

Conservation and Sustainable Management of High-Value Arid Ecosystems in the Lower Amu Darya Basin

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10439

Countries

Tajikistan

Project Name

Conservation and Sustainable Management of High-Value Arid Ecosystems in the Lower Amu Darya Basin

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

11/13/2019

Review completed by PM

3/23/2020

Program Manager

Ulrich Apel

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

PIF

Part I – Project Information

Focal area elements

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Not fully.

- As the project works on restoration, please also select LD-1-3 (FLR) as an objective with an appropriate share of the total budget.
- Please also clarify whether the work on HCVF and its management falls under LD focal area objective LD-1-2 (SFM).
- The proposed work on Plant Micro Reserves (PMR) is not eligible under BD-1-1. It may be eligible under BD-1-4: "Sustainable use of plant and animal genetic resources". Please check the respective section of the BD focal area strategy and bring the proposed activity in line with this objective as appropriate.
- As the work on restoration and on HCVFs will generate carbon benefits, please select the appropriate Rio Marker for CC-M and also provide an estimated target for the carbon benefits in the core indicators table.

02/12/2020 UA:

Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

1. OK – done as indicated.
2. Per Output 1.2: "1.2 Dryland High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) guidelines and management plans developed, approved and operationalized in 2-3 priority forestry units covering 8,000 ha of HCVF, including 650 ha of degraded HCVF restored, incorporating biodiversity considerations and provisions for joint forest management to support sustainable livelihoods". LD priority LD-1-2 also added to Table A, with LD resources allocated evenly amongst all three LD priorities.
3. The output relating to PMRs has been reconciled with GEF Objective 1-4, namely through introduction of a dedicated line in Table A, providing justification on direct link to Objective 1-4 in Table II.1.a. The PMR work addresses one of the key pillars of GEF's work on agrobiodiversity, namely – in-situ protection of wild relatives of agriculturally important species. Adjustments made to Table A, Table II.1.a. and additions made to the description of output 2.3.
4. OK. Estimate for carbon benefits included in core indicators table. Climate mitigation 2 Rio Marker indicated in Taxonomy worksheet.

Indicative project/program description summary

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: No, the project description in Table B and throughout the text needs to be revised and re-arranged.

- Component 1: (a) Clarify which outputs are to take place within the protected areas (PA) and which will target the buffer zones, and (b) it is not evident that there will be a training component for the small farmers and users of the landscape as mentioned in the text (but not in Table B), (c) In addition, please clarify if the protected areas are legally recognized.

- Component 2: (a) This BD component corresponds with Objective 2-7 which states ‘Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species and Improve financial sustainability, effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate’ . How is the project addressing the direct drivers of degradation of the targeted protected areas and KBAs? What are the mechanisms that will be targeted to improve financial sustainability of the PAs beyond business planning? As indicated in the GEF-7 BD strategy, GEF is placing more emphasis on development and implementation of comprehensive, system-level financing solutions for PAs. use tools and revenue mechanisms that are responsive to specific country situations (e.g., conservation trust funds, systems of payments for environmental services, debt-for-nature swaps, economic valuation of protected area goods and services, access and benefit sharing agreements, etc.) and draw on accepted practices developed by GEF and others. GEF will also encourage national policy reform and incentives to engage the private sector (concessions, private reserves, etc.) and other stakeholders to improve protected area financial sustainability and management.

[https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_BiodiversityStrategy%202018_CRA_b11_0.pdf]

- As above mentioned, please also refer to the BD strategy for the work on Plant Micro Reserves. Please also clarify how will the management of the mini-reserves be enforced? Will there be a co-management arrangement set up with local CBOs or NGOs?

Component 3: (a) please consider improving knowledge at the institutional level- training of relevant personnel within the government, NGOs etc., improving the curriculum in relevant academic institutions etc., (b) the actual output does not make any reference to education and awareness in relation to biodiversity conservation and PAs.

- Please revise Table B and the PIF text in a way that it better shows which project outputs correspond to which specific core sub- indicators.

- Components 1-3 also include TA activities, please categorize accordingly, indicating both TA & Investment where appropriate.

02/12/2020 UA:

Addressed, but one clarification request remaining:

- The theory of change for the project indicates that the drivers of degradation "cannot be addressed by capacity building and awareness raising alone, but requires investments in sustainable livelihoods and/or compensation schemes". There are text references in the PIF that mention such type of investments and potential project activities. Please clarify if such activities are planned and under which outcome/output in table B they are included.

03/23/2020 UA:

Adequately addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

5. Adjustments made as per specific comments below.

6. Regarding point (a) - OK. Done in Table B, as requested.

Regarding point (b), indeed, "training" is mentioned a few times in the PIF text, but not specifically in reference to small farmers and resource users (mainly in reference to capacity on LDN/integrated land use planning, and PA management effectiveness). The exact types of trainings, and under which project components are to be fully elaborated during the PPG phase, based on targeted capacity needs assessments conducted during the PPG. The main project focus area for capacity development is under Component 3, although training activities of different types will be conducted under Components 1 and 2 as well. For the time being a reference to training of local resource users has been specifically added to Table B under Component 1. Reference to training of local resource users added to Output 1.2 and 1.3.

Regarding point (c), OK - the Table 1 in the main body of the PIF specifically indicates that the PAs within the scope of the project are national-level PAs, with their IUCN category level also indicated. The planned Plant Micro Reserves will also be legally recognized. This is implied in the text, but has been clarified. The term "legally recognized" has been added in reference to the PAs in Table B as well. The term "legally recognized" has been added in reference to PAs under Component 2 in Table B, and in the main PIF text body.

7. Component 2 addresses the direct drivers of biodiversity loss in a variety of ways, which are now further elaborated in the introductory text for Component 2.

The objective of the project is a landscape approach, using BD to secure cornerstones for ecosystem service provision and international species within the concrete geographic area. The PA estate in this area alone, however, is considered an important sub-national PA sub-system, as it covers a large area of 157,651 ha, and is 28% of the total PA estate besides Tajik National Park. Targeting subsystems of the protected areas has traditionally been in line with GEF policies. The “landscape approach” is driven by the ecological degradation problems, and protected area is just one element of the strategy. Within the context of the landscape approach, and the natural geographical and financial limits of the project, the project does not intend to pursue a separate ambitious goal of addressing the whole financial sustainability problem of the whole protected area estate. The project, nonetheless, does approach the protected areas within the landscape, through the business planning approach and very specific country tailored activities that aim at engaging communities in conservation and thus creating new sustainable financial flows – with benefits both for people, and ecosystems. By focusing this way, the project achieves, within its limitations and objective, a tangible BD benefit that is an important piece of the puzzle in the overall country’s PA estate.

Additional text clarifying how the project addresses direct drivers of biodiversity loss in and around PAs has been added to the introductory text for Component 2 in the main body of the PIF.

8. OK, done. The specific arrangements for the implementation of the PMRs will be further developed during the PPG phase, but it is anticipated that community-based monitoring measures will be established, additionally supported through education and awareness raising activities, and further combined with support from local, regional, and district level authorities. In addition, PMRs may be supported through physical infrastructure measures such as fencing, or through remote monitoring such as field cameras. Depending on the PMR sites to be established, it is also possible that co-management arrangements will be established with the authorities of existing nearby PAs, which is a standard approach in many such situations globally, where a large established PA takes on responsibility for oversight and management of a nearby smaller PA.

9. Output 3.1 previously stated: "Knowledge management, education and awareness campaign conducted targeting key decision-makers and local resources users on key issues and conservation measures for globally significant biodiversity," which seems to be already reflective of the reviewers comments.

Additional clarification added. Similar additions made in the description of Output 3.1 in the PIF text body. Output 3.1 re-stated as (additions in bold): "3.1. Knowledge management, education and awareness campaign conducted targeting **institutional-level** key decision-makers and local resources users on key issues and approaches for conservation of globally significant biodiversity **and PAs**, including strengthened capacity for LDN monitoring"

10. OK. Figures clarified, further disaggregated, and references made to GEF core sub-indicators for each outcome.

11. The PIF template only allows indication of either Inv or TA for component classification. Component 3 has been reclassified as TA. Component 3 reclassified as TA.

Agency Response (19 March 2020)

The land use plans to be designed and launched under Output 1.1 will focus on land-uses that will ensure economic income for local communities without surpassing the carrying capacity of ecosystems. Alternative generation of sustainable biomass fuel supply is also expected to result from joint forest management under Output 1.2. More secure long-term income from livestock management is targeted by Output 1.3, as communities will benefit from improved / restored pastures. Engagement of communities in reforestation and agroforestry (sustainable fruit production) is targeted by Output 1.4. Alternative fuel sources are also part of the community engagement in the management of protected areas that will be targeted under Output 2.2.

Corresponding edits have been made to Section II.1.a3 Proposed long term solution (marked in yellow color).

Co-financing

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Clarification requested.

- Please clarify whether or not the co-financing from the State Committee for Env. Protection and the Ministry of Agriculture are recurring expenses?
- Please provide the names of the sources for the CSO and Beneficiaries. If not yet confirmed, please exclude them from the table, and you may add a note below the table with the details to be confirmed during the PPG.
- Forestry Agency is mentioned as cofinancer in the footnote write up, but not listed in the Table.

02/12/2020 UA:

- The "Pilot Program for Climate Resilience" is not a name for a donor agency. Please correct.
- Please note that for the listed co-financing, the confirmation will have to be provided (at CEO endorsement) stage by the respective donor agency, which are currently: IFAD, GCF, World Bank, and GIZ, which is a rather complex mix of co-financing contributions.
- The explanations under Table C include unnecessary long and inconsistent information, which is not in line with the prompt: "Describe how any 'Investment Mobilized' was identified. Please be concise and do not include any other figures than listed in table C to be consistent.

03/23/2020 UA:

Adequately addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

12. Revisions per below specific comments.

13. OK. Done.

14. Indeed details of all co-financing partners are to be confirmed during the PPG phase, as co-financing letters are not required at the PIF stage. CSOs and beneficiares removed from Table C. Note added to text below Table C, as suggested.

15. OK. Done. Forestry Agency Added to Table C.

Agency Response (19 March 2020)

Thank you. We have revised the co-financing in line with the comments above.

GEF Resource Availability

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

The STAR allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

The focal area allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

The LDCF under the principle of equitable access

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

n/a

Agency Response

The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

n/a

Agency Response

Focal area set-aside?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

n/a

Agency Response

Impact Program Incentive?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

n/a

Agency Response

Project Preparation Grant

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Core indicators

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Not fully.

- Output 2.3 - As GEF doesn't support the establishment of micro-reserves (mini PAs) under BD-1-1, the target needs to come under 4.1. or 4.2 as appropriate. Also note that the core indicator sheet does not have a WPA ID for this PA.

- Please include targets for core indicator 6.

- Clarify and confirm the target of 558,120 ha under improved practices. Can this be a direct result of a project of that scope? Please note that hectares recorded under Indicator 1 for improved management in and of Protected Areas, cannot be counted again under Indicators 3 & 4. In relation to this, please clarify which output corresponds with the target under sub- Indicators 4.1.

- There are a few inconsistencies between the core indicator sheet and the text in terms of the targeted hectares- for pasture land the Table B mentions 70,000 ha, the core indicator sheet and text write up have 22,000 ha.

02/12/2020 UA:

Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

16. The 500 ha of PMR (project Output 2.3) has been moved, as advised under Core Worksheet Indicator 4.1. This has been reflected both in Table F (with a corresponding foot note) and the Core Indicator Worksheet in the annex.

17. OK. Done. Data on GHG added and Core indicator 6 completed.

18. OK. The figure of 558,120 was indicated as the figure of the non-PA area of the KBAs targeted within the project (out of a total landscape area of 2.4 million ha), under the assumption that the project activities will have direct benefits for the area of all the KBAs targeted. This figure has been revised to 305,350 ha, reflecting the non-PA areas covered by Outputs 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3. As with all figures, this figure will be further confirmed and detailed during the PPG phase, once the specific sites and areas to be addressed have been confirmed. Core indicator 4 total revised to 305,350.

19. These have been clarified - this was intended to refer to a total of 70,000 ha of pasture under improved management, of which 22,000 ha is starting out as degraded and which will be restored (a conservative estimate at the PIF stage, considering many sources consider >50% of Tajikistan's pastures to be degraded). In places in the

text where relevant this has been clarified to 48,000 ha of non-degraded pasture and 22,000 ha of degraded pasture. Clarifications made in text as appropriate, especially in Table B and Table F.

Project/Program taxonomy

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Part II – Project Justification

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Not fully.

The baseline scenario as described is mainly a list of existing projects. Please bring this into a concise description of the current situation and what the trajectory of natural resource management is under this scenario. What are the general lessons learned of previous initiatives and how they will be followed up? Is there a consistent trajectory of improved natural resource management in Tajikistan or is it getting worse? Are efforts being made to reform the relevant sectors, especially with regard to the enabling policy framework? It may be also helpful to mention lessons learned from previous UNDP projects in Tajikistan.

02/12/2020 UA:

Addressed. One issue remaining:

- Please remove the mentioning of "weapons" from the PIF text and note that GEF grants should not be used to arm rangers.

03/23/2020 UA:

Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

20. OK. Done. Additional descriptive text added to the baseline section.

19 March 2020: Done.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Not comprehensively.

- Information on project interventions are dispersed throughout the document under different sections including the incremental reasoning, the note on the LDN checklist, gender and private sector sections. It would be useful to include all the relevant information on the project in the alternative scenario section as well so that there clear understanding of all aspects of the project.

- Please also include a concise description of the project's theory of change in this section.

- Overall, given the barriers mentioned related to weak enforcement, weak regulatory framework, lack of capacity at the institutional level, little extension support for farmers, very little baseline data on degraded land, species, boundaries of protected areas, it would seem that the project's approach can hardly be sustainable in the long-term, if not some reform and investment in the national institutional and policy framework is done either by the project or is being worked on in parallel through other initiatives. So, in practical terms, important questions are how the project will address the described root causes / drivers: land tenure issues and unsustainable fuel wood collection?

- Implementing activities at a local scale when the enabling environment is not adequate will not help to sustain the activities (see also comments to the sustainability section). There is also no mention of support from or for other non-governmental actors to assist with filling the gap. Additionally, the challenge of deforestation for fuel wood would continue to pose a problem for the land that is being proposed for restoration in this project. What will prevent communities from deforesting the land in the future for this purpose? What viable alternatives exist for fuel?

02/12/2020 UA:

Addressed, but not fully adequate:

- The Theory of Change figure is not readable due to very low resolution and too small font that is also not readable when zoomed due to low resolution. Please either increase resolution and/or provide as separate Annex. Please also add a short paragraph that briefly summarizes the Theory of Change and explains the figure.

- What is meant by "limited BD and LD funding"? Do you mean that a certain amount of the GEF funding will be directly invested in activities on the ground?

