

Advancing Climate Resilience of Water Sector in Bhutan (ACREWAS)

Basic Information

GEF ID

10779

Countries

Bhutan

Project Title

Advancing Climate Resilience of Water Sector in Bhutan (ACREWAS)

GEF Agency(ies)

UNDP

Agency ID

UNDP: 6647

GEF Focal Area(s)

Climate Change

Program Manager

Yuki Shiga

PIF

Part I – Project Informatic

Focal area elements

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes, it is aligned with the GEF-7 strategy (CCA-1).

Agency Response

Indicative project/program description summary

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021.5. 4: Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2021.4.28: Please see the review in II-3.

Agency Response

Agency Response 30/4/2021

Additional text is provided in this section in the PIF.

Co-financing

3. Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines, with a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021.5. 4: Cleared. Clarification has been provided.

2021.4.28: Please clarify whether the investment co-financing from RGOB is based on a GCF-funded project “Supporting Climate Resilience and Transformational Change in the Agriculture Sector in Bhutan” or from the other source. If this is from the GCF-funded project, please properly reflect this in the Table as 'source: Donor Agency'.

2021.4.1: Private sector /DHI investment explained in the ‘investment mobilized’ section is not included in Table C. Please include this in Table C or provide further explanation to why this cannot be included at this stage.

Recommended action: Please elaborate further on the above point(s).

Agency Response

Agency Response 30/4/2021

Table C as reproduced under clearly says that the Co-financing is from RGoB, and not from project funded by the GCF.

C. INDICATIVE SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY NAME AND BY TYPE, IF AVAILABLE

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount (\$)
Recipient Country Government	RGOB	Grant	Investment mobilized	23,702,000
Recipient Country Government	RGOB	In-kind	Recurrent cost	1,488,600

Total Co-financing			25,190,600
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The following text is included in the footnote in the Cofinancing Table of the PIF. Cofinancing from DHI will be activity-based. The amount of DHI co-financing will be included in Table C upon assessment based on activities that will be identified during the PPG phase.

GEF Resource Availability

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Agency fees are in line with GEF policies and guidelines and within the resources available.

Agency Response

The STAR allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

The focal area allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

The LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Yes.

Agency Response

The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

Focal area set-aside?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

Impact Program Incentive?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

Project Preparation Grant

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Yes, it is within the allowance cap.

Agency Response

Core indicators

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021.4.26: Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2021.4.21: CCA core indicators are provided; however, meta-information seems to be lacking. Please provide such information (i.e., CCA Core Indicators AND meta-information), in the excel format for effective data management. (<https://www.thegef.org/documents/gef-climate-change-adaptation-results-framework-gef-7>)

2021.4.1: Please provide CCA core indicators and meta-information in the CCA results framework.
<https://www.thegef.org/documents/gef-climate-change-adaptation-results-framework-gef-7>

Agency Response

Agency Response 23/4/21

Separate excel sheet with meta information attached/submitted. The meta-information is also included in Annex B.

Project/Program taxonomy

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Yes.

Agency Response

art II – Project Justification

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021.4.1:

- Yes. The problem of insufficient drinking and irrigation water is well articulated. Deteriorating water quality is also reflected as problem. Although the background information on the problem is described for the national level, it remains true for the four targeted districts.
- The PIF has highlighted climate change as the causes contributing to the water shortage, in addition to the hostile land profile, making it vulnerable to floods and landslides and affecting the water quality aspects as well.
- Barriers are described adequately.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021.4.21: Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2021.4.1:

Baseline climate scenario is well described, including listing of recent climate induced disasters and its consequences on water supply in the various parts of the country. However, the PIF has not highlighted the associated baseline projects clearly, including those of the GEF (e.g., GEFID10234 tourism project etc.) and other institutions such as GCF (e.g., those led by UNDP and FAO etc.).

Recommended action: Please elaborate further on the above point(s).

Agency Response

Additional text is provided in the PIF.

The proposed project will closely coordinate and complement with the following adaptation projects:

The GCF financed UNDP project on Supporting Climate Resilience and Transformational Change in the Agriculture Sector in Bhutan supports resilient agricultural practices, interventions to integrate climate change risks into water and land management practices that affect smallholders and in reducing the risk and impact of climate change induced landslides during extreme events that disrupt market access. The project picks up water supply for 8 Dzongkhags of Dagana, Tsirang, Sarpang, Punakha, Wangdue, Zhemgang, Trongsa and Samtse. The total grant financing for the project is USD 25,347,194 over its implementation timeline from 2016 to 2025

Synergy and partnership with FAO led GCF project on water is described as below:

Partnerships and collaboration complementarity – The project aims to achieve inter-agency partnership, particularly with FAO, to compliment and leverage climate change adaptation results in terms of addressing critical issues in water sector. For instance, FAO and UNDP are already working together in terms of conducting a joint consultation with stakeholder, as issues related to water and impact of climate change are mostly common. It is also agreed that such partnership will continue during the PPG and complement, in some cases provided coordinated upstream policy support,. During the implementation, partnership will focus on knowledge and expertise sharing through the creation of common communication and knowledge exchange platform. This is particularly important since the two projects will be treating the adjoining landscape. The two projects will implement complementary measures to address climate vulnerability at the sub-basin level by restoring the functionality of broader watershed ecosystem. .

In addition the project will also bring on-board Bhutan Water Partnership to explore scaling up of the use of low cost Hydraulic Ramp Pump (a low-cost water climate-smart technology to address water scarcity in rural Bhutan) and will collaborate with the DHI, the DGPC, GBCL, and private sector (non-state actors). These partnerships will enhance effectiveness and impact and ultimately offer more sustainable

solutions through new technologies, nature-based solutions, sustainable watershed management initiatives, and strengthened capacities and to enhance resilience of Bhutan's vulnerable water resources and fragile ecosystems. By addressing critical issues around climate change impacts, the project aims to also complement the GCF project on Climate-Smart Agriculture in achieving its outcomes. The RGoB seeks support to enhance the resilience of smallholder farms to rainfall variability, as well as increases in temperature and projected increases in monsoonal rainfall. Enhancing the resilience of the population engaged in agriculture, including the transition from reactive to climate-informed planning is fundamental to meeting the RGoB's aspirations on climate-resilient, low carbon development

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021.5. 4: Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2021.4.28: As per the guidelines, an indicative M&E budget should be included at PIF stage. Please reconsider.

Recommended action: Please elaborate further on the above point(s).

2021.4.21: ToC is clear. Please put this diagram also in the main text of the Portal directly (not only in the attached document).

Recommended action: Please elaborate further on the above point(s).

2021.4.1: Outputs etc. delineated in the ToC do not seem to be aligned with those in Table B. Please make these consistent or provide justification. In addition, please include ToC in the main text (not in Annex).

Recommended action: Please elaborate further on the above point(s).

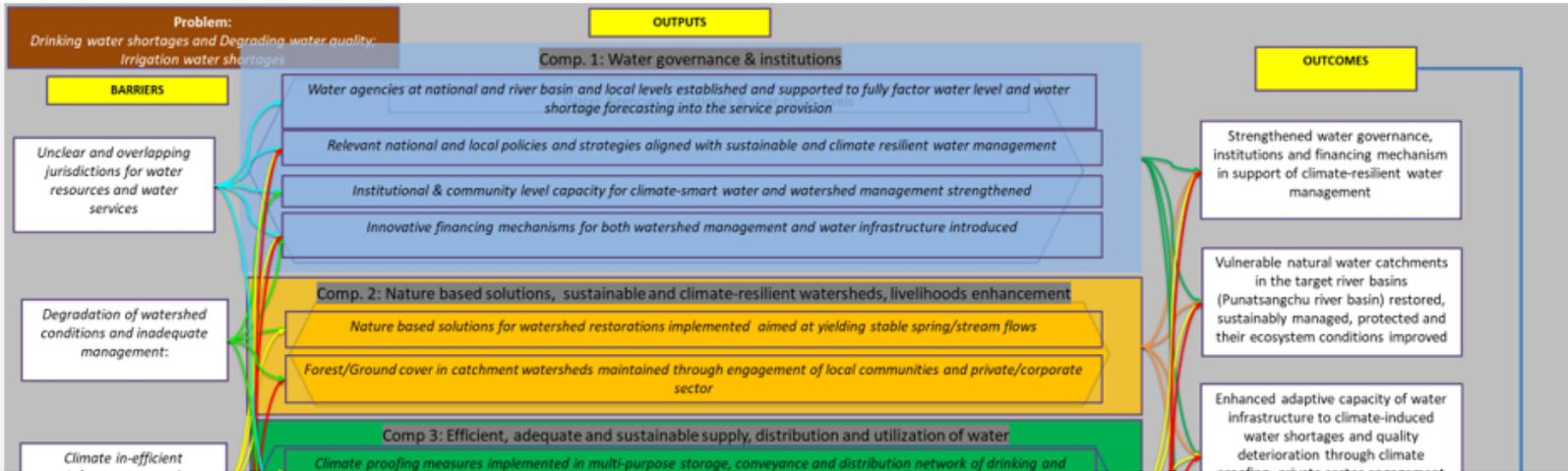
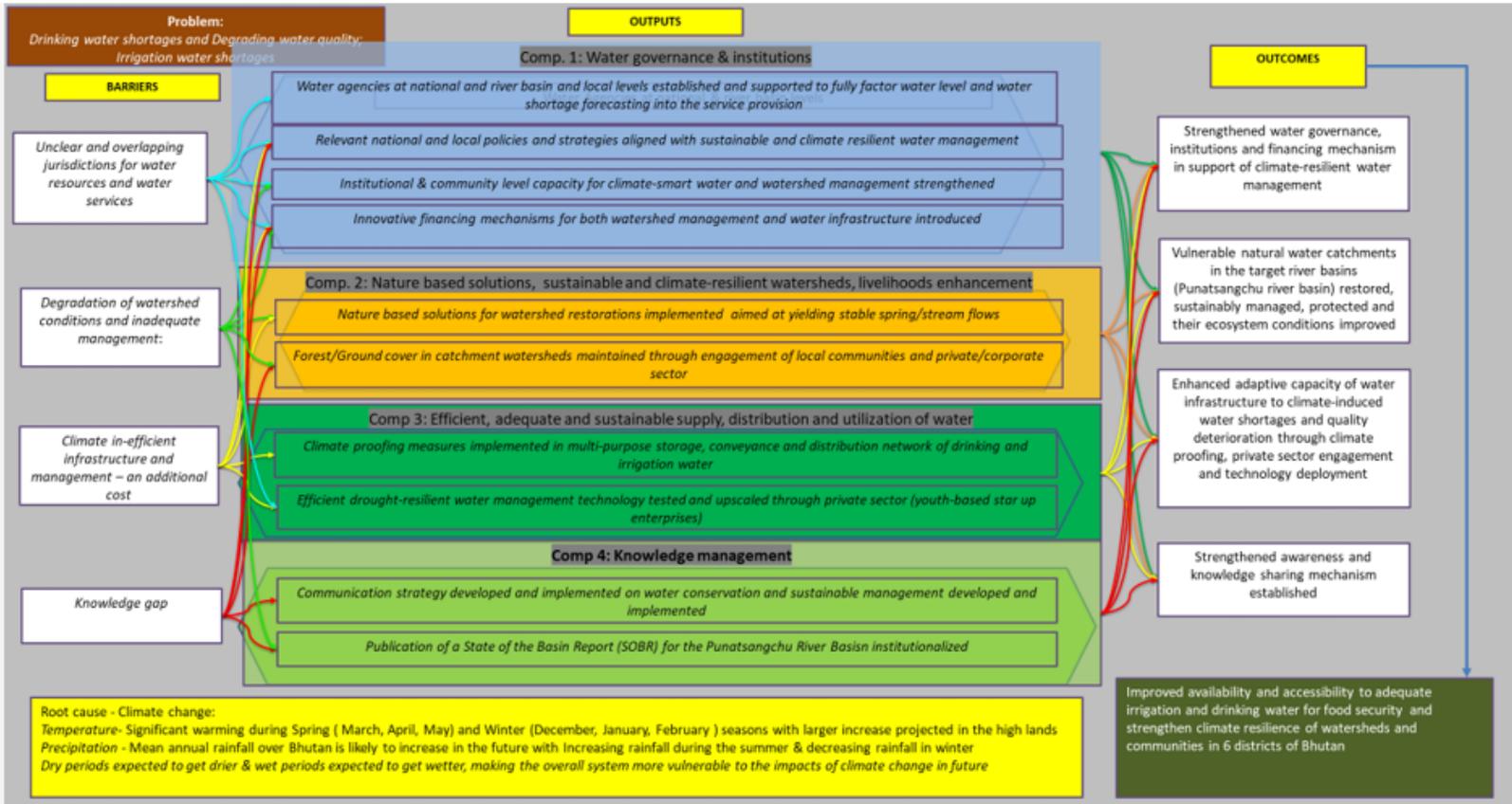
Agency Response

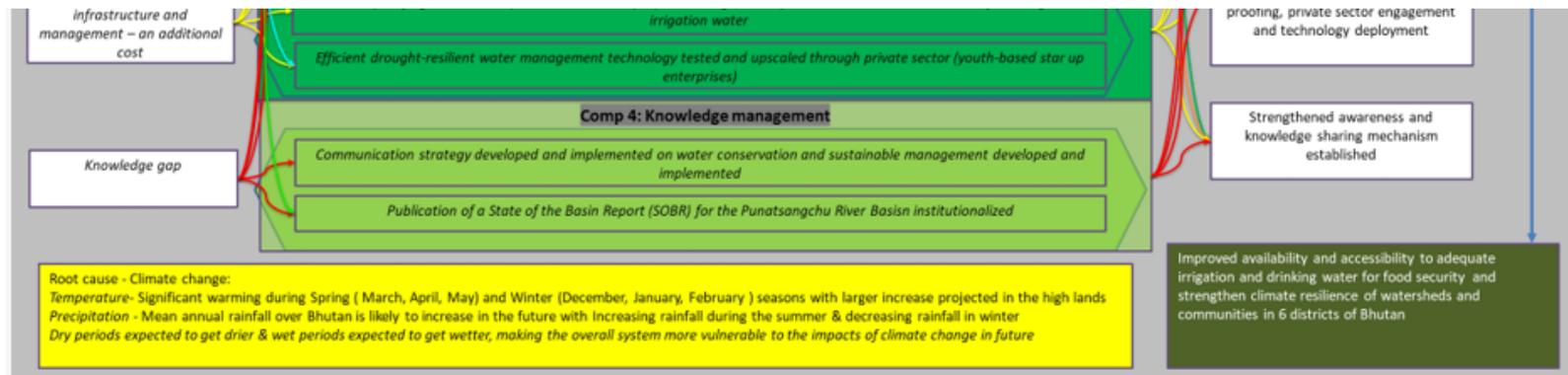
Agency Response 30/4/2021

Included in Component 4 is the indicative M & E budget is USD 173,200 with government co-financing of USD 788,600. The activities will include inception workshop, annual workplan preparation and monitoring, implementation review of gender action plan and other safeguard plan, conduct of mid term and terminal review, including other important M and E activities. The indicative M & E budget is in Annex D (pg. 64).

Agency Response 23/4/21

- Below updated TOC, that are consistent with Table B is updated in the main PIF text , page 17 (para 33)





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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes.

Agency Response

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

indicators) reasonable and achievable? Or for adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021.4.21: Yes.

Please refer to the earlier review on CCA results framework and core indicators.

Agency Response

Agency Response 23/4/21

- Separate core indicator attached/submitted

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021.4.21: Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2021.4.1: Please further elaborate on how the economic feasibility for private sector involvement is sustained during as well as after the project period.

Agency Response

Private Sector Involvement: Additional paragraph provided as below to enhance the case and narrative while also linking to existing initiatives to encourage private sector participation and engagement:

Under the PES scheme, the project will support Druk Green Power Corporation (DGPC), as the premier corporate agency in the country for hydropower development, to adopt PES for improved health of watershed. The project will also support the Green Bhutan Corporation Limited (GBCL) which is already engaged in plantation as its core areas of business to establish a modality for GBCL to collaborate with the DGPC whereby the DGPC provides financial resources to fund the plantation activities of GBCL. Post project, the DGPC will support

plantation activities of GBCL for watershed restorations which will sustain watershed restoration and enrichment

The GEF funded UNDP project (under consideration by GEF) on ecotourism will develop concession framework for engagement of private sector in development of ecotourism products and services. This project will upscale implementation of the concessions framework in enabling private sector to be engaged in nature-based solutions/enterprises that will support restoration and enrichment of watersheds. Also in the water infrastructure operations, youth based private firms will be engaged in implementation of DHI's technology for water management. This will, for the first time in Bhutan, enable engagement of private sector in water infrastructure management and embed an element of sustainability in operations and management of water infrastructure

Project/Program Map and Coordinates

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

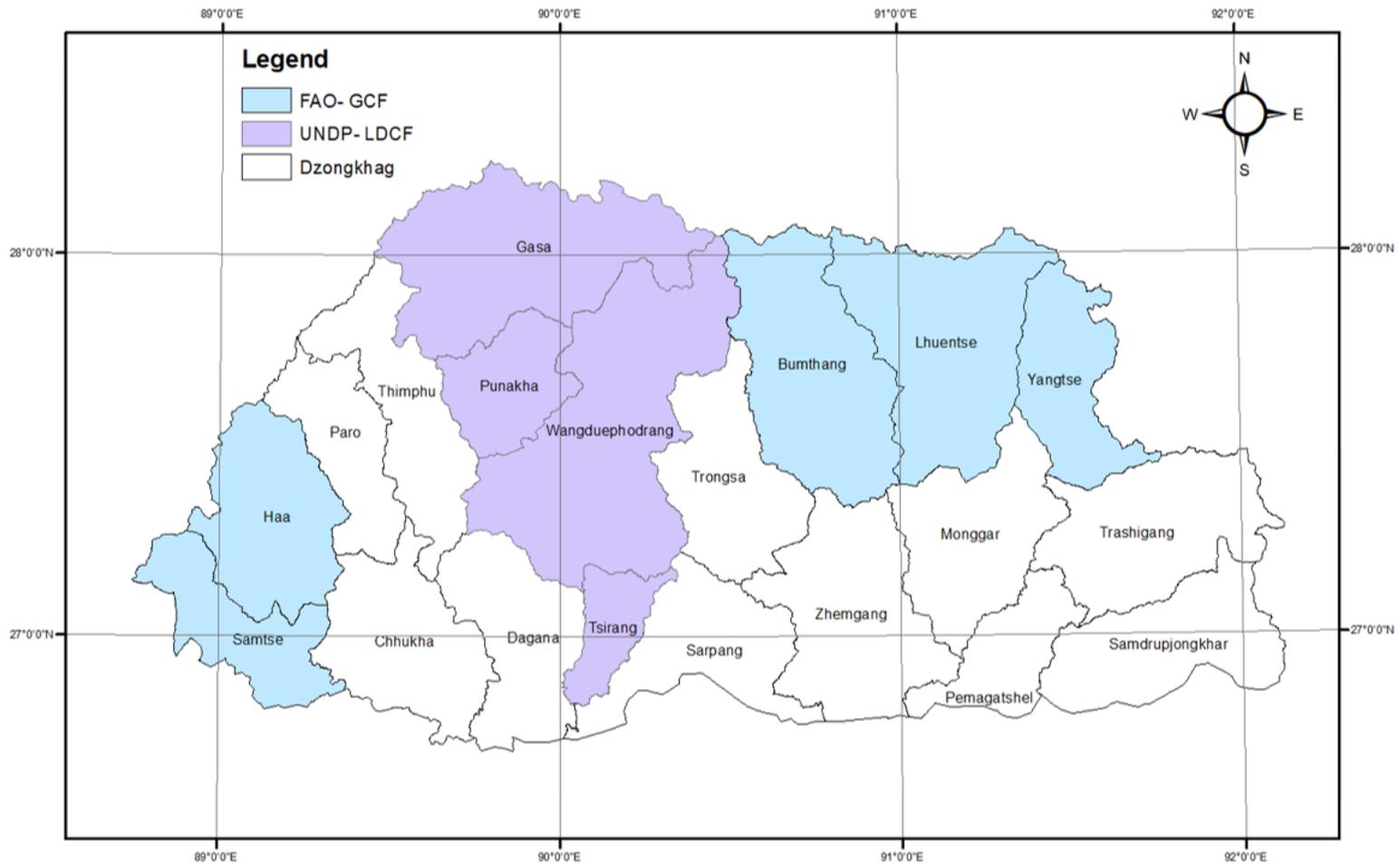
2021.4.21: Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2021.4.1: Project map is not clear and very difficult to read. Please the provide a map in readable form. Also please elaborate on any border dispute matters, if those are within or at close vicinity of the project sites.

Agency Response

Additional map provided as under with co-ordinates:

- There are no boarder disputes,nor does it fall within the vicinity of any dispute areas. Further, China and Bhutan, in a recently concluded meeting has agreed to maintain border peace and stability (<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202104/1220652.shtml>)



Stakeholders

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021.5. 4: Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2020.4.28: Please describe the consultations conducted during the project identification phase with Civil Society Organizations and Private Sector Entities as indicated in the stakeholders section.

Agency Response

Agency Response 30/4/2021

The following text is added in the PIF.

Consultations were undertaken within the constraints imposed due to COVID lockdown Key agencies and stakeholders were consulted deploying different modes such as one on one, e-platform and face-to-face group consultations A national stakeholder consultation to present and finalize the PIF was held which was attended by key stakeholders such as Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC)[1], Ministry of Works and Human Settlement (MoWHS)[2], Ministry of Agriculture and Forest MoAF[3] Watershed Management Division (WMD) [4], Department of Agriculture (DoA)[5] National Environment Commission Secretariate (NEC)[6], and Planning Officers of the Local government authorities. During the PPG, and depending on the evolving COVID situation, consultation will be enhanced deploying appropriate means, including using e-platform.

In addition, face-to-face meetings were held with the following: a) Bhutan Water Partnership (BWP)[7] on possible engagement in the context of low energy water hydrant installations where relevant in the project, and b) InnoTech Department of Druk Holding and Investment (DHI) on the possible collaboration on water management solution and support to start-up enterprises where they presented Research and Innovation Venture Excellence Center (DRIVE) program and made a presentation of their prototype on water management solution. Actual community consultations were not possible due to COVID 19 restriction and was limited to their representative, such as few *Gups*[1]. Since, the PIF is anchored on Water Flagship, which was prepared through extensive local government consultation, communities concerns are already reflected. The PPG process will ensure communities are consulted as part of preparing safeguards, and gender action plans where priorities as presented in the PIF will be further validated

[1] Gup is the Head of the *gewog*, elected by the community of the *gewog*. *Gewog* is the lowest administrative unit is part of local government.

[1] GNHC is the office of the GEF OFP as well as government's agency to nationally co-ordinate policy, plans, programs and to mobilize grant resources

[2] Amongst other mandate, MoWHS is also responsible for rural water supply, and currently Water Flagship secretariate is housed with MoWHS

[3] MoAF is responsible for agriculture development in the country

[4] WMD is responsible for managing country's watershed

[5] DoA is directly responsible for irrigation development

[6] NEC is the country's apex environment agency, and is the national focal agency for UNFCCC and UNCBD

[7] Bhutan Water Partnership is currently hosted under Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN), <http://www.rspnbhutan.org/>

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021.5. 4: Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2021.4.28: It is noted that the agency has not identified any relevant women interest groups/organizations/associations and or ministries or networks responsible for gender in Bhutan. Please elaborate further on key stakeholders and efforts to ensure consultations of any of these interest groups during project development.

2021.4.1: Please provide some general statements on gender, drawing on existing national relevant gender disaggregated data/information.

Agency Response

The Para 46 (pg. 36) below, which is also integrated in the PIF succinctly addresses the concerns. Reference is made to National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), which is the institution established by the government to mainstream as well as to monitor gender program and results respectively. The NCWC works through a network of Gender Focal Points of the ministries and districts, and Gender Expert Group which provides advices to NCWC.

The part of para 46 is paraphrased as below to make it more explicit and clearer:

Equal rights are enshrined in the Bhutan's Constitution and other legal framework. The institutional architecture is comprehensive with the presence of the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), an institution established by the government to mainstream as well as monitor gender program and results across ministries and local government. NCWC works through a network of Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in each ministries and districts, and regularly work with Gender Expert Group (GEG) to improve the services.

Enhanced the narrative on gender as under:

Equal rights are enshrined in the Bhutan's Constitution and other legal framework. The institutional architecture is comprehensive with the presence of the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), existence of Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in national agencies, and a Gender Expert Group (GEG). However, human capacity and resources are reported to be limited. A National Gender Equality Policy has been adopted in 2019 with a vision for a society where substantive equality is practiced providing equal opportunities for women and men, boys and girls to achieve their full potential and benefit equitably from the social, economic and political development in the country. To improve women's participation in the Civil Service and promote women in leadership positions, the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) in the 12th Five-Year Plan incorporated two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), "number of interventions to promote women in leadership positions in the civil service" and "number of gender interventions in the civil service". However, male participation in various social groups and associations is 56 percent as compared to 48 percent for females; and in climate initiatives male participation is 10 percent as compared to only 3.5 percent for females[1]. In 2017, almost 60 percent of employed women were active in agriculture, as compared to more than 34 percent of the employed men (PHCB, 2017) showing increased participation of women in the agriculture sector, which itself is a sector that is vulnerable to impacts of climate change. The PPG phase of the project will carry out a gender analysis in the context of water resources and water management and gender-based vulnerabilities to climate changed. Based on the gender analysis a gender action plan for the project will be prepared and budgeted in the project. The project will contribute to enabling gender-balanced access and control over natural resources (water and water resources) and enable gender-balanced participation and leadership in decisions related to water management as well as in awareness and capacity development for climate-resilient water and water resources management.

[1] Gender and climate change in Bhutan with a focus on NDC priority areas; Agriculture, Energy and Waste, National Commission for Women and Children, 2020.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes. This is the innovation in the Bhutanese context, where such services were always been a government's or communal responsibilities. Further details need to be provided during PPG phase.

Agency Response

This is noted; further details to be provided during PPG phase.

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021.4.21: Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2021.4.1:

- COVID-19 risks and opportunities: While the country is starting to get vaccinated against the ongoing pandemics, smooth implementation of the project is also going to be impacted by progress on pandemic management outside of Bhutan. This is especially true, where the material supply and expert advice need to be depended from outside. Therefore, the PIF need to recognize this reality and propose mitigation measures. Also, elaborate on any potential opportunities, if any.
- Climate risks: while the PIF takes into consideration vulnerability to climate change, potential climate hazards /impacts on the ecosystem and indicative mitigation measures are not clear. In general, the success of the NbS is highly context specific and depends on how the local biodiversity responds to climate threats.
- Private sector involvement: Private sector involvement is one of the keys to the success of this project. How would this project ensure

their active involvement?

Agency Response

COVID-19 and Climate risks and opportunities; A paragraph is added in the PIF as below

In addition to above risks, project is mindful of the continuing risks associated with COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting risks, and the disruptions inof the global supply chain and restrictions on human mobility it has had. However, UNDP's on-going project activities have not been impacted seriously, as most of the supplies, particularly goods, come from India. The special agreement and protocol on export and import of goods have facilitated trade, which has greatly benefitted Bhutan. This practice is expected to continue. The vaccination drive, first round of which has been successful for Bhutan is also expected to result into easing of domestic travel. There are national experts who could implement the PPG and project activities. When needed, international consultants could provide virtual inputs to the local team. Nevertheless, the situation will be monitored and assessment will be made during the PPG to understand and adapt accordingly to the evolving situation andto make appropriate mitigation measures to over come any risks. Similarly, during the PPG, context specific climate risk and vulnerability will be explored and elaborated to mitigate any negative impacts on local biodiversity, eco-system and others

Coordination

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes.

Agency Response

Consistency with National Priorities

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes.

Agency Response

Knowledge Management

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021.5. 4: Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2021.4.28: Please further elaborate on the plans to learn from relevant projects, initiative, evaluations and best practice during project preparation, and proposed knowledge and learning outputs, per guideline on the Project and Program Cycle Policy.

Agency Response

Knowledge management mechanisms to share best practices and lessons learned between key stakeholders involved in water governance and management are generally lacking. The situation of multiple agencies involved in water governance and management call for a systematic approach to sharing of information and lessons between different units, departments and agencies of (local) government and with the private sector and civil societies. The GEF investment aims to significantly increase the capacity and knowledge of local and national stakeholders working in water sector through implementation of a transparent, effective, and efficient communication strategy that will be prepared during the PPG. Further the publication of an institutionalized State of the Basin Report (SOBR) for the Punatsangchu river basins will ensure that stakeholders are informed of the issues, opportunities, and state of affairs of watershed conditions including climate information of the Punatsangchu river basins. Lessons learnt from the project areas will also be included in the SOBR so that the water flagship program can upscale success cases and best practices in other project areas. The project's annual PIR, MTR and TE should also include discussion on lesson learned and opportunities for scaling up.

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately documented at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes.

Agency Response

art III – Country Endorsements

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

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Yes.

Agency Response

Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects

Does the project provide sufficient detail in Annex A (indicative termsheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table in Annex B to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. After reading the questionnaire in Annex C, is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

EFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

2021. 5. 4: This PIF is recommended for technical clearance.

2021.4.28: Not yet. Please refer to the review items (I-2, I-3, II-3, Stakeholders, Gender and KM) and resubmit for consideration (please highlight the update).

2021.4.21 /2021.4.1: Not yet. Please refer to the review items and resubmit for consideration (please highlight the update).

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	4/1/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/21/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/28/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/4/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)		

PIF Recommendation to CEO

Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval

