



Strengthening the adaptive capacity of communities by up-scaling integrated landscape management and restoration in south-west region of Central African Republic

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10771

Countries

Central African Republic

Project Name

Strengthening the adaptive capacity of communities by up-scaling integrated landscape management and restoration in south-west region of Central African Republic

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

9/15/2022

Review completed by PM

10/19/2023

Program Manager

Jason Spensley

Focal Area

Climate Change

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

6Nov2023:

Cleared

18Oct2023:

A) Please provide an explanation of why the CER indicates a 1 for Rio Markers related to biodiversity, climate mitigation, and land degradation, when these were indicated as 0 in the PIF. What has changed in the project to merit this?

B) Please request the agency to correct the expected completion date to match the expected duration of the project.

Agency Response

A) This is an oversight ? Rio markers have been corrected as per PIF originals.

B) Apologies, this has been corrected.

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

6Nov2023:

Cleared

18Oct2023:

Although we note the brief indication in para 189 of some of the changes made in project design from PIF to CER, please provide a detailed explanation of every change made to outcomes and outputs from the time of PIF submission to CER submission. Please also indicate what has changed during project preparation to require each change and how will it strengthen this project?

Agency Response

Please see an updated, more detailed description of changes in paragraph 189.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

18Oct2023:

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

6Nov2023:

The current significant decrease in co-finance from PIF to CER remains disappointing. However, the efforts to achieve a similar level of co-finance indicated in the approved PIF are appreciated, as is the continued effort to secure the co-financing initially indicated from MEDD and MADR prior to CER approval.

18Oct2023:

A) We note again with concern that yet again an FAO project has significantly reduced the level of co-finance from the approved PIF to the CER submission, this time from \$30.6 million from 8 sources down to \$9.49 million from 3 sources. We note that this type of reduction is a concerning pattern among FAO projects and is not just this isolated case, and as such we encourage this pattern to be addressed for FAO implemented projects. In the case of this project, please seek to identify opportunities to bring the co-finance back up to the level it was at the time of PIF approval, and provide an explanation for any source and amount of co-finance that was expected at PIF approval but not delivered at CER.

B) Please resubmit the Co-financing letter from FAO. The submitted letter does not open.

Agency Response

A) The decrease in cofinancing in this specific case is due to:

i) the extended PPG phase, during which some of the cofinancing sources identified at PIF stage (June 2021) expired - this is the case of the IFAD-funded PADECAS project, World Bank-funded PRADAC project, Peacebuilding Fund project and USAID-funded ?Community resilience in CAR? project.

ii) the complex and challenging nature of the national context, which does not attract many cofinancing investors, thus making it difficult to identify new cofinancing sources.

In spite of this, the EU cofinancing line identified in the PIF was confirmed, if modified, during PPG, in the form of the WWF and African Parks cofinancing lines, both funded by the EU programme ? Programme NaturAfrica - Protection de la biodiversite? en Re?publique centrafricaine?. The FAO cofinancing line was also increased.

The MEDD and MADR cofinancing lines identified at PIF stage are still be pursued ; however, the dialogue at the institutional level with both ministries to secure the cofinancing letters is lengthy, and given the urge to secure CEO endorsement for this project before the cancellation deadline, it was decided to submit without these letters. FAO is still looking to obtain cofinancing from these two sources, and confirm this as soon as possible. FAO will also be on the lookout for additional cofinancing sources throughout implementation, and duly report this in PIRs.

Finally, as mentioned in the submission, a new letter from IFAD was secured (cf. changes in the cofinancing table & new letter uploaded).

For information, please note that, under GEF-7, the average cofinancing ratio in the FAO-GEF portfolio is actually 7.3 to 1.

B) The FAO letter has been reuploaded.

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

13Nov2023:

Cleared

6Nov2023:

The explanation and progress on reducing the PMC to 6.5% is appreciated. However, we have to note the cap is 5%. Please identify ways to reduce PMC to the agreed cap of 5%.

