



GEF-6 REQUEST FOR PROJECT ENDORSEMENT/APPROVAL

PROJECT TYPE: Full-sized Project

TYPE OF TRUST FUND: GEF Trust Fund

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PART I: PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title:	Conservation-oriented management of forests and wetlands to achieve multiple benefits		
Country:	Belarus	GEF Project ID:	7993
GEF Agency:	UNDP	GEF Agency Project ID:	5495
Other Executing Partner(s):	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (MNREP)	Submission Date:	September 14, 2016
GEF Focal Area (s):	Multi-focal area	Project Duration (months):	60
Integrated approach pilot	IAP-Cities <input type="checkbox"/> IAP-Commodities <input type="checkbox"/> IAP-Food Security <input type="checkbox"/>		Corporate Program: SGP <input type="checkbox"/>
Name of parent program:	NA	Agency fee (\$)	405,038

A. FOCAL AREA STRATEGY FRAMEWORK AND OTHER PROGRAM STRATEGIES¹

Focal Area Objectives/ Programs	Focal Area Outcomes	Trust Fund	(in \$)	
			GEF Project Financing	Co-financing
BD-1 Program 1	Outcome 1.1. Increased revenue for protected area systems and globally significant protected areas to meet total expenditures required for management; Outcome 1.2: Improved management effectiveness of protected areas	GEFTF	1,954,132	5,000,000
LD-3 Program 4	Outcome 3.1: Support mechanisms for SLM in wider landscapes established	GEFTF	444,121	1,200,000
CCM-2 Program 4	Outcome A: Accelerated adoption of innovative technologies and management practices for GHG emission reduction and carbon sequestration	GEFTF	444,121	2,750,000
SFM-1	Outcome 1: Cross-sector policy and planning approaches at appropriate governance scales, avoid loss of high conservation value forests	GEFTF	421,187	3,800,000
SFM-3	Outcome 5: Integrated landscape restoration plans to maintain forest ecosystem services are implemented at appropriate scales by government, private sector and local community actors, both women and men.	GEFTF	1,000,000	1,480,000
Total Project Cost		GEFTF	4,263,561	14,230,000

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Project Objective: To introduce conservation-centered and financially self-sustainable approach to management of forests and wetlands bearing internationally important biodiversity and important for climate and land integrity						
Project components	Financing Type ²	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs (Further details on outputs are in the main text under Part II. A.)	Trust Fund	(in \$)	
					GEF Project Financing	Confirmed Co-financing
Component I: Improved institutional, financial and management sustainability of forest and	Inv	- Management effectiveness and financial sustainability of 6 PAs with globally important species improve (see	Output 1.1 Improvement of nature conservation legislation aimed at conservation of globally threatened species and their habitats Output 1.2 Improved habitat conditions for the European bison micro population in the Nalibokski	GEFTF	2,287,456	6,400,000

¹ When completing Table A, refer to the excerpts on [GEF 6 Results Frameworks for GETF, LDCF and SCCF](#).

² Financing type can be either investment or technical assistance.

Project components	Financing Type ²	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs (Further details on outputs are in the main text under Part II. A.)	Trust Fund	(in \$)	
					GEF Project Financing	Confirmed Co-financing
mire protected areas, which are key areas for conservation of globally threatened species		logframe in project document for baseline and target METT scores) - Spatial distribution of bison throughout the micro population's living area improves - Population size of indicator species (aquatic warbler, curlew, greater spotted eagle) improves (see project logframe for baseline and target value)	Reserve through creation of mosaic meadow grounds among dense forests Output 1.3 Profitable use of cranberry reserves as an effective way of mire ecosystem conservation. Output 1.4 Financially self-sustaining wetland biomass harvesting and processing program launched at two PAs (Sporovsky and Zvanets) in partnership with private sector Output 1.5 Improved financial sustainability of measures for conservation of floodplain meadows (key habitats of globally threatened species) through introduction of technology of sustainable use of meadows for mowing and grazing and through development of ecological tourism (Annex 3). Output 1.6 Ecological tourism developed at key protected areas, resulting in improved financial sustainability of protected areas and raised awareness about importance of globally biodiversity conservation.			
Component II: Sustainable management of biodiversity-important forest and wetland ecosystems outside protected areas	Inv	- The system of inventory of rare and typical biotopes during forest management planning is established. - 12,456 ha of degraded peatland forests restored and decisions on restoration/ wise management made for 260,000 of peatland forests throughout the country. - Positive impact on rivers and meadow ecosystems adjacent to peatland forests resulting from the improved hydrological condition and sustainable grazing	Output 2.1 Forest biotopes, subject to special protection, are identified, approved and sustainably managed at an area of 150,000 ha. Output 2.2 Avoided degradation of inefficiently drained forest peatlands (260,000 ha) as a result of development and implementation of the Scheme of Sustainable Use of Drained Forest Peatlands, defining ways of use of each peatland, and ecological rehabilitation of inefficiently drained peatlands demonstrated at an area of about 12,456 ha.	GEFTF	1,027,039	5,130,000

Project components	Financing Type ²	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs (Further details on outputs are in the main text under Part II. A.)	Trust Fund	(in \$)	
					GEF Project Financing	Confirmed Co-financing
		activities. - Avoided emissions and increased carbon sequestration functions of peatland and forest ecosystems (see Incremental Benefits table for details on carbon benefits)				
Component III: Increased experience and knowledge of innovative measures for habitat restoration and elimination of the most significant threats to globally threatened species; monitoring of efficiency of the project's measures	TA	- Data gaps on status, threats and recommended conservation actions are filled and actions are under implementation for previously poorly known species. - Population size of globally threatened species (Aquatic warbler, Greater spotted eagle, Curlew, Great snipe) stabilized (see logframe for baselines and targets)	Output 3.1 Restored habitats (about 1,820 ha) of globally threatened species (Aquatic warbler, Greater spotted eagle, Great snipe, Black-tailed godwit) within the most important protected areas (Servech, Dikoe) through control of vegetation succession (control of the spread of shrubs and reeds) and optimization of hydrological regime. Output 3.2 Program on exchange of individuals across micro-populations to improve the genetic status of the Nalibokski micro population of the European bison developed and realized. Output 3.3 Targeted measures to stabilize populations of insufficiently studied globally threatened species. Output 3.4 Monitoring the efficiency of implementation of project measures (monitoring of globally threatened species, soil and ground water table, carbon emissions avoided and carbon sequestered).	GEFTF	746,039	2,000,000
Subtotal				GEFTF	4,060,534	13,530,000
Project Management Cost (PMC)				GEFTF	203,027	700,000
Total project costs				GEFTF	4,263,561	14,230,000

C. **CONFIRMED SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY NAME AND BY TYPE** (Cofinancing letters are included in the submission package.)

Co-financing Sources	Name of Co-financier	Type of Cofinancing	Amount (\$)
GEF Agency	UNDP	Grants	1,500,000
Recipient Government	Ministry of Environment (MNREP)	Grants	2,900,000
Recipient Government	Ministry of Forestry	Grants	8,000,000
Other	JSC Turovschina	Grants	1,050,000
Other	Republican Landscape Reserve Nalibokski	Grants	30,000
Other	National Academy of Sciences	Grants	750,000
Total Co-financing			14,230,000

D. TRUST FUND RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY, COUNTRY AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country name	Focal Area	Program ming of funds	(in \$)		
					GEF Project Financing (a)	Agency Fee (b)	Total (c)=a+b
UNDP	GEF	Belarus		SFM	1,421,187	135,013	1,556,200
UNDP	GEF	Belarus	Biodiversity		1,954,132	185,643	2,139,775
UNDP	GEF	Belarus	Climate Change		444,121	42,191	486,312
UNDP	GEF	Belarus	Land Degradation		444,121	42,191	486,312
Total GEF resources					4,263,561	405,038	4,668,599

E. PROJECT'S TARGET CONTRIBUTIONS TO GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Corporate Results	Replenishment Targets	Project Targets
1. Maintain globally significant biodiversity and the ecosystem goods and services that it provides to society	Improved management of landscapes and seascapes covering 300 million hectares	242,153 ha* (At the PIF stage this was estimated as 280,500 but this has now been revised based on a more detailed understanding of project activities that was developed during the preparation phase.)
2. Sustainable land management in production systems (agriculture, rangelands, and forest landscapes)	120 million hectares under sustainable land management	340,000 ha** (This was estimated as 330,000 ha in the PIF and has now been slightly revised)
3. Promotion of collective management of transboundary water systems and implementation of the full range of policy, legal, and institutional reforms and investments contributing to sustainable use and maintenance of ecosystem services	Water-food-ecosystems security and conjunctive management of surface and groundwater in at least 10 freshwater basins;	NA
	20% of globally over-exploited fisheries (by volume) moved to more sustainable levels	NA
4. Support to transformational shifts towards a low-emission and resilient development path	750 million tons of CO _{2e} mitigated (include both direct and indirect)	3,199,577 tCO ₂ -eq/20y (The estimate in the PIF of 2,382,740 tCO ₂ -eq/10years has been revised based on a more detailed elaboration of project activities and associated calculations during the preparation phase and a lifetime of 20 years)***
5. Increase in phase-out, disposal and reduction of releases of POPs, ODS, mercury and other chemicals of global concern	Disposal of 80,000 tons of POPs (PCB, obsolete pesticides)	NA
	Reduction of 1000 tons of Mercury	NA
	Phase-out of 303.44 tons of ODP (HCFC)	NA
6. Enhance capacity of countries to implement MEAs (multilateral environmental agreements) and mainstream into national and sub-national policy, planning financial and legal frameworks	Development and sectoral planning frameworks integrate measurable targets drawn from the MEAs in at least 10 countries	NA
	Functional environmental information systems are established to support decision-making in at least 10 countries	NA

* The project improves forest and wetland management at key biodiversity areas with a total area of 242,153 ha consisting of the following: Nalibokski (86892 ha), Sporovsky (19384), Zvanets (16824), Mid-Pripyat (Pogost meadow) (170), Turov Lug (390), Olmany Mires (94219), and National Park Belovezhskaya Puscha (Dikoe mire) (15206), Servech (9068).

** Through Activity 2.1 the project improves the status of 150,000 ha of forest landscape. Further, through Activity 2.2 it indirectly improve the condition of soil and ground water in peatlands forests at 260,000 ha (through development of proposals to improve future use of forest hydro ameliorative systems at 260,000 ha). Since some of these areas are targeted by both activities, there is an overlap of about 70,000 ha. Therefore, the total effect on wetland and forest landscapes is 260,000 + 150,000 – 70,000 = 340,000 ha.

*** This has been calculated as follows:

Output 2.1 Avoided deforestation resulting from HCVF designation at 800 ha. Total area of selected sites is no less than 150,000 ha. Without implementation of conservation measures about 800 ha of area will be cut down in the next 20 years. Accounted for under FAO Exact Model, module LUC Deforestation

Output 2.1 Reduced (dryland) forest degradation at 9,500 ha. Accounted for under FAO Exact Model, module 5.1.

Output 2.2 Restoration of 12,456 ha of forest peatland (avoided peatland degradation). This area includes 5 project sites where the water level restoration will be implemented. Accounted for under FAO Exact Model, module 5.2

Output 3.1 Restoration of 1,025 ha of open peatland (avoided peatland degradation). This area is depleted peatland site Dokudovskoe. FAO Exact Model, module 5.2.1

Output 1.5: Improved grassland management at Turov Lug – two sites with a total area of 560 ha. FAO Exact Model, module 4.1.2

Output 1.4 Replacement of fossil fuels with peatland biomass and pellet production at 3,800 ha. Based on the available equipment, its productivity and effective working time, it is planned to clear and collect mire biomass annually at 950 ha of fens over 4 years. Fossil fuel replacement rate used is that calculated by Belarus and German scientists of 15.6 tCO₂eq/ha and then extrapolated to 20 years.

Total avoided emissions + carbon sequestered = **3,051,377 tCO₂-eq/20y** (see EX-ACT tool for detailed calculations) + **148,200 tCO₂-eq/20y** (see CCM tracking tool for explanation) = **3,199,577 tCO₂-eq/20y**

F. DOES THE PROJECT INCLUDE A “NON-GRANT” INSTRUMENT? No

PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

A. DESCRIBE ANY CHANGES IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE PROJECT DESIGN WITH THE ORIGINAL PIF

A.1. *Project Description.* Elaborate on: 1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed; 2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects, 3) the proposed alternative scenario, GEF focal area strategies, with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project, 4) [incremental/additional cost reasoning](#) and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and [co-financing](#); 5) [global environmental benefits](#) (GEFTF) and/or [adaptation benefits](#) (LDCF/SCCF); and 6) innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up.

1) The drivers of degradation section has been edited to make it more concise. Maps on project sites are provided in the annexes describing the pilot sites of the project.

2) There is no change in the baseline scenario section.

3) Under the proposed alternative scenario, the description of project components has been clarified; each component has been divided into outputs and activities as detailed below. It needs to be noted here that at the time the PIF was developed and approved (2014), the GEFSEC was trying out a new way of presenting the “Indicative Project Description Summary” table, which removed the output column all together. There was an outcomes column that was supposed to be of a broader nature than outputs. Subsequently, GEFSEC has reverted back to the system where there is a separate column for outcomes and outputs. As a result of this, it was not possible to maintain an exact correspondence between what was stated in the PIF as outcomes (which was an amalgam of outcomes and outputs), and what is required in the CEO ER i.e., distinct outcome and output columns. In terms of substantive changes, the broader outcome/ output amalgam that was in the PIF has now been further detailed into separate outputs. The differences between the amalgamated outcome/ output column in the PIF and the output column in the CEO ER are as follows:

Output in CEO ER	Change from PIF
Output 1.1 Improvement of nature conservation legislation aimed at conservation of globally threatened species and their habitats	This output is considered essential for strengthening the legal framework for the protection and rational (sustainable) use of mires (peatlands), conservation and improvement of their habitat forming, water protection and other functions, satisfaction of economic, aesthetic, and other needs of present and future generations. This was not explicitly mentioned in the PIF. (Note: What is mentioned as Outcome 1.1 in the PIF is not an output statement but rather encapsulates the expected outcome of the entire component).
Output 1.2 Improved habitat conditions for the European bison micro population in the Nalibokski Reserve through creation of mosaic meadow grounds among dense forests	The substance of this output is the same as what is in the PIF, with a slight wording change.
Output 1.3 Profitable use of cranberry reserves as an effective	This was one component of Outcome 1.4 in the PIF (others

way of mire ecosystem conservation.	were livestock management as Turov Lug, and ecotourism at various sites) that has been pulled out as a separate output.
Output 1.4 Financially self-sustaining wetland biomass harvesting and processing program launched at two PAs (Sporovsky and Zvanets) in partnership with private sector	This was listed as Outcome 1.3 in the PIF.
Output 1.5 Improved financial sustainability of measures for conservation of floodplain meadows (key habitats of globally threatened species) through introduction of technology of sustainable use of meadows for mowing and grazing and through development of ecological tourism (Annex 3).	This was one component of Outcome 1.4 in the PIF (others were cranberry harvesting, and ecotourism at various sites) that has been pulled out as a separate output.
Output 1.6 Ecological tourism developed at key protected areas, resulting in improved financial sustainability of protected areas and raised awareness about importance of globally biodiversity conservation.	This was also one component of Outcome 1.4 in the PIF (others were cranberry harvesting, and sustainable mowing and grazing at meadows) that has been pulled out as a separate output.
Output 2.1 Forest biotopes, subject to special protection, are identified, approved and sustainably managed at an area of 150,000 ha.	This has not changed in substance from the PIF.
Output 2.2 Avoided degradation of inefficiently drained forest peatlands (260,000 ha) as a result of development and implementation of the Scheme of Sustainable Use of Drained Forest Peatlands, defining ways of use of each peatland, and ecological rehabilitation of inefficiently drained peatlands demonstrated at an area of about 12,456 ha.	This has not changed in substance from the PIF.
Output 3.1 Restored habitats (about 1,820 ha) of globally threatened species (Aquatic warbler, Greater spotted eagle, Great snipe, Black-tailed godwit) within the most important protected areas (Servech, Dikoe) through control of vegetation succession (control of the spread of shrubs and reeds) and optimization of hydrological regime.	This output merges what were Outcomes 3.1 and 3.3 in the PIF.
Output 3.2 Program on exchange of individuals across micro-populations to improve the genetic status of the Nalibokski micro population of the European bison developed and realized.	This has not changed in substance from the PIF.
Output 3.3 Targeted measures to stabilize populations of insufficiently studied globally threatened species.	This output includes what was stated in the PIF as Outcome 3.4. But the output is not focused on the greater spotted eagle alone but applies to other globally important species requiring special conservation actions by undertaking an inventory, changing land use status, and implementing priority measures to address targeted threats to the most important populations of globally threatened species.
Output 3.4 Monitoring the efficiency of implementation of project measures (monitoring of globally threatened species, soil and ground water table, carbon emissions avoided and carbon sequestered).	This has not changed in substance from the PIF; appears as Outcome 3.5 in the PIF.

In addition to the detailed elaboration of project components described below, the allocation of GEF resources across components has also been altered slightly from what was stated in the PIF. This change was required as project activities were more clearly articulated during project development and associated input costs were calculated. The change in resource allocation is as follows:

Component No.	Allocation of GEF resources estimated in PIF	Actual allocation	Change from PIF
Component I	1,725,658	2,287,456	561,798
Component II	1,319,219	1,027,039	-292,180
Component III	1,015,657	746,039	-269,618

Outcome I: Improved institutional, financial and management sustainability of forest and mire protected areas, which are key areas for conservation of globally threatened species

This component is aimed at improvement of nature conservation legislation and introduction of new approaches to Protected Area management that realize financial sustainability of measures for conservation of globally threatened species. Key Biodiversity Protected Areas are: Nalibokski, Sporovsky, Zvanets, Mid-Pripyat (Pogost meadow), Turov Lug, Olmany Mires, and National Park Belovezhskaya Puscha (Dikoe mire). These Protected Areas (area is about 242,153 ha)³ support the major part of populations of such globally threatened species as European bison, greater spotted eagle, and aquatic warbler. The project's objectives will be achieved through engagement of Ministries, Institutes of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Forestry Enterprises, PA administrations, private business, and local communities. Further details on these pilot sites are in Annex 1. The state program "Environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources" in the 2016 - 2020 years will constitute the baseline for this project outcome.

The project will update and expand the existing management plans for five protected areas through the introduction of new approaches that increase financial sustainability of measures aimed at conservation of globally threatened biodiversity. It will develop and introduce new methods of sustainable management of floodplain meadows (mowing and grazing of beef cattle), gathering and processing of vegetation mire biomass, sustainable use of cranberries, and development of ecological tourism. These methods and approaches will be tested in practice during project implementation and, on the basis of this experience, changes will be made to the Management Plans, and Business Plans will be developed for further promotion of these methods. Each business plan developed under this outcome will: (i) ensure that women are appropriately represented in all meetings and discussions on planning the income-generating activity; (ii) include a gender analysis of the income generating activity (understand of gender-specific roles and gender-differentiated vulnerabilities/ impacts); and (iii) set a target on the participation of women in implementation of the income-generating activity. On average, it is expected that at least 50% of those involved in and benefitting from these sustainable use activities will be women.

Mire ecosystems in Belarus are the most important biotopes as habitats of rare and threatened animal and plant species. These ecosystems harbor more than 40% of bird species, 35% of insect species, and more than 15% of wild plants listed in the Red Data Book of Belarus. They also support a considerable share of the world population of globally threatened species such as aquatic warbler (about 40%), greater spotted eagle (10%), and great snipe (3%). Mires possess significant biological reserves of cranberry, medicinal plants, and game animal species. The development of ecological tourism in Belarus is largely due to this recreational potential of mires. However, despite their value for biodiversity conservation and ecological safety, Belarus' legislation contains not a single normative legal act that would provide at the legislative level integrated management of multiple social relations in the field of protection and rational (sustainable) use of mires (peatlands).

Output 1.1 Improvement of nature conservation legislation aimed at conservation of globally threatened species and their habitats, as well as of the system of registration of nature protection areas

The project plans to develop the draft of the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On the Protection and Use of Peatlands", which should state the legal framework for the protection and rational (sustainable) use of mires (peatlands), conservation and improvement of their habitat forming, water protection and other functions, satisfaction of economic, aesthetic, and other needs of present and future generations. A coordination group including representatives of various organizations and leading experts in the field of protection and use of peatlands will be established to coordinate elaboration of the draft law.

Besides, proposals will be prepared on improvement of normative legal acts, regulating issues of registration and management of protected areas, data on number and area of protected areas will be updated, corresponding information resources will be optimized (register of protected areas, databases on Red Data Book species, rare and typical biotopes, etc.). Protected areas in Belarus (more than 22% of the Belarus' area) will be classified by IUCN categories. "BelNitsEcology" will implement works on achievement of the Outcome 1.

Activity 1.1.1 Elaborate the concept and draft of the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On the Protection and Use of Peatlands", which should state the legal frameworks for the protection and rational (sustainable) use of mires (peatlands). The concept of the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On the Protection and Use of Peatlands" will be

³ Nalibokski (86892 ha), Sporovsky (19384), Zvanets (16824), Mid-Pripyat (Pogost meadow) (170), Turov Lug (390), Olmany Mires (94219), and National Park Belovezhskaya Puscha (Dikoe mire) (15206), Servech (9068).

elaborated with engagement of leading specialists in protection and use of peatlands. After its acceptance, the draft Law will be developed and approved according to the established procedure.

Activity 1.1.2 Preparation of proposals on improvement of normative legal acts, regulating issues of registration and management of protected areas.

Draft normative legal acts on protected areas, including enactments regulating forestry activities in rare and typical biotopes, will be prepared, agreed with stakeholders and transferred to the Ministry of Nature Resources and Environmental Protection.

Activity 1.1.3 Updating of data on number and area of protected areas, optimization of corresponding informational resources (register of protected areas, databases on Red Data Book species, rare and typical biotopes, etc.).

Inventory of protected areas will be conducted, coordinates of the borders' key points will be defined if necessary, information and corresponding informational resources will be updated. Protected areas in Belarus will be classified by IUCN categories and the information will be updated.

Output 1.2 Improved habitat conditions for the European bison micro population in the Nalibokski Reserve through creation of mosaic meadow grounds among dense forests

The Nalibokski PA is a large forest complex with mires, rivers and floodplain meadows situated on its territory in a mosaic pattern (total area of the PA is 86,892 ha). This output will focus on improving foraging conditions for European bison through creation of a network of meadows (353 ha) in dense forest massif at an area of about 50,000 ha and maintaining open structure of these meadows. (The findings of the feasibility study on conservation of bison – conducted during the PPG – are in Annex 4.)

Long term contracts will be signed between the PA administration, local farmers and tourism organizations on maintenance of restored meadows in an open and highly productive state. To implement the sustainable management of meadows, the project will procure special equipment and transfer it to the PA administration. Also, training of all the project's participants will be conducted in methods of maintenance of the meadows in a highly productive state and tourism development. Effectiveness of measures on improvement of habitat conditions for the European bison will be assessed on the basis of monitoring of the meadows' state, the bison population, and amount of funds received from tourism.

Activity 1.2.1 Restore natural foraging grounds (meadows) of European bison in river floodplains and on abandoned amelioration systems (355 ha) through removal of shrubs, sowing of grass, and optimization of hydrological regime. By creating the network of highly productive foraging grounds in the forest massif, conflicts with farmers caused by animals feeding in neighboring agricultural fields will be avoided. These works will include elaboration of scientific justification, and the development and realization of the engineering project on restoration of natural foraging meadows for European bison. The scientific justification will be elaborated by the Scientific-practical Centre for Bioresources (which has bison experts). The engineering project will be developed and realized by organizations, defined by tender.

Activity 1.2.2 Maintain restored foraging meadows in a highly productive state. It is planned to procure special equipment for maintenance of highly productive state of the meadows and transfer it to the PA administration of Nalibokski. Also, training of personnel will be conducted in continuous maintenance of meadows. To ensure sustainability of the project results, a long-term contract will be signed between the project and the PA administration, under which the project transfers the equipment to the PA, and the PA is obligated to carry out work to maintain meadows in the open state.

Output 1.3 Profitable use of cranberry reserves as an effective way of mire ecosystem conservation.

Activity 1.3.1 Develop local business aimed at collection and processing of cranberries that grow in natural mire ecosystems. The project will support businesses focused on processing and production of various environmentally friendly products from cranberries collected by local people on natural mires. Development of such business will increase the interest of local people (job creation and additional income from cranberry collection), private business and government (taxes) in conservation of natural mires. A marketing and advertising plan will be elaborated for distribution of products of JSC "Arzhanitsa" from cranberry processing in Belarus and abroad.

Activity 1.3.2 Sustainable use of cranberry reserves in Olmany Mires. The project will reduce the disturbance factor for the largest population of the greater spotted eagle in Europe that resides at the Olmany Mires Reserve. A system for

sustainable use of cranberry and other resources will be developed that stipulates collection timing and plots where collection is allowed or forbidden; appropriate information campaigns for local communities will be conducted. Introduction of these rules will lead to reduction of the disturbance factor on one of the world's largest breeding populations of the greater spotted eagle. The management plan for the PA will be modified to reflect the new system for sustainable use of cranberry.

Output 1.4. Financially self-sustaining wetland biomass harvesting and processing program launched at two PAs (Sporovsky and Zvanets) in partnership with private sector

In Sporovsky and Zvanets PAs, the project will launch a sustainable wetland biomass collection and processing scheme that will improve the habitat status of several globally threatened species: Aquatic warbler (40% of the global population), Greater spotted eagle, Curlew and Great snipe. At the PPG stage, a business plan was designed for harvesting, processing and use of wetland biomass, indicating roles and responsibilities of different actors, technological requirements and time table for implementation. The plan also stipulates schemes of collection and processing of biomass; plots for mowing; list of available and needed equipment. The activities described below are based on this study and have been discussed and agreed with all parties involved (findings are in Annex 2).

Activity 1.4.1 Procure necessary equipment for sustainable and profitable mowing of reeds, shrubs and grass in accordance with the feasibility study. Equipment and machinery, procured by the project, will be transferred to the scientific-technical center on management of internationally important reserves, established at Sporovsky Reserve and to Zvanets Reserve. Equipment belonging to the Sporovsky Reserve and local businesses will also be used to realize this Output as project co-financing.

Activity 1.4.2 Mow and cut reeds and shrubs in Sporovsky Reserve and Zvanets Reserve on a regular basis. Harvesting of shrubs and reeds is expected to produce about 2,500 tons of dry biomass annually. The project will support harvesting for the first 3 years, after which the income earned from the sale of biomass will be sufficient to harvest and process the biomass. Procurement of missing technology by the project will fully equip the entire process for the collection and processing of mire biomass in the Zvanets and Sporovsky PAs with the extension of the processing to production of fuel pellets and reed mats. On the basis of the available equipment, its capacity and effective working time, it is planned to harvest mire biomass at area of about 950 ha (Annex 2). About 25,000 m³ of chips and 6,800 tons of grass biomass will be received over the entire period of project implementation, which will be used for energetic purposes and agriculture, and about 35,000 reed euro sheaves to be used for roof material and mats.

Activity 1.4.3 Develop business plans for Sporovsky and Zvanets Reserves centered on profitable use of vegetation mire biomass in accordance with results of practical works and dissemination of the experience to other protected areas.

Output 1.5 Improved financial sustainability of measures for conservation of floodplain meadows (key habitats of globally threatened species) through introduction of technology of sustainable use of meadows for mowing and grazing and through development of ecological tourism (Annex 3).

Sustainable traditional grazing will be tested on floodplain meadows of the Turov Meadow Reserve and in Pogost Meadow site in the Mid-Pripyat Reserve. Sustainable use of meadows will conserve key breeding sites for several rare and near-threatened bird species, such as Lapwing, Great snipe, Terek sandpiper, Ringed plover, Black-tailed godwit, and habitats for the largest concentrations of migrating birds in Europe located at Turov Meadow (Lesser white-fronted goose, Pintail, Widgeon, Black-tailed godwit, Ruff).

Activity 1.5.1 Test methods of sustainable use of floodplain meadows (Turov Meadow, Pogost Meadow) for the conservation of unique biodiversity habitats (Annex 3). The project will procure special machinery for clearing meadows of shrubs and mowing of wet meadows. Long-term agreements will be signed between the project and JSC "Turovschina", according to which the project will transfer the equipment to local agricultural organization "JSC Turovschina", which will then implement profitable continuous annual grazing of beef cattle and mowing. Scientific justification of sustainable use of floodplain meadows for livestock farming and biodiversity conservation will be elaborated by the Institute of Livestock Farming; realization of this plan will be implemented by local agricultural organization "JSC Turovschina".

Activity 1.5.2 Based on the project's experience develop technology of ecologically effective and economically profitable use of meadows for raising cattle for beef. On the basis of the project's experience, the technology of sustainable use of floodplain meadows will be developed and transferred to livestock farming system. Seminars are

planned on dissemination of the technology of sustainable use of floodplain meadows for grazing of beef cattle and fodder harvesting.

Output 1.6 Ecological tourism developed at key protected areas, resulting in improved financial sustainability of protected areas and raised awareness about importance of globally biodiversity conservation.

The project plans to elaborate the strategy for ecological tourism on Protected Areas, to improve and create touristic infrastructure, develop touristic routes, prepare promotional products (maps, booklets, etc.), and develop and test mechanisms of sustainable management of nature conservation objects taking into account touristic activities. The following activities are planned on the most important Protected Areas: equipment of information-educational centers (Olmany Mires, Turov Meadow), construction and reconstruction of ecological paths (Olmany Mires, Servech, Zvanets, Sporovsky), building of observation towers (Olmany Mires, Servech, Zvanets, Nalibokski), production and establishment of big boards (Olmany Mires, Servech, Zvanets, Turov Meadow, Nalibokski), publication of informational materials about reserves' biodiversity (posters, booklets, brochures, maps, etc.), creation of infrastructure for observation of European bison, including demonstrational cage and observation platform (Nalibokski). Implementation of the tourism development program will reduce negative impact of non-organized tourism on globally threatened biodiversity, and also provide additional funds for measures on conservation of habitats. The organization "BelNitsEcology" will elaborate the strategy for ecological tourism on Protected Areas.

Outcome II: Sustainable management of biodiversity-important forest and wetland ecosystems outside protected areas

This component focuses on identification of biodiversity-important forests outside PAs and ensuring their sustainable management via assigning special protection status to these territories. It is planned to undertake an inventory of biotopes subject to special protection under the Bern Convention and National Legislation (at least 150,000 ha), to prepare their passports, protection obligations and to transfer them to land users for protection and sustainable use. Inventory works will be carried out simultaneously with basic forestry planning on territory of 38 forestry enterprises. Biotopes will be described, status of and threats to biodiversity documented, conservation and management measures defined and they will be officially declared as biotopes of international importance needing special protection. A pilot project will be implemented on integration of the management system for rare and typical biotopes needing special protection into the forest management plans in two forestry enterprises. In the framework of the pilot project, special measures on sustainable use of biotopes will be included into the forest management plans and implemented: changes in logging plans, timing and types of logging, biotechnical measures, and training of forestry workers in sustainable management methods. Inventory of biotopes will be done using GIS technologies and modern satellite images. Inventory of rare biotopes will facilitate organization of their protection and sustainable use across all forest districts in Belarus, as well as to integrate biotope conservation methods in the forest management plans, and to raise the knowledge of forestry workers in this area.

In addition, the project will undertake inventory and define ways of further use of forest hydro ameliorative systems (about 260,000 ha) built in 1970-1990. The state of drained peatland forests before and after drainage will be compared and recommendations on their further use will be made based on specially designed parameters: reconstruction of drainage infrastructure (where it would be feasible to raise the productivity of forests); rehabilitation of inefficiently drained forest peatlands, or regulation of the water table to prevent fires and such. The ecological rehabilitation and regulation of water tables to prevent fires and restore mire ecosystem will be demonstrated at five inefficiently drained peatlands with a total area of 12,456 ha, which have been selected at the PPG stage. The project's experience will be shared through seminars and used during preparation of the government's new Forest Sector Development Program.

Output 2.1 Forest biotopes, subject to special protection, are identified, approved and sustainably managed at an area of 150,000 ha.

Under the PPG a detailed feasibility study was undertaken based on which a justification and action plan for changing the forest paradigm have been defined (Annex 5). The primary focus will be on two Forestries – Diatlovski and Stolinski. However, recognizing that the experience also needs to be rapidly replicated at other Forestries, 38 additional Forestries will also be included in all training sessions. However, the actual implementation of conservation measures at these 38 will be undertaken by the Forestries using their own budgets; the project will oversee and provide technical support. Besides, the inventory of all high biodiversity value forests will be carried out, and action plan will be elaborated for their transformation to protected biotopes.

Activity 2.1.1 Harmonize forest and nature conservation legislation with respect to designation of protection status for biodiversity-valuable forest plots by ensuring that such plots can be transferred to protected biotopes under the legislation.

Activity 2.1.2 Identify forest biotopes subject to special protection and nature monuments (outside PAs); undertake an inventory and prepare passports for these biotopes (150,000 ha); and transfer these plots to land users for conservation and sustainable use. Inventory of all high biodiversity value forests and development of the action plan for their transformation into protected biotopes. The inventory works and description of biotopes and nature monuments will be implemented by the Scientific-Practical Centre for Bioresources, Institute of Experimental Botany of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the National Belgosless Institute.

Activity 2.1.3 Revise forest management plans so that they take into account sustainable use of the biotopes now subject to protection. The project will make changes to forest management plans on the basis of the investigation of the state of the biotopes; these changes could affect logging plans, construction of temporary trails, timing and kinds of logging, biotechnical measures. Implementation of the requirements for the sustainable use of biotopes will be demonstrated at two forestries (Stolinski, Diatlovski). Integration of the system of sustainable management of biotopes subject to special protection into forest management plans of two forestries will be implemented by the Institute of Experimental Botany and special institution BelGosLes, which is responsible for forest management planning in Belarus. Consultative and methodical assistance will be provided and foresters will be trained in other 38 forestries, where forestry management planning will be conducted during the project.

Activity 2.1.4 Train foresters, responsible for development and implementation of forest management plans, in identification and sustainable use of biotopes subject to special protection. The project will ensure that this specialized training opportunity is equally accessible to women forestry professionals; the training announcement and selection process will be targeted and designed accordingly.

Output 2.2 Avoided degradation of inefficiently drained forest peatlands (260,000 ha) as a result of development and implementation of the Scheme of Sustainable Use of Drained Forest Peatlands, defining ways of use of each peatland, and ecological rehabilitation of inefficiently drained peatlands demonstrated at an area of about 12,456 ha.

Under the PPG a detailed feasibility study was undertaken based on which a justification and action plan for preventing degradation of drained forest peatlands have been defined (Annex 6).

Activity 2.2.1 Implement a complex inventory of forest hydro ameliorative systems with evaluation of their economic and ecological value based on specially developed and approved criteria (see Annex 6). Regulations for the organization of sustainable use forest hydro ameliorative systems will be developed as needed. Inventory of drained forest peatlands will be implemented under the coordination of the Scientific-practical Center for Bioresources of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

Activity 2.2.2 Develop and approve proposals for future use of forest hydro ameliorative systems (260,000 ha) based on their complex evaluation (reconstruction, repeated waterlogging). Gain approval of the proposed future use of forest hydro ameliorative systems by the Ministry of Forestry with their subsequent implementation.

Activity 2.2.3 Develop and implement engineering projects on repeated waterlogging of forest hydro ameliorative systems (12,456 ha), further effective use of which in productive industrial forestry is impossible due to different reasons. The participation of women in these engineering projects will be encouraged.

Activity 2.2.4 Disseminate the project's experience in the area of practical use of methods of ecological rehabilitation and reconstruction of forest hydro ameliorative systems.

Outcome III: Increased experience and knowledge of innovative measures for habitat restoration and elimination of the most significant threats to globally threatened species; monitoring of efficiency of the project's measures

This component advances the state of monitoring and research on globally important species, and demonstrates active habitat management and restoration techniques to conserve globally important species whose populations depend on the state of habitats in Belarus. The component will also ensure monitoring of the project's environmental benefits. Innovative measures will be tested that eliminate the most significant problems and threats to globally threatened species: fragmentation of distribution area, degradation and reduction of key habitats' productivity, reduction of genetic heterogeneity of populations, lack of knowledge about the status of insufficiently studied globally threatened species,

lack of experience in accelerated restoration of globally threatened species' habitats. The Action Plan on Conservation and Management of Bison (2015 – 2019) will constitute the baseline for this project outcome. The international LIFE Project "Stepping stones towards ensuring long-term favourable conservation status of Aquatic warbler in Lithuania (2016-2023)" will contribute to this outcome about Euro 670,000 as co-financing for measures related to conservation and management of Aquatic Warbler populations. The project will implement 3 workshops in different parts of the country to present and distribute its experience.

Output 3.1 Restored habitats (about 1,820 ha) of globally threatened species (Aquatic warbler, Greater spotted eagle, Great snipe, Black-tailed godwit) within the most important protected areas (Servech, Dikoe) through control of vegetation succession (control of the spread of shrubs and reeds) and optimization of hydrological regime.

The main goal is to create conditions for restoration of the aquatic warbler population through restoration of a network of key habitats - sedge fen mires. The current range of the aquatic warbler is very fragmented and key areas can occur a long distance from each other. Fen mires Servech and Dikoe are located between the main center of the distribution range in the Pripyat Polesie (mires Zvanets and Sporovsky) and peripheral habitats in Lithuania and Poland. Mires Servech and Dikoe are selected as the project areas to create key habitats for aquatic warbler in the transboundary region of Lithuania, Poland and Belarus. The project will restore open sedge mires and potential ecological productivity of mire ecosystems through shrub removal (birch and willow) and optimization of hydrological regime. The linkage of breeding areas in Belarus with those in the EU is important to minimize population fragmentation, ensuring better genetic diversity and more stable numbers of breeding birds.

At present, progressive degradation of mire ecosystems occurs on mires Servech and Dikoe as a result of disruptions of hydrological regime, overgrowth of open mires with shrubs and reduction of mire ecosystem productivity. Over the last 20 years the population of aquatic warbler in Servech has declined from 120 to 30 singing males over, and in Dikoe from 300-400 to 150-200 singing males.

Activity 3.1.1 Restore key aquatic warbler habitats at Dikoe fen mire (bordering Poland) and Servech fen mire (bordering Lithuania) through a) removal of bushes and reed (cutting with high power mulcher), b) optimization of hydrological regime, c) controlled burning in Servech. This will result in richer biomass growth, significant increase in invertebrates, and aquatic warbler population growth. Restoration of mire ecosystem in Dikoe mire will be implemented under the GEF project, and in Servech mire will be covered by co-financing of the LIFE project.

Activity 3.1.2 Rehabilitate extracted peatland at Dokudovskoe fen mire (bordering Lithuania) by accelerated technology through assisted revegetation (using native sedge species). The project will restore sedge fen mire on extracted peatland by accelerated technology. According to this method, seed material and vegetative parts of typical fen mires plant species will be planted, and after that the water level will be raised to set optimal conditions for sedge grass vegetation development. As a result, typical fen mire vegetation communities will develop in the next 3-6 years. Rewetting process will include: preparation of scientific justification and Environmental Impact Assessment, development of the engineering project, its realization, and monitoring of the rewetting efficiency. Rewetting of the Dokudovskoe peatland will be covered by co-financing of the LIFE project.

Activity 3.1.3 Develop and test method of creation of new aquatic warbler populations through relocation of young birds from Zvanets Reserve to restored habitats in Zuvintas Reserve (Lithuania). This activity aims to reduce the habitat fragmentation of the aquatic warbler through creation of new micro populations by relocation at restored wetland biotopes. Young birds memorize their future nesting sites when they are 30-50 days old. The project will relocate young birds from Zvanets Reserve to mires in Zuvintas Reserve in Lithuania. Both sites are very similar in their vegetation and hydrology conditions. In addition, the competent authorities in Lithuania and Belarus have confirmed their support and will provide the necessary permissions and cooperation to realize translocation. All translocation works will be implemented covered by co-financing of the LIFE project.

Output 3.2 Program on exchange of individuals across micro-populations to improve the genetic status of the Nalibokski micro population of the European bison developed and realized.

A feasibility study on conservation of bison was conducted during the PPG. The findings are in Annex 4. Based on this feasibility studies, the following activities are to be undertaken.

Activity 3.2.1 Implement individual identification of European bison (passportization) on the basis of molecular-genetic research to assess their genetic potential. At least 5 traps to catch live bison will be established; at least 10 samples of

biomaterial will be obtained. At least 5 genetic passports, reflecting genetic diversity and potential of the European bison Nalibokski micro population will be prepared through molecular-genetic research of received samples. The results will be the basis for genetic recovery of the Nalibokski micro population of the European bison.

Activity 3.2.2 Conduct genetic recovery of the Nalibokski micro population of the European bison and monitor implemented activities. The project will develop mating schemes, realize exchange of genetic material, including introduction of new individuals, and evaluate changes in genetic potential of the micro population.

Output 3.3 Targeted measures to stabilize populations of insufficiently studied globally threatened species.

In Belarus, considerable segments of the populations of insufficiently studied globally threatened species (see table below) are poorly protected due to lack/ absence of knowledge about location of their key habitats inside PAs or outside them. To ensure protection of such populations, the project will undertake the following activities.

Table 1. Globally important species requiring special conservation actions

Status	Species
Critically Endangered (CR)	1. European eel <i>Anguilla Anguilla</i>
Endangered (EN)	1. <i>Agabus clypealis</i> 2. Thick shelled river mussel <i>Unio crassus</i> 3. Waterwheel plant <i>Aldrovanda vesiculosa</i>
Vulnerable (VU)	1. European bison <i>Bison bonasus</i> 2. Greater spotted eagle <i>Aquila clanga</i> 3. Common pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i> 4. Aquatic warbler <i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i> 5. European crayfish <i>Astacus astacus</i> 6. Great raft spider <i>Dolomedes plantarius</i> 7. <i>Dytiscus latissimus</i> 8. <i>Graphoderus bilineatus</i> 9. Depressed river mussel <i>Pseudanodonta complanata</i>
Near Threatened (NT)	1. Ferruginous duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i> 2. Red kite <i>Milvus milvus</i> 3. Red-footed falcon <i>Falco vespertinus</i> 4. Great snipe <i>Gallinago media</i> 5. Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> 6. Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> 7. Eurasian oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> 8. Meadow pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i> 9. Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> 10. European pond turtle <i>Emys orbicularis</i> 11. Pygmy damselfly <i>Nehalennia speciosa</i> 12. <i>Phengaris arion</i> 13. Dusky large blue <i>Phengaris nausithous (Maculinea nausithous)</i> 14. Scarce large blue <i>Phengaris teleius (Maculinea teleius)</i> 15. False ringlet <i>Coenonympha oedippus</i> 16. European medicinal leech <i>Hirudo medicinalis</i> 17. Fen orchid <i>Liparis loeselii</i>

Activity 3.3.1 Undertake an inventory of key habitats of the above globally threatened species.

Activity 3.3.2 Change land use status of such habitats to the protection category. The project will prepare passports of identified habitats for their transfer to land users for protection and sustainable use. Borders of protected areas inhabited by globally threatened species will be updated, and data on protection regimes within PAs will be included into the Land Cadastre (in line with the National legislation). This will result in improved registration system of protection regimes and PAs sustainable use and better protection of globally threatened species.

Activity 3.3.3 Develop and implement priority measures to address targeted threats to the most important populations of globally threatened species. Pilot measures are planned on key habitats to improve habitat conditions for globally threatened species. Measures will include:

- creation of new populations (Thick shelled river mussel *Unio crassus* (EN), Waterwheel plant *Aldrovanda vesiculosa* (EN), European crayfish *Astacus astacus* (VU));
- introduction of globally threatened species to restored peatlands (Great raft spider *Dolomedes plantarius* and other);
- prevention of egg losses of European pond turtle *Emys orbicularis*;
- establishment of artificial nests and shelters for globally threatened species on the project areas (Greater spotted eagle, bats, Garden dormouse, other);
- development of National Action Plans on conservation of globally threatened animal species (at least 5 plans);
- on the basis of improved knowledge about the status of all globally threatened species in Belarus to amend all normative documents (Protection rules of wild animals, included in the Red Data Book of Belarus, and their habitats), regulating protection and use of protected species;
- update of the information in international databases according to the data obtained under cooperation with IUCN.

Output 3.4 Monitoring the efficiency of implementation of project measures (monitoring of globally threatened species, soil and ground water table, carbon emissions avoided and carbon sequestered).

The project will ensure regular monitoring of the biodiversity, water tables, and soil and carbon benefits. This is essential to measure the main indicators of project success – breeding population of globally threatened species, and habitat quality before and after implementation of habitat restoration measures within the project sites. For biodiversity conservation benefits, this includes monitoring of the dynamics in the density, number and distribution of the indicator species targeted by the project. This research and monitoring will help to evaluate conservation actions and to better plan future management activities for each site. Monitoring of the project efficiency will be implemented by the Scientific-practical Centre for Bioresources of the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Experimental Botany, Institute of Livestock Farming and NGO BirdLife Belarus as well as by experts in specific fields.

Activity 3.4.1 Monitor breeding populations of globally threatened species (European bison, Greater spotted eagle, Aquatic warbler - VU) and other rare bird species (Great snipe, Curlew, Black-tailed godwit, Lapwing, Meadow pipit and other - NT) at all the pilot sites of the project. Estimation of aquatic warbler breeding population size on the project areas will be based on the number of singing males. Singing male counts will be carried out annually during the project implementation starting in 2017. Widely used standard field methods for performing the census will be applied (absolute counts with mapping of singing males, route counts). Monitoring of other rare bird species (greater spotted eagle, great snipe, black-tailed godwit, Eurasian curlew, Lapwing, Meadow pipit) breeding at the pilot sites (Zvanets, Sporovsky, Dikoe, Servech, Olmany Mires, Pogost Meadow, Turov Meadow) will also be implemented annually by standard census methods depending on species and biology.

Activity 3.4.2 Monitor vegetation dynamics on the project areas before and after implementation of the project measures on optimization and restoration of ecosystems. Vegetation monitoring will provide information on changes in ratio and distribution of plant communities; vegetation productivity; vegetation structure changes after completion of measures to stabilize the hydrological regime, ecological mire rehabilitation, shrubs and reeds removal. Grass species composition and plant communities' distribution and coverage are good indicators for evaluating habitat suitability for globally threatened species. Vegetation monitoring will be implemented on project areas (Zvanets, Sporovsky, Dikoe, Servech, Pogost meadows, Turov meadows, five sites for ecological rehabilitation) in years 2017, 2019 and 2022. All plant communities will be mapped in each of the sites. Vegetation mapping and community descriptions will be performed applying standard methods.

Activity 3.4.3 Monitor ground water levels. Water levels will be monitored before and after realization of the project measures to assess efficiency of habitat optimization activities (Zvanets, Dikoe, Servech), ecological rehabilitation of degraded peatlands (five drained forest peatlands), and rewetting of extracted peatland (Dokudovskoe). Monitoring will be performed according to a prepared plan that sets water-level measuring points. Automatic water-level measuring equipment will be installed at the most important parts of the sites. Monitoring will start in May 2017 and continue until 2022.

Activity 3.4.4 Assess efficiency of measures on improvement of foraging conditions for European bison. Efficiency of these measures will be evaluated through monitoring of following indicators of the European bison population state: reproduction rate, survival (mortality) rate, dynamics of population size and growth, spatial distribution of bison.

Additionally, frequency of bison visits to foraging fields, restored highly productive meadows, agricultural fields and other grounds will be tracked.

Activity 3.4.5 Apply the METT and UNDP-GEF financial scorecard to monitor management effectiveness and financial sustainability at target PAs.

Activity 3.4.6 Monitor carbon benefits. Monitoring of carbon benefits will help estimate the efficiency of the project activities aimed at conservation of existing carbon stock in soil and biomass, reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) emission and enhance carbon dioxide absorption by wetlands and forest ecosystems. The duration of carbon benefits accounting is 20 years, with 5 years implementation phase and 15 capitalization phase. Monitoring of carbon benefits will cover four project activities:

Activity	Description of methods for carbon benefits assessment
Activity 1.4.2 Utilization of wetland vegetation	Production and utilization of renewable biofuel (wood chips, fuel pellets, and plant biomass) from wetland vegetation will reduce GHG emission by replacing some amount of fossil fuel (gas or diesel fuel). The amount of replaced fossil fuel is calculated from data on amount of produced biofuel and the heating value ratio. The amount of carbon benefits is equal to avoided GHG emission from burning of fossil fuel.
Activity 2.1.2 Sustainable forest management at an area of 150,000 ha that lies outside PAs	This activity will reduce carbon loss from deforestation by implementation of sustainable management for forest ecosystems and enforcing the protection regimes at areas that need special protection according to the Bern Convention and National legislation. The area of avoided deforestation will be estimated from data observed by forest inventory and area obtained status of special protected area. Assessment of carbon benefits will be done using the Ex-Ante Carbon-balance Tool.
Activity 2.2.3 Rewetting of the forest hydro amelioration systems (12,456 ha)	Realization of activities will conserve peat soil carbon stock, reduce GHG emission from peat mineralization and peatland fires, and enhance carbon dioxide absorption by restored wetland vegetation. The carbon benefits will be estimated separately for each project site as the difference between GHG balance with the implementation of peatland restoration (project scenario) and GHG balance without project activities (baseline scenario). The assessment of GHG balance for each scenario includes the following:
Activity 3.1.2 Rewetting of 1025 ha of “Dokudovskoe” fen peatland site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GHG balance from peat mineralization - GHG emission from peatlands fires - Carbon dioxide absorption by trees - Initiation of methane peak emission in first years after rewetting (only project scenario) The components of GHG balance will be estimated by using the GEST (Greenhouse Gas Emission Site Type) method using data from monitoring of vegetation, soils and water level.

4) and 5) The incremental/ additional cost reasoning and global benefits table has been updated as follows:

State of ecosystems under baseline	Summary of GEF scenario	Increment																					
Biodiversity																							
Current funding priorities and funding availability under the PA baseline program is sufficient to cover basic support to existing PAs, but lacks site-based sustainable financial mechanisms to incorporate systematic consideration of global environment benefits, or to support conservation and management of sites with globally important biodiversity. Management plans of sites with globally important biodiversity are outdated and lack strategies and actions on ensuring financial sustainability. Forest sector programs advance certification but do not ensure conservation and sustainable management of forests that serve as habitat of globally important	System for financially viable conservation and management measures for key biodiversity areas in place, with engagement of private sector and local communities. Degraded wetland and forest habitat of globally important species restored and managed sustainably. Business plans introduced as a concept and applied to generate additional revenue for sites with globally important species and critical actions launched to ensure non-decline of populations.	Financial sustainability of the protected area system improves: annual financing gap for optimal management scenario (operations) is reduced by half over baseline (see BD Tracking Tool for details). METT scores of 6 PAs with globally important species improve as follows: <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr> <th>PA</th> <th>B/L</th> <th>Target</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Nalibokski</td> <td>50</td> <td>85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zvanets</td> <td>49</td> <td>87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sporovsky</td> <td>53</td> <td>87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Olmány</td> <td>43</td> <td>79</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Servech</td> <td>24</td> <td>73</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Turov</td> <td>37</td> <td>84</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Stable populations of greater spotted eagle and aquatic warbler (see logframe for B/L and target population numbers at the	PA	B/L	Target	Nalibokski	50	85	Zvanets	49	87	Sporovsky	53	87	Olmány	43	79	Servech	24	73	Turov	37	84
PA	B/L	Target																					
Nalibokski	50	85																					
Zvanets	49	87																					
Sporovsky	53	87																					
Olmány	43	79																					
Servech	24	73																					
Turov	37	84																					

State of ecosystems under baseline	Summary of GEF scenario	Increment
<p>species. European bison populations unstable due to low genetic diversity of micro populations and unresolved issues of the feeding base. Populations of globally important birds (aquatic warbler, greater spotted eagle) decline due to habitat degradation and lack of restoration and sustainable management, as well as high disturbance factor. Limited data on status and threats to poorly known globally important species (such as invertebrates, plants, mollusks).</p>	<p>Data available on status and threats to all globally important biodiversity in the country; recommendations made and action taken to conserve them in-situ. Forest sector conserves and wisely manages forest areas with globally important species.</p>	<p>different project sites). Habitat degradation and disturbance to European bison, and globally important birds removed (measured by METT). Data gaps on status, threats and recommended conservation actions are filled and actions are under implementation for previously poorly known species. Project contributes to PoWPA (expansion of PAs, integration of PAs in wider landscapes, and community engagement schemes) and Aichi targets.</p>
Climate Change		
<p>In the LULUCF sector, emissions from degraded peatland and peatland forests (soil mineralization caused by lowered ground-water table) will continue at 260,000 ha, producing between 5-15 tCO₂-eq/ha/y. No decisions made and lack of know-how for restoration and sustainable management of degraded peatland forests. Overgrowth of wetlands with invasive shrubs and reeds leads to destruction of fen biotopes, and there is no mechanism in place for sustainable biomass harvesting.</p>	<p>Methodologies designed and launched in practice for sustainable harvesting of wetland biomass for subsequent pellet production, ensuring stability of the biotope and replacement of fossil fuels. Release of carbon prevented and sequestration capacities restored of soil and vegetation at 12,456 ha of degraded peatland soils. Models for biomass harvesting and arresting peatland forest degradation embedded in PA and forest sector for replication.</p>	<p>Avoided emissions and increased carbon sequestration functions of peatland and forest ecosystems resulting from: Output 2.1 Avoided deforestation resulting from HCVF designation at 800 ha. Total area of selected sites is no less than 150,000 ha. Without implementation of conservation measures about 800 ha of area will be cut down in the next 20 years. Output 2.1 Reduced (dryland) forest degradation at 9,500 ha. Output 2.2 Restoration of 12,456 ha of forest peatland (avoided peatland degradation). This area includes 5 project sites where the water level restoration will be implemented. Output 3.1 Restoration of 1,025 ha of open peatland (avoided peatland degradation). This area is depleted peatland site Dokudovskoe. Output 1.5: Improved grassland management at Turov Lug – two sites with a total area of 560 ha Output 1.4 Replacement of fossil fuels with peatland biomass and pellet production at 3,800 ha. Based on the available equipment, its productivity and effective working time, it is planned to clear and collect mire biomass annually at 950 ha of fens over 4 years. Total avoided emissions + carbon sequestered = 3,051,377 tCO₂-eq/20y (see EX-ACT tool for detailed calculations) + 148,200 tCO₂-eq/20y = 3,199,577 tCO₂-eq/20y (see CCM tracking tool for explanation)</p>
Sustainable Forest Management		
<p>The current forestry baseline program would not ensure coverage of the gap in the data on distribution, status, threats and conservation needs for forest habitat that hosts internationally important species. No experience in designation, protection, management planning and enforcement of biodiversity important forests. Continued degradation of peatland forests</p>	<p>Inventory of biodiversity in all forests with important biodiversity, and identification and sustainable management triggered for 150,000 ha of such forests. Volumes, timing and modes of logging adjusted; conservation measures implemented to ensure no-</p>	<p>Biodiversity conservation principles integrated in the forestry sector as follows: 150,000 ha of biodiversity-important forests designated and put under good management ensuring stability of their ecosystem functions, such as genetic reserves, habitat of biodiversity and avoided GHG emissions (figures under CCM row above) . 12,456 ha of degraded peatland forests</p>

State of ecosystems under baseline	Summary of GEF scenario	Increment
at 260,000 ha and lack of experience in their restoration and sustainable management.	disturbance of the forest species. Training of foresters and communities in forest management planning and enforcement of sustainable forest management practices. Inventories of 260,000 of degraded peatland forests, and decision taken on their conservation and wise use. 12,456 ha of degraded forest peatlands restored.	restored and decisions on restoration / wise management made for 260,000 of peatland forests throughout the country
Sustainable Land Management		
Under the current forest management program, there will be continued soil and vegetation cover degradation at 260,000 ha of degraded drained forest peatlands and lack of decision on restoration and wise use thereof. Levels of ground water at forest peatlands will remain low producing negative impact on surrounding areas. Lack of know-how and practical experience for soil and vegetation recovery in forest peatlands. Lack of experience in sustainable livestock management and biodiversity-sensitive grasslands	Inventory of all drained peatlands (260,000 ha) in place and a decision making mechanism launched insuring their restoration and sustainable management. At least 12,456 ha of peatland forests are expected to be restored in practice as a result of project scenario. Sustainable livestock management demonstrated at Turov Lug (560 ha).	Ground water table over 12,456 ha of disturbed organic peat soils stabilized. Peat mineralization and soil dry out prevented at 1,025 ha. Positive impact on rivers and meadow ecosystems adjacent to peatland forests resulting from the improved hydrological condition and sustainable grazing activities.

Co-financing has changed as compared to the expectation at the PIF stage as follows:

Estimated cofinancing sources and amounts at PIF stage:

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount (\$)
Recipient Government	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	Grant	9,000,000
		In-kind	100,000
Recipient Government	Ministry of Forestry	Grant	2,000,000
Recipient Government	Ministry of Energy	In-kind	200,000
Other	National Academy of Sciences	Grant	300,000
GEF Agency	UNDP	Grant	1,500,000
Other	Life AW	Grant	1,000,000
Total Co-financing			14,100,000

Confirmed cofinancing sources and amounts at CEO Endorsement stage:

Co-financing Sources	Name of Co-financier	Type of Cofinancing	Amount (\$)
GEF Agency	UNDP	Grants	1,500,000
Recipient Government	Ministry of Environment (MNREP)	Grants	2,900,000
Recipient Government	Ministry of Forestry	Grants	8,000,000
Other	JSC Turovschina	Grants	1,050,000
Other	Republican Landscape Reserve Nalibokski	Grants	30,000
Other	National Academy of Sciences	Grants	750,000
Total Co-financing			14,230,000

6) Innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up: No change from PIF.

A.2. *Child Project?* If this is a child project under a program, describe how the components contribute to the overall program impact. Not applicable.

A.3. *Stakeholders.* Identify key stakeholders and elaborate on how the key stakeholders' engagement is incorporated in the preparation and implementation of the project. Do they include civil society organizations (yes /no)? and indigenous peoples (yes /no)? ⁴

During the PPG, a stakeholder assessment was conducted and several consultations were held to discuss and gain consensus on various project activities with these stakeholders. The table below lists the main stakeholders of the project and their expected roles and responsibilities in the project.

Table 2. Project stakeholders

Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities in the project
The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (MNREP) of Belarus, BelNIC Ecology	National implementing agency for the project Heads the cross-ministerial Project Steering Committee for the project Ensures regular monitoring of project progress and, with UNDP, takes measures to address problems in implementation Oversees the implementation of the conservation activities related to conservation and sustainable management of European bison populations Takes the lead on project activities aimed at ensuring the financial sustainability of protected areas
The National Academy of Sciences (Scientific and Practical Center – NPC – on Bioresources; Institute of Botany); Scientific and Practical Centre of Livestock Farming; Forest Institute.	Provides its substantial technical expertise and resources for the scientific assessments needed to implement project activities under all three components Provides in-kind co-financing in the form of laboratory, equipment, and research facilities
The Ministry of Forestry (Belgosles, Forestries)	Takes the lead in the identification and designation of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) Takes the lead on conducting the inventory of peatland forests Ensures sustainability and replication of peatland forest restoration and sustainable management activities
PA administrations of PAs targeted by project activities (Nalibokski, Zvanets, Sporovsky, Olmany mires, Mid Pripyat, Turov meadow, Servech, and Belovezhskaya Puscha)	Key partners for implementation of financial mechanisms in Component I Ensure coordination with private sector and local communities Participate in the habitat and species management activities for aquatic warbler, European bison and greater spotted eagle under Component III
Local communities	Actively engaged in the development of income-generation activities at protected areas that are a focus of the project, as well as at the forested peatland pilot sites that are to be restored, withdrawn from logging, and designated for sustainable use
Private sector (OAO «Turovshchina», «Valeotrans», «Arzhanitsa»)	Biomass processing and pellet production industries, as well as tourism operators will be important partners in implementing the financial mechanisms under Component I
NGO “BirdLife Belarus”, NGO “Bagna”	Creating a positive public attitude towards the project. Participation in bird counts in the project areas.

A large number of consultation meetings were held during project preparation. Of these various consultations, two were large workshops organized to discuss the project in general and the Project Document in particular. One was held in Minsk, and the other in Stolin (Brest region).

⁴ As per the GEF-6 Corporate Results Framework in the GEF Programming Directions and GEF-6 Gender Core Indicators in the Gender Equality Action Plan, provide information on these specific indicators on stakeholders (including civil society organization and indigenous peoples) and gender.

The workshop in Minsk was held on 12 May 2016 and included 25 participants as follows: 2 representatives from the Ministry of Natural resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus; 3 representatives from the Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus; 7 representatives from state environmental agencies (nature reserves); 5 representatives from UNDP; 6 representatives from the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus; 2 representatives from NGOs.

The workshop in Stolín was held on 7-8 July 2016 and included 32 participants as follows: 3 representatives from the Ministry of Natural resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus; 4 representatives from the Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus; 1 representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus; 1 representative from the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Belarus; 1 representative from the State Inspection for Fauna and Flora Protection under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Belarus; 1 representative from the State Border Committee of the Republic of Belarus; 2 representatives from Stolín Regional Executive Committee; 1 representative from state environmental agencies (nature reserves); 7 representatives from the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus; 2 representatives from UNDP; and 2 representatives NGOs. The table below lists all consultations held during the PPG.

Table 3. Stakeholder consultations held during the PPG phase

№	Venue: locality, organization	Categories of participants in consultations	Subject matter of consultations	Number of participants
1	Hrodna Oblast, Dziatlava, Dziatlava forestry	Director of the forestry, Chief Forest Officer, engineers and technicians, Director of Lipichanskaya Pushcha Zakaznik, project expert	Pilot forest regulation, biodiversity in a sustainable forest management system	7
2	Brest Oblast, Stolín, Stolín Forestry	Director of the forestry, Chief Forest Officer, engineers and technicians, project expert	Pilot forest regulation, biodiversity in a sustainable forest management system	6
3	Brest Oblast, Stolín, Stolín District Executive Committee	Representatives of ministries, forestries, inspectorates of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Border Guard, local authorities, NGOs, Turovshchina JSC, UNDP, directors of zakazniks, project experts, media	A Workshop on all aspects of the project, especially activities at the pilot site Olmany Mires	32
4	Minsk Oblast, Valožyn District, village of Naliboki, Nalibokski Zakaznik	Director of the Nalibokski Zakaznik, representative of the forestry, engineers and technicians, project expert	Improving the potential of the population of European bison in the Nalibokski Zakaznik	6 (4 consultations)
5	Homiél Oblast, Žytkavičy District, Turaŭ, Turovshchina JSC	Director of Turovshchina JSC, engineers and technicians, veterinarian, economists, project experts	Organization of the sustainable use of pilot sites Turovski Lug and Pogost to ensure conservation of biodiversity and productive cattle breeding	10 (3 consultations)
6	Brest Oblast, Ivacevičy District, village of Vysokaje, Sporovskiy Zakaznik	Director of the Sporovskiy Zakaznik, representatives of an inspectorate of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, non-governmental organizations, engineers and technicians, business community, project experts	Organization of the sustainable use of biomass of the Jasélda River floodplain in the Sporovskiy Zakaznik	14 (3 consultations)
7	Viciebsk Oblast, Miory District, Dzisna, Dzisna Forestry	Director of the Forestry, Chief Forest Officer, representatives of district inspectorates of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, land use units of Miory and Šarkauščyna Districts, engineers and technicians, project expert	Optimization of the hydrological regime at the Zhada land-reclamation facility	12
8	Minsk Oblast, Puchavičy District, Marjina Horka,	Director of the Forestry, Chief Forest Officer, representatives of an inspectorate of the Ministry of Natural Resources and	Optimization of the hydrological regime at the Porechski Mokh land-	8

№	Venue: locality, organization	Categories of participants in consultations	Subject matter of consultations	Number of participants
	Puchavičy Forestry	Environmental Protection, land use unit of Puchavičy District, engineers and technicians, project expert	reclamation facility	
9	Hrodna Oblast, Smarhoń District, Smarhoń, Smarhoń Forestry	Director of the Forestry, Chief Forest Officer, representatives of an inspectorate of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, land use unit of Smarhoń District, engineers and technicians, project expert	Optimization of the hydrological regime at the Ostrovo land-reclamation facility	7
10	Minsk Oblast, Vileika District, Vileika, Vileika Forestry	Director of the Forestry, Chief Forest Officer, representatives of an inspectorate of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, land use unit of Vileika District, engineers and technicians, project expert	Optimization of the hydrological regime at the Beryozovik land-reclamation facility	8 (2 consultations)
11	Viciebsk Oblast, Haradok District, Haradok, Haradok Forestry	Director of the Forestry, Chief Forest Officer, representatives of an inspectorate of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, land use unit of Haradok District, engineers and technicians, project expert	Optimization of the hydrological regime at the Gorodok land-reclamation facility	7
12	Hrodna Oblast, Lida District, Lida, Lida Peat Briquette Factory	Director of the Lida Peat Briquette Factory, representatives of an inspectorate of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, land use unit of Lida District, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, engineers and technicians, project expert	Optimization of the hydrological regime at the Dokudovskoye land-reclamation facility	9
13	Brest Oblast, Kamianec District, village of Kamieniuki, Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park	Deputy Director of Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, Chief Forest Officer, representatives of an inspectorate of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, non-governmental organizations, engineers and technicians, project experts	Organization of the sustainable use of tree, shrub and grass biomass at the Dikoye pilot site	12
14	Brest Oblast, Drahičyn District, Drahičyn, Drahičyn Forestry	Director of the Zvanets Zakaznik, Chief Forest Officer, representatives of an inspectorate of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, non-governmental organizations, engineers and technicians, business community, project experts	Organization of the sustainable use of the biomass from the group of overgrowing mires in the Zvanets Zakaznik	11 (2 consultations)
15	Minsk, Ministry of Forestry	First Deputy Minister, Heads of Directorates, financial division staff, representatives of the Belgosles Republican Unitary Enterprise, project expert	Questions of co-financing	7
16	Minsk, Minsk Hotel	Representatives of ministries, forestries, inspectorates of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Border Guard, non-governmental organizations, Turovshchina JSC, UNDP, directors of zakazniks, project experts, media	Workshop on all aspects of the project	25
17	Viciebsk Oblast, Hlybokaje District,	Director of the Forestry, Chief Forest Officer, representatives of an inspectorate of the	Optimization of the habitats of globally endangered	7

№	Venue: locality, organization	Categories of participants in consultations	Subject matter of consultations	Number of participants
	Hlybokaje, Hlybokaje Forestry	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Department for Emergency Situations of Hlybokaje District, engineers and technicians, project expert	species in the Servech Zakaznik (burning out of unwanted vegetation)	
18	Minsk, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection	Deputy Minister, Head of Directorate, specialists, representative of UNDP, project experts	All aspects of the project, including the questions of co-financing	14 (multiple times)

A.4. *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.* Elaborate on how gender equality and women's empowerment issues are mainstreamed into the project implementation and monitoring, taking into account the differences, needs, roles and priorities of women and men. In addition, 1) did the project conduct a gender analysis during project preparation (yes /no)?; 2) did the project incorporate a gender responsive project results framework, including sex-disaggregated indicators (yes /no)?; and 3) what is the share of women and men direct beneficiaries (women 50%, men 50%)?

Various publicly available indexes portray Belarus as a country with high gender equality. In 2014, Belarus had the 6th highest UNDP Gender Development Index (GDI) value, and ranked 31st in the 2014 Gender Inequality Index (GII). In comparison, GII ranks for the Russian Federation and the United States are 54 and 55 respectively. Thus, the problem of gender inequality is far less severe relative to other countries in the world. However, to the extent that the project generates socio-economic benefits for local people living near the pilot sites of the project, and given that the local population comprises men and women, the gender-differentiated impacts of the project were taken into consideration during the PPG. In addition, during implementation, the gender impact will be monitored, verified and documented.

Component I of the project largely focuses on economically profitable and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources at pilot sites. Of the enhanced income generation opportunities created by the project, the one related to cranberry gathering will accrue maximum benefits to women because some 80% of the gatherers are women. By maintaining wetlands so that they can continue to be accessible and viable for cranberry gathering, women will directly benefit. The number of women gatherers at pilot sites is expected to increase on average 4 times. Other sustainable use activities such as management of forest meadows and tourism at Nalibokski, profitable use of biomass in Sporovsky and Zvanets; and grazing, mowing and tourism at Turov and Pogost are also expected to have an impact on local women. Therefore, each business plan developed under Outcome will: (i) ensure that women are appropriately represented in all meetings and discussions on planning the income-generating activity; (ii) include a gender analysis of the income generating activity (understand of gender-specific roles and gender-differentiated vulnerabilities/ impacts); and (iii) set a target for the participation of women in implementation of the income-generating activity. On average, it is expected that at least 50% of those involved in and benefitting from these sustainable use activities will be women.

Component II of the project will also have a beneficial impact on women. Under Activity 2.1.4 that aims to train forestry professionals in maintaining and enforcing special protection regimes at biodiversity-important forests outside PAs (150,000 ha), the project will ensure that this specialized training opportunity is equally accessible to women forestry professionals; the training announcement and selection process will be targeted and designed accordingly. Secondly, under Output 2.2, the restoration works (restoration of the hydrological regime) planned at forested peatland sites will be designed to actively encourage the participation of women in this activity.

In terms of overall project implementation, the project will promote participation of women in the decision making process by ensuring women are represented on the Project Steering Committee and any additional working groups that are established under the project. Finally, to promote equal opportunities in employment, UNDP will encourage qualified women applicants for positions under the project as per UNDP rules and regulations.

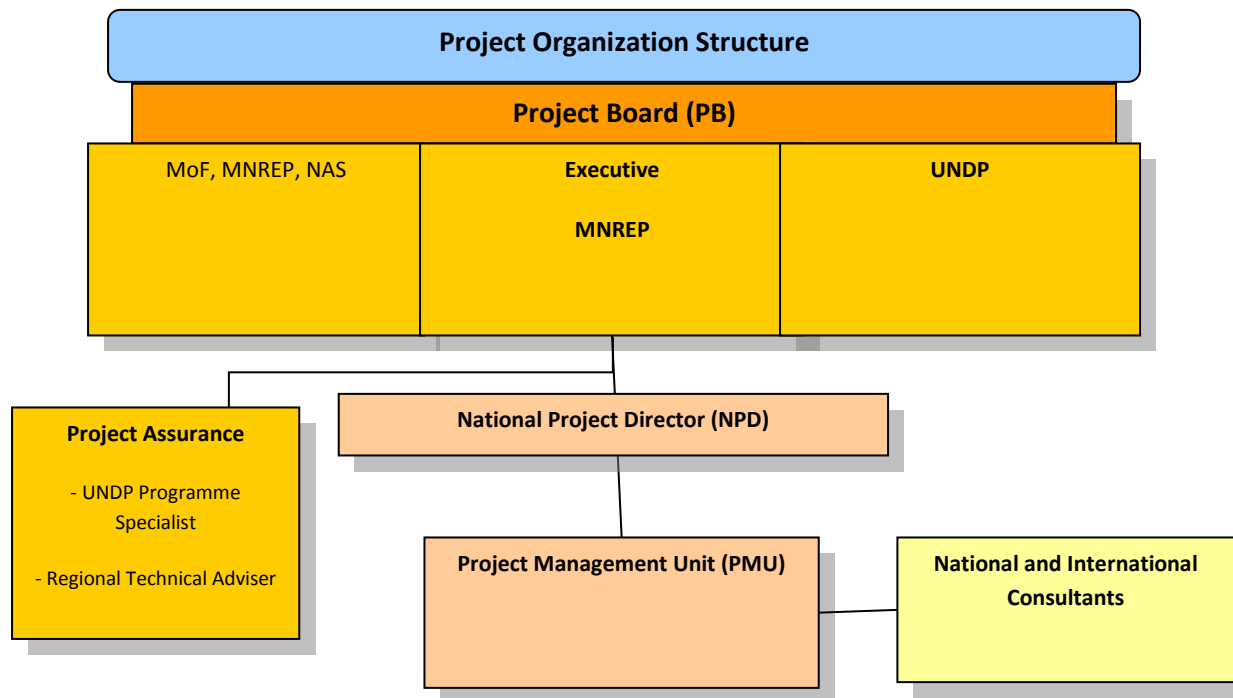
A.5 *Risk.* Elaborate on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, the proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation.(table format acceptable):

Risk	Level	Mitigation
The project is too ambitious for the amount of resources available	M	During PIF preparation the project activities were designed based on a careful analysis of their cost-effectiveness. The ambition of the proposed framework is considered to be just right for the amount of resources available from the GEF and co-financing. Based on further analysis carried out during the PPG, as well as following discussions with stakeholders, the feasibility of implementing the project framework outlined in the PIF is confirmed. At the implementation stage, the management unit will carefully monitor implementation on a regular basis vis-à-vis the available resources. If there is a mismatch, the Project Steering Committee, in agreement with implementing agencies and GEF Secretariat (where relevant) might be called in to consider a corresponding change to project outputs or strategy. At the same time, it is equally likely (as has been the evidence with all previous and present GEF projects) that new co-financing is going to be identified in addition to those confirmed at the CEO Endorsement stage.
Climate change leads to catastrophic impacts	L	More frequent drought, warmer summers and changed winters are some of the climate change symptoms in Belarus. During the preparation of its National Communication to UNFCCC and implementation of the peatland project, Belarus has developed good knowledge on climate change impacts on the vegetation and fauna structure of the country. The expert teams that will be working on forestry and PA plans will use that knowledge to make sure that proposed solutions incorporate climate change risks.
Use of machinery during restoration and management of habitat might damage flora and fauna of wetlands (soil compaction, ditches formation, etc.)	M	All works will be conducted taking into account the standing ground water table and soil condition. The main bulk of work will be carried out during the winter season when minimal to no damage would be expected. The project will take stock of the lessons learnt from wetland ecosystems management in Poland and Lithuania. The project experts have an understanding of what kind of machinery (light weight) is necessary to work on wetland soils without damaging them. Nevertheless, this precaution will be specially highlighted in the work plan and procurement practices related to these restoration works.
Demand and price dynamics in wetland biomass (pellets) might influence project activities	M	Presence of private sector agents who already work on biomass production shows that the demand and prices for biomass products have remained stable over the course of the past 10 years. The experience of similar GEF projects implemented elsewhere, as well as non-GEF projects in Belarus (e.g. projects funded by EU in Belarus) confirms that the viability of conservation approaches and technologies and their marketability depends on (1) quality of feasibility study, (2) experience during implementation, (3) careful monitoring and adjustment of proposed approaches after their piloting. All three elements above will be paid careful attention to, given that UNDP has rich experience in engaging best national and international specialists in biomass production. In addition, the project will learn from wetland biomass projects in Lithuania and Poland and will develop its business plan with knowledge of the most cost-effective and biodiversity-friendly approaches.
Innovative biotechnical measures (e.g., “stepping stones” of threatened species habitats, translocation, artificial nests) cannot be easily applied in Belarus because of the possibility of events such as droughts and floods	M	Catastrophic floods and droughts may affect the success of measures to restore the marshes. To reduce the risk, for the majority of the pilot areas the project plans to provide optimal hydrological regime. This will reduce the negative impact on the success of the pilot areas and activities, even if there is a lack or excess of water.

A.6. Institutional Arrangement and Coordination. Describe the institutional arrangement for project implementation. Elaborate on the planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.

The project will be implemented over a period of five years. It will be nationally implemented (NIM) by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus (MNREP), in line with the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and UNDP signed on 24 September 1992. The

MNREP acting as the Executing Entity for this project will be responsible for overall coordination of Project implementation, efficient use of Project resources and achievement of all the planned Project results. The Executing Entity will closely cooperate with UNDP to ensure successful implementation of all Projects activities and achievement of all the objectives and tasks. The Executing Entity will assign a senior official as the National Project Director (NPD)⁵ who will provide general coordination and support to the project on behalf of the MNREP. The Project organization structure, as shown in the figure below, will consist of a Project Board, Project Assurance, and a Project Management Unit (PMU).



A Project Board (PB) will be established at the Project inception phase to monitor progress, guide its implementation and support the Project in achieving its listed outputs and outcomes. It will be chaired by the NPD and include representatives from the main stakeholders including the MNREP, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Forestry, National Academy of Science and UNDP Belarus. Other members can be invited at the decision of the PB on an as-needed basis, but taking due regard that the PB remains sufficiently lean to be operationally effective. The Project Manager (PM) will participate as a non-voting member in the PB meetings and will also be responsible for compiling a summary report of the discussions and conclusions of each meeting. The final list of the PB members will be completed at the outset of Project operations and will be approved by UNDP and MNREP. The first PB meeting will take place within 6 months from the Project registration date. The PB will meet at least twice a year to discuss the issues related to Project implementation. The PB could meet more often if it will be deemed necessary.

The Project Assurance role supports the PB Executive by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. The Project Assurance role will rest with the respective UNDP Belarus Programme Specialist and UNDPs Regional Technical Adviser in Istanbul.

The day-to-day management of the Project will be carried out by the PMU under the overall guidance of the PB. The PMU will include the PM, a full-time Administrative/ Financial Assistant, a Scientific Coordinator and a Driver. It will also be supported through the part-time services of a procurement specialist and communications specialist. The PMU staff will be selected through an open competitive process in accordance with the respective UNDP rules and procedures taking into account consultations with the MNREP. Effectiveness of the PMU staff's work will be evaluated

⁵ The NPD will not be paid from the project funds; the PD's time is an in-kind contribution from the government to the project.

annually by UNDP Belarus. Based on the evaluation results and consultations with the NPD, a decision will be made on renewal/ non-renewal of the PMU staff contracts. The Project will be supported by short-term international and national experts, particularly a part-time Procurement Specialist. Tentative terms of reference are in Annex 8.

A work plan for the first year of Project implementation will be developed and approved by the MNREP and UNDP during the inception phase. Work plans for the second and subsequent project implementation years will be prepared during the last month of the work year.

To successfully achieve the objective and outcomes of the Project, it is essential that progress of the different Project components be closely monitored both by the key local and international stakeholders using detailed component-specific work plans and implementation arrangements throughout the entire implementation period. This should facilitate early identification of possible risks to successful completion of the Project together with adaptive management and early corrective action, when needed. During implementation, proper care will be taken to ensure communication and co-ordination mechanisms are in place to address areas of common interest in a cost-efficient way.

Both the PMU and the PB will implement mechanisms to ensure ongoing stakeholder participation and effectiveness with the commencement of the Project by conducting regular stakeholder meetings, the dedicated Project website, conducting feedback surveys, implementing strong project management practices. A list of Project stakeholders and their projected roles on the Project are provided on Table 3.

Coordination with other initiatives

UNDP is currently implementing a GEF project on sustainable management of all types of peatlands. The primary focus of the project is the development of a National Strategy and Action Plan for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Peatlands, on restoration and sustainable management of peatlands in agriculture, as well as on expansion of IUCN Category IV protected areas on peatlands. The project builds the important policy and regulatory basis for peatlands. It also promotes legal protection, through extension of the PA network on peatlands. The UNDP-GEF initiative described in this document, on the other hand, focuses on forest and wetland biodiversity of global importance and on active management of protected areas that will ensure long term financial sustainability of the key biodiversity areas. The two approaches – formal protection under the ongoing UNDP-GEF project, and implementation of active management and financially sustainable mechanisms under the project proposed herein – are highly complementary and are both critical to ensuring long-term survival of important biodiversity, stability of soil and ground water resources, and avoiding emissions from land-based sources. UNDP will coordinate the activities of both projects through exchange at the expert level and through joint Project Steering Committee meetings.

Consultations have also taken place with the World Bank that is developing a Forest Sector Loan and a GEF-6 project in parallel to this UNDP-GEF initiative. The biodiversity/ ecosystem management required under BD Program 9 (mainstreaming) is only a small fraction of the World Bank project and has peripheral value, with the primary focus being on forestry in the climate change context. In contrast, this UNDP-GEF initiative focuses solely on management of ecosystems that harbor globally important biodiversity (this falls under the GEF BD program 1 on protected area sustainability). The two initiatives strengthen the forestry sector in two parallel and non-overlapping areas. MNREP, as the key partner of both initiatives, has coordinated the preparation of the two initiatives to ensure complementarity and avoid overlap. The World Bank project, focuses on forest structure improvement, forest fire management, forest management information systems, improving effectiveness of silvicultural practices, and managing and embedding conservation values into forest management in the face of climate change (such as management of invasive species). None of these issues are covered by the UNDP GEF project, which focuses instead on financial sustainability of KBAs in forest and wetland ecosystems (Component I), on identification, mapping and sustainable management of globally important conservation forests based on the criterion of providing habitat for globally important species (Component II), on peatland forest inventory, management and restoration (Component II), as well as on habitat and species management activities for globally important species (Component III). Coordination between the two projects will be ensured through oversight from MNREP as well as through regular consultations between the World Bank and UNDP during implementation.

The Government of Lithuania is developing a project under the EU Life program aimed at managing the habitat of the aquatic warbler. This UNDP-GEF Belarus project will implement activities that would stabilize or increase the population of this globally important species at key biotopes in Belarus (Sporovsky, Zvanets, and Mid-Pripyat). This will trigger positive trends in the movement of the species towards similar ecosystems in neighboring countries,

including in Lithuania. Therefore, the activities in Lithuania aimed at improving nesting conditions there, which would run in parallel to the UNDP-GEF project in Belarus, would double the chances for the stabilization of this species. In the same vein, the project also produces synergy with similar aquatic warbler nesting site management initiatives financed by EU Life in Germany and Poland.

Link with previous projects related to peatlands

Over the last decade or so, there have been a number of internationally funded projects in Belarus that have focused on the conservation and sustainable use of peatlands. Each project has built on the lessons learned from the previous one. Even though, broadly, they all address the same issue namely, the conservation and sustainable use of the multiple benefits generated by healthy peatlands, each project varies in scale and approach to the issue and responds to the identified national priorities and desired directions at the time the projects were formulated. For instance, the very first project was an MSP (GEF ID 2057: Renaturalization and Sustainable Management of Peatlands to Combat Land Degradation, Ensure Conservation of Globally Valuable Biodiversity, and Mitigate Climate Change). This was relatively narrow in scope and focused on the re-naturalization of extracted/ mined peatlands with the overall goal being to mitigate climate change, prevent land degradation, ensure biodiversity conservation, and prevent radioactive pollution by rehabilitating degraded peatlands (15 sites). Other projects focused on bringing more wetland areas into the fold of the national protected area system and improving the management effectiveness – one focusing on the Polesie landscape in the southern part of the country (GEF ID 2104: Catalyzing Sustainability of the Wetland Protected Areas System in Belarusian Polesie through Increased Management Efficiency and Realigned Land Use Practices), and another on bringing oligotrophic and mesotrophic peatlands in the Poozerie landscape in the northern part of the country that were least-represented ecosystems into the national PA system (GEF ID 4468: Landscape Approach to Management of Peatlands Aiming at Multiple Ecological Benefits).

These projects have been instrumental in steadily building local and national capacities for conservation of peatlands and enhancing awareness of the key issues among government staff, technical experts, and policy makers. They have built up a body of knowledge and experience in the country that has enabled national stakeholders to continue to push the boundary when it comes to conserving the multiple global benefits generated by peatlands. Examples of the technical capacity built by these various projects include the national laboratory of peatland carbon of the National Academy of Sciences, policies for and standards on renaturalization of degraded non-forested peatlands, capacities for monitoring GHG emission reductions and biodiversity, partnerships between researchers, peat extraction companies and Government, improved capacities of hydrotechnical companies to maintain hydrological regime on disturbed peatlands, etc.

The experience has also had an impact in other regions of the world inasmuch as specialists and experts who have been involved in the development and implementation of these projects have been called on for support and advice in developing similar projects in other countries (for example, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, Thailand).

In the current project, all activities related to conservation and sustainable use of peatlands have been designed taking into consideration the experiences of the past projects. National experts involved in those projects are also participating in the development and implementation of this one. It is the past project experience that has helped national stakeholders home in on the need to specifically focus on forests and wetlands that harbor internationally important biodiversity and are important for climate and land integrity, and to make measures/ actions in these areas effective from a conservation perspective and sustainable from a financial perspective. It departs from previous projects in that the main focus is a subset of areas that harbor globally significant biodiversity that encompass peatland and non-peatland areas, as well as areas within PAs and outside.

Additional Information not well elaborated at PIF Stage:

A.7 Benefits. Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the project at the national and local levels. How do these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of global environment benefits (GEF Trust Fund) or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)?

While the primary focus of the project is to generate biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, sustainable forest management, and climate change mitigation benefits, in pursuing these, it will simultaneously generate socio-economic benefits for local people living near the pilot sites of the project. Component I of the project

largely focuses on economically profitable and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources at pilot sites. The enhanced income generation opportunities (cranberry gathering, ecological tourism, hay harvesting, and such) created by the project are designed to maintain wetlands in an optimal ecological state and so that they can continue to be accessible and viable for traditional sustainable natural resource use. Maintaining and supporting these traditional uses will help maintain habitats for globally significant biodiversity, GHG mitigation and sequestration, and arresting peatland degradation. A summary of the types of socio-economic benefits and the estimated number of beneficiaries are below.

Sustainable use activity	Location	Estimated number of beneficiaries
Sustainable management of meadows through regular mowing	Nalibokski	40
Cranberry harvesting	Olmany mires Vitebsk region (Activity 1.3.1)	400 900
Wetland biomass harvesting	Sporovsky, Zvanets	45
Sustainable livestock grazing (beef cattle)	Turov, Pogost	140
Ecotourism	Olmany Mires, Turov Meadow, Servech, Zvanets, Sporovsky, Nalibokski	300

A.8 Knowledge Management. Elaborate on the knowledge management approach for the project, including, if any, plans for the project to learn from other relevant projects and initiatives (e.g. participate in trainings, conferences, stakeholder exchanges, virtual networks, project twinning) and plans for the project to assess and document in a user-friendly form (e.g. lessons learned briefs, engaging websites, guidebooks based on experience) and share these experiences and expertise (e.g. participate in community of practices, organize seminars, trainings and conferences) with relevant stakeholders.

Knowledge management is an integral part of the project design. Project development has been guided by the exchange of knowledge and information with past and ongoing projects. For example, UNDP is currently implementing a GEF project on sustainable management of all types of peatlands. The primary focus of the project is the development of a National Strategy and Action Plan for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Peatlands, on restoration and sustainable management of peatlands in agriculture, as well as on expansion of IUCN Category IV protected areas on peatlands. The project builds the important policy and regulatory basis for peatlands. It also promotes legal protection, through extension of the PA network on peatlands. The UNDP-GEF initiative described in this document, on the other hand, focuses on forest and wetland biodiversity of global importance and on active management of protected areas that will ensure long term financial sustainability of the key biodiversity areas. The two approaches – formal protection under the ongoing UNDP-GEF project, and implementation of active management and financially sustainable mechanisms under the project proposed herein – are highly complementary and are both critical to ensuring long-term survival of important biodiversity, stability of soil and ground water resources, and avoiding emissions from land-based sources. The design of Component I of the project has been influenced by the lessons from this initiative and during implementation, as well, UNDP will coordinate the activities of both projects through exchange at the expert level and through joint Project Steering Committee meetings.

Knowledge and information flow will also be maintained with the World Bank Forest Sector Loan and a GEF-6 project occurring in parallel to this UNDP-GEF initiative. The World Bank project focuses on forest structure improvement, forest fire management, forest management information systems, improving effectiveness of silvicultural practices, and managing and embedding conservation values into forest management in the face of climate change (such as management of invasive species). None of these issues are covered by the UNDP GEF project, which focuses instead on financial sustainability of KBAs in forest and wetland ecosystems (Component I), on identification, mapping and sustainable management of globally important conservation forests based on the criterion of providing habitat for globally important species (Component II), on peatland forest inventory, management and restoration (Component II), as well as on habitat and species management activities for globally important species (Component III). Knowledge sharing will be ensured through oversight from MNREP as well as through regular consultations between the World Bank and UNDP during implementation.

The international LIFE Project "Stepping stones towards ensuring long-term favourable conservation status of Aquatic warbler in Lithuania (2016-2023)" is another key initiative with which close knowledge and information sharing will be maintained. In the case of the aquatic warbler conservation measures, the project links up with activities in Lithuania and Poland to enhance cost-effectiveness. Fen mires Servech and Dikoe are located between the main center of the distribution range in the Pripyat Polesie (mires Zvanets and Sporovsky) and peripheral habitats in Lithuania and Poland. Thus, the selection of mires Servech and Dikoe as pilot sites will create key habitats for aquatic warbler in the transboundary region of Lithuania, Poland and Belarus, greatly increasing the conservation impact of measures and costs undertaken in Belarus.

In addition, the project will implement 3 workshops in different parts of the country to present and distribute its experience. These will serve as important forums for knowledge exchange and dissemination.

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PROJECT WITH:

B.1 *Consistency with National Priorities.* Describe the consistency of the project with national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions such as NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, etc.:

No change from PIF.

C. DESCRIBE THE BUDGETED M & E PLAN:

The project will be monitored through the following Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities.

Project start-up

A Project Inception Workshop will be held within the first 4 months of project start with those with assigned roles in the project organization structure, the UNDP Country Office and, where appropriate/ feasible, regional technical policy and programme advisors as well as other stakeholders. The Inception Workshop is crucial to building ownership for the project results and to plan the first year annual work plan. The Inception Workshop should address a number of key issues including:

- Assist all partners to fully understand and take ownership of the project. Detail the roles, support services and complementary responsibilities of UNDP Country Office, MNREP and the UNDP-GEF Regional Service Centre (RSC) vis-à-vis the project team. Discuss the roles, functions, and responsibilities within the project's decision-making structures, including reporting and communication lines, and conflict resolution mechanisms. The Terms of Reference for project staff will be discussed again, as needed.
- Based on the Project Results Framework and the relevant GEF Tracking Tools, if appropriate, finalize the first Annual Work Plan. Review and agree on the indicators, targets and their means of verification, and re-check assumptions and risks.
- Provide a detailed overview of reporting, monitoring and evaluation requirements. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) work plan and budget should be agreed and scheduled.
- Discuss financial reporting procedures and obligations, and arrangements for annual audit.
- Plan and schedule PSC meetings. Roles and responsibilities of all project organization structures should be clarified and meetings planned. The first PSC meeting should be held within the first 6 months following the Inception Workshop.

An Inception Workshop report is a key reference document and must be prepared and shared with participants to formalize various agreements and plans decided during the meeting.

Quarterly

- Progress made shall be monitored in the UNDP Enhanced Results Based Management Platform.
- Based on the initial risk analysis submitted, the risk log shall be regularly updated in ATLAS. Risks become critical when the impact and probability are high.
- Based on the information recorded in ATLAS, a Project Progress Report (PPR) can be generated in the Executive Snapshot.

- Other ATLAS logs can be used to monitor issues, lessons learned etc. The use of these functions is a key indicator in the UNDP Executive Balanced Scorecard.

Annually

Annual Project Review/ Project Implementation Reports (APR/PIR): This key report is prepared to monitor progress made since project start and in particular for the previous reporting period. The APR/PIR combines both UNDP and GEF reporting requirements. The APR/PIR includes, but is not limited to, reporting on the following:

- Progress made toward project objective and project outcomes - each with indicators, baseline data and end-of-project targets (cumulative)
- Project outputs delivered per project outcome (annual)
- Lesson learned/good practice
- Annual Work Plan and other expenditure reports
- Risk and adaptive management
- ATLAS Quarterly Progress Reports (QPR)
- Portfolio level indicators (i.e. GEF focal area tracking tools) are used by most focal areas on an annual basis as well.

Periodic Monitoring through site visits

UNDP Country Office and the UNDP-GEF RSC will conduct visits to project sites based on the agreed schedule in the project's Inception Report/Annual Work Plan to assess first hand project progress. Other members of the PSC may also join these visits. A Field Visit Report/BTOR will be prepared by the UNDP Country Office and UNDP-GEF RSC and will be circulated no less than one month after the visit to the project team and PSC members.

Mid-term of project cycle

The project will undergo an independent Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) at the mid-point of project implementation. The MTE will determine progress being made toward the achievement of outcomes and will identify course correction if needed. It will focus on the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation; will highlight issues requiring decisions and actions; and will present initial lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. Findings of this review will be incorporated as recommendations for enhanced implementation during the final half of the project's term. The organization, terms of reference and timing of the MTE will be decided after consultation between the parties to the project document. The Terms of Reference for this MTE will be prepared by the UNDP Country Office, based on guidance from the UNDP-GEF RSC. The management response and the evaluation will be uploaded to UNDP corporate systems, in particular the UNDP Evaluation Resource Center (ERC). The relevant GEF Focal Area Tracking Tools will also be completed during the mid-term evaluation cycle.

End of Project

An independent Final Evaluation will take place three months prior to the final PSC meeting and will be undertaken in accordance with UNDP and GEF guidance. The final evaluation will focus on the delivery of the project's results as initially planned (and as corrected after the MTE, if any such correction took place). The final evaluation will look at impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development and the achievement of global environmental benefits/ goals. The Terms of Reference for this evaluation will be prepared by the UNDP Country Office, based on guidance from the UNDP-GEF RSC. The final evaluation should also provide recommendations for follow-up activities and requires a management response which should be uploaded to PIMS and to the UNDP ERC. The relevant GEF Focal Area Tracking Tools will also be completed during the final evaluation.

During the last three months, the project team will prepare the Project Terminal Report. This comprehensive report will summarize the results achieved (objectives, outcomes, outputs), lessons learned, problems met and areas where results may not have been achieved. It will also lay out recommendations for any further steps that may need to be taken to ensure sustainability and replicability of the project's results.

Communications and visibility requirements

Full compliance is required with UNDP's Branding Guidelines. These can be accessed at <http://intra.undp.org/coa/branding.shtml>, and specific guidelines on UNDP logo use can be accessed at: <http://intra.undp.org/branding/useOfLogo.html>. Amongst other things, these guidelines describe when and how the

UNDP logo needs to be used, as well as how the logos of donors to UNDP projects needs to be used. For the avoidance of any doubt, when logo use is required, the UNDP logo needs to be used alongside the GEF logo. The GEF logo can be accessed at: [http://www.thegef.org/gef/GEF logo](http://www.thegef.org/gef/GEF_logo). The UNDP logo can be accessed at <http://intra.undp.org/coa/branding.shtml>.

Full compliance is required with the GEF’s Communication and Visibility Guidelines (the “GEF Guidelines”). The GEF Guidelines can be accessed at: [http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/C.40.08 Branding the GEF%20final_0.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/C.40.08_Branding_the_GEF%20final_0.pdf). Amongst other things, the GEF Guidelines describe when and how the GEF logo needs to be used in project publications, vehicles, supplies and other project equipment. The GEF Guidelines also describe other GEF promotional requirements regarding press releases, press conferences, press visits, visits by Government officials, productions and other promotional items.


Table 4. M&E work plan and budget

Type of M&E activity	Responsible Parties	Budget US\$	Time frame
Inception Workshop and Report	PM UNDP Country Office UNDP-GEF RSC	Indicative cost: 5,000	Within first four months of project start up
Measurement of Means of Verification of project results.	PM will, with support from the UNDP-GEF RSC, oversee the hiring of specific studies and institutions, and delegate responsibilities to relevant team members.	Indicative cost: 5,000 (To be finalized in Inception Phase and Workshop.	Start, mid and end of project (during evaluation cycle) and annually when required.
Measurement of Means of Verification for Project Progress on <i>output and implementation</i>	PM	Indicative cost: 5,000 To be determined as part of the Annual Work Plan's preparation.	Annually prior to ARR/PIR and to the definition of annual work plans
ARR/PIR	PM UNDP Country Office UNDP RTA UNDP ERC	None	Annually
Periodic status/ progress reports	PM	None	Quarterly
Mid-term Evaluation	PM UNDP Country Office UNDP RSC External Consultants (i.e. evaluation team)	Indicative cost: 20,000	At the mid-point of project implementation.
Final Evaluation	PM UNDP Country Office UNDP RSC External Consultants (i.e. evaluation team)	Indicative cost: 20,000	At least three months before the end of project implementation
Project Terminal Report	PM UNDP Country Office local consultant	None	At least three months before the end of the project
Audit	UNDP Country Office Project manager and team	Indicative cost per year: 2,000 x 5 years (10,000)	Yearly
Visits to field sites	UNDP Country Office UNDP RSC (as appropriate) Government representatives	For GEF-supported projects, paid from IA fees and operational budget	Yearly
TOTAL indicative COST Excluding project staff time and UNDP staff and travel expenses		US\$ 65,000	

Note: Costs included in this table are part and parcel of the UNDP Total Budget and Work Plan (TBWP) in the PRODOC, and not additional to it.

PART III: CERTIFICATION BY GEF PARTNER AGENCY(IES) GEF Agency certification

This request has been prepared in accordance with GEF policies⁶ and procedures and meets the GEF criteria for CEO endorsement under GEF-6.

Agency Coordinator, Agency Name	Signature	Date (MM/dd/yyyy)	Project Contact Person	Telephone	Email Address
Adriana Dinu UNDP-GEF Executive Coordinator		09/14/2016	Maxim Vergeichik Regional Technical Advisor, EBD	+ 421 259 337 152	maxim.vergeichik@undp.org

⁶ GEF policies encompass all managed trust funds, namely: GEFTF, LDCE, and SCCF

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

This project will contribute to achieving the following Country Programme Outcomes as defined in the 2016-2020 CPD for Belarus: 3.1: Solutions developed at national and subnational levels for the sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste; and 3.2 Legal and regulatory frameworks, policies and institutions able to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems, in line with international conventions and national legislation.

UNDP Strategic Plan: Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable, incorporating productive capacities that create employment and livelihoods for the poor and excluded.

Applicable GEF Strategic Objective and Program: BD-1 Program 1; LD-3 Program 4; CCM-2 Program 4; SFM-1; SFM-3

Applicable GEF Outcome Indicators:
 BD-1 Program 1: Indicator 1.1: Funding gap for management of PA systems and globally significant protected areas, Indicator 1.2: Protected area management effectiveness score.
 SFM-1: Indicator 1: Area of high conservation value forest identified and maintained
 SFM-3: Indicator 5: Area of forest resources restored in the landscape, stratified by forest management actors
 LD-3 Program 4: Indicator 3.2: Application of integrated natural resource management (INRM) practices in wider landscapes
 CCM-2 Program 4 Indicator 4. Deployment of low GHG technologies and practices

Project Strategy	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline	Target (by project end)	Source of verification	Risks																					
Project Objective: To introduce a conservation-centered and financially self-sufficient approach to management of forests and wetlands that harbor internationally important biodiversity and are important for climate and land integrity	<p><u>Biodiversity:</u> Funding gap for management of targeted globally significant PAs -- Nalibokski, Sporovsky, Zvanets, Mid-Pripyat (Pogost meadow), Turov Lug, and Olmany Mires</p> <p>Protected area management effectiveness score -- METT applied at Nalibokski, Sporovsky, Zvanets, Mid-Pripyat (Pogost meadow), Turov Lug, Olmany Mires, Dikoe and Servech</p> <p><u>Sustainable Forest Management:</u> Area of high conservation value forest identified and maintained</p> <p><u>Land Degradation:</u> Application of INRM practices in wider landscapes</p>	Annual financing gap for optimal management scenario (operations): USD 135,506	Financing gap reduced by half	Annual project monitoring reports	The project is too ambitious for the amount of resources available																					
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>PA</th> <th>B/L METT</th> <th>Target METT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Nalibokski</td> <td>50</td> <td>85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zvanets</td> <td>49</td> <td>87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sporovsky</td> <td>53</td> <td>87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Olmany</td> <td>43</td> <td>79</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Servech</td> <td>24</td> <td>73</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Turov</td> <td>37</td> <td>84</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	PA	B/L METT		Target METT	Nalibokski	50	85	Zvanets	49	87	Sporovsky	53	87	Olmany	43	79	Servech	24	73	Turov	37	84		Annual project monitoring reports
		PA	B/L METT	Target METT																						
		Nalibokski	50	85																						
Zvanets	49	87																								
Sporovsky	53	87																								
Olmany	43	79																								
Servech	24	73																								
Turov	37	84																								
50,000 ha	200,000 ha	Annual project monitoring reports																								
0	12,456 ha (5 forested peatland pilots)	Annual project monitoring reports																								

Project Strategy	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline	Target (by project end)	Source of verification	Risks																								
	<u>Climate Change Mitigation:</u> Area under low GHG management practices with monitoring of low GHG impact undertaken	0	415,385 ha ⁷	Annual project monitoring reports																									
Outcome I: Improved financial sustainability and management effectiveness of protected forest and wetland biotopes harboring globally important biodiversity	Number of business organizations involved in sustainable habitat management at target PAs (Zvanets, Sporovsky, Mid-Pripyat, Turov Meadows) that is profitable for them	No business organizations involved in management of target PAs	At least one business organization profitably involved at each target PA	Reports of business organizations on their activities within PAs	Use of machinery during restoration and management of habitat might damage flora and fauna of wetlands (soil compaction, ditches formation, etc.) Demand and price dynamics in wetland biomass (pellets) might influence project activities adversely																								
	Representation of women in sustainable use activities associated with business plans developed under Outcome 1	0%	50%	Reports of business organizations on their activities within PAs																									
	Area of natural, highly productive foraging grounds within the living territory of the European bison's micro population in the Nalibokski Reserve (50,000 ha)	Not more than 100 ha	More than 300 ha	Implementation reports of the engineering project																									
	Spatial distribution of bison throughout the micro population's living area	During late autumn and early spring bison feed mainly on adjacent agricultural lands	Bison forage in this area (mosaic meadows) during the most important period of the year (late autumn, early spring)	Data collected by monitoring studies throughout the year using camera traps, etc.																									
	Area of open sedge mires where sustainable resource use and vegetation management is practiced	Sporovsky 500 ha Zvanets 100 ha	Sporovsky 3,000 ha Zvanets 4,500 ha	Reports on monitoring of vegetation																									
	Dynamics of water level throughout the year	Unstable water level (30-50 cm above or 30 cm below ground level) during May-July Water mineralization is from 300 to 450 mg/l	Optimal water level – 5-20 cm above ground level during May-July Water mineralization is from 150 to 300 mg/l	Reports on monitoring of water levels at pilot sites																									
	Population size of indicator species in Zvanets and Sporovsky Reserves	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Sporovsky Reserve</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Species</th> <th>B/L pop. size</th> <th>Target</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Aquatic warbler</td> <td>500-700 males</td> <td>900</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Greater spotted eagle</td> <td>1-2 pairs</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="3">Zvanets Reserve</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Aquatic warbler</td> <td>2,100-4,400 males</td> <td>5,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Greater spotted eagle</td> <td>0-2 pairs</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Curlew</td> <td>0-4 pairs</td> <td>15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Sporovsky Reserve			Species	B/L pop. size	Target	Aquatic warbler	500-700 males	900	Greater spotted eagle	1-2 pairs	4	Zvanets Reserve			Aquatic warbler	2,100-4,400 males	5,000	Greater spotted eagle	0-2 pairs	4	Curlew	0-4 pairs	15	Reports on monitoring of bird species' populations	
	Sporovsky Reserve																												
	Species	B/L pop. size	Target																										
Aquatic warbler	500-700 males	900																											
Greater spotted eagle	1-2 pairs	4																											
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Aquatic warbler	2,100-4,400 males	5,000																											
Greater spotted eagle	0-2 pairs	4																											
Curlew	0-4 pairs	15																											
Area of open, sustainably used meadows at Turov and Pogost Meadows	Turov Meadow 100 ha Pogost 0 ha	Turov Meadow 380 ha Pogost 150 ha	Results of monitoring of biotopes' ratio, vegetation																										

⁷ This includes: 150,000 ha of HC VF, 260,000 ha of forested peatlands, 1,025 ha of open peatland, 560 ha improved grassland management, 3,800 ha where biomass production replaces fossil fuels.

Project Strategy	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline	Target (by project end)	Source of verification	Risks	
	Population size of species during spring migration (Widgeon, Ruff, Black-tailed godwit)	Turov Meadow			Results of monitoring bird populations during migrations	
		Species	B/L pop. size	Target		
		Widgeon	10,000-20,000	50,000		
		Ruff	10,000-30,000	40,000		
		Black-tailed godwit	3,000	10,000		
		Pogost Meadow				
		Widgeon	100	10,000		
		Ruff	0	10,000		
	Black-tailed godwit	0	500			
	Population size of nesting indicator bird species (Great snipe, Black-tailed godwit, Terek sandpiper, Redshank)	Turov Meadow			Results of monitoring bird populations during breeding	
		Species	B/L pop. size	Target		
		Great snipe	100 males	150		
		Black-tailed godwit	30 pairs	80		
Terek sandpiper		5 pairs	20			
Redshank		120 pairs	200			
Pogost Meadow						
Great snipe		0 males	20			
Black-tailed godwit	0 pairs	5				
Numbers of organized tourists in the PAs	PA			Reports of PA Management Agencies on the tourism activity		
		B/L tourist nos.	Target			
	Nalibokski	250	2,500			
	Sporovsky	4,500	5,500			
Outcome II: Sustainable forest and wetland ecosystem management in buffer zones and economic landscapes adjacent to protected areas	Area of forest biotopes transferred to the protection category	3,000 ha of forest lands with rare biotopes are transferred into protection	150,000 ha of forest lands with rare biotopes are transferred into protection	Passports of biotopes' transfer into protection	Climate change leads to catastrophic impacts on high conservation value forests and peatlands	
	Number of Forestry enterprises that envisage forestry management plans in line with sustainable use of protected biotopes	3 forestry enterprises	10 forestry enterprises	Forestry Management Plans		
	Number of employees of the Ministry of Forestry trained in the sustainable use of protected biotopes	Employees of the Ministry of Forestry do not have experience in sustainable use of rare biotopes needing special protection	At least 20 employees of the Ministry of Forestry trained	Training evaluations, workshop reports		
	Official policy and document on future use of forest hydro amelioration systems	Due to the lack of data for evaluation of the current state of forest hydro amelioration systems, there is no coordinated policy on their further use	Proposals on ways of further use of forest hydro ameliorative systems (260,000 ha) are developed and encapsulated in a Sectoral document of the Ministry of Forestry	Sectoral document titled "The Scheme of Distribution of Forest Hydro Amelioration Systems according to Their Use"		
Outcome III: Increased	Area of territory with associations of sedge mires	Dikoe 250 ha Servech 200 ha	Dikoe 1,250 ha Servech 570 ha	Reports on monitoring of	Innovative biotechnical	

Project Strategy	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline	Target (by project end)	Source of verification	Risks	
experience and knowledge of innovative biotechnological measures for eliminating the most significant threats to globally important species, and monitoring of their populations.				vegetation associations	measures such as “stepping stones” of threatened species habitats, translocation, and artificial nests cannot be easily applied in Belarus	
	Population size of globally threatened species: Aquatic warbler, Greater spotted eagle, Curlew, Great snipe.	Dikoe		Reports on monitoring of bird populations		
		Species	B/L pop. size			Target
		Aquatic warbler	150-200 males			250
		Greater spotted eagle	4-5 pairs			4-5 ⁸
		Servech				
		Aquatic warbler	31-38 males			90
		Curlew	0-2 pairs			3-4
		Great snipe	21-30 males	30-40		
	Area of restored sedge fen mires	There is only one sedge fen mire in the Grodno Region - the "Svisloch" mire – with an area of 200 ha	Sedge fen mire Dokudovskoe with an area of 1,200 ha is restored (located in northwest Belarus); offers potential key habitats for globally threatened aquatic warbler, greater spotted eagle.	Report on implementation of the construction project on ecological rehabilitation of Dokudovskoe		
	Area of vegetation associations on restored mire	Sedge communities on the peatland Dokudovskoe (1,200 ha) occupy no more than 20 ha	Sedge communities on peatland Dokudovskoe occupy at least 700 ha	Data on monitoring of vegetation communities		
	Greenhouse gas emissions at following pilot sites: 12,456 ha of forest peatland; 1,025 ha of open peatlands	Carbon dioxide emissions are about 10-20 tons per ha per year	Carbon dioxide emissions are about 0 tons per ha per year	Data on monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions		
	Number of genetically valuable bison transferred from different micro populations in Belarus and Poland to Nalibokski to increase diversity	0	5	Data from genetic research studies		
	Number of genetic passports issued for the Nalibokski micro population of the European bison	0	8	Data from genetic research studies		
Population dynamics of the Aquatic warbler in the Zuvintas Reserve (Lithuania)	Population size of the aquatic warbler at the restored potential key habitat Zuvintas is 2-7 males	Population size increases to at least 30 males (through translocation) and further population growth is registered	Reports on monitoring of bird species populations			
Number of breeding pairs of greater spotted eagle in Olmany Mires	18-20 pairs	Stabilized at 20-25 pairs	Reports on monitoring of the population of greater spotted eagle in Olmany Mires			
Breeding success	30%	40-50				
Number of secure nesting sites	Lack of secure places for nesting	At least 20 artificial nests are established on plots where greater spotted eagles nest	Report on the state			
Action plan on conservation of 13	Lack of data prevents actions	Collected data on the state of				

⁸ The objective is to stabilize the condition for this species. Without the project activities, the number of eagles will decline quickly.
GEF6 CEO Endorsement /Approval Template-Dec2015

Project Strategy	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline	Target (by project end)	Source of verification	Risks
	invertebrates and 5 molluscs with EN and VU status based on scientific knowledge of size and distribution (including <i>Dolomedes plantarius</i> , <i>Dytiscus latissimus</i> , <i>Graphoderus bilineatus</i> , <i>Cerambyx cerdo</i> , <i>Lycaena helle</i> , <i>Lopinga achine</i> , <i>Euphydrias matura</i> , <i>Phyllodesma ilicifolia</i> , <i>Unio crassus</i> , <i>Pseudanodonta complanata</i>)	for their effective protection	populations of these species leads to the development of an Action Plan on conservation of these poorly known species	and distribution of species and on protection measures	

ANNEX B: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS (from GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF).

Comment	Response	Location of changes in UNDP Prodoc
STAP comments		
<p>3. The case for conserving globally important biodiversity is strong. The section on drivers of degradation is useful, but would be strengthened through the use of maps and if it was made more concise with additional editing and organization. The baseline scenario shows reasonable commitment to these issues in Belarus. This is further validated by the coordination of this project with, for example, the World Bank Forest Sector GEF-6 project through the Ministry of Environment. The narrative for the proposed alternative scenario is written and organized in a way that is hard to read, and does not always appear to match the much stronger project description. This may well simply be a question of editing and text organization. The incremental cost reasoning table is strong, although it is not always easy to reconcile the numbers provided. Under climate change, for instance, there is "avoided deforestation on 11,000ha resulted from redesigned management plans for globally important forests at 150,000 ha". What does this mean, exactly? Peatland forest restoration of 10,000 ha and peat restoration of 2,000 ha is difficult to reconcile with the figures in the Project Summary table. These figures seem to be repeated in different parts of this table, and are difficult to follow. It is therefore particularly important that these outcomes are carefully summarized (as indicators) in the Project summary table.</p>	<p>The drivers of degradation section has been edited to make it more concise. Maps on project sites are provided in the annexes describing the pilot sites of the project.</p> <p>The description of project components has been clarified; each component has been divided into outputs and activities.</p> <p>The numbers in the IC reasoning table have been reconciled with the description of project components, outputs and activities. The numbers have also been reconciled with the project framework/ project summary table in the CEO Request.</p>	<p>Section 1.2 and Annex 1 to 6</p> <p>Section 2.4</p> <p>Section 2.1</p>
<p>4. As it currently stands, the project is largely a combination of valuable but individual actions to address a range of important biodiversity issues in Belarus. The process of implementing these changes is not really described, but could well be the most important contribution of the project if well designed. There may well be an intention to use</p>	<p>In terms of national norms and policies for biodiversity management in peatlands, the project has identified one area of weakness. Despite the value of peatlands for biodiversity conservation and ecological safety, Belarus' legislation has no single normative legal act that would provide, at the legislative level, integrated management of multiple social relations in the field of protection and rational (sustainable) use of mires (peatlands). Therefore, the project will address this gap by elaborating the concept and</p>	<p>Section 2.4, Output 1.1</p>

Comment	Response	Location of changes in UNDP Prodoc
<p>these pilots to shift national norms and policies about biodiversity management in forests and peatlands, but the project would be stronger if it made this explicit, and also spent more time thinking through the process of how to implement these pilots in ways that established national norms, standards and even policy. A good example to learn from is the UNDP/GEF Grasslands Project in South Africa. In a somewhat similar manner to this project, it used high level facilitators to work with stakeholders to solve field-level problems, but importantly it ensured that these field practices were codified as guidelines by the stakeholders. Because of the widespread engagement of stakeholders in issues like urban protected areas, mine rehabilitation and offsets, and biodiversity management in forests, these guidelines were often adopted as national standards and norms. Perhaps Component 4 should be added and include 3.5 (monitoring and research) but also the codification of best practice?</p>	<p>draft of the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On the Protection and Use of Peatlands". This will state the legal framework for the protection and rational (sustainable) use of mires (peatlands) – Output 1.1. The pilots will be important insofar as they will inform development and approval of this law.</p> <p>In terms of biodiversity management in forests, until 2016, particularly valuable forests, including old growth forests, were protected according to Belarus' nature conservation and forest legislation by means of designation of these territories as "specially protected plots". In 2016, several amendments were made to the Forest Code in order to harmonize the forest and nature conservation legislation, as well as to meet the requirements of international conventions. As a result of these amendments, the concept of "specially protected plots" has been abolished, and forests designated as such are to be distributed to other categories of protected forests: nature conservation forests (habitats of protected species, rare biotopes, and forests on protected areas), protective forests, and recreational forests. The 2016 amendments also put into law the need for Forestries to review their forest management plan together with researchers should it be identified that there are rare biotopes within the forests they manage (whether protective forests or not). Further, in 2014 Belarus ratified the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats. As a result, the concept of "rare biotopes" appeared in nature conservation legislation and the procedures for their identification and transfer for protection were developed. However, introduction of the concept of "rare biotopes" in nature conservation legislation is only the first step in securing biodiversity conservation at the biotope level. Assignment of particularly valuable plots as "rare biotopes" requires their inventory by specialists, preparation of protection documents and introduction of all necessary procedures and results into forest management plans. Planning and implementation of forest management activities in most forestry enterprises is usually carried out under conditions of lack or absence of information about distribution of protected species and rare biotopes needing special protection. Typically, only formerly known data on location of habitats of Red Data Book animal and plant species are considered by forestry enterprises during forest management planning. As a result, rare biotopes subject to special protection according to the Bern Convention and national legislation can be subject to cutting and</p>	<p>Section 2.4, Output 2.1</p>

Comment	Response	Location of changes in UNDP Prodoc
	<p>other forestry activities. The main reasons that rare biotopes are not given special consideration in forest management plans are: the lack of a system for collection and analysis of information on habitats of globally threatened species and location of rare biotopes, insufficient knowledge about identification criteria, and low awareness about the value of rare biotopes.</p> <p>To address these shortcomings, Output 2.1 of the project will make an inventory, prepare passports and protection obligations, and transfer forest biotopes subject to special protection (at least 150,000 ha) to land users for protection and sustainable use. The project will create a model of how to bring together foresters and researchers to follow the new Forest Code by (1) identifying the biotopes, (2) describe them, (3) create conservation/ protection measures, and (4) control implementation of measures and ecological success. If such pilot examples exist, then whether the rare biotopes are within forests of protection or non-protection categories, once identified, the biotopes will be protected, and the project's model will be replicated using the new Forest Code as the legal basis. (This explanation is provided in the Annex titled "Justification and action plan for modified forest management paradigm (Output 2.1)")</p>	
<p>5. The project makes an effort to reconcile delivery of multiple global environmental benefits in biodiversity, land degradation and climate change. The choice of peatland ecosystems is a strong case for this type of interventions. The project assumes that "release of carbon [will be] prevented and sequestration capacities restored of soil and vegetation at 250,000 ha of degraded peatland soils". Carbon cycle dynamics of peatland ecosystems is complicated. Peatlands store carbon in different parts of their ecosystem (biomass, litter, peat layer, mineral subsoil layer), each having their own GHGs (carbon dioxide, methane, and often nitrous oxide) dynamics, both spatial and temporal (e.g., Parish, F., Sirin, A., Charman, D., Joosten, H., Minayeva, T., Silvius, M. and Stringer, L. (Eds.) 2008. Assessment on Peatlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change: Main Report. Global Environment</p>	<p>The carbon benefits expected to be generated by the project stem from avoided emissions and increased carbon sequestration functions of peatland and forest ecosystems resulting from:</p> <p>Output 2.1 Avoided deforestation resulting from HCVF designation at 800 ha. Total area of selected sites is no less than 150,000 ha. Without implementation of conservation measures about 800 ha of area will be cut down in the next 20 years.</p> <p>Output 2.1 Reduced (dryland) forest degradation at 9,500 ha.</p> <p>Output 2.2 Restoration of 12,456 ha of forest peatland. This area includes 5 project sites where the water level restoration will be implemented.</p> <p>Output 3.1 Restoration of 1,025 ha of open peatland. This area is depleted peatland site Dokudovskoe.</p> <p>Output 1.5: Improved grassland management at Turov Lug – two sites with a total area of 560 ha</p> <p>Output 1.4 Replacement of fossil fuels with peatland biomass and pellet production at 3,800 ha. Based on the available equipment, its productivity and effective working time, it is planned to clear and collect mire biomass annually at 950 ha of fens over 4 years.</p> <p>Total avoided emissions + carbon sequestered =</p>	<p>Carbon calculations are summarized in Section 2.1, Table 1.</p> <p>Carbon calculations using the EX-ACT tool can be provided on request.</p>

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<p>Centre, Kuala Lumpur and Wetlands International, Wageningen.). There are multiple best management practices (BMPs) to restore degraded peatlands that would have measurable GHG benefits (reviewed recently by FAO (2014): http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4029e.pdf). Most of these practices aim to sustain/increase waterlogging and restrict aerobic decay of carbon in peatland soils. This project proposes a range of practices within and outside of PAs (regulated cranberry picking, sustainable grazing, sustainable wetland biomass collection, reconstruction of drainage infrastructure and etc.) that could have opposite impacts on GHG emissions. STAP recommends that project proponents carefully review existing literature on the potential impacts of different management techniques for peatland and wetlands restoration on GHG emissions. In some instances, preserving biodiversity and local livelihoods could run counter to GHG reduction benefits and will be locally specific. Final choice of management options should be informed by the assessment of all potential benefits (biodiversity, sustainable land management and GHG benefits). GHG benefits, particularly, should be assessed for project model areas based on the existing information if not additional measurements. In assessing GHG impact of project activities, STAP recommends using new GHG accounting for GEF project framework that will be submitted as Information Document for GEF's 48th Council meeting.</p>	<p>3,051,377 tCO₂-eq/20y (see EX-ACT tool for detailed calculations) + 148,200 tCO₂-eq/20y = 3,199,577 tCO₂-eq/20y (see CCM tracking tool for explanation)</p> <p>The above estimation of carbon benefits of the project has been undertaken by the national laboratory of peatland carbon of the National Academy of Sciences, which has close collaborations with researchers involved in developing these methodologies (for example, Joosten and Minke). The group is very familiar with the ongoing research in this field and related research papers, findings, and recommendations. All of the proposed sustainable use activities (cranberry picking, sustainable grazing, peatland restoration through water table regulation, biomass harvesting) have been designed through consultations with the national laboratory of peatland carbon of the National Academy of Sciences and have proved to either have a positive impact on GHG emission reduction or no negative impact. Overall, project activities have been carefully designed so that there is no conflicting interest between community livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, land degradation, sustainable forest management and climate change mitigation.</p> <p>Furthermore, the carbon calculations use the EX-ACT tool which is mentioned in the "RECOMMENDED FRAMEWORK FOR AFOLU PROJECTS" in the GUIDELINES FOR GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING FOR GEF PROJECTS that was submitted to the 48th Council Meeting.</p>	
<p>6. It is surprising that the PIF does not mention any lessons learned from several completed projects on peatlands in Belarus and elsewhere including projects funded by the GEF (IDs: 2057, 2104, 2751, particularly 4468 focused on carbon stocks monitoring, 5764, and 6947 as</p>	<p>Over the last decade or so, there have been a number of internationally funded projects in Belarus that have focused on the conservation and sustainable use of peatlands. Each project has built on the lessons learned from the previous one. Even though, broadly, they all address the same issue namely, the conservation and sustainable use of the multiple benefits generated by healthy peatlands, each project</p>	<p>Section 2.9</p>

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<p>well as SGP). Of particular relevance are experiences of the completed German government funded project summarized in: Carbon credits from peatland rewetting Climate -biodiversity - land use. Science, policy, implementation and recommendations of a pilot project in Belarus Ed.: Franziska Tanneberger; Wendelin Wichtmann, 2011. 223 pp. Assuming that this project could generate significant MRV carbon benefits potentially eligible for voluntary carbon markets, it is surprising that PIF does not mention this possibility.</p>	<p>varies in scale and approach to the issue and responds to the identified national priorities and desired directions at the time the projects were formulated. For instance, the very first project was an MSP (GEF ID 2057: Renaturalization and Sustainable Management of Peatlands to Combat Land Degradation, Ensure Conservation of Globally Valuable Biodiversity, and Mitigate Climate Change). This was relatively narrow in scope and focused on the re-naturalization of extracted/ mined peatlands with the overall goal being to mitigate climate change, prevent land degradation, ensure biodiversity conservation, and prevent radioactive pollution by rehabilitating degraded peatlands (15 sites). Other projects focused on bringing more wetland areas into the fold of the national protected area system and improving the management effectiveness – one focusing on the Polesie landscape in the southern part of the country (GEF ID 2104: Catalyzing Sustainability of the Wetland Protected Areas System in Belarusian Polesie through Increased Management Efficiency and Realigned Land Use Practices), and another on bringing oligotrophic and mesotrophic peatlands in the Poozerie landscape in the northern part of the country that were least-represented ecosystems into the national PA system (GEF ID 4468: Landscape Approach to Management of Peatlands Aiming at Multiple Ecological Benefits).</p> <p>These projects have been instrumental in steadily building local and national capacities for conservation of peatlands and enhancing awareness of the key issues among government staff, technical experts, and policy makers. They have built up a body of knowledge and experience in the country that has enabled national stakeholders to continue to push the boundary when it comes to conserving the multiple global benefits generated by peatlands. Examples of the technical capacity built by these various projects include the national laboratory of peatland carbon of the National Academy of Sciences, policies for and standards on renaturalization of degraded non-forested peatlands, capacities for monitoring GHG emission reductions and biodiversity, partnerships between researchers, peat extraction companies and Government, improved capacities of hydrotechnical companies to maintain hydrological regime on disturbed peatlands, etc.</p> <p>The experience has also had an impact in other regions of the world inasmuch as specialists and experts who have been involved in the development and implementation of these</p>	

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	<p>projects have been called on for support and advice in developing similar projects in other countries (for example, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, Thailand).</p> <p>In the current project, all activities related to conservation and sustainable use of peatlands have been designed taking in to consideration the experiences of the past projects. National experts involved in those projects are also participating in the development and implementation of this one. Some of the key lessons emerging from the past projects were that in order to secure the multiple benefits from peatlands, passive protection is insufficient and there is a need for accompanying active habitat management and conservation. The latter, in turn, requires financing that can be sustained (the main focus of Component I is on securing financial sustainability for active habitat management measures in protected areas, and Component III also promotes active habitat management through targeted measures to remove threats to insufficiently studied globally threatened species). The past projects also highlighted the need to direct conservation efforts to areas that harbor globally significant biodiversity but lie outside formal PAs and Component II of the project is designed to meet this need. Another important lesson emerging from past experience was the need to dedicate resources for regular monitoring of the biodiversity, water tables, and soil and carbon benefits of the project so that measures can be appropriately adapted, and Outcome III (Output 3.4) addresses this.</p> <p>It is these lessons that have helped national stakeholders home in on the need to specifically focus on forests and wetlands that harbor internationally important biodiversity and are important for climate and land integrity, and to make measures/ actions in these areas effective from a conservation perspective and sustainable from a financial perspective. It departs from previous projects in that the main focus is a subset of areas that harbor globally significant biodiversity that encompass peatland and non-peatland areas, as well as areas within PAs and outside.</p> <p>With respect to carbon trading, the VCS methodology on restoration of peatlands is still undergoing the international review and approval process and hence no trading is possible at the moment.</p>	
Council Members		
<p>Comments from Germany: Suggestions for improvements to</p>	<p>Despite the fact that over 85% of production forests of Belarus are certified either under the</p>	<p>Output 2.1</p>

Comment	Response	Location of changes in UNDP Prodoc
<p>be made during the drafting of the final project proposal: It is mentioned that major parts of the forests in Belarus are certified (e.g. FSC). The PIF should clarify the links to this certification approach, whether biodiversity aspects are respected in these areas and whether this can be adapted to non-certified areas.</p>	<p>Forest Stewardship Council or the European certification scheme, biodiversity values are not accounted for properly in the management of forests. One of the main reasons for the inadequate incorporation of biodiversity conservation in forest management is the lack of data on the location of habitats of rare species and habitats, and the lack of experience among forestry workers with sustainable use of forests. The project will tackle this gap by identifying habitats of rare species and habitats that need to be taken under protection on the territory of 35 forestry enterprises (with or without certification). Simultaneously, forestry workers will be trained in sustainable forest management and the protection of habitats of rare species and habitats, this creating models that can facilitate biodiversity conservation in production forests.</p>	

ANNEX C: STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION ACTIVITIES AND THE USE OF FUNDS⁹

A. Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

PPG Grant Approved at PIF: USD 120,000			
<i>Project Preparation Activities Implemented</i>	<i>GEF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)</i>		
	<i>Budgeted Amount</i>	<i>Amount Spent To date</i>	<i>Amount Committed</i>
Component A: Technical review	47,500	28,500	19,000
Component B: Institutional arrangements, monitoring and evaluation	42,000	16,076	25,924
Component C: Financial planning and co-financing investments:	20,500	13,500	7,000
Component D: Validation workshop	10,000	10,000	-
Total	120,000	68,076	51,924

ANNEX D: CALENDAR OF EXPECTED REFLOWS (if non-grant instrument is used)

Provide a calendar of expected reflows to the GEF/LDCF/SCCF Trust Funds or to your Agency (and/or revolving fund that will be set up)

NA

⁹ If at CEO Endorsement, the PPG activities have not been completed and there is a balance of unspent fund, Agencies can continue to undertake the activities up to one year of project start. No later than one year from start of project implementation, Agencies should report this table to the GEF Secretariat on the completion of PPG activities and the amount spent for the activities. Agencies should also report closing of PPG to Trustee in its Quarterly Report.