

Conservation of Atoll Ecosystems through an effectively managed national protected area Estate (CATENATE)

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10542

Countries

Maldives

Project Name

Conservation of Atoll Ecosystems through an effectively managed national protected area Estate (CATENATE)

Agencies

IUCN

Date received by PM

11/30/2021

Review completed by PM

2/15/2023

Program Manager

Sarah Wyatt

Focal Area

Biodiversity

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

11/11/2022

Yes.

6/6/2022

No, as stated before, there is justification needed for the global biodiversity significance not for working in the Maldives but rather for the specific protected area that is receiving substantial support. There is some minimal text on this in the CER that is not in the ProDoc.

4/5/2022

No, it is correct that the focal area has not changed, the expectation would be for further justification of the global importance of the site receiving much targeted support.

1/12/2021

No, the GEF-7 BD strategy clearly focuses support for new PAs on KBAs and areas that could qualify as such. However, the new proposed PA and surrounding area that will receive much of the support from this project have

Agency Response

24/10/2022

Environmental context has been further expanded to capture specific biodiversity justification for both the Project Areas ? Boduthiladhunmathi atoll and Project site ? Farukolhu Protected Area. Additional information has been added to the Global Environmental Benefits section highlighting the importance of Farukolhu Protected Area, designated in 2018, that requires management intervention.

Note: CATENATE is designed to support the financial sustainability, effective and equitable management of 15 legally declared protected areas including Farukolhu (project site). The project will not be establishing new protected areas.

26/8/2022

Additional information has been added on the global biodiversity significance of Boduthiladhunmathi atoll and specifically Farukolhu island.

11/5/2022

Additional information included in the CEO Endorsement Request regarding Farukolhu Protected Area which is highlighted in yellow and shown in track changes in the document titled, '03GEF 7 CEO Endorsement _Approval _FSP _MSP MV Biodiversity CATENATE 10May2022'.

8/3/2022

BD-2-7 Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species and Improve financial sustainability, effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate

Focal area has not changed since PIF. In the PIF stage it was approved.

The Project will not be establishing new PAs.

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

12/6/2022

Yes.

11/11/2022

No, while changes have been made in the project results framework they have not been brought over to the Portal entry for table B.

5/31/2022

No, the project proponents state that the project won't impact traditional use rights but the language of the target under component 2 is "*Alternative income generation activities identified, and markets established for 100% of households affected by restrictions in Shaviyani Farukolhu*"

Therefore, it does appear that traditional use will be impacted. In addition, the ProDoc discusses various uses of the area. Thus, consultations will need to be undertaken with an understanding of the rights of communities and an FPIC-like process for development of the approach. There needs to be a commitment to these approaches in the documents submitted and some description of it.

4/5/2022

No, while acknowledging that this was not mentioned before output 2.2 does not sound like an output and really does not reflect the actual activities there. It would be good to rewrite it as it sounds like it will accomplish little if the project is evaluated by only reading the output. Please also clarify if traditional use rights will be restricted and the consultation process that will be undertaken to ensure community support before doing this (2nd indicator for 2.2).

1/12/2021

No, as written this project appears to focus basically solely on one atoll (with the exception of data systems) and spend significant resources on it. The language about impact talks about the full protected area system and biodiversity values of Maldives as a whole while the activities do not seem to match this. Please work to broaden the activities to have greater systemic impact. Overall there may be some confusion because at points it seems like the project documents refer to all of the Maldives as "the Atoll" and other times just the case study area as "the atoll".

Agency Response

21 Nov 2022 IUCN

The changes related to indicators and targets for Outputs 1.1 and 1.2 are now reflected in Table B of the CER

24/10/2022

Language has been changed to be clear that the project will support new supplemental income generation activities. No new restrictions will come in place as a result of this GEF project. The management directives for each Protected Area were published at the time of declaration of Protected Area status in the national gazette of the Government. These management directives provide the do's and do not's (management directive) for each specific protected area. Through a participatory and inclusive approach, the project will incorporate aspects of traditional use, identify, train and initiate supplemental income generation activities for the communities.

26/8/2022

A consultative process is described in the ProDoc to understand traditional use rights during the Project implementation. Based on impacts to resource users new opportunities for income generation activities will be identified and implemented.

11/05/2022

Output 2.2 has been revisited and the text revised to capture the activities that will be undertaken which is highlighted in yellow in the online CER and shown in track changes mode in the document titled, '03GEF 7 CEO Endorsement _Approval _FSP _MSP MV Biodiversity CATENATE 10May2022'.

Traditional use rights will not be restricted. A consultative process is described in the ProDoc.

8/3/2022

Legal governance frameworks, financing, KM will be implemented at national level while demonstration will be at Boduthilandhunmathi Atoll level.

Background on Boduthiladhunmathi Atoll (name of natural atoll formation) comprises of 4 administrative atolls in Maldives. Akin to provinces or states in the rest of the world.

Actions taken to address this comment. Include the following changes in the ProDoc to better reflect the outputs/activities that will have national level benefits.

- *Output 1.1: the governance models developed, is applicable to other national PAs. We have also highlighted that the Boduthiladhunmathi PA network is 15 PAs covering 4 administrative atolls. This is also mentioned under Activity 1.1.1 description ?Instead of one big network, 4 small atoll-based networks within Boduthiladhunmathi are proposed as a decentralized governance model (Figure 6).?*

- *Output 1.2: The Certificate level course on PA management will be a national level course which will continue beyond the project life. All teaching materials and resources developed for the course will be utilised nationally ? this has been added as a target in the results framework.*

- *We have highlighted that the short trainings carried out for Councillors and Police can also be implemented in other atolls of the country and is mentioned as follows ?Materials developed through the Project for training will be shared with the Local Government Authority (LGA) for integration into their regular training programmes targeting Councillors and Council secretariats. The materials will also be made accessible to the public via the online PA management platform to be developed under Output 3.1.*

- *Activity 1.2.6 will be implemented at national level. The training on initiating the Green List (GL) verification process is for the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology (MECCT) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in addition to Farukolhu PA. The training will provide the know-how and enable national agencies to implement this in other PAs in the country. This has been updated to reflect more clearly.*

- *Output 1.3 is a national level component to review and strengthen existing PA selection, assessment and monitoring standards. The word ?national? has been inserted for clarity.*

The proposed financing model (Figure 9) is will be applicable to the context of other atolls in the Maldives. The lessons learnt through implementation at project site will benefit other national PAs. A sentence has been added to reinforce this.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

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

1/12/2021

Yes, we encourage the project to seek out and document additional co-financing through the life of the project but understand how the current economic situation make make this challenging.

Agency Response We agree with this comment

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

1/12/2021

Yes.

Agency Response

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

1/12/2021

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

6/6/2022

Yes.

5/31/2022

Yes. However, please note that all PA hectares must have an improved METT score to count for the GEF core indicator. Please complete the initial METT score during inception.

3/16/2022

No, please include assurances that the METT will be completed in the Portal section below the CI entries as well as the explanation provided below on how the numbers were calculated.

1/12/2021

No, please address the following:

PA hectares - CI 1 and 2 should be able to be added together to get the total number of PA hectares supported. Therefore, the numbers should be different for terrestrial and marine. In some cases, we understand that it may be difficult to draw precise distinctions between realms, but please ensure the total number is correct.

Indicator 5 - Please clarify that these are not hectares being counted elsewhere.

Indicator 5.2 - Not relevant to this project - please remove.

Please provide any explanations needed in the Portal about how the numbers were arrived at, such as the gender ratio.

Agency Response

11/5/2022

Figures in CI 1 (terrestrial) and 2 (marine) are the totals of all legally protected areas in Bodhuthilandhumathi Atoll. Calculation is based on gps coordinates of the designated protected areas.

METT assessment for Farukolhu (project site) and other selected protected areas in Boduthiladhunmathi (project area) will be carried out during the project through Activity 1.4.5 (ProDoc).

There have been notes added highlighted in yellow in the online CER form

8/3/2022

1&2 ? added together is the total PA hectares supported. These are correct figures.

5 - Marine areas listed under improved management practices are areas that are managed by the tourism sector, while not legally declared protected they are preserved for their economic benefits and thereby can be further strengthened to contribute to a connected and well managed PA network.

5.2 not filled.

The population figures are totals of the disaggregated populations of the 4 administrative atolls in the region where GEF project will be implemented. Source Maldives Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

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

11/11/2022

Yes.

4/5/2022

No, please identify where these changes were made.

Please note that the expectation is that with PPG resources and additional time projects will improve and refine all aspects of their proposals.

1/12/2021

No, it would be good to have a integrated perspective on barriers than what is presented. The barriers seem to map too "perfectly" to the components rather than being an examination of the underlying challenges.

Agency Response

11/5/2022

The issues described in the barriers section are persistent issues in the Maldives. They were therefore easy to identify even at the very early stages of the PIF. Further analysis during PPG did not reveal new barriers.

8/3/2022

The section has been improved by adding background and justification on the identification of barriers as well as supporting information. Note that the barriers are the same as those described in the PIF.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/12/2021

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

12/5/2022

Yes, we expect IUCN will play close attention to this issue as presents reputational risk for IUCN and GEF.

11/11/2022

No, the response does not acknowledge that the implementation of the protected area will be done by this project. The characterization that it is difficult to access does not match the narrative about use provided in the ProDoc. The issue of the loss of rights and livelihoods access as the result of conservation is a very important issue and needs to be given adequate care and consideration in project development as acknowledged in the ProDoc, which should also be reflected in the responses in the review sheet. Not giving this issue sufficient attention and care in project implementation opens IUCN and the GEF up to grievance cases. While the reality of the issue here may be fairly minor, it still needs to be recognized from the outset.

5/31/2022

No, issues still remain for insuring consultation and consent for the establishment of the PA and recognition of rights. 2.2 appears to be doing to different activities - implementing the PA financing plan and sustainable livelihoods. The ESMF review points to a number of issues with potential use restrictions and recognizing customary rights even if they are not currently legally recognized, noting that it is often women and the poor who in particular depend on natural resources. The response is payments from a fund that, while it has many interesting ideas for fundraising, does not have secured funding at the moment.

Committing to FPIC for these activities could address the concerns about the process.

4/5/2022

No, issues still remain:

1.1 - The description in the ProDoc still seems like this has very limited regional focus rather than working on national regulations/frameworks/applicable guidelines with a pilot

2.1 - It may help to clarify that this is a fund for the PA rather than a trust fund, which would typically be associated with investment in stocks or similar and complicated financial management (all of which incur significant costs and specialized expertise). This is why a national fund, even with subaccounts, would make sense to reduce administrative burden. However, this sounds like a simpler venture. Please clarify.

2.2 - Please revise 2.2 to reflect the activities described and ensure consultation and consent related to resource use.

1/12/2021

No, it would be good for the project to think about and undertake some activities that would support broader good management of natural resources in the Maldives and an improved PA system overall. At the same time, we do not want to push the project to stretch too thinly.

Please address the following:

1.1 - The language here and in this component is confusing and in the results table. It appears that the results will just be a recommendation for a governance system for this atoll's PA. Will the review produce guidance documents or recommendations for regulations?

1 - It would be generally be helpful to revise this component with careful consideration as it is confusing what is working where. As of now, it appears that there will be a limited impact of the project outside of the targeted PA and, therefore, unlikely that there will be the targeted 30% increase in METT score at the various PAs.

2.1 - General trust fund good practice would not encourage the creation of many different, small trust funds and their many administrative burdens and transaction costs. The documents mention a national trust fund. Could the project support the establishment of the national fund? The impact of a single PA or atoll fund seems quite limited and difficult to justify for the GEF.

3.1 - All too often systems like this fall out of repair and updating. Who will manage the portal after project end? How will the project encourage sustainability of these systems? What programs, websites, or systems that are more broadly used and maintained can be harnessed for this project? For example, citizen science and data collection efforts can use iNaturalist which is a well-maintained and updated platform that connects to various other initiatives. Ongoing maintenance, updating (especially to keep up with new smart phone operating systems), and accessibility of data are important to consider.

Minor:

Please remove note on page 64.

Agency Response

21 November 2022 IUCN

Through Output 1.4 as described in the Prodoc. Studies on current and potential resource use and limits of acceptable change (LAC) at Farukolhu will be undertaken to facilitate development of detailed management plans (Activity 1.4.1 & 1.4.2). Maps of current and potential resource uses at Farukolhu will be produced. The map will be based on the resource use assessments and will identify resource users as well as vulnerable groups and their dependency on the natural resources. The resource use maps, and LAC will be utilised in preparing the detailed management plan. The management plan is intricately linked to Outcomes 2 and 3 and these linkages need to be well coordinated for successful implementation.

In addition, the following paragraph has been edited to summarize the activities in Outcome 2 under 4.7 Project alignment with IUCN Programme.

The Farukolhu Protected area was established in 2018 and includes management directives that outline the permitted and prohibited activities in the PA. These management directives were developed and adopted by the Government through stakeholder engagement including communities in islands near the Farukolhu PA. Based on the existing published management directives for Farukolhu PA an assessment will be conducted in Outcome 2 to identify any groups whose livelihoods may have been marginalised through the establishment of the PA in 2018 and through the implementation of management plan developed by the Project. New income generating opportunities will be identified and implemented to support groups whose supplemental income has been affected through better monitoring and management of resource use to ensure a more equitable distribution of benefits from the PA.

Activity 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 provides details on how the livelihood plans would be developed and implemented to support communities near Farukolhu PA.

The revisions are reflected on page 73 of the ProDoc

26/08/2022

Farukolhu island was declared a Protected Area on 8 October 2018 categorized as 'Protected Area with Sustainable Use' under the Environmental Protection and Preservation Act (4/93).

Farukolhu is a separate island, it is only accessible by speedboat or motorized vessel which is expensive and cannot be afforded by many.

Since declaration as a protected area in 2018 Farukolhu Protected Area the Atoll council must be informed prior to visits to the island.

11/5/2022

1.1 1.1 Description on coverage updated and changes made in ProDoc table 4.8.2

2.1 In the Maldives context, given the infancy of the financial system, trust funds operate primarily as revolving funds. For the sake of clarity we have reworded the document to indicate this

2.2 ? The output 2.2 has been revised which is now highlighted in yellow in the online CER and shown in track changes mode in the document titled, '03GEF 7 CEO Endorsement _Approval _FSP _MSP MV Biodiversity CATENATE 10May2022'

8/3/2022

The following changes have been made to address the comments.

1.1 Has been re-worded in the ProDoc and CEO endorsement form. The project will develop Governance models and the details of the implementing process to develop these models. Revision will be made Protected Area regulation to incorporate the models proposed.

1. Outcome 1 has been revised as per response to previous comment to highlight the benefit beyond the demonstration site, for example, capacity building and trainings target all 4 atolls in Boduthiladhunmathi.

2.1 An insertion has been made in the CEO Endorsement form and ProDoc to elaborate that National Trust funds are not effective for local conservation activities, as often national priorities override local needs. The project will develop a national PA financing framework that will have trust funds as per the jurisdictions defined by the 8th Amendment to the Decentralization Act.

3.1 The ProDoc and CEO Endorsement form has been changed to reflect existing platforms that can be utilized rather than creation of new systems.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/12/2021

Yes.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/12/2021

Yes.

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

11/11/2022

Yes.

6/6/2022

No, the information is too general. Please see earlier feedback on this issue.

4/5/2022

No, please provide stronger justification for the global biodiversity significance of Farukolhu PA.

1/12/2021

No, the documents do not discuss the global value of the specific area that will be protected. Much of the project's activities are focused on one area.

Agency Response

24/10/2022

The section on global environmental benefits has been elaborated and includes specific benefits from the improved management of Farukolhu Protected Area.

26/8/2022

Additional information added with reference to A rapid assessment of natural environments in the Maldives report.

11/5/2022

Additional information on Farukolhu inserted and highlighted in yellow in the online CEO endorsement form and also reflected in track changes mode in the document titled, '03GEF 7 CEO Endorsement_Approval_FSP_MSP MV Biodiversity CATENATE 10May2022'. Also additional information of significance of the region strengthened in ProDoc which is shown in track changes mode and highlighted in yellow.

8/3/2022

No new PAs will be established through project.

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

5/31/2022

Yes. It will be important to pay close attention to these issues during inception and focus energy on how to ensure knowledge sharing and additional training.

1/12/2021

No, please discuss how the project will be designed for and ensure sustainability and scaling-up. There is a significant focus on training and working with local officials who are likely to change over time.

Agency Response

8/3/2022

Amended with insertion into the ProDoc.

The capacity building and training components included are significant for sustainability as the baseline assessments showed that technical and management know-how is one area that needs improvement at local level. Though elected council members, present during the implementation will be trained, the activity also includes the training of permanent secretariat civil service staff at Island/Atoll Councils. Civil service staff is now been mentioned in the ProDoc.

Though elected members may leave the Council, the knowledge they have will be retained within area.

The project activities include planning for next 5 years which includes developing a management programme and a financial plan. Doing this exercise within the project timeframe will provide the PA management agencies with the know-how to continue planning for successive programmatic years. Hence this will add to sustainability of the project activities. This note has also been added into both the ProDoc and CEO endorsement form.

The proposed governance models, trust fund model knowledge management system - can be scaled up and replicated. This has also been highlighted and changed while addressing previous comments.

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
1/12/2021

Yes.

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
NA

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
1/12/2021

Yes.

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

1/12/2021

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

5/31/2022

Yes.

4/5/2022

No, little change has been made to this section in the Portal. In addition, many of the references to the private sector reference "potential" consultation rather than actual consultation that would have helped design the project to work well for the private sector as well.

1/12/2021

No, this section is rather weak and it is unclear what policies and regulations the PS will be consulted on in the content of this project.

Agency Response

11/5/2022

Included a paragraph to describe the status of private investment in Boduthilandhumathi Atoll area and highlighted in yellow in the online CER form.

8/3/2022

The section has been added and strengthened including referring to the following.

The project promotes private sector participation through a unified set of guidelines for assessment and monitoring of privately managed sites. This project will integrate biodiversity conservation and enhancement of environmentally sustainable economic activities linked to protected areas making private sector participation is vital.

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

5/31/2022

Yes, though during inception it will be important to consider how changing weather patterns and other challenges posed by climate change will be incorporated in planning project activities.

●4/5/2022

No, please expand the climate change risks to consider how climate change may endanger project results and how project activities will work to mitigate this.

1/12/2021

No, please include the risks posed by climate change.

Agency Response

11/5/2022

Additional text added to climate change risks mitigation and highlighted in yellow in the online CER form.

8/3/2022

Addressed. Climate change risk and Covid-19 pandemic risks included in ProDoc and CEO endorsement.

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
1/12/2021

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
1/12/2021

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
4/5/2022

Yes.

1/12/2021

No, it would be especially helpful to focus on how this approach will build on existing materials and resources and create new ones that are well prepared for distribution.

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

5/31/2022

Yes. However, should pages 8 and 9 be completed at this point?

4/5/2022

No, this information is still not included and should be included with first submission of CEO Endorsement.

1/12/2021

No and the ProDoc appears to be still in draft in this section.

Agency Response

11/05/2022

The ESMS screening is now provided

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

1/12/2021

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

4/5/2022

Yes.

1/12/2021

No, this section could be improved by focusing on specific socioeconomic benefits including the livelihoods support planned what the expected results of that will be.

Agency Response

8/3/2022

Addressed with additions in both ProDoc and CEO Endorsement Form.

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/3/2023

Yes, these issues have been addressed.

2/27/2023

No, thank you for the edits but please address these issues:

- The PPG utilization table has been modified as requested by there seems to be an error as the balance of funds should be equal to the difference between the budgeted amount and the amount spend to date. The total balance of funds should be $\$100,000 - 94,092 = \$5,908$

- On Co-financing:
 - Shaviyani Fundadhoo Council: please combine both entries and report as ?In-kind / recurrent expenditures?.
 - Ministry of Environment, Climate Change & Technology: change ?Other? to ?Public Investment?
 - Regenerate project:
 - o change ?Donor Agency? to ?GEF Agency
 - o change ?Regenerate project? to ?IUCN?

- On gender: It is noted that a gender analysis and tentative action plan has been provided as a project supporting document. Please summarize and clearly reference this annex in the portal section on gender.

- On Stakeholder engagement: It is noted that the prodoc elaborates on a stakeholder analysis, information on consultations during PPG as well as a stakeholder engagement plan. Please ask agency to summarize and clearly reference these in the portal section on stakeholder engagement to allow us and others to locate. The role of CSOs could be further detailed and suggestion to include civil society organizations in the project steering committee could be considered.

1/25/2023

No, Please address the following issues -

1. Considering that this project needs to be circulated 4-weeks prior to CEO Endorsement, it is impossible to start implementation by January 2, 2023. Please adjust the implementation start and completion dates accordingly.

2. There is a \$1 difference for component 3 between Annex E and Table B. Please correct.

3. On the proportionality of the PMC: The co-financing contribution to PMC is not proportionate compared with the GEF contribution to PMC. If the GEF contribution is kept at 5%, for a co-financing of \$7,018,074 the expected contribution to PMC must be around \$350,000 instead of \$250,000 (which is 3.5%). management have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to the PMC, the GEF contribution and the co-financing contribution must be proportional, which means that the GEF contribution to PMC might be decreased and the co-financing contribution to PMC might be increased to reach a similar level. Please amend either by increasing the co-financing portion and/or by reducing the GEF portion.

4. On Monitoring and Evaluation: as you will be able to see in comment #1 (above) the budget for M&E seems to be \$30,170. This does not seem to match what is stipulated in section 9 (please see table below). Please review and correct where necessary.

5. On the utilization of PPG: please request the agency to provide additional details on what the expense category entail and which activities are funded through these items. It is not possible to assess what ?consultants ProDoc and Stakeholder consultation? entails. Additional details will allow us to confirm that all expenses are eligible for GEF funding

6. On the budget:

a. Office equipment should be charged to the PMC and not to the components.

b. Same comment for the Financial Specialist. Per guidelines this cost should be charged to the PMC.

c. Project Advisor and Project Manager are being charged across components and PMC. Per Guidelines, the costs associated with the project?s execution have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to PMC.

d. Please request the agency to provide additional details on what the operational cost entail so that we can confirm these are eligible expenses under GEF guidelines.

Agency Response

3 March 2023 IUCN

1. As advised, the PPG utilization table has been revised in the CER online template and uploaded word document to reflect the the total balance of funds of USD 5, 908

2. Thank you very much for the feedback on co-financing. The requested changes have been made as follows:

a. Shaviyani Funadhoo Council entries have been combined and reported as In-kind/recurrent expenditure

b. Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology ?Other? has been changed to ?Public Investment?

c. For the IUCN related cofiancing entry, ?Donor Agency? changed to ?GEF Agency? and ?Regenerate project? changed to IUCN

3. The gender analysis and action plan is now added in Section 9.1 of the ProDoc and also included in the relevant section of the CER

4. The stakeholder analysis as well as stakeholder engagement plan has been included in the relevant section of the CER. On the matter of representation of CSO?s in PSC, kindly note that this is included in the stakeholder engagement plan

13 February 2023 IUCN

1. Changes to start date made in ProDoc and CEO Endorsement Request as well as online CER template with the start date changed to 1 April 2023 and end date to 30 September 2026.

2. The USD1 dollar difference is now corrected in Annex E in line with Table B

3. The co-financing contribution to PMC has been increased to 5%. This adjustment has been reflected in the tables in the ProDoc, Appendix 9.5 and 9.6 Detailed Budget, CEO Endorsement Request, Annex E of the online CER.

4. The budget for M&E has been adjusted and is USD 42,170 and is related to the costs of conducting mid-term review and terminal evaluation. These adjustments have been made in Section 9 of the CEO Endorsement template, relevant section of the ProDoc, Annex B, Annex E of the online CER and Appendix 9.5 and 9.6 Detailed Budget

5. The breakdown of the PPG utilisation is updated and uploaded .

6.a This has been relabelled to reflect that this is not a cost of office equipment for project management centre. It is to support the implementation of the management plan developed for the Protected Area in the project site.

6.b The term Financial Specialist was utilized for an expert that will set out the sustainable financing framework budgeting guidelines and innovative funding opportunities for the Protected Area network in the Atoll and implemented at Project site. It is not the same as the functions of a finance specialist in the PMC. We have relabelled this for clarity as Conservation Financing Expert and retained it only in the respective component.

6c. The Project Advisor was incorrectly labelled. This function is for an international expert in the areas of protected area governance required for component 1 to develop legal framework and Governance models. The terminology has been edited to reflect this.

The Project Manager cost has been consolidated to the PMC.

6d. We have reworded all instances to clarify costs. The detailed cost items are as follows:

i) Cost of training session, venues, cost of participation of stakeholders in trainings

ii) Cost associated with conducting capacity assessment at local and national level for the development of PAMS, Design, Develop system and required administrative and user manuals.

iii) Cost associated with printing training materials, Training of trainers, venues and participation of stakeholders for the management and maintenance of knowledge platform

12 December 2022 IUCN

The correct version of the STAP comments response is now included in Annex B of the CER

11/05/2022

The Annex B related to STAP comments is now provided in the CEO endorsement template. All other relevant annexes of the ProDoc have been uploaded as part of the initial submission

08/03/2022

Please clarify on what annexes are missing

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/12/2021

Yes.

Agency Response

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/12/2021

Yes.

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/6/2022

Yes.

11/11/2022

No, these are still not included in the Portal entry and need more than a single sentence response. There is no response to the comment from Canada. Please also attribute the comments.

6/6/2022

No, please include the responses as requested in the Portal. These are things that are reviewed by Council members to see how their comments are incorporated.

4/5/2022

No, please include responses to Council comments offered at PIF approval.

Agency Response

21 November 2022 IUCN

The response to Council comments are now included in Annex B of the CER

11/05/2022

Suggestions for improvements to be made during the drafting of the final project proposal:

-

•*The first project component will enable policy and legal framework and capacity building for good governance and, to ensure sustainable management of the Protected Area network, develop tools, standards, manuals and handbooks. The collection and integration of traditional knowledge in management strategies and the developed materials would be an important and valuable addition.*

A consultative participatory approach is described in the development of models to ensure that traditional practices are incorporated.

•*In the second project component in the context of innovative funding opportunities, incentives for the development of Sustainable Blue Economy business models should be given/included as well as other innovative income generating activities - not only for groups that could be affected negatively in socio-economic terms (as mentioned) but for economic diversification and improved livelihoods.*

At the start of the PPG, supplementary funding and to implement ideas such blue economy models were explored unsuccessfully.

Blue economy models at the moment are difficult to incorporate as part of small projects but are feasible as standalone projects or parts of larger programmes. Furthermore, since such models are still budding in the Maldives it is very difficult to convince locals of models that haven't been demonstrated successful in the local context. Therefore, including a prescriptive model would bring in strong risks that may be quite difficult to mitigate within the project.

•In the first and the second project components a strong participatory approach through active involvement and empowerment of local communities, the private sector and other stakeholders would be desirable - especially against the background of an integrated and equitable sustainable system.

A consultative participatory approach is emphasized through the activities in both outcomes

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

2/15/2023

Yes.

12/12/2022

No, please fix the formatting issues and provide a response to the opening comment.

12/6/2022

No, still says Sri Lanka.

11/11/2022

No, please include the responses to the Maldives project and not Sri Lanka.

4/5/2022

No, please include responses to the STAP review comments in the table along with GEF Secretariat comments.

1/12/2021

No, please include these.

Agency Response

13 February 2023 IUCN

The formatting issues have been fixed and a response has been provided to the opening comment

12 December 2022 IUCN

We apologise for the continuing error. We have now correctly inserted/included the detailed response to GEF STAP comments on the CATENATE Maldives project in Annex B of the CER

21 November 2022 IUCN

We apologise for the error, the correct version of the responses to STAP comments is included in the CER Annex B

11/5/2022

The detailed response is provided in Annex B of the online version CEO Endorsement Request

8/3/2022

Addressed:

A theory of change has been included.

Scaling up and sustainability addressed as above.

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
NA

Agency Response
Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response
CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
1/12/2021

Yes.

Agency Response
Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
1/12/2021

Yes.

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
NA
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 NA

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 NA

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/3/2023

Yes.

2/27/2023

Yes.

1/25/2022

No, please address the comments on the annexes and comments formatting.

12/6/2022

No, STAP comments need to be correct.

11/11/2022

No, please carefully review the submission to ensure that all of the issues are fully addressed.

6/6/2022

No, most of the same issues that were raised before remain. Please fully address these before resubmitting.

4/5/2022

No, please fully address the comments above and resubmit.

1/12/2021

Not at this time, please revise and resubmit.

Review Dates

**Secretariat Comment at
CEO Endorsement**

**Response to
Secretariat comments**

First Review	1/12/2022
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/5/2022
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/6/2022
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/11/2022
Additional Review (as necessary)	2/15/2023

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations