AMCOW priorities and efforts to increase attention to groundwater as a support to achieving the SDGs and sustainable development. Alignment of yet to identified pilots with national strategies and plans needs to be assured during the project preparation phase and outlined in the endorsement request. The alignment of the two identified pilots with country priorities is already described in the PIF.

(4/12/2022) Response noted. Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

Alignment of the pilots that will be identified during the PPG phase with national strategies and plans needs will be assured during the project preparation phase and outlined in the endorsement request.

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed "knowledge management (KM) approach" in line with GEF requirements to foster learning and sharing from relevant projects/programs, initiatives and evaluations; and contribute to the project's/program's overall impact and sustainability?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022)

1. This is inherent in the concept/logic of the PIF but needs concretization in the PIF (incl. table B and components and budget).
2. Please also include information about: 1) an overview of existing lessons and best practice that inform the project concept, 2) proposed tools and methods for knowledge exchange, learning and collaboration, and 3) proposed knowledge outputs to be produced and shared with stakeholders.

(4/12/2022) Noted. Cleared.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

These comments were addressed by introducing a new component 5.

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 PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022) Yes. The FAO risk screen is included and the project is classified as "low risk".

1. Please provide a brief summary on the environmental and social screening results and justification in the portal section on ESS.

(4/12/2022) The explanation is indeed brief but as this is a low risk project, this is seen as sufficient.

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

A brief explanation of the environmental and social screening conducted during the PIF stage has been included in the portal section on ESS.

art III – Country Endorsements

Has the project/program been endorsed by the country's GEF Operational Focal Point and has the name and position been checked against the GEF data base?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022)

1. The project is covering all countries in Africa and will require LOEs only for countries with on the ground activities. At endorsement stage all LOEs for countries with pilots have to be provided. At PIF stage countries with pilots identified in the PIF have to be provided.
2. The LOE for Mozambique is still missing assuming Moz is to participate. Else the text would need to be clearer that it is not. LOEs from Uganda and Malawi have been provided.
3. In the Project Information section, please correct the "Countries entry", delete "Africa" and next to "Regional" (instead of "Global"), add "Uganda, Malawi", as well as Mozambique - if applicable.

(4/12/2022) The LOE from Mozambique has been provided. Please note that at ER stage LOEs will have to be provided from other countries in which additional pilots are identified during project preparation.

Cleared

Agency Response

FAO (5/2/2022)

2. The LOE for Mozambique was uploaded in the Portal.
3. Done

Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects

Does the project provide sufficient detail in Annex A (indicative termsheet) 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 in Annex B to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. After reading the questionnaire in Annex C, is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

N/A

Agency Response

NA

EFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

Is the PIF/PFD recommended for technical clearance? Is the PPG (if requested) being recommended for clearance?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(4/15/2022) Please address the comments provided and resubmit.

(5/6/2022) PIF stage comments have been addressed adequately in line with what is expected at concept stage. Please pay attention to comments and reminders which have been included where significantly more clarity is needed at endorsement stage.

(5/10/2022) There are two small formal changes in the portal still needed:

1. In Part I Project Information: Countries: Delete "Africa" and just say: Regional (Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda)
2. Table D: Change "Africa" to "Regional" in the country column (as was already done in table E).

(note: if not corrected, the reports will not capture this project when requesting information on "Regional" countries)

Please amend and resubmit.

(5/11/2022) These comments have been addressed. The project is technically cleared and recommended for an upcoming work program.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Additional recommendations to be considered by Agency at the time of CEO endorsement/approval.

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

- - Deep Resilience – this term seems unusual and does not truly seem to add to clarity. During project preparation/PPG you may want to consider if the term gains traction. 'Groundwater for Resilience' seems perfectly fine to be used in the title and throughout.
-
- - Please pay attention to comments and reminders which have been included where significantly more clarity is needed at endorsement stage.

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	4/20/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/10/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		

PIF Recommendation to CEO

Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval

Background. Groundwater is often overlooked in initiatives focused on climate and ecosystems. While groundwater is a resource on which the majority of the African population depends (Upton and Danert, 2019), and while groundwater plays a key role in climate resilience as a drought-tolerant resource in rural poor regions as well as in sustaining ecosystems, resilience and ecosystem-based strategies too often fail to take groundwater explicitly into account. With the strategic role groundwater, can play in the future of climate resilience and ecosystem services in Africa, it is of utmost importance to account for and build into such plans and strategies at all levels the role groundwater plays in water security and resilience and the potential it has in further safeguarding communities against climate change, while supporting the equitable distribution of benefits across society and the sustainability of ecosystem services.

The project. The Groundwater for Deep Resilience (G4DR) in Africa project aims to bring groundwater and its sustainable development and protection to the forefront of water security and adaptation planning and investment in Africa, enhancing resilience for humans and ecosystems. It will do so by: 1. Strategic Planning: Supporting the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), through their Pan-African Groundwater Program (APAGroP); 2. Evidence and Capacity for G4DR in Africa: Identifying aquifers that present risk and opportunity to enhance resilience, as well as populations/socio-economic contexts in Africa informing investments; 3. Demonstrating benefit: Utilizing evidence-based planning to realize on-the-ground impacts in pilots; 4. Incorporating G4DR into an inter-generational effort and supporting a pan-African Youth Forums: enhancing the beyond-project capacity, outreach, networking, and uptake of long-term workable and sustainable strategies and solutions; and 5. Supporting Knowledge Management and M&E: Supporting capture, exchange and dissemination of key project advancements, as well as evaluation of project progress relative to targets.

The project's expected **regional and global benefits** are the support to AMCOW , RECs, RBOs, and Member States to achieve water security and resilience with improved groundwater planning and management. Outcomes will equally support an improved policy context for introducing innovative groundwater solutions in Africa and foster the cross-scale and cross-sector linkages necessary. Enhanced knowledge generation and lesson exchange will increase awareness on the opportunities and risks related to groundwater, and capacity strengthening activities will enable stakeholders across scales to assess groundwater assets and further, planning, evidence-generation, and implementation of integrated solutions will be undertaken in local pilots, so that the value of groundwater-based planning and evidence is demonstrated on-the-ground.

Innovation, Scale-up and Sustainability. While groundwater provides immense benefit as a response to climate variability and drought, benefits of groundwater are not limited to severe environments. Irrespective of severity of climate and water challenges, groundwater provides benefits to key productive sectors such as agriculture, mining and urban uses in Africa. Groundwater is equally key to sustainable water management. It is thus important to acknowledge the role groundwater plays as part of a larger ecosystem, and in provision of ecosystem services. Ultimately, groundwater is a strategic resource, and failing to consider it in planning limits that benefits that can be derived from management. It is thus important to understand past barriers to consideration of groundwater, as well as incentives which can motivate greater consideration to the resource going forward.

G4DR aims to support AMCOW and its groundwater desk, involve stakeholders in pilots, and engage with youth of all genders and social differences and thus supporting the creation of a pan-African platform for scale-up on a wider scale.

COVID provisions. Potential impacts of COVID-19 will be closely and regularly monitored throughout the project lifetime. It is anticipated that, even if face-to-face interactions are reduced, the project will still be able to carry out most activities as planned with proper management and alternative communication channels, which have been widely exercised in 2020-2021. Exceptions are the local activities, such as stakeholder engagement and joint learnings, which is covered in the item b below. The project will implement adaptive management. The work plan and stakeholder engagement plan will be flexibly designed to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. Remote communication via email, online meetings, and phone may be used increasingly to adjust to the current situation. Consequently, the project will invest in staff safety and remote working capacities (e.g. provide internet access, dongles, etc., to enable out-of-office work). The detailed budget will be flexible and have a contingency budget item to include COVID-19 related prevention measures, especially for activities involving local and international travels.