



PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)¹

PROJECT TYPE: Full-sized Project

TYPE OF TRUST FUND: GEF Trust Fund

PART I: PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Title:	Environmental Services Project		
Country(ies):	Albania	GEF Project ID: ²	
GEF Agency(ies):	WB (select) (select)	GEF Agency Project ID:	P128412
Other Executing Partner(s):	Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration	Submission Date:	2012-04-11
GEF Focal Area (s):	Multi-focal Areas	Project Duration (Months)	60 months
Name of parent program (if applicable): ➤ For SFM/REDD+ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Agency Fee (\$):	288,485

A. FOCAL AREA STRATEGY FRAMEWORK³:

Focal Area Objectives	Expected FA Outcomes	Expected FA Outputs	Trust Fund	Indicative Grant Amount (\$)	Indicative Co-financing (\$)
CCM-5 (select)	Outcome 5.1: Good management practices in LULUCF adopted both within the forest land and in the wider landscape	Output 5.1: Carbon stock monitoring systems established	GEFTF	206,061	1,539,192
CCM-5 (select)	Outcome 5.2: Restoration and enhancement of carbon stocks in forests and non-forest lands, including peatland	Output 5.2: Forests and non-forest lands under good management practices	GEFTF	412,121	3,078,384
(select) LD-1	Outcome 1.2: Improved agricultural management	Output 1.2 Types of Innovative SL/WM practices introduced at field level	GEFTF	206,061	1,539,192
(select) LD-1	Outcome 1.3: Sustained flow of services in agro-ecosystems.	Output 1.3 Suitable SL/WM interventions to increase vegetative cover in agro-ecosystems	GEFTF	309,091	2,308,788
(select) LD-1	Outcome 1.4: Increased investments in SLM	Output 1.4 Appropriate actions to diversify the financial resource base Output 1.5 Information on SLM technologies and good practice guidelines disseminated	GEFTF	206,061	1,539,192
(select) LD-3	Outcome 3.2: Integrated landscape management practices adopted by local communities	Output 3.1 Integrated land management plans developed and implemented Output 3.2 INRM tools and	GEFTF	309,091	2,308,788

¹ It is very important to consult the PIF preparation guidelines when completing this template.

² Project ID number will be assigned by GEFSEC.

³ Refer to the reference attached on the [Focal Area Results Framework](#) when filling up the table in item A.

		methodologies developed and tested			
(select) LD-3	Outcome 3.3: Increased investments in integrated landscape management	Output 3.3 Appropriate actions to diversify the financial resource base Output 3.4 Information on INRM technologies and good practice guidelines disseminated	GEFTF	412,121	3,078,384
(select) SFM/REDD-1	Outcome 1.1: Enhanced enabling environment within the forest sector and across sectors.	Output 1.1: Payment for ecosystem services (PES) systems established (number).	GEFTF	171,717	1,282,660
(select) SFM/REDD-1	Outcome 1.3: Good management practices adopted by relevant economic actors.	Output 1.2: Forest area (hectares) under sustainable management, separated by forest type Output 1.3: Types of services generated through SFM	GEFTF	171,717	1,282,660
(select) SFM/REDD-2	Outcome 2.1: Enhanced institutional capacity to account for GHG emission reduction and increase in carbon stocks.	Output 2.2: National forest carbon monitoring systems in place (number).	GEFTF	171,717	1,282,660
(select) SFM/REDD-2	Others	Outcome 2.2: New revenue for SFM created through engaging in the carbon market. Output 2.3: Innovative financing mechanisms established (number). Output 2.4: Carbon credits generated (number).	GEFTF	171,716	1,282,659
Sub-Total				2,747,474	20,522,559
Project Management Cost ⁴			GEFTF	137,374	2,052,256
Total Project Cost				2,884,848	22,574,815

B. PROJECT FRAMEWORK

Project Objective: To continue and extend environmentally, socially, economically and financially sustainable community based natural resource management planning and implementation, in erosion prone upland areas, reversing land degradation and sediment runoff, while increasing carbon sequestration and biodiversity benefits						
Project Component	Grant Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	Indicative Grant Amount (\$)	Indicative Cofinancing (\$)
1.1 Improved management of communal forest and pasture and micro-catchments (investments)	Inv	Community forests and pasture managed sustainably and self financing in perpetuity. Forest governance /	Most forest and pasture transferred to communal ownership under actively implemented participatory sustainable forest and pasture management plans,	GEFTF	1,248,852	9,328,436

⁴ GEF will finance management cost that is solely linked to GEF financing of the project.

		<p>SFM improved and areas under SFM increased Payments made for environmental benefits provided</p> <p>Integrated resource management of participating Micro-catchments</p> <p>Sustainability of forest management enhanced</p> <p>Erosion reduced Degraded land restored Degraded forest restored/regenerated</p> <p>Carbon sequestered</p> <p>Poverty reduced</p>	<p>and methods for financial sustainability established including mechanisms for payment for environmental services</p> <p>Number/area of micro-catchments under participatory communal resource management increased</p> <p>Forest, pasture and micro-catchment areas managed to favour native species</p> <p>Active forest, pasture and microcatchment management to address erosion and degradation including specific investments in check dams, afforestation, natural regeneration, pasture management and anti-erosion measures in degraded areas</p> <p>Areas of degraded pasture and scrub re/afforested through natural regeneration and or planting Forest management improved to increase total biomass and carbon stocks</p> <p>Forest, pasture and micro-catchment activities contributing to participating community/family income Communities actively seeking access to rural development funding through IPA/IPARD</p>			
1.2 Improved management of communal forest, pasture and micro-catchments (TA)	TA	Forest and pasture transferred to communal ownership covered by participatory sustainable forest and pasture management plans, and methods for financial sustainability established including mechanisms for payment for environmental service	Participatory sustainable forest and pasture management plans prepared/updated to cover all forest and pasture transferred to communal ownership	GEFTF	217,192	1,622,337

2. Payment for Environmental Services	TA	<p>Principles and the quantification of payments for environmental services accepted by downstream beneficiaries</p> <p>Downstream beneficiaries paying for environmental services provided by upstream land managers/owners</p> <p>Sequestered carbon paid for, either through CDM or voluntary markets</p>	<p>Quantities of reduced sediment entering water courses, reservoirs, dams and other water infrastructure due to sustainable forest/upland management estimated</p> <p>Monitoring systems designed and functioning</p> <p>Willingness to pay for environmental services by downstream beneficiaries established</p> <p>Mechanisms to charge downstream beneficiaries designed and agreed</p> <p>New voluntary mechanism designed</p> <p>Continued use of CDM systems if possible</p> <p>New voluntary markets established</p>	GEFTF	304,068	2,271,271
3.1 Forest, Pasture and Rural Development Institutional Support (TA)	TA	<p>Fully functioning forest and pasture extension service (or its equivalent), cooperating with rural development extension service of Min of Ag, providing sound integrated resource management advice to communes and FPUAs, villages and individuals</p> <p>Women actively involved and participating on a more equal basis in the decision making processes of the user associations</p> <p>Communal and private forest ownership clearly defined, titled and officially registered</p> <p>Small grants fund administered by the</p>	<p>Forest and pasture service trained</p> <p>Commune forestry staff trained</p> <p>Cooperation with other extension services established</p> <p>Guidelines, training and reference materials provided and disseminated</p> <p>Women in leading positions of the FPUAs, FPUA committees and other relevant community organizations</p> <p>Cadastral survey of forest (not inventory or measurement of growing stock) – this refers to boundary definition and ownership only – completed</p> <p>Technical advice/support to train paying agency staff</p>	GEFTF	434,383	3,244,673

		Agricultural paying agency fully functioning and disbursing component 1 investments to FPUAs, and others where relevant	and ensure efficient implementation along the lines of EU LEADER payments			
		Status, growth rates and productivity of communal and private forests known, carbon sequestration measurement methodologies adopted, capacity for continuous updating of forest databases established and a Forest Management Information System operational	Sample based forest inventory of transferred forest completed Permanent sample plots established, measured at regular intervals, and estimates growth rates prepared Carbon sequestration measurement methodologies prepared FMIS software adapted to local situation			
3.2 Forest, Pasture and Rural Development Institutional Support (Investment)	Inv	Fully functioning forest and pasture extension service, cooperating with rural development extension service of Min of Ag, providing sound integrated resource management advice to communes and FPUAs, villages and individuals Forest databases established and a Forest Management Information System operational	Necessary equipment and logistical support provided Hardware and software provided and installed	GEFTF	542,979	4,055,842
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
Sub-Total					2,747,474	20,522,559
Project Management Cost ⁵				GEFTF	137,374	2,052,256
Total Project Costs					2,884,848	22,574,815

C. INDICATIVE CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY SOURCE AND BY NAME IF AVAILABLE, (\$)

Sources of Cofinancing	Name of Cofinancier	Type of Cofinancing	Amount (\$)
Other Multilateral Agency (ies)	IBRD	Soft Loan	10,000,000
Bilateral Aid Agency (ies)	Swedish SIDA	Grant	10,000,000

⁵ Same as footnote #3.

National Government	Government of Albania	In-kind	1,287,407
National Government	Government of Albania	Grant	1,287,408
(select)		(select)	
(select)		(select)	
(select)		(select)	
(select)		(select)	
(select)		(select)	
(select)		(select)	
Total Cofinancing			22,574,815

D. GEF/LDCF/SCCF RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY, FOCAL AREA AND COUNTRY¹

GEF Agency	Type of Trust Fund	Focal Area	Country Name/Global	Grant Amount (a)	Agency Fee (b) ²	Total c=a+b
WB	GEF TF	Climate Change	Albania	649,091	64,909	714,000
WB	GEF TF	Land Degradation	Albania	1,514,545	151,455	1,666,000
WB	GEF TF	(select)	Albania	721,212	72,121	793,333
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
Total Grant Resources				2,884,848	288,485	3,173,333

¹ In case of a single focal area, single country, single GEF Agency project, and single trust fund project, no need to provide information for this table

² Please indicate fees related to this project.

PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PROJECT WITH:

A.1.1 the GEF focal area/LDCF/SCCF strategies:

The project addresses a number of objectives from three of the GEF V Strategies: Climate Change Mitigation, Land Degradation and Sustainable Forest Management Strategies. Much of the enabling work to address these issues has already been completed under the previous Natural Resources Development Project (NRDP), so the follow on project concentrates on replication and direct investment in producing significant and tangible results.

Climate change mitigation: The project meets Objective 5 of the GEF Climate Change mitigation results framework in that the Environmental Services Project (ESP) will promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks through sustainable management of forests and uplands. The project will prevent future loss of soil and re-establish forest on degraded/denuded lands, and increase carbon sequestration through improved forest management. The mechanism to monitor carbon sequestration developed under the NRDP will be further utilized and developed.

Land degradation: The project meets Objectives LD 1 (Agriculture and Rangeland Systems) and LD3 (Integrated Landscapes). The project will provide improved agricultural management with increased area of uplands agriculture and pasture under sustainable community management reducing the community vulnerability to climate variability through direct community based investments. Degraded areas of land will be rehabilitated and restored. The project will include innovative sustainable land management practices and increase the vegetative cover in pasture and agriculture. Work will be done to identify and trial payments for the environmental services provided for the sustainable management of the uplands. Under the project good management practices and guidelines will be prepared by the extension and rural development services. Under LD3, the project will support outcomes 3.2 and 3.3 (integrated landscape management practices adopted by local communities, and increased investments in landscape management). Integrated land management plans will be adopted and implemented. Actions will be taken to diversify the financial resource base and information on integrated resource management planning, appropriate technologies and good practice guidelines prepared and disseminated.

Sustainable Forest Management (SFM): The project will address both objectives of the SFM strategy (1. Reducing pressures on forest resources and generate sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services; and 2. Strengthening the enabling environment to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhance carbon sinks from LULUCF activities). The ESP will reduce pressures on forests by working with communities to reduce grazing pressure, to rehabilitate damaged and eroded lands, to undertake regeneration and reforestation activities as part of the implementation of sustainable forest management plans (which will be/were prepared by the communities with technical support of the ESP or NRDP). Once the forests have been restored, sustainable flows of forest products will be produced as part of the management plan and in a sustainable, silviculturally sound manner. However because of the initial degraded state of the forests, these flows are likely to take time to materialize. Therefore innovative financing is being sought for the communities through payments for environmental services provided from the sustainable forest management, such as payments for sequestered carbon and increased life span of water, power, drainage and irrigation infrastructure. At the same time sustainable rural development will be pursued in the wider landscape to encourage investments in areas such as rural, cultural and nature tourism. This will contribute to: good management in existing forests; good management practices adopted by relevant economic actors, enhanced carbon sinks through reduced forest degradation and increased restoration; sustainable services being generated in forest and the wider landscape; payments for environmental services established. Part of the project will be to address the need to develop institutional capacity for GHG accounting and to certify forest derived carbon credits. Furthermore the project is looking to access the voluntary carbon market to access payments for carbon sequestered through improved forest management and regeneration as well as the more prescriptive CDM methodology.

A.1.2. For projects funded from LDCF/SCCF: the LDCF/SCCF eligibility criteria and priorities:

- A.2. National strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions, if applicable, i.e. NAPAS, NAPs, NBSAPs, national communications, TNAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, etc.:

Relevant national strategies and action plans include the National Biodiversity and Action Plan (BSAP) approved in 1999, Assessment report of capacity building needs to address the priorities of BSAP (2007), national forestry and pasture management strategy (2005) (and three national reports to the CBD secretariat) and the Environmental sector and cross-cutting Strategy, 2007. The latter is part of the National Strategy for Development and Integration which is referred to under project overview; on climate change there are two national communications (2002 and 2010) and a Technological Needs Assessment (2005).

B. PROJECT OVERVIEW:

- B.1. Describe the baseline project and the problem that it seeks to address:

Albania has undergone rapid economic development over the last 10 years, and, having graduated from IDA lending in mid 2008, is now a lower-middle income country. The Government of Albania is, committed to achieving long term, balanced and sustainable economic, social and human development, as outlined in the 2007 National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI). The Government believes that these objectives are best pursued through EU accession and applied for EU candidate status in 2009. The fulfillment of the conditions and requirements to achieve candidate status present the biggest challenge in the medium term. At the same time, key measures have been identified in the NSDI, the National Forest and Pasture Strategy and the National Environmental Strategy to address the main environmental and natural resources management concerns including: further supporting the participatory forest and pasture management and planning at the local level, decreasing upstream soil erosion and illegal logging, increasing the level of forest cover and controlling gravel extraction in river beds.

Increases in the variability of precipitation, steep topography, heavily populated low lying coastal zones, and reliance on water for energy and agriculture, mean that Albania is extremely vulnerable to climate change. In fact, Albania is among the most vulnerably countries to climate change in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and suffers both from high exposure to increased climate extremes, as well as a high sensitivity to climate change. Temperature increases of up to 1.7 to 2.3 C are expected by mid-century, along with a significant decrease in precipitation (up to -6.9 to -5.3 percent by 2050). Considering that close to 95 percent of Albania's electricity is derived from hydroelectric power, this will pose additional challenges to power infrastructure. Upstream soil erosion and downstream sedimentation are already causing significant problems with damaged drainage, irrigation and power infrastructure and flooding. In addition, Albania is expected to suffer from more frequent and severe droughts, extreme weather events (heat waves, floods), and increased fire risk in forest and pasture areas. Sea level rise is likely to result in a loss of wetland and coastal forest areas (Lezha coast).

To date the Government of Albania has transferred from the state to communal ownership more than 750,000 ha of forest and pasture (~ 60% of all state owned forest). Even though Albania has a high percentage of forest cover, most of the forest and pasture recently transferred to the communes is in poor condition. Fragile soils on the one hand, and unsustainable forestry and agricultural practices on the other, mean that soil erosion is a significant problem with currently unquantifiable amounts of sediment being eroded into the rivers, lakes and canals, prior to being washed into the Adriatic. It is estimated that soil erosion varies from 21.4 ton-hectares to 34.7 ton-hectares per year, which puts Albania among the Mediterranean countries with the highest level of erosion (Albania's Second National Communication, 2009), with significant impacts on communities. Changes in agricultural practice and migration of the population away from rural areas have led to abandonment of fields and pasture. It is estimated that there are between 120,000 ha and 300,000 ha of abandoned agricultural land that could be suitable for afforestation and or natural regeneration.

The recent rapid growth in the economy (real economic growth rates of around 6% over the last decade) has been accompanied by an impressive decline in poverty (nearly half Albania's poor was lifted out of poverty

between 2002 and 2008). The incidence of poverty in rural areas has more than halved over the whole country, from 29.6% in 2002 to 14.6% in 2008. However, poverty remains high at 29.8% in certain areas, mostly the mountainous uplands.

The ESP will build on and expand the success of the Albania Natural Resources Development Project. Under the NRDP, communal and participatory forest and pasture management plans (CFPMPs) were prepared (or updated) in some 240 communes covering 744,000 ha of forest and pasture. Thirty communes had integrated micro-catchment plans (covering 85,000 ha) approved and under implementation. Additionally investments to sequester carbon had been implemented in some 6,272 ha of degraded forest or bare-land and will have sequestered 146,000 tonnes of CO₂ by 2011. It is estimated that the project interventions to date have reduced erosion by 290,000 tonnes.

Although the progress has been good, and the approaches of communal forest and pasture management and also micro-catchment management that have been developed have proved technically sound, there is now the need to scale up and replicate the approach, but more importantly to ensure financial sustainability in the long term through developing financial and business planning capacity and providing access to new funding lines through both competitive grants and payments for environmental services. The management plans prepared under the NRDP are for ten years and require continued support to be implemented. Despite the success of the NRDP, there are still significant areas of erosion, degradation and unsustainable land use practices. Without continued support in the short to medium term, it is highly likely that many of the gains in improved management of communal, rural natural resources would be reversed, due to the uncertain financial sustainability for the communities and rural population. Rural poverty is still highly prevalent in the rural upland communities. One of the objectives of the Environmental Services Project will be to identify means to secure funding for these essential operations in perpetuity (through further protecting the land use rights and tenure, sharing the benefits of the sustainable land uses, through payments for environmental services - e.g. sequestered carbon and damage avoided through reduced erosion, and precursors to EU funding for Natura 2000 and rural development payments, potentially from the Instrument of Pre-Accession and Rural Development (IPARD)).

The recently closed NRDP was funded by an IDA credit (closed June 30, 2011), a Sida Trust Fund (closed May 1, 2011), and GEF Grant (closed November 30, 2011). There is a follow on Sida funded hybrid Trust Fund which will bridge the financing gap from closure of the NRDP until commencement of the ESP (which is expected in FY 13). The hybrid TF will continue to support improved community-based management of natural resources in upland/mountainous erosion prone lands but will also support the preparation of the new ESP. Moreover, there is a current Program on Forests (PROFOR) grant being implemented over 24 months to undertake fundamental research into the effects of different land uses on the sediment runoff, their impact on downstream water infrastructure and to propose mechanisms for payments to land owners/managers to implement management practices to reduce erosion.

Baseline Project Description

The baseline project, is the overall Environmental Services Project which builds on the NRDP, to be funded by co-financing.

The project objective is to continue and extend environmentally, socially, economically and financially sustainable community based natural resource management planning and implementation, in erosion prone upland areas, reversing land degradation and sediment runoff, while increasing carbon sequestration benefits.

The ESP will include three main components:

1. Improved management planning and implementation in communal forest and pasture and micro-catchments: This will include participatory preparation and implementation of CFPMPs in the areas transferred to communal ownership but not yet covered by management plans, continued implementation of the current CFPMPs, and renewing the plans which expire during the project life span.

The communal and participatory forest and pasture management plans prepared under the NRDP cover a ten year implementation period. The NRDP was of six years duration, and many of the plans were prepared during the later years of the project. Therefore most of the plans have only been partially

implemented. The forest and pasture user associations (FPUAs) will therefore require continued support for implementation of the specified activities. Most of the forests transferred were highly degraded and because the crop will take many years to mature, it will be some time before the forest can start yielding significant returns to the FPUAs from wood products. Further investments are required to continue plan implementation and to secure ongoing communal support. Although the communes supported by the NRDP now understand the principles of sustainable forest management they lack resources to continue implementation. Types of activities to be implemented by the ESP would include: remedial forest operations (e.g. coppicing, cleaning, re-spacing, enrichment planting, selective silvicultural thinning); construction of anti-erosion measures such as check dams, gully rehabilitation, repair of culverts and drains; and reduction of grazing pressure in pasture lands through construction of watering points to allow use of alternative currently under utilized pasture areas, planting of fodder crops, artificial insemination etc. The implementation of such plans will also have carbon sequestration benefits, which are expected to be attractive to financing from the voluntary private corporate sector, based on the experience and methodology developed under the CDM carbon sequestration implemented under the NRDP. The types of silvicultural interventions to bolster carbon benefits will include: protection of degraded areas from grazing; coppicing where necessary of heavily grazed areas, so browsed and deformed plants can regenerate with the potential to grow into mature trees; singling/respacing/thinning of the regrowing stems to allow for even spacing, and removal of damaged and twisted stems, and to maximize the utilization of the available area; enrichment planting to ensure complete coverage (i.e. planting gaps and bare areas) and to improve species composition (i.e. in areas where only shrub species are growing, areas will be cleaned and planted with tree species in groups); and, planting shelterbelts, and fruit and nut trees. Furthermore, the NRDP successfully supported the preparation of integrated resource management plans in 30 micro-catchments and implemented investments in forest and agricultural land such as: land stabilization (e.g. check dams, gully rehabilitation, repair of culverts and drains, planting of trees and shrubs etc.); rehabilitation of forests; rehabilitation of degraded agricultural land, and use of alternatives to cultivation and grazing on erosion prone lands. The ESP will therefore replicate this approach and include an increased coverage of integrated micro-catchment plans in additional communes and support key investments for their implementation. Such scaling up of micro catchment support would undertaken by following a River Basin program based approach including integrated agriculture, forestry and pasture extension.

Unlike the NRDP, the ESP funding for investments to implement the CFPMPs and the micro-catchment integrated resource management plans will be provided through competitive grants, whereby the participants and user associations will need to apply competitively for funding. This will entail the preparation of technical proposals and business plans, which will demonstrate compliance with the management plans' objectives and prescriptions but also, and importantly, financial and business sustainability. This will give targeted support to desirable land-use practices and could be used stimulate the inclusion and participation of vulnerable groups. The grants will be managed by the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Consumer Protection's payment agency. Extension support will be provided to the beneficiaries to help them prepare their proposals and business plans. The ESP under component 3, will assist (in terms of logistics and training) both the extension services and payment agency. This approach is innovative in comparison with the NRDP, and is designed to: i) increase the business and financial planning capacity and hence business sustainability of the forest pasture and user associations; ii) utilize the Ministry of Agriculture's Paying Agency to administer the program (to increase the institutional sustainability) rather than a project financed PIU; and, iii) to lead into national and EU funding opportunities post ESP.

These project interventions will: reduce erosion and sediment runoff; increase the amount of carbon held in the forest biomass (climate change mitigation); improve the sustainability of forest management (including better governance); increase the extent, range and quality of the habitats available for biodiversity; and help address rural poverty in mountainous areas.

2. Payment for Environmental Services: It is unlikely that the financial returns from investments in forest, pasture and watershed management oriented agricultural land-use management will provide sufficient financial incentive for sustained involvement of participating farmers and community members in the

short to medium term. If, however, their direct financial return is complimented by payments for the environmental services that the sustainable management of upland resources provides to downstream users (and other beneficiaries), then the long term sustainability and short term financial viability are much more likely. This calls for negotiations between the down-stream beneficiaries, such as power, irrigation and water companies and the up-land land managers, and other potential beneficiaries such as the voluntary carbon market. Successful negotiations would require a research-based quantification of the effects of different soil-conservation practices, such as cost/benefits to reduced erosion on the life of dams. Initial research has now commenced as part of the PROFOR supported work mentioned above. This a new and innovative approach being developed worldwide; it is the first time for this approach to be trialed in Albania in particular.

The ESP will replicate, monitor and verify the estimates of reduced soil erosion and the impacts on downstream beneficiaries over a larger area, and will quantify the effects of different soil-conservation practices as the basis for payments for soil and silt not entering into dams, watercourses and irrigation infrastructure. The project will work with the down-stream users to establish their willingness to pay for these services and to develop appropriate mechanisms. Initial discussions with the local power producer indicate that they are extremely interested in investing in methods to promote the life span and decrease the maintenance costs of their infrastructure whilst at the same time reducing the likelihood of catastrophic failure.

Various payment methods will be investigated, such as: the direct economic settlement between the up-land and down-stream parties; Government taxation of the beneficiaries and provision of payments for improved sustainable upland management practices; and, direct investment by the down-stream beneficiaries in the upper catchment areas (i.e. the power company or drainage/irrigation provider providing communities directly with support to improve sustainability/reduce the erosion of the upper catchments).

The environmental services from sequestered carbon under the NRDP, were/will be paid for through an Emissions Reduction Purchase Agreement (ERPA) – a 'carbon offset contract that underlies the sale and purchase of Certified Emissions Reductions from Clean Development Mechanism projects under the Kyoto Protocol' – between Albania and the World Bank administered Bio-Carbon Fund. The conditions for such formal **carbon credit payments** are constrained by CDM regulations, for example they could not apply to carbon benefits in land formally defined as forest after 1990, even if the forest was severely degraded and improved forest management would lead to increased biomass production. Currently there is no follow on agreement to the Kyoto Protocol and with the first commitment period ending in 2012, there is great uncertainty over the future of the regulated carbon market. However, the COP that was held in Durban at the end of this year might lead to some international agreement on climate change. The World Bank's BioCarbon Fund is therefore currently in the process of fund raising for a third tranche, targeting mostly the voluntary carbon market. This third tranche of the BioCarbon Fund will also focus on programs, rather than projects, integrating various types of emission reducing activities at a geographically defined area (for example, at the watershed level) thus following a "landscape" based approach to carbon finance. Scaling up the carbon component of the NRDP, and developing a landscape program in Albania would be a perfect fit for the new generation BioCF, given the innovative poverty alleviation, rural development approach already tested under the NRDP. The initial quantification of sequestered carbon is based on the measured and validated experience of carbon sequestration from the NRDP pilot activity on just 6,272 ha (i.e. it is assumed that the ESP will be able sequester at least 146,000 tonnes of **measurable** CO₂ Emission Reductions according to the CDM methodologies developed during the NRDP, including carbon gains from managed natural regeneration in degraded areas) in that the monitoring system for the Voluntary Carbon trading is likely to be similar to that of the ERPA agreement. It is expected that these numbers would increase under a landscape carbon finance program, as several activities would count toward emission reduction targets. The actual amount of carbon sequestered will be many times this estimate, because most of the sequestration occurs on land that was ineligible under the Kyoto protocol as it was classed forest even though it was severely degraded or bare land in 1990. **Therefore voluntary carbon markets will be specifically targeted, and GEF funds will not be used for CDM projects.**

Of the 750,000 ha of forest that is now covered by forest and pasture and management plans, 466,000 ha is estimated to be forest, with the balance under managed pasture. Under work done by SNV net forest growth in the newly managed forests was estimated to be around 5m³/ha/yr. If it is assumed that without the new ESP, half of the forest now under the management plans will continue to have a net growth of half this amount (i.e. 2.5 m³/ha/yr) then over a 5 year period, there would have been growth of around 1.74 million m³ [column 3 in table 1](without the project it is likely that some of the forests will again be overcut, that some will be cleared, and most of the remainder neglected). Under the ESP, it would be reasonable to assume that these forests would continue to be managed and should achieve the full growth rate. However assuming a more cautious estimate that 75% of the growth rate over 75% of the forest, with the ESP there would be total growth of just over 3.93 million m³ [column 5] over the five year project. The net growth due to the ESP interventions would therefore be 2.18 million m³ [column 5 –column 3]. The GEF contribution to this growth would be around 269 thousand m³ [assuming contribution in proportion with the level of finance]. This is summarized in table 1:

Table 1. Estimated volume production due to sustainable forest management under the ESP

Project interventions	Target ha	Volume without project (m ³)	Gross Volume with project due to GEF (m ³)	Total Gross Volume with project (m ³)	Net Volume with project due to GEF (m ³)	NetGross Volume with project (m ³)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sustainable management of communal forest	750 000	1 746 675	484 356	3 930 019	269 086	2 183 344
Sustainable management of pasture lands	not estimated					
Micro-catchment management	not estimated					

According to the FAO Forest Resource Assessment for Albania (2010), the total growing stock volume over 776 thousand ha of forest and other wooded lands, amounted to some 82.2 million m³ over bark (ob) and this had an above ground biomass of 82.9 million metric tonnes (oven dry weight) of carbon, with an additional 45.6 million metric tonnes below ground. From this it can be derived, that on average one cubic meter of volume equates to 1.01 metric tonnes of above ground biomass (this average seems intuitively high but probably takes into account the large quantity of branches and small sizes of the stems, in much of Albania's forests that would not be measured in a traditional forest inventory). If it is again cautiously assumed that just the equivalent above ground biomass will be captured by the ESP, then the total biomass captured would be 2.2 million tonnes of carbon, with the GEF attributable portion of 271 thousand tonnes of carbon. These conservative estimates, as well as excluding the estimates of below ground carbon capture (i.e. soil, roots etc.) exclude the deadwood and leaf litter, but perhaps also more importantly, the carbon that will be captured or emissions prevented from improved management and further degradation of pasture.

3. Forest, Pasture and Rural Development Institutional Support: The transfer of forests to the communes means that there is an urgent need for an effective **Forest and Pasture Extension Service** and a functioning control system. The NRDP started to address these issues, but the new institutions still require significant continued support for capacity building through training of the extension service and of the forestry staff of Communes. Most Forest and Pasture Extension Service staff have a formal forest education but need to undergo in-service training to be able provide technical, managerial and socially adapted advice to the communes and to forest and pasture users both directly and through the Forest and Pasture User Associations (FPUAs). The extension officers would also be trained to provide extension

advice to agriculture extension staff as a way to integrate forest and pasture messages into other land-use extension packages, to minimize the costs of delivery and to address the broader rural development needs. The ESP will encourage provision of holistic rural development extension advice (at the community level regarding forests, pasture and micro-catchment management). The future Forestry and Pasture Extension Service will then cooperate and coordinate with the other concerned extension disciplines.

The ESP will place more emphasis in involving **vulnerable groups**, particularly women, in planning and decision-making with respect to preparation and implementation of the CFPMPs and MC plans. This takes account the strong link and dependence women (and other vulnerable groups) have with their forests, pastures and agriculture. This may require innovative measures to overcome the sometimes inherent cultural male dominance and may warrant affirmative action, such as requiring a set proportion of women as members of the Forest Pasture and User Associations' (FPUAs') committees and Local Action Groups and women only meetings (if women don't participate in the usual meetings in sufficient numbers). The ESP will build on the participatory features developed by the NRDP, to include the active involvement of CSOs and NGOs in project activities such as: formation of the FPUA's; participation in the preparation of CFPMPs and MC plans; formation of Local Action Groups (LAGs) to access prototype EU LEADER type funding; participation in small grants program; participation and inclusion of CSOs and NGOs in project outreach and awareness activities; and, participation in training and capacity building to be implemented through the project supported extension service.

The CFPMPs are established through a detailed confirmation of traditional land use rights between the community, families, clans and individuals. This has resulted in a strong sentiment among the majority of clans and individuals with traditional rights to go further to acknowledge **private forest** land within the communal forests. It is likely that this will result in new patterns of ownership within the communal forests, which will require new and different management of the forests. This requires new institutional arrangements in terms extension service and management planning and implementation. It may also justify an expanded role of the FPUA to also cover forest owners.

Only a small proportion of the communes that have received forest and pasture land actually have the title to that land. This together with the likely emergence of private ownership of forest is suggesting that the boundaries of properties need to be established and officially registered with official land titles (which in English is referred to as **cadastre survey**, whilst cadastre in Albania normally refers to the registry of the condition of the forests).

The proposed project will also support the setting up of a **Small Grants Fund** to support prototype Local Action Groups (LAGs) along the lines of the EU LEADER program, but specially directed to FPUAs for local capacity building and for grants to members of FPUAs and micro-catchment groups to projects with positive effects on the livelihood and environmental development in Communes included in the program (for implementation of investments under component 1). Sida bridge-funding is foreseen to support the design of the Small Grants Manual.

The ESP project will focus on supporting the sustainable forest management of the newly transferred forests, (60% of the total Albanian forest area). As there is no current funding or plans redo the **National Forest Inventory** of 2004, there is a need for an objective inventory of the transferred forest to monitor the extent of forest areas, volume, growth, species distribution, health status for the forests and possible illegal logging. At the same time the project will develop a system for measuring and monitoring the carbon sequestered through the project's interventions. This will build on the carbon monitoring undertaken during the NRDP and help institutionalize this process. To make that data on forest area and status readily available to planners and users, the development of a **Forest Management Information System** (FMIS) will be started. The FMIS will utilize the information from the 2004 forest inventory, existing management plans and maps as a baseline and will be updated with new data as they become available. The FMIS will also be used to collate, analyze, store, and report on the data from carbon monitoring system currently under development. Carbon monitoring will be undertaken throughout the country but initially only at the specific carbon sites already established under the NRDP and then subsequently under the ESP. The monitoring system will be designed for further roll out and collection of data as and when required. The methodology to be developed will allow for national level reporting as

well as site specific reporting (important for voluntary and CDM reporting).

- B. 2. [incremental](#) / [Additional cost reasoning](#): describe the incremental (GEF Trust Fund) or additional (LDCF/SCCF) activities requested for GEF/LDCF/SCCF financing and the associated [global environmental benefits](#) (GEF Trust Fund) or associated adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF) to be delivered by the project:

The GEF will finance incremental costs of expanding the baseline program (the Environmental Services Project) described above, to include those activities which maximize global environmental benefits. These activities would be fully integrated into the baseline. These investments and activities are more than simply scaling up and replication of the NRDP, but further develop the sustainability of the interventions through increased business and financial planning for the forest and pasture user associations, use of the Ministry of Agriculture's paying agency with the intention of this leading to continued support post (and probably during) ESP from national and EU funding opportunities, and payments for environmental services from downstream beneficiaries (e.g. utility companies, users of water and water infrastructure). The GEF supported additional activities would add to the baseline program, the following elements:

1. Investments to preserve and restore forest and upland stability, critical protective functions, and services through sustainable land and forest management. The GEF funding will complement the baseline program developing and increasing the financial sustainability of community-based management arrangements for multiple sustainable use of forest, pasture and agricultural resources, and will support: (i) rehabilitation and protection of degraded ecologically sensitive forest areas; (ii) rehabilitation of agricultural land bordering rivers and riparian forests; (iii) use of indigenous tree species to rehabilitate degraded forests, re-introduction of indigenous plants for rehabilitation of pastures, and use of traditional and native varieties of fruit trees and bushes in establishing orchards and fruit production as alternatives to arable and pasture; (iv) the sequestration of carbon, (v) improvement of and increased sustainability of forest management systems, (vi) enhancement of pasture management systems; and, (vii) establishment of windbreaks to reduce water and wind erosion. ;
2. Technical assistance to bolster and expand the necessary research, and to develop mechanisms where downstream beneficiaries compensate local communities for the protection of forest and other ecosystem stability and the critical functions and services provided in watersheds, thereby improving the financial sustainability of sensitive and land and forest management in the short to medium term; and,
3. Further strengthening the enabling environment and institutional capacity to prevent/rehabilitate ecosystem degradation through provision of the necessary technical extension capacity and control functions within the extension service, communal forest managers and the DGFP. This would include: (i) integration of sustainable forest management and stakeholder-driven priorities in resource management plans - integrating ecological, economic and social goals - to facilitate coordinated resource mobilization and the successful implementation of priority activities; (ii) strengthening of participatory institutional mechanisms and capacities for integrated ecosystem management planning and implementation at the local and national levels and across sectors; (iii) development of appropriate regulations and incentive structures, including the improved land tenure system to encourage efficient and sustainable land management; and (iv) dissemination and replication of good ecosystem management practices and lessons learned.

The GEF grant will finance small works; goods; field, office and other equipment; consulting services; training and workshops; stakeholder consultations; and the incremental costs related to the management, monitoring, and evaluation of the above activities. The details of the purchases will be developed during project preparation.

The outcomes of GEF-financed activities would include: (i) strengthened institutional and human resource capacity for sustainable forest management planning and implementation; (ii) improved land tenure systems as an incentive for the adoption of sustainable forest and landscape management practices; (iii) preservation or restoration of the structure and functional integrity of critical ecosystems, improved effectiveness of forest

and fragile agricultural land management, and increased environmental and economic sustainability of forest and agricultural operations in the project areas; (iv) raised awareness, support, and participation of the local population and communities in sustainable ecosystem management; and, (v) improved business management and financial sustainability of the forest pasture and user associations.

The incremental GEF support will catalyze widespread adoption of comprehensive forest management interventions that integrate ecological, economic and social goals to achieve multiple and cross-cutting global benefits through the introduction and nation-wide replication of sustainable forest management practices. These activities would help forge strategic partnerships with the community-based organizations, land users, and other stakeholders at the local and national levels to address land degradation in a way that achieves multiple long-term global environment benefits. They would integrate and optimize the positive ecological, economic and social benefits of natural resource management. They would accelerate country-driven actions on sustainable forest management to (i) preserve and restore the structure and functional integrity of natural ecosystems; (ii) strengthen conservation of biological diversity, including globally significant biodiversity; (iii) reduce carbon dioxide emission and improve carbon sequestration; and, (iv) reduce sediment runoff into water-courses, reservoirs, dams, and irrigation infrastructure. They would strengthen integrated and cross-sectoral approaches in addressing ecosystems degradation at the local and national levels.

B.3. Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the Project at the national and local levels, including consideration of gender dimensions, and how these will support the achievement of global environment benefits (GEF Trust Fund) or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF). As a background information, read [Mainstreaming Gender at the GEF.](#)":

The whole project and approach is designed around the concepts of benefit sharing with the community and community based resource management, to create the win-win situation where socio-economic gains are accompanied with sustainable management of natural resources. Under the NRDP, it was shown that on average participating family income increased by 8% in forestry only related interventions and 28% in micro-catchment areas. Under the new ESP, the expected socio-economic gain is expected to be larger, due to the new component to develop further the concept of payment for environmental services. This will increase the financial sustainability of the sustainable forest and upland management approach being developed and hence the provision of the global environmental benefits (carbon sequestered, improved biodiversity, reduced erosion and rehabilitation of degraded land).

The socio-economic benefits will include: participating in project financed environmental rehabilitation activities; returns in kind from project activities e.g. arisings from coppicing, cleaning and pruning; income from small grant implementation of alternative income generating activities areas such as orchards, nuts, irrigation, livestock watering points, improved fodder production, artificial insemination, hedges and windbreaks to increase agricultural production, etc. ; In addition to direct returns, socio-economic benefits also arise from the process of community management in areas such as training, participation in user associations and committee membership. The program will also facilitate the adaptation of the FPUAs into proto-type Local Action Groups (LAGs), which may then be able to apply for future Rural Development funding under the LEADER axis (axis 4 for member states' European Agriculture and Rural Development Fund) of the Instrument of Pre-accession for Agriculture and Rural Development (IPARD).

The ESP will directly support and positively influence the increase of women's and disadvantaged groups' membership in both the FPUAs and the FPUA committees. Additionally gender and social exclusion will have to be taken into consideration in business plans and applications for funding under the competitive grants schemes proposed for implementation of activities in support of the CFPMPs and integrated resource micro-catchment management plans.

B.4 Indicate risks, including climate change risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design:

Risk	Level	Mitigation
Inadequate returns for sustainable forest and agricultural land management in the short term result in reduced community uptake/replication, reversal of some gains, and continuing erosion and degradation	M	Under the NRDP, the mechanisms for participatory forest and micro-catchment management have been successfully demonstrated and further replication is not risky. However, the implementation of the activities in the plans is dependent currently on continued investment and donor support until the forest and other investments begin to yield more significant returns to the FPUAs and communes. The difficulty is to make the process and approach financially self sustaining in perpetuity. This will be mitigated through working with down-stream beneficiaries of environmental goods and services (e.g. provision of carbon, reduced erosion leading to damage avoided, and increased life span of energy, drainage and irrigation infrastructure). Initial contact with local energy providers indicates a willingness to develop these mechanisms.
Absence of a post Kyoto carbon trading agreement may make it harder to secure payments for sequestered carbon	M	Previously payments for sequestered carbon were made by the Bio-Carbon fund under the CDM of the Kyoto Protocol. This may be difficult to replicate for two reasons: (i) there is no follow-on agreement to Kyoto as yet, although one may be realized in Durban in 2011; and (ii), suitable areas for carbon sequestration that were not registered as forest in 1992 may be hard to locate. It is therefore proposed to follow the voluntary market, which could follow the methodology developed under the NRDP, but would not be dependent on either Kyoto, or not being classified as bare or agricultural land in 1992.
Institutional change/capacity required to support project interventions may be too slow to provide the necessary advice and administrative support	L	The NRDP has shown that the Government has pushed ahead with the necessary institutional/legislative/policy changes and is serious about developing the capacity and undertaking the necessary training. The project will support this process and provide necessary equipment and training, as well as seek other ways to ensure this important function (e.g. planning for a private extension system or set up forest extension unit within the existing Agricultural Extension Service).
Capacity to implement and manage the project interventions	M	With a large program reaching many communes, villages, FPUAs and individuals it is cumbersome to implement and requires diligent management of the program resources. Under the proposed approach, it is intended that the payment agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, already established in the 12 regions of the country as part of the Government's Rural Development Crosscutting Strategy, should administer the program implementation. The project will provide training and the necessary resources to ensure that the agency has the necessary capacity. This will also allow for future EU support.
The development of private property could interact negatively with the common rights previously developed	N	The demand for communal rights to be further devolved to traditional owners has arisen from the progress made with developing communal forest management plans, where the traditional owners are now benefitting from communal management. Although the management planning, advice and extension requirements will be slightly different, the demand for traditional ownership will enhance rather than threaten the gains made in the sustainability of forest management, as it will

		guarantee the owner's rights to the benefits in perpetuity. The project has been designed to address the changing institutional requirements.
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B.5. Identify key stakeholders involved in the project including the private sector, civil society organizations, local and indigenous communities, and their respective roles, as applicable:

Stakeholder	Role
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration (MOEFWA)	The MOEFWA is the project proponent and the main project implementing agency. The MOEFWA is the focal point for GEF but also for the implementation of other environmental conventions (biodiversity, climate change, combating desertification), including the Kyoto Protocol (ratified in 2004). The MOEFWA is responsible for forest and pasture extension service.
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection (MOAFCP)	The project investments at the local level will be implemented by the payment agency of MOAFCP. The MOEFWA and MOAFCP will cooperate to provide rural development extension advice for the implementation of the Project.
Communes	Management of forest and pasture is now the responsibility of the local Communes, and as such will be key stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of management plans
Forest and Pasture User Associations (FPUAs)	FPUAs, manage and implement the management plans locally on behalf of the communes and participating beneficiaries
Local consultants	Local consultants prepare and update the Communal Forest and Pasture Management Plans and the Integrated Micro-Catchment Plans for the Communes and FPUAs
Individual and family participants	The integrated MC plans and the CFPMPs are implemented by individual and family members of the FPUAs
Women and disadvantaged groups	Under the project a quota of women and disadvantaged groups will be required for membership of the FPUAs, and the FPUA committees and as recipients of the small grants and investment proceeds
Local and international companies	Local and international power, water and drainage companies will participate in the project as purchasers of environmental services such as sequestered carbon, increased life span of water, drainage, irrigation and power infrastructure

B.6. Outline the coordination with other related initiatives:

The project is completely in line with Government policy in terms of the 2007 National Strategy Development and Integration (NSDI), the National Forest and Pasture Strategy and National Environmental Strategy. The ESP is complementary to the proposed IBRD funded Water Resources and Irrigation Project (WRIP), in that the improved upland and forest management will be of direct benefit to improving the downstream use of water resources and irrigation infrastructure.

The ESP is included in the IBRD and IFC's Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for Albania for the period FY11-FY14, and as such is part of an overall coordinated program.

C. DESCRIBE THE GEF AGENCY'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE TO IMPLEMENT THIS PROJECT:

The proposed project is an investment operation and is consistent with the comparative advantage of the World Bank as stipulated in the Comparative Advantage matrix. The World Bank has a proven track record of working in the forest and upland community sector in Albania, firstly with the Albania Forestry Project which closed in 2005, and the presently closing NRDP.

The World Bank is also providing expert support and advice throughout the region in areas such as: the participatory development of forest policy and strategies (Romania, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Russia); work on climate change mitigation and adaptation with respect to forest fires in Bulgaria and Russia; carbon sequestration and land rehabilitation (Moldova and Albania); forest law enforcement and governance (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan and previously in Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and Moldova); institutional reform and development in Russia, Bulgaria and Romania; and the provision of key forest sector investments in areas such as the rehabilitation of the dry Aral seabed, and reforestation of the Semei and Irtysh Pine forests in Kazakhstan, investment in forest institutions and infrastructure in Romania, protected area management and forest conservation in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina,

The World Bank as the largest Multi-lateral Development Bank, is instrumental in implementing key REDD+ projects worldwide.

C.1 Indicate the co-financing amount the GEF agency is bringing to the project:

Under the ESP it is anticipated that the Government of Albania will borrow US\$ 10 million from the IBRD, provide 10 percent from its own financing or in kind (incl. GEF funding), and Sweden will provide additional bilateral grant funding of US\$ 10 million. The total ESP co-financing is expected to be in excess of US\$ 22 million.

C.2 How does the project fit into the GEF agency's program (reflected in documents such as UNDAF, CAS, etc.) and staff capacity in the country to follow up project implementation:

The third strategic objective of the Albania Country Partnership Strategy program of the WB for FY 11-14 is to reduce vulnerability to climate change by (i) improving water conservation, management and efficient use of Albania's water resources, and (ii) decrease vulnerability to natural and manmade disasters. Thus the Environmental Services Project will further address upstream erosion and other degradation issues that impact Albania's sustainable development.

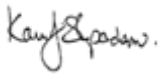
Project implementation will be overseen by a skilled and experienced World Bank team that is based in the Bank's Albania Office, supplemented with forestry and climate change experts from Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The Albania team includes the project's Task Team Leader (who successfully managed the implementation of the NRDP), Financial Management Specialist, Procurement Specialist, Safeguards Specialists, and Operations Officer. The supervision team has utilized a number of highly experienced and senior consultants covering the fields of forestry and rangeland management, forest policy and institutional development, and project management and administration. The team's proximity to the client will allow it to ensure continuous project supervision effectively and efficiently and to address any issues as they arise.

PART III: APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT BY GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT(S) AND GEF AGENCY(IES)

- A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S):** (Please attach the [Operational Focal Point endorsement letter\(s\)](#) with this template. For SGP, use this [OFP endorsement letter](#)).

NAME	POSITION	MINISTRY	DATE (MM/dd/yyyy)
Mr. Pellumb Abeshi	GEF Operational Focal Point	MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, WATER AND FOREST ADMINISTRATION	03/29/2012

- B. GEF AGENCY(IES) CERTIFICATION**

This request has been prepared in accordance with GEF/LDCF/SCCF policies and procedures and meets the GEF/LDCF/SCCF criteria for project identification and preparation.					
Agency Coordinator, Agency name	Signature	DATE (MM/dd/yyyy)	Project Contact Person	Telephone	Email Address
Karin Shepardson, GEF Executive Coordinator, ENVGC, World Bank		04/11/2012	Angela Armstrong, GEF Regional Coordinator	(202) 458-0975	aarmstrong@worldbank.org
			Drita Dade, Task Team Leader	5246+137	ddade@worldbank.org