03/23/2020 UA:

Adequately addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

21. Clarifications and additions made to alternative scenario section.

22. OK. Done. Theory of Change figure added.

23. As outlined in the baseline and national priorities sections, there are numerous other national-level initiatives being undertaken to strengthen the enabling environment and address these issues. This includes various initiatives by UNDP, and wider implementation of national strategies such as the NBSAP. This proposed project supports implementation of various aspects of the NBSAP and other national development strategies in Tajikistan, but a project of this size and scope cannot completely address all relevant issues, the project does intend to take advantage of synergies and complementarities with other relevant efforts at the national level. The project does include interventions specifically to address unsustainable fuelwood collection, and this will be further elaborated during the PPG phase, based on more detailed baseline studies to be conducted in the specific high priority and strategically targeted project intervention areas. Note added to description of Component 1 indicating that the project will further elaborate the approach to the issue of unsustainable fuelwood harvesting during the PPG phase.

24. See note above. In the Partnership and Private Sector engagement sections of the PIF there is some discussion about how the project will work with other organizations including non-governmental actors, such as Jamoat Resource Centers, to assist in filling the gap. Additional details will be elaborated during the PPG phase. Additional text highlighting the fuelwood issue added to the description of Component 2.

19 March 2020.

A separate TOC annex was created, and a one paragraph was added to the main text in PIF to explain / summarize it.

On the “limited funding”, it turns out to be a misnomer. We meant “available funding”. A correction was made

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Not fully.

As above mentioned, some project activities need to be better aligned with the respective focal area objectives (BD-1-4, LD-1-2, LD-1-3).

02/12/2020 UA:

Addressed, but not adequately. The description of the alignment with the GEF focal area strategies is using too much space and too detailed and incorrectly refers to focal area results frameworks and core indicators, which do not exist in the form as described in the tables. Please briefly and concisely describe how the project interventions align with (a) the BD focal area, (b) the LD focal area and (c) the Drylands Impact Program. The focus of this description are the projects contributions to the GEF strategy and not a description of the GEF strategy itself.

03/23/2020 UA:

Adequately addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

25. OK. Done. Additional LD strategic priorities added to the table. Other corresponding changes made throughout as appropriate.

19 March 2020

The corresponding section has been revised accordingly.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Not fully.

While described largely in line with the guidelines, there is some inconsistencies in the numbers (refer to comments above) and some parts of the description may need to be revised as a result of revisions in other parts of the PIF in response to GEFSEC comments.

02/12/2020 UA.

Addressed. (There is however an incomplete sentence added in the yellow highlights).

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

26. Done.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Clarification requested

Please refer to comments on core indicators above.

02/12/2020 UA:

Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

27. OK. Done. Addressed through earlier comments. Per the preliminary analysis and consultations during the PPG phase, the contributions to the GEBs are assessed by national stakeholders as being reasonable and achievable. Revision to the calculation methodology regarding the overall number of landscape hectares was made in response to previous comments, and has been reflected in the "Benefits" column of the table in section II.1a.5 of the PIF.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Not fully.

The potential for innovation, sustainability, and scaling up has been described. The section on sustainability, in addition, needs to discuss the enabling legal and regulatory framework, depending on the project's activities and/or how external work on the enabling framework will influence it vis-a-vis sustainability.

02/12/2020 UA:

Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

28. OK. Additional text added to the sustainability section regarding the recent development for forest and pasture management laws.

Project/Program Map and Coordinates

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Stakeholders

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Not fully.

In the context of the proposed work on Plant Micro Reserves, gender aspects should be taken into particular consideration as this activity has special relevance for women, who often depend on agricultural biodiversity for their livelihoods through its contribution to food security and nutrition, medicines, fodder, building materials and other provisioning services as well through support for ecosystem function. Women's participation will be particularly critical, given the primary role that women play in agrobiodiversity management. Please include these considerations as appropriate in the gender section.

02/12/2020 UA:

Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

29. Through the PMR activity, the project focuses on one of the key pillars of agrobiodiversity program of GEF, which is in-situ protection of wild relatives of agricultural species. The project will be working to improve the conservation of rare and endangered plants in the region, some of which do have medicinal qualities, and others of which are crop wild relatives, and are occasionally harvested from the wild, and indeed women play a role in sustainable harvesting . A sentence highlighting the involvement of women in this activity has been added to the section on gender equality and women's empowerment. Sentence specifically relating to PMR activity added to gender section. A detailed gender action plan will be designed at the PPG stage.

Private Sector Engagement

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Risks

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Not fully

The risk section is very detailed and does not only cover major risks but also minor risks and technical barriers (e.g. lack of high resolution maps) that do not pose a risk. Please shorten the section by focusing on the potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved or may be resulting from project/program implementation.

Please assess the risk of the insecure land tenure situation, which has been done partly under the discussion of "claiming rights" but might need to be expanded in scope to the legal and regulatory framework for natural resource management.

02/12/2020 UA:

Addressed, but clarification request remaining:

- The climate change risk has been assessed as "Impact: negligible" and "risk: low". That is a questionable assessment in view of Tajikistan being one of most vulnerable countries to climate change in the world. Please clarify how this assessment has been derived at (what is "SESP"?).

04/06/2020 UA:

The climate risk has been Adequately addressed.

However, please clarify if, at this stage, the completed UNDP Social and Environmental Screening (SESP) Checklist can be provided as an attachment. If not, please indicate more clearly the preliminary overall risk classification of the project as well as the types and risk classification of any identified risks and impacts including any preliminary measures to address identified risks and potential impacts.

04/07/2020 UA:

Addressed. The SESP report has been submitted as a separate Annex and filed in the portal document section.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

30. The risks table has been shorted to focus on key risks. A detailed risks table in line with UNDP SESP procedures will be presented in the full project document.

The potential project risks will be updated and revised at the PPG phase, along with an update and revision to the SESP.

With respect to land tenure: The land tenure situation in Tajikistan is not insecure per se - there are well established procedures and norms that set forth land tenure arrangements for resource users. Although the land is not privately owned, resource users do have "secure" tenure rights per the established lease arrangements, typically for up to 20 years. In previous UNDP-GEF projects in Tajikistan there has not been an issue in achieving planned project outcomes due to land tenure insecurity. For example, GEF project ID 3129, "Sustaining agricultural biodiversity in the face of climate change in Tajikistan" was rated "highly satisfactory" by the project's terminal evaluation, and did not have any issues with land tenure aspects.

Risk related to high resolution maps removed (low risk). Risk related to government stakeholders and rights holders removed (low risk). Risk related to project activities within sensitive habitats removed (low risk). Risk related to replanting native tree species removed (low risk).

19 March 2020:

The risk rating has been corrected accordingly. Mentioning of SESP – Social and Environmental Screening protocol, a standard safeguard tool of UNDP, has been removed for now.

07April2020:

We are submitting a separate annex (SESP) for information. The SESP indicates the overall risk category and provides further details as seen at the PIF stage. The SESP will be reviewed and revised at PPG following indepth project preparation

Coordination

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Not fully. Please revise language.

- The section does not clearly state who is the executing agency for the project.
- The first paragraph that states that "This project will be implemented within the context of the UN programming frameworks driven by the Government, [...]" can be misleading as obviously, the project must be implemented fully in line with GEF policies and guidelines, which is the overriding principle.
- Details provided on the Senior Supplier Role and the Project Assurance may also create the misunderstanding if it is not clearly stated that all those described roles and functions fall under the responsibilities of the Implementing Agency as part of their implementation functions as per GEF policy and guidelines and are not meant to be executing support that will incur charges to the project beyond the agency fees.
- As the agency is well aware, the implementation and execution roles on GEF projects are meant to be separate as per GEF policy and guidelines. The GEFSEC will analyze any requests for dual role playing by an agency at the time of CEO endorsement and only approve those cases that it deems warranted on an "exceptional" basis, based on country requests. We strongly encourage the project proponents to also look at third party options. We also strongly encourage the agency to discuss any and all options for project execution that do not include the government with the GEFSEC early in the PPG phase. The technical clearance of this PIF in no way endorses or encourages any alternative execution arrangement.

02/12/2020 UA:

Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

31. OK. Done. Sentence added to this section clearly stating the national body that will serve as the executive agency.

32. Implementation of any project managed by UNDP must be in line with UN country framework agreed between UNDP and the Government. The highlighted sentence is stating this as otherwise UNDP's legal role / presence in the country, with this project, is not defined. The sentence, therefore, can not be removed from the PIF. At the request of the GEF reviewer, a phrase has been added that the project "will be implemented fully in line with GEF policies and Guidelines." Edits and revisions made to Institutional arrangements section.

33. The detailed description of the Senior Supplier Role and Project Assurance is a standard text which serves as a legal basis for UNDP's involvement in any project. It has been standard in all GEF submissions and cannot be changed as otherwise UNDP's legal basis for involvement is not defined. We have added a note, however, to clarify, as requested by the GEF reviewer that "any role in the project undertaken by UNDP is in line with UNDP's status as GEF implementing agency. No UNDP project functions mentioned herewith are going to lead to creation of "execution support" or any charges beyond the UNDP IA GEF role." Edits and revisions made to Institutional arrangements section.

34. The proposed project's execution role is planned to be undertaken by the Government of Tajikistan as indicated throughout the PIF, with the Executing Agency role being undertaken by the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Center, which has played the same role in multiple previous UNDP-GEF projects. UNDP is fully cognizant of these GEF guidelines and policy. The general principle and reference to GEF policy, mentioned in the comment is noted. No additional specific revisions.

Consistency with National Priorities

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Not fully.

While the PIF elaborates on how the project has been designed in line with the LDN checklist, it still lacks details whether and how it will help the country to meet its voluntary LDN targets.

02/12/2020 UA:

Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

28Jan2020

35. It is the team's understanding that Tajikistan is currently engaged in a process with FAO to eventually develop a national LDN target, and it is expected that this process will be completed before the currently proposed project begins implementation. This will be further assessed and analyzed during the PPG phase, and if the national LDN target-setting process is completed during the PPG phase the full project document proposal will specifically outline the project's contribution to the agreed national LDN target. Paragraph added to section 7. on consistency with national priorities discussing national LDN target, and project's potential contribution to the target.

Knowledge Management

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Part III – Country Endorsements

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: Yes.

LoE provided, signed by OFP, Mr. Gulmahmadzoda.

Cleared

Agency Response

Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

n/a

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

11/27/2019 UA: No.

Please address comments made in this review.

02/12/2020 UA: No.

Please address outstanding clarification requests.

04/06/2020 UA:

Please address additional comment on risk.

04/07/2020 UA:

All comments addressed. Program Manager recommends the PIF for CEO clearance.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

As a reminder, at CEO Endorsement, we expect the co-financing to cover a portion of the actual PMC financing including project staff etc. Please also review the GEF Program and Policy guidelines for details on eligible expenses.

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		

	PIF Review	Agency Response
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		

PIF Recommendation to CEO

Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval

The UNDP/GEF project GEF ID 10439 “Conservation and Sustainable Management of High-Value Arid Ecosystems in the Lower Amu Darya Basin” has the objective to secure high value arid ecosystem biodiversity and associated ecosystem services, while ensuring resilient and sustainable livelihoods in Tajikistan’s lower Amu Darya landscape. The project applies an approach of government resource managers and local communities jointly planning and implementing integrated natural resource use practices that are biodiversity friendly and support healthy soil and vegetation. The project aims to address the poverty-environment nexus in all aspects of the project, including catalyzing community economic benefits from sustainable pasture and forest management by investing directly into schemes that support long-term resilience of ecosystems. At least 7 protected areas covering more than 150,000 ha in the targeted landscape area will be targeted and 300,000 ha of productions landscapes brought under sustainable management. The project will also restore 22,650 ha of forest and pastures and directly benefit 20,000 project participants.