

Transforming landscapes and livelihoods: A cross-sector approach to accelerate restoration of Malawi's Miombo and Mopane woodlands for sustainable forest and biodiversity management

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10254

Countries

Malawi

Project Name

Transforming landscapes and livelihoods: A cross-sector approach to accelerate restoration of Malawi's Miombo and Mopane woodlands for sustainable forest and biodiversity management

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

12/11/2020

Review completed by PM

4/21/2021

Program Manager

Ulrich Apel

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

01/19/2021: Yes.

However, in Table A, please retain the SFM IP line only with the total amount of funding (same like in the parent PFD Table A).

Please set CCM Rio Marker to 2 as SFM incentive funding is involved.

03/15/2021: Missing information:

The SFM IP line has been correctly selected, but the drop down menu for the related "focal area outcome" (2nd column) needs to be selected as well.

04/09/2021: FOCAL AREA OUTCOMES STILL MISSING.

Please select from the drop down menu in the second column or let us know if there is a technical issue.

04/12/2021: Inserted.

Cleared

Agency Response

Noted and corrected accordingly.

3/31/21

Done

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

01/19/2021: Yes.

However, the PMC co-financing amount entered in Table B is not proportional to the overall co-financing rate. As per GEF policy and guidelines PMC need to be sufficiently co-financed so that no management costs are charged to project components. Please see also further comments in this regard on the project co-financing (Part 1, box 4) and the budget (Part 1, box 5).

03/15/2021: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

The co-financing budget was revised and PMC increased. As detailed in the cofinancing letters the co-financed portion of PMC includes the following:

From the MCHF project: project management staff time dedicated to the establishment and operation of GoM's National Forest and Monitoring Unit (NMU) located within DF and includes office space, equipment etc.

From GoM: provision of office space including maintenance for Project GvT Focal Point and other officers contributing to the project; drivers; vehicles running costs; meeting facilities for coordination team; utilities (water and electricity); provision of office supplies.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 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

01/19/2021: No.

- There is no government co-financing, which is not considered feasible nor acceptable.
- Co-financing letters do not specify type of co-financing.
- Please provide explanation on how Investment Mobilized was identified.
- Please clarify how PMC will be co-financed.

03/15/2021: One issue remaining:

According to the co-financing letters from FAO, the co-financing funds originate from bilateral donor Agencies (European Union and UK/DFID). Please revise the table C to reflect the source (donor Agency) and name.

04/09/2021: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Additional cofinancing was received. Please see revised table C and corresponding cofinancing letters.

Addressed. Letters have been amended and now include the type of cofinancing.

Additional text added under Table C explaining how Investment Mobilized was identified.

Please refer to response to section 2. above.

31/3/2021

Done.

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

01/19/2021: While overall funding request is correct and in line with what was approved as part of the PFD, the following clarifications and revisions are requested with regard to the proposed budget:

- In line with GEF policy on execution support, please revise the budget accordingly. Note that M&E costs as required by the M&E policy do not trigger an execution support request if separately budgeted in the GEF budget table. The main budget items that trigger the execution support are international consultants and related travel.
- Please revise the budget in a way that takes into account more field implementation, less international consultancy and travel in light of COVID, co-financing potential for vehicles, and all management activities to be charged to PMC (e.g. costs of drivers cannot be charged to project components).
- The justification for cars is only partly acceptable as far as cars for field work in the district is concerned. We can't accept using 100% GEF grants to pay for 5 vehicles and 5 drivers. Please mobilize government co-financing to share these costs in line with GEF policy.

03/15/2021: Partly addressed. Among other amendments, costs for drivers are covered by co-financing. Therefore, Program Manager approves purchase of field vehicles and motorbikes as budgeted.

However, the following issues still pertain:

(i) Project staff (Project Coordinator, Project Accountant and Administrative Procurement and Operations Officer) are paid from the Project Components ? these have to be paid from PMC. Please revise the budget in line with GEF guidelines on PMC.

(ii) Knowledge management and communication officer is mainly charged to component 2 while it should be charged to component 3 (Effective knowledge management, monitoring, and linkages with the DSL-IP). Please clarify.

(iii) Execution Capacity Development Support and ESS monitoring specialist is partially charged to PMC ? in absence of TORs, it would be more reasonable to charge it to Component 3 and M&E; or please provide TORs for this position.

(iv) There are three contracts for ?outsourcing support? ? only one (FFF for \$102,000) is explained in ProDoc ? the other two (FFS and CBS ? each one for \$120,000) are not mentioned in ProDoc. Is this a direct transfer of resources for executing activities? Please clarify.

(v) Miscellaneous expenses for \$32,543 are charged to PMC ? PMC cannot pay for unspecified charges. Please specify or remove.

04/09/2021: All comments addressed as per agency response and budget revised accordingly.

04/12/2021: OUTSTANDING ISSUES:

a) Project Coordinator still is partially charged to the project components when as per Guidelines, costs associated with the execution of the project must be covered by PMC (GEF portion and the Co-financing portion ? see Guidelines paragraph 5 ? page 49). The co-financing portion allocated to PMC is considered to be sufficient to cover this.

b) The Execution Capacity Development Support and ESS monitoring specialist (which was subject of a previous comment iii) now disappeared from the budget. Is this position not needed anymore or was it replaced by some other position? It was not possible to find an explanation of the change in the Review sheet.

c) The transfers to FFS and CBS (\$120,000 each) are explained in ProDoc - however, reviewer could not find the direct involvement of the GEF Agency in applying its Fiduciary Standards in this transfer as presumably the transfer would be done by the Executing Entity (Department of Forest) (if I missed this information, please indicate where it is in ProDoc and in Portal).

04/21/21: Addressed.

on (a) the revised TOR for the Project Manager covering both managerial and technical tasks have been found acceptable and are herewith approved by the Program Manager.

on (b) the Execution Capacity Development Support and ESS monitoring specialist is still in the budget (see line 22 in Excel table).

on (c) Agency has confirmed that FAO fiduciary standards apply in this case, as per response below.

Cleared

Agency Response

The budget was revised to remove international consultancies and shift additional budget in support of field implementation under Component 2. This will be done through the engagement of regional entities. See further explanation under comment re institutional arrangements.

Budget revised to eliminate drivers. The vehicles will be used mainly to deliver and monitor field activities ? these are therefore budgeted under Component 2 and only partly under PMC. This is aligned to guidance provided by Henry Salazar.

GoM will provide through cofinancing sources the costs for the drivers and vehicles maintenance. The budget was revised accordingly.

3/31/2021

(i) The budget was revised to cover the Project Accountant and the Administrative Procurement and Operations Officer entirely under PMC. The project coordinator is now partly covered by PMC in line with GEF guidelines.

(ii) The KM and communication officer is now charged under outputs 1.1.3, 3.1.1, 3.2.3, all of which will include KM related activities.

(iii) TORs are available in Prodoc Annex O (TORs of PMU members). These have also been uploaded as a separate document in the Portal.

(iv) Resources will be used to support outscaling of SLM and SFM field interventions through international NGO that are specialised in required technical fields including FFS (Farmer Field Schools), FFF (Forest and Farm Facility) and CSB (Community Seed Banks). FFS, FFF and CSB are all mentioned in the project document.

(v) The budget was revised to remove the miscellaneous budget line.

04/20/2021: OUTSTANDING ISSUES:

a) The Project coordinator will be tasked with technical deliverables beyond PMC related tasks, this is why associated costs are also spread over technical outcomes. Please see revised version of PMU staff TORs ? Annex O. TORs are also available as separate document in the Portal/Road Map.

Co-financing sources will provide substantial PMC related support but additional full time and dedicated staff covered by the project will be necessary to mitigate any risks and bottlenecks during the project's implementation.

The co-financing budget was revised and PMC increased. As detailed in the cofinancing letters and in the institutional arrangement section of the Prodoc the co-financed portion of PMC includes the following:

From the MCHF project: project management staff time dedicated to the establishment and operation of GoM's National Forest and Monitoring Unit (NMU) located within DF and includes office space, equipment etc.

From GoM: provision of National Project Director (NPD), office space including maintenance for Project GvT Focal Point and other officers contributing to the project; drivers; vehicles running costs; meeting facilities for coordination team; utilities (water and electricity); provision of office supplies.

b) Please double check the latest excel budget submitted in RoadMap, budget line A22 highlighted in pink. Please also check Annex O submitted separately in RoadMap and available in Prodoc for respective TORs.

c) We don't understand this comment. FAO cannot operate without applying its own fiduciary standards with third parties. The intention is for the Executing Entity to manage these subcontracts. If this is not possible (DF cannot subcontract as per national legislation), FAO can transfer these resources to third parties. In both cases compliance with FAOs and GEFs fiduciary standards would be applied. Hope this clarifies.

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

01/19/2021:

Please paste into portal in Annex C.

03/15/2021: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response Addressed.

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

01/19/2021: Not fully.

- Carbon estimate must be listed in 6.1 (AFOLU) and 20 years accounting period included. (It is currently listed in 6.2 (non-AFOLU))

03/15/2021: Not fully.

I don't see this addressed in the portal screen, the figure is still listed in 6.2. (non-AFOLU) and start of accounting and 20 year period is missing.

04/09/2021: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Noted and corrected accordingly.

3/31/21

Done.

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

01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

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
01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

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
01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response
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
01/19/2021: Not fully.

The entered text in the respective portal section should make reference to the uploaded gender action plan and briefly summarize it.

03/15/2021: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response Noted, summary provided.

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

01/19/2021: Yes. However, please take the following recommendations into account and address as appropriate:

- Green Value Chain opportunities have been identified in sorghum, pigeon pea, honey (Honey Products Ltd and associated technology certification and sourcing) and baobab and moringa. Charcoal production using non-timber feed stocks (bamboo) is also noted.

- It is also noted that the Government of Malawi is supportive of private sector activities ?yet there is limited engagement with the private sector and limited private sector participation in forestry investments, agricultural commodity marketing, and the water and energy sectors, among others.?

- Payments for ecosystem services, as evidenced by forest based carbon projects in the region, have the potential to link new streams of income to performance based carbon projects. The potential for widened PES to include biodiversity and bundled carbon/biodiversity is expected to increase post 2021 and the adoption of a post 2020 framework. While opportunities have been identified in the voluntary carbon markets, the potential for compliance based and regulatory offsets through Article 6 and ITMOs could also be an opportunity for which voluntary markets could prove a useful transition phase.

- As the demand for tobacco in Malawi decreases, many tobacco companies, including PMI, are seeking to replace tobacco with other crops as they exit the region or specific farms. Such activities in tobacco replacement have significant potential for funding, especially for activities that build smallholder resilience and reduce the reliance on a few cash crops.

- The private sector may be considered for inclusion in the GVC Innovation Platforms and assessment. Members of the GEF PSAG and other have expressed an interest to support such activities.

03/15/2021: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Re PES, some text was added under the narrative for Output 2.2.4 (see Prodoc pg. 81). In addition, the idea is that the GCP could also provide support (via the REM) as this could be a theme of interest to other child projects too.

Re tobacco replacement activities, text was added in Prodoc under the narrative description for Output 2.3.1 (pg. 83) explaining how planning efforts will support/look into existing schemes to make them more effective (indirect involvement of tobacco companies).

Re the private sector and the GVC Innovation Platforms, text was added under the narrative for Output 2.3.3 (pg.85).

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

01/19/2021: Not fully.

While risks have been assessed, and COVID-19 pandemic also discussed and mitigation measures proposed; what is lacking is an assessment of COVID-19 opportunities and potential for integrating the project into national efforts to "build back better".

Further, the uploaded ESS checklist does not indicate the project ID or title, nor does it show an overall rating. It would be good to have an overall summary in the portal with reference made to the uploaded checklist.

03/15/2021: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Noted. Additional text on COVID 19 opportunities was added under the narrative description of the projects Theory of Change (prodoc pg. 55-57).

An ESS summary was added in the portal, and the ESS checklist now includes the project ID and title.

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

01/19/2021: Not fully.

It is noted that the OFP has made an exception request for FAO to provide execution support.

- The justification provided in this case is to ensure a more effective collaboration between the Miombo/Mopane cluster countries under the programmatic approach, and also to provide an opportunity for a harmonized, well-coordinated and cost-efficient deployment of tailored technical assistance to support child project countries in addressing common land degradation challenges. This is not considered a justification for a GEF policy exception, which explicitly precludes the merging or crossing over of the implementing functions of the GEF Agencies and the execution functions undertaken by EAs.
- The proposed arrangement on the procurement of all international expertise for the child project through FAO is not in line with this policy. GEF policy strongly prefers national execution of projects and the utilization of national expertise to provide technical assistance locally. The intended harmonized, well-coordinated and cost-efficient deployment of tailored technical assistance to support child project execution can be achieved by other means than by providing execution support by the Implementing agency.
- FAO as the Lead Agency for the DSL program also implements and executes the associated Global Coordination Project (GCP) for this program. This function is crucial for ensuring coherence among all child projects under the program, and also has a specific budget for providing technical assistance through the GCP. In addition, child projects are expected to allocate funds for engagement in global (and specifically for this IP regional cluster) activities for learning and knowledge sharing.

- Even if situations of low capacity in the country would require specific execution support, we request the GEF Agency to procure a "third-party" to execute as a preferred way forward.

- Finally, written requests by OFPs are only a condition for consideration of the request, and do not automatically lead to GEF's concurrence with the request. In the specific case, the conclusion of the PM is to not approve the request.

- Please re-design the coordination arrangements accordingly.

03/15/2021: Addressed as per agency response below. Program Manager approves the arrangements as described below.

Cleared

Agency Response

The proposed inclusion of technical assistance is based on a capacity building approach according to identified capacity gaps at various level. FAO has not intended to engage/finance FAO experts but international consultants in the sub-region that are familiar with corresponding technical approaches working directly with PMU and government counter parts in the beginning of the project. Not all international consultants were meant to be recruited by FAO but a selected few. A corresponding letter signed by the OFP has been submitted in support to this arrangement.

The approach has been modified now, in line with GEF policy without risking the anticipated results.

The execution arrangements of the Malawi DSL IP child project have resulted from a complex consultation process involving key actors responsible for delivering integrated landscape management and LDN under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment. The executing agencies proposed by the Ministry of Environment are DF and NLGFC. While NLGFC guarantees most (but not all) the set of expertise, convening power and compliance with UN and GEF fiduciary standards required to execute, DF needs PMC and Risk Mitigation Monitoring support of its execution capacities, as further described below. Assessments available if needed.

Moreover, complex institutional arrangements (2 main Executing Entities and several sub- partners, including WRI, The Department of Agriculture Extension Services (DAES), Malawi's National Bureau of Standards, local NGO's, regional entities, and others) require a high level of coordination, M&E and learning efforts that none of the potential Executing Agencies can bear without support. Under the circumstances, even inputs provided through implementing agency fee and own co-financing, alone, are not expected to be sufficient to ensure the desired level of coordination, application of

environmental and social safeguards, coherent flow of knowledge and monitoring of agencies' performances and contributions.

In order to address the above institutional, technical, and operational complexity and to ensure that the program is delivered as one coherent project, the Government of Malawi has requested FAO to perform minor, targeted execution support functions essential to the smooth and consistent delivery of the program. This support will be provided by a dedicated national consultant, namely:

? An Execution Capacity development Support and ESS monitoring specialist. The fiduciary assessment of execution capacity (conducted by the external audit firm BDO) has identified a number of weaknesses that will need minor active support and capacity building to enable DF and NLGFC to perform their role of Executing Agencies. This will be required especially during the first 2 years of implementation. As part of this process, the EA has requested training for harmonizing their procurement standards and process with UN and GEF standards, specifically on OPIM requirements. The fiduciary assessment also highlighted significant risks posed by DF's and NLGFC's limited sub-contracting capacities. FAO's specialist will build their capacities and closely support the implementation of the risk mitigation plan.

Even more importantly, to mitigate the risks associated with the operational and institutional complexity of the program, this profile, co-funded by FAO's own fees and resources, will ensure that all AWP&B, procurement plans and all reporting products are prepared in a consistent manner for smooth review and approval from the Project Steering Committee, a key PMC support task that Executing Agencies, alone, will not be able to ensure for a program of this complexity.

Coordination with the DSL IP Regional Exchange Mechanism (REM) for Southern Africa: FAO is well-positioned to ensure that the project optimizes its interactions both regionally and globally. Through the above minor execution support functions, FAO will be in a better position to enable the project management unit to interface directly with the REM ensuring a consistent and reliable bi-directional flow of data and knowledge.

Specifically the Execution Capacity development Support and ESS monitoring specialist, will perform the tasks as specified in the TORs in Prodoc Annex O.

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

01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response
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
01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response
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
01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response
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
01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

While all Annexes have been submitted as part of the project document, it would be appreciated if the relevant parts are copied and pasted into the portal as well (in the Annex section).

03/15/2021: Not yet included for Annexes D & E in the portal.

Please include. So far, only a hyperlink for the maps is included on Annex D. And only reference to prodoc is made for Annex E. The budget table does not need to be the entire Excel sheet here in this portal section, a summary table with all budget items as per GEF categories (see GEF budget template in guidelines) is sufficient.

04/12/2021: CORRECTION of comment above on 03/15, which was made in error, apologies for any inconvenience.

The Budget version included in Portal (Annex E) is insufficient ? as per guidelines the table pasted in Annex E should be the same table as the one that is uploaded in the documents section.

04/21/21: Please insert the same table into the Annex E as is uploaded in the documents section of portal. (If freezing occurs, please either remove output breakdown from table to make it smaller, or contact GEF for IT support).

04/27/21: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Addressed.

4/20/2021

Addressed. A more complete summary table is now captured in Annex F. The full detailed excel budget cannot be cut and pasted in Annex F as the portal freezes due to oversize.

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/19/2021: Has been provided as part of the Project Document.

Cleared

Agency Response

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/19/2021: Earlier upstream comments on the Malawi project document have been taken into consideration/addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request If there are Council comments during the 4-weeks circulation period, the reviewer will inform the agency accordingly to respond.

Agency Response

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/19/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/19/2021: Yes.

Upstream UNCCD Secretariat comments have been addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request none received

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request none received

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/19/2021: Has been provided in the project document.

Cleared

Agency Response

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/19/2021: Has been provided.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

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 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

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/19/2021: No. Please address comments made in this review.

03/15/2021: No. please address outstanding comments.

04/09/2021: One outstanding issue in Table A (Focal Area Outcome column is blank) - please address and re-submit.

04/12/2021: No. Outstanding issues encountered in the revisions and responses, please address. Further, there is one Correction of a comment on Annex F (budget table in portal Annex needs to be the same as uploaded in document section in the portal).

04/21/2021: No. Please insert same budget table in Annex E as is uploaded to the portal documents section.

04/27/2021: Yes. Program Manager recommends CEO endorsement.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	1/19/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	3/15/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/9/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/12/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/21/2021	

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations

This project is part of the Impact Program on Dryland Sustainable Landscapes (DSL IP), with the goal to avoid, reduce, and reverse further degradation, desertification, and deforestation of land and ecosystems in drylands through the sustainable and integrated management of production landscapes. Among the DSL IP countries, seven are part of the so-called "Miombo Cluster": Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. The project is fully in line with the programmatic approach and will focus on Malawi's dry miombo and mopane ecosystems of the upper Shire Basin, in three landscapes in the Districts of Mangochi, Ntcheu and Balaka, which were selected at the design phase based on biodiversity, land degradation and climate change vulnerability criteria.

The project seeks the transformation to sustainable management of the Miombo and Mopane woodlands in the target landscapes in line with LDN principles. The objective of the project is "Improve livelihoods and economic diversification of rural communities in two productive landscapes of the Upper Shire River Basin of Southern Malawi by promoting best land management practices and green value chains for key agriculture and woodland commodities". The project will restore 16,300 ha and bring 421,000 ha under sustainable management, directly targeting 150,000 beneficiaries. It will also lead to 712,000 t CO₂ eq of carbon benefits.

The project will address the Covid-19 crisis in multiple ways, addressing the risks by mitigation measures incorporated into the project interventions and taking advantage of emerging opportunities by responding to the recommendations of the UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to Covid-19. Specifically, the project will mainstream the priorities established in the Malawi National Plan Clusters - with focus on those related to agriculture and food security - into the project components, applying different tools that have developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Malawi and will give continuity to interventions that have already been launched by other projects, especially with regard to the baseline investment.