Examples of projects with an approved PIF illustrating 6 aspects of strong project rationale and description

[This is a collection of references to project PIF prepared in order to illustrate the types of information and detail that contribute to a strong project rationale and description based on examples from approved GEF TF and LDCF/SCCF projects. Some of these projects are under implementation while others are still at project preparation phase. These examples should NOT be used as a template for other projects, nor are they necessarily fully internally consistent or reflective of the full diversity of project types and thematic areas of programming.]

Land Degradation Focal Area projects

GEF TF - LD FA - GEF ID 10694 - The Bahamas – *Integrated Landscape Management for Addressing Land Degradation, Food Security and Climate Resilience Challenges in The Bahamas*

Project Details - https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10694
Featured in - https://www.gefieo.org/sites/default/files/documents/evaluations/sfm-2020-vol1.pdf

Aspects of PIF rationale and description illustrated:

1. Define the problem and resulting objectives
3. Empower your stakeholders
4. Provide a theory of change, justify the project components
6. Monitor and learn, manage the knowledge

Sections of the PIF with exemplary information:

- Project Justification – problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed
- Project Justification – alternative scenario
- Project Justification – knowledge management
- Theory of Change (annex E)

Explanation:

The project aims to enhance climate-resilient food production across productive agricultural landscapes through sound Integrated Landscape Management and Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) approaches in The Bahamas. It includes (i) a strengthening of the enabling environment for the achievement of land degradation neutrality through improved policy and governance, (ii) a demonstration of regenerative agriculture and resilient food production systems, practices and technologies, (iii) interventions to incentivize uptake and replication of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and climate resilient agriculture, and (iv) an enhancement of monitoring and knowledge management systems for LDN assessment and agricultural production system resilience.

The PIF is strong in defining the objectives, which are consistently linked to the stated problems (key aspect #1). In identifying the causes of land degradation, the project rationale clearly identifies interlinkages between land degradation, food security and healthy ecosystems. The project components are the result of a causal pathway captured in a theory of change that distinctly articulates how impacts are reached (key aspect #4). Finally, the project description and rationale are convincing regarding the inclusion of stakeholders as agents of change (key aspect #3), particularly academic institutions concerning knowledge management and sharing activities (key aspect #6).

GEF TF - LD FA - GEFID 10863 - Cabo Verde – *Towards Land Degradation Neutrality for Improved Equity, Sustainability, and Resilience*

Project Details - https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10863
LDN methodology - https://www.stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/guidelines-land-degradation-neutrality

Aspects of PIF rationale and description illustrated:

1. Define the problem and resulting objectives
2. Plan for the future, choose a resilient response
4. Provide a theory of change, justify the project components
5. Innovate, scale and transform

Sections of the PIF with exemplary information:

- Project Justification – problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed
- Project Justification – baseline scenario
- Project Justification – alternative scenario
- Project Justification – Global Environment Benefits (see both PIF and CEO ER for reference on level of detail and integration with TOC)
- Project Justification – Innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up

Explanation:

The objective of this Land Degradation focal area project is to enhance climate-resilient food production and nutrition in productive landscapes through nature-based solutions in support of Cabo Verde's voluntary Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets. It includes activities to (i) strengthen the enabling environment to achieve LDN in Cabo Verde, (ii) demonstrate the LDN approach and scale out Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices in target landscapes, (iii) generate land degradation data and information and share lessons learned.

The project description and rationale feature a strong consistency of interventions (aspect #4) enabled, among others, by mainstreaming SLM aspects in planning instruments. It also includes important co-benefits in terms of food security, nutrition, livelihoods, equity, and resilience including to climate change impacts (aspect #2). It also includes a clear use of the LDN methodology and decision hierarchy system (aspect #4 and #5) informed by good baseline studies (aspect #1) and including behavioral insights. This hierarchy of responses is directly used as an input in the GEB calculation across core indicators, with a clear causal chain and justification of assumptions, thereby confirming the cost-effectiveness of the project (aspect #4) and its ability to reach durable impact (aspect #2) at scale (aspect #5).

Multi-Focal Area projects

GEF TF - LD/BD MFA - GEFID 10192 - Zambia – *Ecosystem Conservation and Community Livelihood Enhancement in North Western Zambia*

Project Details - https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10192
Featured in - https://www.thegef.org/newsroom/feature-stories/forests-fall-zambians-race-find-alternatives-logging

Aspects of PIF rationale and description illustrated:

1. Define the problem and resulting objectives
2. Plan for the future, choose a resilient response
4. Provide a theory of change, justify the project components
6. Monitor and learn, manage the knowledge

Sections of the PIF with exemplary information:

- Project Justification – problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed
- Project Justification – baseline scenario
- Project Justification – alternative scenario
- Project Justification – monitoring and evaluation

Explanation:

This multi-focal area project aims to strengthen community-based sustainable management of forest landscapes, and provide improved livelihood opportunities for targeted forest-dependent rural communities in Zambia's North West Province. It includes (i) the development of enabling regulatory and planning frameworks for community-based, sustainable forest management, (ii) the promotion of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in community-managed forests and (iii) the enhancement of sustainability and productivity of agricultural practices on the lands zoned for agriculture adjacent to community managed forests.

This project is a good example of a theory of change that irrigates the whole logical flow of the PIF, by ensuring a connection between each component and identified barriers (aspect #4). This is made possible by a good identification and formulation of barriers (aspect #1) in particular by assessing the drivers of forest degradation and deforestation and clearly articulate the causes of biodiversity loss with the causes of unstainable agriculture and land management. Furthermore, the project includes a limited number of well thought out components with targeted outcomes and outputs (aspect #4). It also shows a good use of tools to set up the baseline, through livelihoods surveys, participating land-use planning systems (aspect #1, also relevant for aspect #2 and #6). Finally, climate risks are embedded in the project design, with mitigation measures in all 3 components (aspect #2).

GEF TF - LD/BD MFA - GEF ID 10850 – *Integrated land management, restoration of degraded landscapes and natural capital assessment in the mountains of Papua New Guinea*

Project Details - https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10580

Aspects of PIF rationale and description illustrated:

2. Plan for the future, choose a resilient response
4. Provide a theory of change, justify the project components

Sections of the PIF with exemplary information:

- Project justification – theory of change (CEO ER document)
- Project justification – risks

Explanation:

The project's objective is to achieve biodiversity conservation and land degradation neutrality in the Southern Highlands and Hela Provinces of Papua New Guinea through integrated landscape management and natural capital assessment. It includes interventions on (i) the enabling environment to support the flow of ecosystem goods and services and achieve land degradation neutrality (LDN), (ii) natural capital valuation and implementation of sustainable land and forest management (SLM/SFM) practices in mountain landscapes, (ii) knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation, awareness raising and training.

The project description in this PIF includes a plan to consider different scenarios of irregular and increased rainfalls to tackle climate risks and hazards, by tailoring SLM practices to minimize adverse impacts on project deliverables (key aspect #2). At CEO ER stage, the project is restructured around a convincing theory of change (key aspect #4) with three different causal pathways centered on SLM/SFM, integrated landscape management, and climate adaptation, to ultimately achieve LDN.

Biodiversity Focal Area projects

GEF TF - BD FA - GEFID 10906 - Viet Nam – *Mainstreaming Marine and Coastal Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting into Viet Nam's Development Planning for Blue Economic Growth of Key Sectors* Project Details - https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10906
Key aspects of project rationale and description: 1. Define the problem and resulting objectives; 5. Innovate, scale and transform
Sections of the PIF with exemplary information: - Project Justification – problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed - Project Justification – baseline scenario - Project Justification – Global Environment Benefits
Explanation: The project objective is that natural capital values and protection of coastal and marine ecosystems are integrated in development planning and that landscape management is improved as part of the national blue economic growth policy in Viet Nam. It focuses on (i) setting up the national institutional system, data and monitoring for application of natural capital accounting (NCA), (ii) Integration of marine and coastal natural capital accounting into provincial and local development planning and operations, (iii) outreach and knowledge management for national uptake. The PIF project rationale builds on a strong baseline to define the objective (aspect #1), with a focus on institutional and methodological barriers at national level and on an assessment of drivers in the Quang Ninh Province, which hosts globally significant biodiversity, several protected areas and the emblematic Ha Long bay. The GEB targeted are informed by this baseline and confirm the relevance of the project (aspect #1, also relevant for aspect #4). Innovation (aspect #5) is at the heart of the project description, which outlines how transformation will be achieved by introducing and implementing state-of-the-art NCA to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services into blue economy policies and sectors.

Climate Change Adaptation projects (supported by LDCF and SCCF)

LDCF - GEF ID 10746 - Solomon Islands – *Strengthening Resilience of Water Supply in Honiara*

Project details: https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10746

Key aspects of project rationale and description:

1. Define the problem and resulting objectives

Sections of the PIF with exemplary information:

- Table B Indicative Project description summary
- Project description
- Proposed alternative scenario
- Supporting document: 'Environmental Assessment and Review Framework' includes an analysis of climate change and how it affects water supply in Honiara

Explanation:

This project focuses on water supply to the capital city of the Solomon Islands and is a part of the regional LDCF GEF-7 program on 'Climate Resilient Urban Development in the Pacific' (it is therefore a CEO ER to be read in conjunction with the Program PFD). Honiara's water distribution system provides drinking water to approximately 60% of its households, and current capacity is only enough to serve average daily demands until around 2027. While analyzing how to address the critical water supply needs of the population, the project included consideration of climate change impacts, to arrive at solutions that mainstream climate resilience and therefore offer greater relevance and sustainability.

The climate risk assessment conducted for Honiara's water supply revealed severe risks. A growing flooding problem, a result of both cyclones and excessively heavy wet season rainfall, is threatening the city's water supply. Extreme precipitation and flooding events cause high turbidity, leading to water supply interruptions, as turbidity has safety/health implications. According to climate change assessments undertaken, turbidity issues and associated disruptions will be increasingly severe over coming years. Extreme precipitation and flood events also directly or indirectly (through erosion) physically undermine water supply infrastructure (e.g., trunk mains, distribution pipes).

A foundational feature of this project is its analysis of climate change risks in conjunction with existing water supply stresses to arrive at appropriate engineering solutions to mitigate the impacts of increased erosion and sediment transport during heavy rainfall events, as well as strengthening capacity for informed decision-making and planning, including through community empowerment (key aspect #1). It will also support interagency and inter-sectoral coordination and governance mechanisms for integrated, climate-responsive catchment management plans, such as a sustainable nature-based mechanism to protect the catchment areas that are vital to Honiara's climate resilience and current and future water supply. This mechanism will address turbidity at source, and if scaled up, would also be an important component of Honiara's flood control and disaster management strategy to protect infrastructure for decades to come.

LDCF - GEF ID 10908 - Madagascar – *Building adaptation and resilience to climate change in the essential oil sector (ARCHE)*

Project Details - https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10908

Key aspects of project rationale and description:

1. Define the problem and resulting objectives
3. Empower your stakeholders
4. Provide a theory of change, justify the project components

Sections of the PIF with exemplary information:

- Stakeholders
- Gender
- Project description (particularly paragraphs 9-22)
- Alternative scenario (paragraphs 36-70)

Explanation:

The project will reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to climate change of the essential oils value chain in Madagascar through innovation, as well as transfer and large-scale deployment of adaptation-oriented technologies and services. This will be achieved by (i) creating a broadly owned national strategy that integrates climate adaptation and resilience into the essential oils value chain, with policy recommendations and training to achieve it; (ii) providing incubation and acceleration technical assistance and finance for incubation and acceleration of essential oil MSMEs and projects; and (iii) articulating and sharing learning among relevant actors nationally and internationally. Innovative aspects of this project include the creation of the first essential oil sustainability strategy for the country; as well as acceleration of adaptation oriented MSMEs with proven and high impact new technologies and solutions along the full value chain. With $1.78 million of GEF finance from the LDCF, the project is anticipated to directly benefit 34,005 people (50% female), manage 3,600 hectares for climate resilience, train 6,000 people (50% female), and catalyze $5.47 million in co-finance from 11 difference sources, of which 5 are from the private sector.

In paragraphs 17 to 36, the project is directly designed to address climate risks and vulnerabilities of the essential oils supply chain in Madagascar. Data on current and anticipated climate hazards and their impacts is provided for a range of RCP scenarios related to temperature, precipitation, sea level rise, cyclones, and floods. Historical data is also provided for the climate hazards of temperature and precipitation change (key aspect #1). The project clearly describes how its outputs will address the climate hazards and their impacts (key aspect #4), including drawing on proactive stakeholder engagement, as described in paragraphs 53 to 71. Engagement in project execution is laid out in detail in the section on stakeholders, involving several Ministries and other government actors, the association of Essential Oils Exporters, Extracts and Oleoresins, Regional Environment and Sustainable Development Directorates, the Economic Development Board of Madagascar, insurance companies, national banks to enable financial inclusion, and others (key aspect #3). Furthermore, given the fundamental role of women in the essential oils industry and their vulnerabilities to climate impacts, gender considerations are central to the project, well described in the gender section, and integrated in the outputs. Financial sustainability is advanced in partnership with microlending institutions to help climate vulnerable small-scale productions and small enterprises int eh essential oils sector get access to capital to transition to climate resilience practices.

LDCF - GEF ID 10997 - Comoros – *Strengthening the Resilience of Climate-Smart Agricultural Systems and Value Chains*

Project details - https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10997

Key aspects of project rationale and description:

1. Define the problem and resulting objectives
2. Plan for the future, choose a resilient response
4. Provide a theory of change, justify the project components

Sections of the PIF with exemplary information:

- Project description, section on 'Projections for the Comoros climate variables based on future RCP climate scenarios'
- Supporting document: Climate Risk Assessment
- Proposed alternative scenario (theory of change section)

Explanation:

This project focuses on agricultural value chain resilience in an African LDC SIDS. An aspect that is especially well-presented in this project is the use of multiple plausible climate futures are included in the future climate scenarios presented in the PIF (Key aspect #1). This speaks to the range of conditions in which proposed interventions will have to operate and will help inform the selection of interventions that work across as wide a range of conditions as possible (key aspect #2). Variables considered include mean, maximum and minimum temperature, precipitation, and sea level rise.

A solid theory of change is presented with clear articulation of well-researched barriers (key aspect #4). A figure is provided along with a detailed description. There is a clear linkage across climate change impacts, the project's development objective, barriers, project components, outcomes and project impacts.

LDCF/SCCF - GEF ID 10927 - Regional – *Acceleration of financial technology-enabled climate resilience solutions*

Project Details - https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10927

Key aspects of project rationale and description:

4. Provide a theory of change, justify the project components
5. Innovate, scale and transform
6. Monitor and learn, manage the knowledge

Sections of the PIF with exemplary information:

- Innovation, sustainability, and potential for scale-up (paragraphs: 155 to 160)

Explanation:

This medium sized project will accelerate financial technology-enabled climate resilience solutions across target markets in Africa. Together with the 50+ organizations participating, BFA Global will launch an ecosystem for innovation to explore opportunities and solutions at the intersection of modern finance and climate action, centered on vulnerable communities in emerging markets. The project will accelerate startups to refine their products and scale them, building on a learn-by-doing approach developed by the Catalyst Fund. This will be achieved through a set of activities, including conducting a data rich analysis of fintech startups enhancing climate resilience; accelerating startups; developing investment thesis briefs; building talent pipelines; and sharing learning and insight. With $1.0 million in LDCF and SCCF finance, this project will catalyze $8.8 million in co-finance from different sources.

An innovative aspect of this project is that it will develop introduce climate change adaptation and resilience as an opportunity for the fintech ecosystem by accelerating solutions that enable vulnerable communities to grow economically (key aspect #5). This project is innovative in attracting one of the most dynamic and technologically advanced sectors in Africa (fintech) to find in climate change resilience a joint opportunity for inclusion and business. There are currently no programs solely focused on the intersection between fintech and climate change resilience and adaptation (key aspect #5). As shown in the Theory of Change figure, this project is designed to support local entrepreneurs and their surrounding ecosystem such that they can meaningfully contribute to greater resilience to the impacts of climate change among vulnerable populations (key aspect #4). The project not only provides needed deep, tailored support to startups building solutions for vulnerable communities to adapt to the effects of climate change, but also engages various ecosystem actors like investors, corporates, talent pools to strengthen the ecosystem for fintech and climate resilience. The program has a built-in learning agenda to extract and disseminate learnings and insights from the work done especially from supporting high potential startups in the space (key aspect #6). The learning agenda ensures that the wider industry can grow alongside the program. Additionally, through co-financing, startups receive patient capital to help them continue to grow beyond the program's support.

LDCF - GEF ID 10727- Nepal – *Managing Watersheds for Enhanced Resilience of Communities to Climate Change (MaWRiN)*

Project Details - https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10727

Key aspects of project rationale and description:

1. Define the problem and resulting objectives
3. Empower your stakeholders
6. Monitor and learn, manage the knowledge

Sections of the PIF with exemplary information:

- Project Justification – project description
- Project Justification – alternative scenario
- Project Justification – knowledge management

Explanation:

The project will support the development of information and knowledge products related to CCA including information on the different impacts of climate change across gender, age, and social groups. The project will consider communities as generators of knowledge and promote peer-to-peer and lateral knowledge-sharing. In this respect, it will support the assessment, documentation and dissemination of Indigenous knowledge for CCA, and promote its integration in adaptation solutions for agriculture, livestock management, water management, and community/ leasehold forest management. The project will have a monitoring and evaluation system in place to keep track of project progress against project results including GESI indicators, ESS indicators, identify constraints and challenges to project progress, and provide information for adaptive management.

Currently, issues of watershed and climate change adaptation are dealt in isolation. Although, river basin offices have been established and currently preparing and, in some level, implementing basin management plan, the plan focuses on costly hard technologies and fails to adequately integrate climate change. This project thus aims to adopt an integrated approach by addressing the threats caused by climate change in the watershed while also implementing other prioritized watershed management activities. Therefore, the activities designed are a combination of conventional conservation of forest, freshwater and agricultural lands as well as application of NbS identified under uncertain climate change scenarios, adapted to the local conditions in each community of the Marin watershed (key aspect #1). Marin watershed is one of the regions having highly vulnerable communities to climate change risks and impacts which is largely populated by the indigenous people (around 90% of the people in the area) living on subsistence farming. Given this backdrop, knowledge management is of particular importance for this project. Approaches described in the project document such as consideration on communities as generators of knowledge (key aspect #3) and the promotion of peer-to-peer and lateral knowledge-sharing as well as assessment and dissemination of Indigenous knowledge for CCA, and promoting its integration in adaptation solutions are very good elements that will likely lead to the desirable outcomes (key aspect #6). Monitoring and evaluation system not only to keep track of project progress against project results, but also to identify constraints and challenges to provide information for adaptive management is also an excellent element (key aspect #6).