18Oct2023:

There is an increase of PMC from the 5% cap to 8.2% with the following justification ?Please note that PMC is beyond the PIF-approved cap of 5%. An initial HACT assessment of national government partners (as suggested in the PIF) pointed out significant operational capacity gaps. Non-state development partners were assessed instead, and both WWF & African Parks have been identified and confirmed as operational partners. WWF's field activities are located in South-West CAR, while African Parks operations are concentrated in South-East CAR. Though both partners will provide significant co-financing to PMC, the cost of multiple PMUs is substantial and exceeds the PMC cap. In addition, some of the project management functions will be entrusted to the two key line ministries of environment and forests to secure coordination, stewardship and ownership.?

When reviewing the budget, one cannot see where the increase of 3.2% will go excepting for costly Audit (\$150,000) and costly Spot checks (\$150,000). Please note that when there are similar situations in projects implemented by Regional Banks, they provide capacity building using their specialists (procurement, financial, etc.), without the need if increasing the administrative costs. We are unable to accept this significant increase.

Agency Response

The PMC budget has been revised as much as possible, and now amounts to 6.5% of the budget. Please note that standard FAO procedures demand that at least one audit and two spotchecks be commissioned annually for each operational partner for this level of operational capacity. This is all the more relevant in the CAR context that warrants a strong risk management strategy. The budget for audits and spotchecks has been revised as follows: 1 audit per OP per year (@USD 9,500 for WWF and @USD 7,000 for African Parks, reflecting the different scopes of their execution roles), and 2 spotchecks per OP per year (@USD 4,500 for WWF and USD 4,000 for African Parks).

11 Nov2023

The budget has been revised. PMC are now at 5%.

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

18Oct2023:

Yes

Agency Response

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

13Nov2023:

Cleared

6Nov2023:

Thank you for indicating 20.350 people to be trained. However, the CER now indicates 0 direct beneficiaries and 0 hectares of land for climate resilience. Please correct. If this is a problem with the portal, we can arrange a call with the portal IT team to fix it.

18Oct2023:

A) Please explain the significant change in thematic focus tagged from the time of PIF approval.

B) We note the indicator for people trained indicates that no people will be trained in this project, although 20,000 people were expected to be trained at the time of PIF approval. Please indicate at least a the level in the CER as was planned in the PIF and provide an explanation for any change.

Agency Response

A) The project thematic has remained unchanged from the PIF. However, the taxonomy has been adjusted to better align with the taxonomy indicated at PIF submission, while also reflecting the full scope of the project (with activity plan refined during PPG).

B) Apologies, as it seems that the Portal had not saved updates on the Core Indicators (reflected in Annex F of the Project Document). This has been corrected. There is indeed a plan to train approx. 20,350 people through the project.

11 Nov 2023

This was a Portal glitch, which seems to have been resolved.

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

6Nov2023:

Cleared

18Oct2023:

We notice some key information in the PIF is not included in the CER. Was it found to be incorrect or no longer to the project, and if so why? Please either explain why any key information is removed or put it back in in the CER.

Agency Response We did cross-check the PIF and project document, and could not identify any key element from the PIF that would be missing in the project document (only a missing mention to the National & Regional Land Management Plans has been found missing and has been added in the revised project document under Component 1).

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

18Oct2023:

Yes

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

18Oct2023:

Yes

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

6Nov2023:

Apologies. This was an accidentally misplaced comment. This is cleared.

18Oct2023:

No. Please address this.

Agency Response Could you kindly clarify expectations? Both the sections ? Alignment with GEF focal area ? (paragraph 163 & Table 7) and ? Adaptation benefits ? (paragraphs 171 to 173) describe explicitly how the project aligns with the LDCF strategy.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

6Nov2023:

Cleared

18Oct2023:

No, it appears to be the same text in this particular section from the time of PIF to CER.
Please address this.

Agency Response Indeed, the reasoning from the PIF remains valid as the project strategy has not changed since the PIF. However, this section has been revised to better incorporate new development brought in the project document.

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
18Oct2023:

Yes, due to additional text provided throughout the CER.

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
18Oct2023:

Yes

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
6Nov2023:

Cleared

18Oct2023:

Coordinates are provided, but we are not seeing a map. Please provide this.

In Annex D on Project Map and Coordinates, please consider inserting the geographic location of the site directly under the dedicated data entry field ?GEO LOCATION INFORMATION? ? it is left blank.

Agency Response A map has been added, and Annex D has been filled.

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

18Oct2023:

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

6Nov2023:

Cleared

18Oct2023:

No. Please address this in the CER.

In doing so, please provide a summary in the section on stakeholder engagement in the portal section on project plans to further engage/consult stakeholders in project implementation, the means and timing of engagement, how information will be disseminated, and resource allocations etc.

Agency Response Please see the Stakeholder Engagement Plan uploaded in the Portal that details both past consultations during PPG, as well as future engagement during implementation. The summary in the Stakeholder section has been enhanced as requested.

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

18Oct2023:

Yes

Agency Response

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

6Nov2023:

Cleared

18Oct2023:

The indication that "The exact role and means of engagement of the private sector should be determined by the project within the first year of operation" is weak. Given the lengthy time provided for project preparation, please provide a solid description of what private sector actors will be engaged, how they will be engaged, and how this will drive climate change adaptation impact.

Agency Response Please see an updated description of private sector involvement in the dedicated section.

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

18Oct2023:

Yes

Agency Response

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

18Oct2023:

Yes

Agency Response

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

18Oct2023:

Yes

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
18Oct2023:

Yes

Agency Response
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
18Oct2023:

Yes

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
18Oct2023:

Yes

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
18Oct2023:

Yes

Agency Response

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

6Nov2023:

Cleared. Given the project context, the response on the the need for a motorbike is well noted, as a bare minimum mode of transportation.

18Oct2023:

Regarding the budget:

A) \$1,235,200 for maintenance and weeding related to forest restauration seems high. Please explain and provide a breakdown.

B) There are some discrepancies between the total amounts provided in Table B and in Annex E. As an example, component 1 in Table B amounts \$ 1,255,560 and in Annex E \$ 1,266,560. This comment applies to other components. Please request the agency to review and make sure all the numbers across tables match.

C) It seems that the budget table has been uploaded twice in annex E. One right after the other. Please remove one.

D) The purchase of a motorbike has been included in the budget. The use of GEF funds to purchase vehicles is strongly discouraged. Such costs are normally expected to be borne by the co-financed portion of PMCs. Any request to use GEF funding to purchase project vehicles will only be considered with compelling justification by the exceptional specific circumstances of the project.

Agency Response

A) The project foresees to put 4,000 ha under restoration. The context in Central African Republic require regular maintenance to ensure the targeted sites are not invaded or burned down. This requires interventions by local communities with regards to fire-breaks, clearing of fast-growing lianas, deweeding and the estimation of 100 USD/ha/year for first three years after establishment is the minimum.

B) The various annexes and tables have been reviewed to correct any inconsistency.

C) Apologies, this has been corrected.

D) Please note that the proposed project is set to operate in extremely remote areas, both in South-West and South-East CAR. This is why, fully cognizant of the GEF policy on this matter and in light of existing capacities in the field, it has been proposed to limit the purchase of means of transportation to the bare minimum while counting on cofinancing for additional needs in this respect.

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

18Oct2023:

Yes

Agency Response

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

6Nov2023:

Please address the remaining comments.

3 October 2022:

Please resubmit a complete CER.

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

6Nov2023:

Cleared

19October2023:

Please indicate where Council members comments from Germany and Canada have been addressed, and ensure a specific response to each comment.

Agency Response Council members comments are addressed in the dedicated annex in the project document uploaded (Annex B).

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

6Nov2023:

Cleared

Agency Response

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

6Nov2023:

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 N/A

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

6Nov2023:

Please address the remaining comments.

19 October 2023:

Not yet. Several comments need to be addressed.

Review Dates

**Secretariat Comment at
CEO Endorsement**

**Response to
Secretariat comments**

First Review	10/19/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/6/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/13/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	
Additional Review (as necessary)	

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations