Umbrella Programme for Preparation of National Communications (NCs) and Biennial Update Reports (BURs) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

### Basic Information

**GEF ID**
10167

**Countries**
Global (Burundi, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Benin, Dominica, Vietnam, Yemen, Pakistan, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Suriname, Uganda, Fiji, Gambia, Mauritania)

**Project Title**
Umbrella Programme for Preparation of National Communications (NCs) and Biennial Update Reports (BURs) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

**GEF Agency(ies)**
UNEP

**Agency ID**
UNEP: 01698

**GEF Focal Area(s)**
Climate Change

**Program Manager**
Milena Vasquez
Non- Expedited Enabling Activity req (PIF)

Part 1: Project Information

Focal area elements

Is the enabling activity aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements in Table A, as defined by the GEF 7 Programming Directions?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion
Yes, this enabling activity is aligned with the GEF-7 climate change focal area strategy.

Agency Response

Project description summary

Are the components in Table B and as described in the PIF sound, appropriate, and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objectives?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Yes, the components in Table B are sound and appropriate to achieve the objectives.

Agency Response
Co-financing

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

Expected cofinancing of $960,000 is listed as in-kind from national governments and UN Environment. Please mark the Investment Mobilized column as recurrent expenditure.

Comment cleared.

Agency Response

Done. Recurrent expenditure included.

GEF Resource Availability

Is the proposed GEF financing in Table D (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes, however, we expect the PMC that will provide enhanced execution support to project management activities to be utilized only as indicated and to support only those LDCs and SIDS that would require it, aligned with our policies and guidelines.

Comment cleared.
Agency Response

Noted. The enhanced execution support proposed responds to the need we have noted from our experience supporting all LDCs and SIDs, and will be utilized only as indicated in the proposal.

Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):

The STAR allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A

Agency Response

The focal area allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A

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 Yes, there are enough resources in the climate change focal area set aside to support this project.

Agency Response

Is the financing presented adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Yes, the project aims to utilize up to $500,000 and up to $352,000 per National Communication and Biennial Update Report, respectively per report, per COP guidelines plus a small amount of PMC for enhanced execution support. However, given the diversity of countries involved and associated capacities, and based on previous comments by Council, please provide addition information on how these amounts are utilized by countries as well as information on how the project will report updated information during implementation and completion on the utilization of resources per country and to what extent activities were co-financed or supported by other sources.

Comment cleared.
Agency Response

Information on how these amounts are utilized by countries: This information will be available after the preparation of the Project Implementation Plans, under component 1, and therefore after CEO endorsement. This is result of the fact that PPG resources are not available for EAs which means that detailed planning can only take place after the umbrella is approved.

The allocation of funds/components of NCs and BURs will be guided by the UNFCCC guidelines for NCs and BUR preparation and the GEF Policy documents. The PIPs will outline how the requested amounts of $352,000 for BUR; $500,000 for NC and $852,000 for NC&BUR will be utilised over the project implementation period. Progress on project implementation (component 2) will be monitored by UN Environment according to the project indicators and the agreed work programme.

Reporting updated information during implementation and closure:

Additional information on the reporting requirements for the EAs has been included in Section E. The Budgeted M & E Plan. Information obtained from each country project, shall be consolidated and reported annually to the GEF, as well as during the mid-term review and terminal evaluation of the umbrella programme. The analysis will show the amount of utilized funds against the approved total GEF funds, as well as the amount of realized co-financing, and any other additional sources of co-funding received by countries.

Part 2: Enabling Activity Justification

Background and Context.

Are the achievements of previously implemented enabling activities cited since the country(ies) became a party to the Convention?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion
Please provide additional information on the selection of the countries (how do countries choose whether to join an umbrella program or submit an individual proposal, why UN Environment is the choice for these countries, what may or may not change for those countries going from individual to umbrella programs, how it builds on previous EA projects, why this group of countries make sense together due to timing, etc.) in anticipation of similar questions these projects have received from Council before.

Information on whether or not the countries listed have submitted the previous national communications and/or BURs is listed; however, there is no information on the expected submission dates for the ones that have not yet been submitted, which would have to be on the UNFCCC website in order to get endorsed and this would have to happen within 18 months from approval in order to avoid project cancellation. This includes:

NC1: South Sudan
NC2: Afghanistan, Pakistan
NC3: Benin, Burundi, Dominica, Fiji, Gambia, Sao Tome & Principe
NC4: Mauritania
BUR1: Afghanistan, Benin, Uganda

Comments cleared.

**Agency Response**

**Selection of countries:**

The eighteen countries have expressed their interest to join the umbrella programme, as indicated in their letters of endorsement because:

- they have benefitted from UN Environment support under previous NC/BUR umbrella programmes
- most countries in the umbrella have nearly the same timelines for submission of their current NCs/BURs
- they have expressed their readiness to initiate the implementation of the subsequent NCs/BURs early next year.
- Each country will get the opportunity to outline their priority needs and design their country-specific implementation strategy, under Component 1, that will inform the approach they adopt during NC/BUR preparation

**Why UN Environment is the choice for these countries:**
The UN Environment has more than twenty years of experience in supporting countries to meet their reporting requirements under the UNFCCC. Over this time, the UN Environment has noted that these reports have not only assisted countries to meet their reporting requirements under the UNFCCC but more importantly have helped them to (i) establish subcommittees and sectoral working groups responsible for specific chapters of national reports as well as (ii) link scientific assessments of climate change to national policies aimed at contributing to reducing GHG emissions and promoting adequate adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change whilst ensuring sustainable development of their national economies.

The UN Environment delegates the following responsibilities to EAs (i) establishing a Project Management Unit within their respective Ministries; (ii) engaging services of national experts and research institutions in line with their national procurement processes; (iii) managing and reporting on use of GEF resources to IAs etc. This has supported the Ministries (EAs) to move away from a one-person led project modality to creating climate change units within Ministries. EAs have expressed their satisfaction with this approach since it gives them the opportunity to conform the NC/BUR project implementation processes (hiring staff, organizing workshops, contracting services etc) to their established national procedures. The UN Environment will continue, through this programme, to support the establishment of climate change units and training project staff and experts on administrative and/or technical aspects of the project, to create sustainable institutional organizations that support the enhanced reporting requirement under the Convention and the Paris Agreement.

UN Environment’s comparative advantage and EAs responsibilities included in the section C. The Enabling Activity and Institutional Framework for Project Implementation

what may or may not change for those countries going from individual to umbrella programs,

Not many changes. It would not be a lot of time saved by the countries to go for individual projects because we have a small team and the volume of submissions will increase, resulting in consequent delays. The PPGs are not available for the EA projects, which could be the way countries would provide additional information on the use the GEF allocation at CEO endorsement.

how it builds on previous EA projects,

Considering that most of these countries have prepared their Initial and Second National Communications, country teams will be encouraged use the teams/structures established in previous projects to continue strengthening the existing information/data base and human/institutional capacities. Teams will also be encouraged to make use of the methodologies recommended by the UNFCCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Conference of Parties (COP) and the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE) in preparation of these reports.

This information included in the Section A. on Enabling Activities Background and Context

Information on the expected submission dates: The eleven (11) countries that are still preparing their NCs and BURs are expected to have completed and submitted their report to the UNFCCC by September 2019 as shown under Section A. Enabling Activity Background and Context to avoid project cancellation.
Goals, Objectives, and Activities.

Is the project framework sufficiently described?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Please address the following comments:

- The project duration seems too long. Please consider bringing it down to 5 years, which should allow sufficient time for project completion considering a 4-year NC timeline.

- The expected submission dates for the reports are too late. Please consider meeting a two-year and four-year timelines for these reports per COP guidelines. This would mean the NC should be expected to be submitted by December 2024 and BURs by December 2022.

- Please consider cutting the time allowed to prepare BUR PIPs considering their more accelerated timelines when compared to NCs (for example, up to 3 or 4 months maximum).

- Please add information on the IPCC 2019 refinements which are expected to be adopted in May 2019 and clarify that the project will support Parties to use them.

Comments cleared.

Agency Response

- The project duration: Project duration reduced to 60 months/ 5 years

The expected submission dates for the reports are too late.

- Suggested changes made: NC’s submitted by December 2024 and BURs by December 2022, and period allocated under component 1 & 2 have been slightly reduced to accommodate these changes. i.e.

Component 1: PIP preparation allocated 4 months

Component 2: NC/BUR preparation allocated the following timeframes:

- NC preparation: - 32 months
- BUR preparation: - 20 months
- Please consider cutting the time allowed to prepare BUR PIPs:

  BUR preparation period reduced under the 2 components as follows: -

  Component 1: BUR PIP preparation: - 4 months
  Component 2: BUR preparation: - 20 months

- Please add information on the IPCC 2019 refinements which are expected to be adopted in May 2019 and clarify that the project will support Parties to use them.

Information added under component 2 indicators

'Selected experts will be guided by the UNFCCC guidelines for National Communications for Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (Decision 17/CP.8) and the adopted guidelines on the preparation of biennial update reports (BURs) by non-Annex I Parties as outlined in Annex III CoP.17 respectively. In addition, all participating countries will be encouraged to use the 2006 IPCC Guidelines, and it's 2019 refinements which are expected to be adopted in May 2019. To this end, the UN Environment will notify and encourage executing agencies to appoint additional national experts, to be funded through NC/BUR project funds, to attend any IPCC hands-on training workshops (at regional/international level) organized by either the UNFCCC/IPCC, CGE, GSP or/and other donors. This approach will increase the number of national experts who benefit from these training opportunities, without resulting in additional cost implication to the organizers.'

Stakeholders.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Yes, the PIF provides indicative information on how stakeholders will be involved at the country level. Please provide more detailed information per country at the time of CEO Endorsement.

Agency Response Noted

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 Yes, each country will undergo a gender analysis during project implementation plan preparation.

Agency Response

Part III. Endorsement/ Approval by OFP

Country endorsement

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Yes, the Operational Focal Points for all of the countries involved have provided endorsement letters for this project.

Agency Response

Response to Comments

Are all the comments adequately responded to? (only as applicable)
Gef Secretariat comments?

GEF Secretariat Comment
Agency Response

Other Agencies comments?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

Is CEO clearance/approval recommended?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

P.M. recommends CEO PIF clearance.

CEO Memo

The objective of this project is to support 18 governments to prepare and submit National Communications (NCs) and Biennial Reports (BURs) under the UNFCCC. The project is in line with GEF’s climate change mitigation focal area strategy objective 3 - *Foster enabling conditions to mainstream mitigation concerns into sustainable development strategies.*

The goal of the project is to continue supporting developing countries in preparing NCs and BURs in a coordinated manner, using the umbrella program approach to streamline project approval and funds disbursement. Considering that countries are in different phases of NC and BUR preparation, the GEF funding will support SNC, TNC, NC4, NC5 and/or BUR1, BUR2 or BUR3 preparation. Twelve countries are requesting support for NC preparation; three countries are requesting support for BUR preparation; and three countries are requesting to combine NC and BUR preparation.
The project has 3 components:

i. Preparation of Project Implementation Plans (PIPs) for NCs and BURs
ii. Preparation of NCs and BURs
iii. National stakeholders' involvement and institutional arrangements for preparation of subsequent BUR and NC

It will support assessments of national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories, GHG mitigation, and vulnerability and adaptation to climate impacts. Further, 15 of the 18 countries the program is supporting are LDCs and SIDs, which will receive enhanced administrative and technical support.

Additional Comments

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

By CEO Endorsement, we expect a request from the OFPs of those countries that require additional execution support from the implementing agency (which according to the execution arrangement included would be Afghanistan and Yemen) indicating the specific roles and responsibilities of all partners, including any execution activities provided by a GEF Agency. The request should provide a sound justification for the execution activities that the GEF Agency may perform.

In addition, by CEO Endorsement we expect all 13 identified outstanding reports to have been submitted to the UNFCCC per our comments above.

In addition, please provide additional detailed information per country on the expected institutional arrangements, consistency with national priorities, stakeholders, coordination with other initiatives and expected report submission dates.

Review Dates
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Review</td>
<td>4/19/2019</td>
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