

Advancing Climate Resilience of Water Sector in Bhutan (ACREWAS)

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10779 Countries

Bhutan Project Name

Advancing Climate Resilience of Water Sector in Bhutan (ACREWAS) Agencies

UNDP Date received by PM

10/28/2022 Review completed by PM

11/7/2022 Program Manager

Yuki Shiga Focal Area

Climate Change **Project Type**

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 2023.2.10: Clear

2022.11.02:

The proposed project seems to cover some elements that could be related to climate change mitigation and/or land degradation.

For example, CEOER states that the interventions will include vegetative measures such as plantations, and physical assets created in the project will be made climate resilient through soil conservation and erosion control structures. If so, please reflect and make this clear in the relevant sections of the CEOER including Rio Markers and target indicators.

Agency Response UNDP, 1 Feb 2023: The Rio Maker has been set to Climate Change Adaptation 2 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 2022.11.02: Clear

Agency Response 3. If this is a non-grant instrument, has a reflow calendar been presented in Annex D? Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response UNDP, 1 Feb 2023:

This is a grants-only instrument project

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 2022.11.02: Clear

Agency Response 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 2022.11.02: Clear

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 2022.11.02: Clear

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 2023.2.10: Clear

2022.11.01:

While most of the indicators have increase from or remained at the level of the PIF, female ratio of Core Indicator 4 has decreased from 50% to less than 35%. Please reconsider this or provide rationale for this change.

Agency Response UNDP, 1 Feb 2023:

Presently, of the total number of civil servants only approximately 29% comprises of women personnel as also indicated in the GAP. Through focused group discussions, the GAP also observed that the representation of women in the Executive Committees of the WUAs in project areas were minimal. It was in this context that an aspiration target level of a minimum 35%, which already is ambitious was set during the PPG phase.

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 2022.11.02: Clear

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 2022.11.02: Clear

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 2023.2.23: Clear

2023.2.10:

Component 1: please further provide background, reason and context to the following statement now added in the CEOER: "creating water agency was no longer the governments priority during the PPG".

Component 2: It is crucial that the investment on climate resilient water supply infrastructure under the component 3 is well integrated with activities planned for watershed management under the component 2. Therefore, please clarify that the activities planned under the component 2 directly relates to investment in component 3.

2022.11.02:

Private sectors: From the sustainability and technology/knowledge transfer perspective, it is important to engage private sector entities within the country or local community, more than those from other countries or regions. Although some examples of private sector entities mentioned in the CEOER are local ones such as DHI, it is not clear how the project will ensure strong and proactive engagement from the local ones. An example of guiding questions to this could be: How will they be incentivized?

Component 1: In the PIF, there is project output ?1.1 Agencies for water utilities at national, river basin, and local levels established and supported to fully factor water level and water shortage forecasting into the service provision?. One of the root cause of the water issues is lack of proper water agency that focuses on delivery of the water (be it irrigation or drinking) like a utility service delivery. However, the CEOER has not discussed the output. In fact, this output seems to have been dropped off completely, without clear explanation.

Output 1.3: CEOER states that under Output 1.3, the project will introduce innovative financing mechanisms. A PPP model is mentioned; however, please provide other mechanism(s) if any.

Component 2: Under output 2.1, very pleased to note clarity on the proposed plan to formulation catchment protection plan to be coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture. Here, we would suggest strengthening planning process by enhancing the engagement of local communities for both preparation and implementation of the watershed management plan in the project sites. In fact, the plan should be fully implemented by the local community so that there is improved ownership of investment by the local agents. The role of the government could be limited to providing technical backstopping. Therefore, we would suggest revising some of the activities so that communities are empowered for planning and implementation interventions under this output.

Component 4: Knowledge management: In order to clearly convey the message and have a meaningful dialogue, it is advisable to use local language.

Agency Response Agency Response 21 Feb. 2023

Component 1: Additional text clarifying the rationale have been added in the CEO ER under ?Changes in Outputs? on page 6 (the same has been reflected in the CEO ER in GEF portal). The recommendations by government stakeholders during the first PPG Meeting on the 5th of October 2021 recommended that the formation of agencies for water utilities be dropped from the project based on the following rationale.

During the PIF Phase, the purpose for recommending the creation the water agency had been based on the premise that there was a need for one agency to coordinate the fragmented and overlapping mandates of the different government agencies on water governance, management and delivery of services. However, during the PPG phase, the government was already considering a government wide transformation exercise, which was likely to result in assessment for re-organizing several mandates and organizations establishments. It was in this context that the government decided to drop the idea of creating a central water agency as part of the project since to await more clarity from the transformation exercise. This transformation exercise was completed in Q3-2022 and resulted in re-organization Ministries and departments across the board and a water department has already been created under a new Ministry called the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resource (MOENR).

Component 2: Additional text has been provided in the CEO ER under ?Sustainability? on page 51 (and the same has been reflected in the CEO ER in GEF portal) to clarify as follows. The activities under component 2 are directly related to the investments under component 3 in the following way.

Watershed restoration activities under component 2 will include extensive soil and water conservation through water harvesting, retention structures and check dams. It will ensure re-vegetation of slopes through assisted natural regeneration and protective structures around water sources that will reduce erosion in addition to improving recharge. The component will also set up institutional structures and financial mechanism to sustain these activities. This relates to the investments under component 3 as follows:

1. Sustained flows, including during the dry season, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of investments in water infrastructure.

2. Buffering of floods during the peak rainy season, thereby buffering high flows and protecting the water infrastructure downstream.

3. Reduced transportation of sediment and debris along streams, improving efficiencies of water distribution, reducing O&M costs and preventing structural damage.

4. Direct protection by the protective structures around crucial infrastructure, from extreme events which could trigger mud-slides and high debris transport.

UNDP, 1 Feb 2023:

The project will engage local youth-based enterprises to manage the technological aspects and support the overall O&M of water infrastructure in collaboration with concerned WUAs and/or the municipal authorities under activity 3.2.1. These enterprises will be incentivized

through payment for their services by the WUAs and local municipalities post project period to bring about efficiency in the O&M.

During the PIF and PPG design phase consultations have been held with all key stakeholders including DHI. DHI offers extensive homegrown experience in the setting-up water management systems within Bhutan which also offers the potential for synergies with the ACREWAS project and adds value. Engagement of corporate and private sector (start-ups) in O&M is expected to ensure long term sustainability of the project beyond the implantation period. However, during the PPG, the UNDP and the Government strongly expressed the need to engage private sector through competitive procurement processes as per the standard selection process, based on request for proposals (RFPs). Accordingly, during the implementation phase, private sector entities such as the DHI will be invited to participate in the project through a competitive procurement process to integrate automation of irrigation and drinking water assets.

Further explanations have been added in the revised text for Component 1, Output 1.1 in the CEO ER (copied below and highlighted in the CEO-ER pg. 6).

Output 1.1 in the PIF stated: ?Agencies for water utilities at national, river basin, and local levels established and supported to fully factor water level and water shortage forecasting into the service provision?. This has now been removed based on the recommendations by government stakeholders during the first PPG Meeting on the 5th of October 2021. This decision was taken because of the need for creating a water agency was no longer a government priority during the PPG as opposed to the PIF period.

Output 1.3 On additional mechanisms for innovative financing. A PES system is proposed to be upscaled and flexible payment systems (in cash or contribution of labour) have been proposed. These financial mechanisms are in described further under Output 2.2. Relevant text has been highlighted for ease of reference (pg. 34 of CEO-ER and pg. 36 of the ProDoc).

We welcome the suggestion made on community ownership of the preparation and implementation of the watershed management plan with the role of the government being limited to technical backstopping. The changes are reflected on pg.34 of the CEO-ER and pg. 36 of the ProDoc (highlighted for ease of reference).

We also welcome the suggestion to explicitly state that the local language will be used in dialogue and dissemination for Component 4: Knowledge Management. Changes are reflected on pg. 37 in the CEO-ER and pg. 38 of the ProDoc.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

2022.11.02: Clear

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

2022.11.02: Clear

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 2022.11.02: Clear

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 2022.11.02: Clear

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 2022.11.02: Clear

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

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 2022.11.02: Clear

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 2022.11.02: Clear

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

2023.2.10: Clear

2022.11.02: Please refer to the section on alternative scenario.

Agency Response UNDP, 1 Feb 2023:

Private sector engagement is in the form of service providers and stakeholders. There is no role of the private sector engaged as financier. The SEP (Annex 9) describes the role of private sector as a stakeholder in the project

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 2022.11.02: Clear

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 2023.2.10: Clear

2022.11.02:

1. The PIF mentioned that the project will seek to have a common PMU for the GEF project as well as all co-financing projects thereby improving complementarity. Please clarify whether the project will have a common PMU; or if not, please elaborate on how the project will ensure complementarity amongst different projects.

2. CEOER mentions, 'UNDP may, on the basis of the annual review findings and at the request of the government, require to, in compliance with LDCF and UNDP policies, provide implementation support'. In case UNDP foresees such requirement, please inform and consult with GEFSEC to address it adequately per GEF policies and guidelines.

3. Institutional arrangement and coordination: The GEF is made aware through the OFP that since the approval of PIF, the OFP has changed. In this regard, it would be useful to note if there any additional changes in the internal govt structure that could potentially affect project delivery and how to manage such risk, if any.

Agency Response UNDP, 1 Feb 2023:

1. The project PMU will be housed in the MOWHS and will be responsible for coordination along with other responsible partners, namely the MOAF and the NEC. The PMU will also be responsible for reporting against co-finance secured from the MOWHS, MOAF, NEC and local government of the 3 beneficiary districts of Gasa, Punakha and Tsirang ensuring the complementarity and proper data collection and reporting.

2. While implementation support requests have not been foreseen or identified by the Government during the project design, this clause has been added to allow for adaptative management so as to ensure project implementation is not affected. This will be reviewed during project inception and subsequently during annual review meetings and planning. Should support be needed/ requested by the Government, the GEF SEC will be consulted, ensuring GEF requirements are duly followed

3. The recent Government reforms include the merger of the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) under multiple agencies. The Donor Coordination Division of the GNHC, which was key agency for all donor and coordination efforts has been merged under the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the appointment of the new GEF-OFP (Mr. Loday Tsheten, Director, Ministry of Finance) has also been officially communicated to the GEF. While some reforms are expected in the next few months, no major implications that will affect the project implementation are anticipated as there is no change in the IP and its structure. The reforms and changes will also be discussed during the project LPAC and inception to ensure smooth implementation of project activities.

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 2022.11.02: Clear

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 2023.2.10: Clear

2022.11.02:

Since the approval of the PIF, water sector in the project areas has been highlighted by a number of targeted measures. In fully acknowledging such intervention, it will be very useful for the projects to capture the lessons leant and improve delivery of the project.

Agency Response UNDP, 1 Feb 2023:

Thank you for this suggestion. We have explicitly stated that the project will be informed by the lessons learned from relevant project. This is reflected on pg. 74 in the CEO-ER. **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 2022.11.02: Clear

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 2022.11.02: Clear

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 2022.11.02: Clear

Agency Response Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2023.2.10: Clear

2022.11.02:

- Annex13 seems to be missing. Please check whether all the relevant annexes are available in the Portal.

- Please change the classification of checklist to 'public' in the Portal.
- Project Results Framework is off the margins

ANNEX A: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK (either copy and paste here the framework from the Agency document, or provide reference to the page in the project document where the framework could be found).

This project will contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goal (s): SDG 1: No Poverty (target 1.5 - resilience of those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulne rability to climate-related extreme events); SDG 2: sustainable agriculture (target 2.4 - strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disa sters); SDG 5: Gender Equality (target 5.a: equal rights to economic resources, access to ownership and control natural resources, in accordance with national laws); SDG6: Clean Water and Sanitation (target 6.1 -universal and equitable access to safe and affordable domestic water: 6.4 - increase water-use efficiency and reduce number of people suffering from water scarcity; 6. 5 - integrated water resources management; 6.6 - protect and restore water-related ecosystems; 6.b - participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management); SD G 13: Climate Action (target 13.1 - resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters); SDG 15: Life on Land (Target 15.1- conservation, restoration and sustain able use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services) The project also contributes to UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025) and five of the six signature solutions viz. 1: Poverty and Inequality; 2: Governance; 3: Resilience; 4: Environment and 6: Gend er Equality This project will contribute to the following country outcome (UNSDPF): Outcome 2: access to water sanitation and hygiene services (2.3- Improved policies and strategies for health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene); Outcome 4: communities and its econo my are more resilient to climate-induced and other disasters (4.1; Inclusive, risk-informed systems and capacities to benefit from sustainable management of natural resources; 4.2- innovati ve financing, inclusive business environment and improved livelihoods through climate resilient and nature-based solutions) Objective and Outcome Indicators Baseline Mid-term Target End of Proj<mark>e</mark>ct Target Project Objective: To enhance resili Mandatory Indicator 1: Direct proje 0 11,200 people (male = 5,840 & fem 37.334 people (Male =19.465 & Fe ence for sustainable economic well ct beneficiaries disaggregated by g ale =5.361) male = 17,8<mark>69</mark>) -being of the people of Bhutan thro ender ugh climate adaptation of the wate Mandatory Indicator 2: Area of land 0 16.746 Ha <mark>41.910 Ha</mark> r sector restored (Ha under climate-resilient management): GEF Indicator 3 Project Component 1 Water governance and institutions Project Outcome 1: Indicator 3: Number of local level in 0 18 18 etitutione petabliched for adaptativ

- 2. Budget Table: the budget presented in Portal merges several positions/activities in one single budget line, which makes very difficult to determine how much is paid to each position (see example below).

Often times, the same position is distributed in several budget lines. While in the past we made the calculations by ourselves, this increased the likelihood of mistakes and it was

extremely time consuming. Given the high volume of projects that we need to review and to avoid mistakes, we stopped making our own calculations ? hence, we cannot continue receiving these type of budgets in which is unclear the cost of different positions / activities as they are merged.

Therefore, we need a budget in which each activity / item / position is properly costed ? we also need to see which is the source (project component / M&E / PMC) that covers the payment of each one, so we can assess the reasonability of this.

			28,500	 28,500		28,500	
	Link Constant Constant State (Constant) (20,000	301.360		201.360	MOWH
	Item: Audio visual equipment. Calculation: unit cost @ 15000 X 1 (local staff) No. years: 2 (Year 1: 12000 Year 2: 3000) Sub-trata = 15000		301,300	301,300			MOWH
Equipment	Total = 2400 Sub-total = 2400 Total = 24000 Total = 24000				15,000	15,000	MOWH
Contractual services- Individual						1 24,000	MOWH
	Calculation: unit cost @ 5000 X 1 () No. years: 1 (Year 4: 5000) Sub-total = 5000	23,000		23,000		23,000	

Agency Response UNDP, 1 Feb 2023

- ? Annex 13 comprising of 7 related assessments uploaded;
- ? Classification of checklist changed to public in the portal
- ? Project Results Framework margin is adjusted
- ? We have updated the budget as suggested. Each activity / item / position is now properly costed and provides information on the source (project component / M&E / PMC).

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2022.11.02:

Clear

Agency Response

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2022.11.02: Clear

Agency Response STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2022.11.02: Clear

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 2022.11.02: Clear

Agency Response Project maps and coordinates Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2022.11.02: Clear

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 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

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 2023.2.23: This CEOER is recommended for technical clearance.

2023.2.10 /2022.11.07: Not yet. Please refer to the review items and resubmit for consideration.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	11/7/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)	2/10/2023	
Additional Review (as necessary)	2/23/2023	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations