Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality in select districts of northwest India by contributing towards the Mahatma Gandhi Green Path (MGGP) Legacy Initiative

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

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<th>GEF ID</th>
<th>10555</th>
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<tr>
<td>Countries</td>
<td>India</td>
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<td>Project Name</td>
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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
03/25/2020 UA:

Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response
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
03/25/2020 UA:

Not fully.

The project objective makes no reference to the global aspects of the project (component 4). If the project is designed as a national STAR complemented by global LD set aside, the objective itself should reflect this and the justification for the investment of the global set-aside should be strengthened in component 4 (especially in the outputs).

04/09/2020 UA:

Addressed. Project is now designed as national STAR project only.

Cleared

Agency Response
UNDP Response, 8 April 2020
In discussion with the GEF OFP’s office the request for LD global set-aside has been removed from the PIF as a revised LOE cannot be provided at this time. The project has been resubmitted as a national LD project using STAR allocation only.

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
03/25/2020 UA:
Yes. Note that depending on the concrete involvement of private sector entities such as Jain and UPL, a potential co-financing by private sector entities could be explored during PPG.

Cleared

Agency Response
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
03/25/2020 UA:
Yes.

Cleared
Agency Response
The STAR allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion
03/25/2020 UA:
Yes.
Cleared

Agency Response
The focal area allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion
03/25/2020 UA:
Yes. The remaining marginal adjustment for India in GEF-7 can be used to accommodate the LD STAR request.
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
03/25/2020 UA:
Yes.
Cleared

04/09/2020 UA:
Set aside funding request has been removed.
Cleared

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
03/25/2020 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**

03/25/2020 UA:

Clarification requested:

- Thank you for providing a well informed estimate for the GHG emission reduction already at the PIF stage based on FAO Exac tool. However, the estimate appears to be very high. Based on the experience from past GEF investments, we have a historical ratio of about 1 ton CO2eq /$ of GEF funding. So, this estimate would be almost 7 times higher than this average.

- Based on the detailed Ex-ACT results presented in Annex C, please consider providing a more conservative estimates for the following (i) avoided forest degradation (e.g. low degradation without project and very low degradation with project); (ii) hectares for perennials (only to include areas where there will be direct impact/investment on the ground); and (iii) manure management practices.

- Please also enter the start year and number of years (20) for accounting in the core indicators table.

- Please enter the 404,000 ha of SLM under the correct sub-indicator 4.3 instead of 4.1.

04/09/2020 UA

Clarification provided and carbon estimates revised.

Cleared
The project EX-ACT estimates have been revised as follows:
- Avoided Forest Degradation: reduced the final improvement category for each forest type. Please see revised Annex C for the details of the new estimates.
- Hectares for perennials revised to include only areas with direct impact/investment on the ground.
- Manure management practices revised to reduce the “with” project feeding practices introduced to 5% of the total cattle population instead of 10% estimated in the previous version.

The new estimated GHG mitigated or avoided for the project is 9,866,384 tCO2eq over a 20-year period. This has been updated in relevant parts of the PIF and the core indicator worksheet accordingly. The missing start year and number of accounting has been added to the portal, and the allocation of SLM target area corrected to align to sub-indicator 4.3.

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
03/25/2020 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
03/25/2020 UA:

Yes. However, the box 1 that contains a summary of barriers reads more like a brainstorming list. Please consider grouping the identified barriers and elaborate briefly for better understanding.

04/09/2020 UA:

Addressed.
Cleared

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 8 April 2020

Box 1 has been removed from the PIF and replaced by a description of the technical challenges faced in the demonstration landscape, particularly by small and marginal farmers.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion
03/25/2020 UA:

Yes.
Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion
03/25/2020 UA:
Yes. However, before the components are described, it would be helpful to have one concise paragraph that explains the theory of change for the project and its global component. The Theory of Change can be described very briefly, no graphic is necessary at this point.

Component 4 needs to better justify the global set aside investment by strengthening the global aspects of the cooperation and outreach. It would be good to mention global partnership platforms besides the conventions that could be engaged with in this context. Please do not refer to official meetings within the convention process (such as SBSTTA, SBI) as participation in those could only be funded by GEF Enabling Activities, not by the global LD set aside. Further, the Isha foundation may also have a global reach through the ongoing participation and active role of Sadhguru in platforms such as the GLF and the UNCCD.

04/09/2020 UA:
Addressed.
Cleared

**Agency Response**

**UNDP Response, 8 April 2020**

The project theory of change has been briefly described and added to Section 3 of the PIF. This outlines how the project’s interventions along pathways of policy reform, landscape monitoring, multi-stakeholder collaboration, technical demonstration and knowledge exchange will come together to support the achievement of LDN – while also making clear a key assumption that broadscale adoption of sustainable land management practices and restoration will require the provision of socioeconomic benefits for farmers.

As outlined above, the global component has been removed from the PIF. The project will still provide some targeted support for the establishment of the Centre of Excellence and retain some attention on South-South cooperation. However, this will be at reduced GEF investment and some targets have been revised to reflect the reduced funding. Revisions have also been made to Component 4 to reflect the potential for the project to participate in relevant global knowledge platforms as part of its knowledge management approach. The text on participation in convention meetings has been removed. The outreach potential of Isha Foundation via its engagement in existing platforms has been emphasized in the stakeholder engagement table, where Isha Foundation has been added in its own right.

4. Is the project/program aligned with focal area and/or Impact Program strategies?
Not fully. Please explore potential to GEF’s Impact Program on Sustainable Dryland Landscapes. The proposed project also works in Dryland areas, and its global component could be linked with the global platform of the IP. Please explore this potential link throughout the PIF (e.g. stakeholder, replication sections) as this would also add to the better justification of global set aside funding made available for the project.

04/09/2020 UA:
Addressed.
Cleared

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 8 April 2020

With regards to the global set-aside funding, as outlined above the project has been resubmitted as a national LD project using STAR allocation only. That said, there can still be potential benefits through the project’s engagement/contribution to related global knowledge platforms related to land degradation and restoration and these are now referenced in the PIF description of Component 4, and in knowledge management and scaling up sections. Such initiatives (e.g. GEF SFM drylands impact program, Global Landscapes Forum) have been added to the stakeholder section, and opportunities to contribute to these platforms will be explored further during the PPG phase.

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

03/25/2020 UA:
Yes.
Cleared

Agency Response
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
03/25/2020 UA:

Please see comment to core indicators above.

Further, please also include the contribution of the global component 4 to the creation and exchange of global knowledge and best practices for restoration as a benefit for the global community.

04/09/2020 UA:

Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response
UNDP Response, 8 April 2020

Core indicators have been revised in response to comments.

As mentioned above, the project has been redesigned to remove the global component. However, as the project will still provide some support for the establishment of the Dehradun-based Centre of Excellence, the potential project contributions to global knowledge and learning on restoration have been briefly mentioned in the discussion of project global environmental benefits and incremental cost reasoning.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion
03/25/2020 UA:

Yes. However, please note earlier comments and elaborate on the scaling up strategy and plans. Which roles could platforms and initiatives play?

04/09/2020 UA:
The project will seek to participate and engage in knowledge platforms such as the global knowledge platform being developed under the SFM drylands impact program coordination project and the Global Landscapes Forum. There is the potential for the project to engage in virtual and physical events on relevant topics (e.g. webinars and virtual learning events), to learn from other countries and to contribute lessons learned and best practices that other countries can learn from (e.g. to the knowledge database on the GLF website). These platforms have been added to the stakeholder engagement table, to the description of Component 4 and the discussion on scaling up potential. Required project activities and budget to facilitate engagement in these platforms will be confirmed during the PPG phase.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion
04/09/2020 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
03/25/2020 UA:
Yes. However, as the Isha foundation could potentially play an important role in the context of this project, please deal with them in one separate line. The reviewer is of the view that while other stakeholder mentioned under the "people's movement" they do not have the same level of importance and potential as the Isha foundation, given its current scale at national level and active involvement in platforms as the GLF and UNCCD.

04/09/2020 UA:
Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response
UNDP Response, 8 April 2020

The stakeholder table has been revised as requested to include Isha Foundation on a separate line from the people’s movements that are active in the demonstration States. Potential partnerships will be explored further during the PPG phase in consultation with national and State governments to confirm the appropriate organizations and movements that can support replicating and upscaling of project interventions across India.

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
03/25/2020 UA:
Not fully. Please elaborate by explaining the project specific context for gender, not only the general context in India. Based on these specifics, what potential has the project to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment? Is there potential for scaling out of this aspects in component 4?

04/09/2020 UA:

Addressed.

Cleared

**Agency Response**

UNDP Response, 8 April 2020

The project-related context for gender-based disadvantages in the project landscape in Rajasthan and Gujarat has been elaborated, and specific gender mainstreaming opportunities for the project detailed. These include policy, capacity development and awareness raising/outreach interventions to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. Gender mainstreaming has also explicitly been included within project replication and knowledge exchange efforts under Component 4 (including the indicative targets for knowledge exchange in Table B). These activities and targets will be further defined during the PPG phase on the basis of the gender analysis completed for the project States/districts.

Private Sector Engagement

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

03/25/2020 UA:

Yes.

Cleared
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
03/25/2020 UA:
Not adequately.
- Please remove minor "challenges" that do not constitute MAJOR risks that might prevent the project from being achieved or maybe resulting from project implementation.
- Please do consider the consequences of climate change and propose mitigation measures.

04/09/2020 UA:
Addressed.
Cleared

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 8 April 2020

The list of risks has been revised and the lower-rated potential operational challenges removed. The risk related to climate change has been elevated for greater prominence and elaborated to provide more information on potential risks and mitigation measures. A key mitigation measure will be integration of climate change vulnerabilities across project interventions, e.g. consideration within landscape monitoring systems, assessments and plans, and selection of species/sites for restoration efforts. All moderate or high rated social and environmental risks identified through the UNDP SESP pre-screening have been retained in the PIF, with
further information provided in the accompanying SESP pre-screening. Potential social and environmental risks will be further assessed and mitigation measures defined during the PPG phase in accordance with UNDP social and environmental safeguards policy.

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

03/25/2020 UA:

- Please enter the name and type of the executing agency in Part I. Fields are currently blank.

- All requests for execution support arrangements will need to be requested by the OFP following the GEF policies and procedures for exemptions and will be discussed latest at CEO endorsement stage based on such request. Technical clearance of this PIF does in no way endorse any of the potential arrangements mentioned in the PIF.

04/09/2020 UA:

Blank fields addressed. Agency agreed to the PMs comments as per response below.

Cleared

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 8 April 2020

The executing agency of the proposed project is the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. This was omitted from the portal entry of the PIF in error and has now been corrected.

The comments on execution support arrangements are well-noted.
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

03/25/2020 UA:

Yes for national strategies.

Since the project has a global component, please elaborate on the consistency with global initiatives such as the Bonn Challenge and the UN Decade on Restoration in this section.

04/09/2020 UA:

Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 8 April 2020

The global component of the proposed project has been removed. However, as the project will still support India’s contribution to these global initiatives, references on the project’s alignment and contributions to the Bonn Challenge and the UN Decade on Restoration have been added to this section for completeness.

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
03/25/2020 UA:

Please elaborate on the KM approach by including a basic sequence for the elements mentioned. Also, make a linkage to the up-scaling and replication in this context including the global component and the global knowledge products to be developed by the project.

04/09/2020 UA:

Addressed.
Cleared

Agency Response
UNDP Response, 8 April 2020

Section 8 of the PIF has been revised to further elaborate on the project’s knowledge management approach. This will apply at the following geographic scales: between project villages/districts; across the broader Green Path area; across India; and with other countries facing similar challenges in drylands systems. Knowledge management approaches will include study/knowledge exchanges between sites, identification and documentation of lessons learned and best practices and dissemination via a range of fora, establishment of a virtual community of practice and project website, and establishment of project steering committee and technical partnerships. Many of these activities will be facilitated through the Centre of Excellence being established by the Government of India, a mechanism that will also help support upscaling and replication of project lessons and practices. The indicative sequencing of the project’s knowledge management approach has been outlined.

The global component has been removed from the PIF. Nevertheless, engagement and contributions to global knowledge via some targeted GEF incremental support to the Centre of Excellence and participation in existing global platforms has been retained and briefly mentioned as part of the project’s knowledge management approach.

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
03/25/2020 UA:

Yes, however, the current LOE only endorses the STAR amount of the PIF. Please submit a revised LOE that includes the $2 million global LD set aside. Alternatively, if no revised LOE can be provided by mid April 2020, the project may be redesigned without the global component 4.

04/09/2020 UA:

Only the STAR amount covered by the submitted LOE is requested. However, the project title in the LOE is different from the title entered into the portal. Please use the same title.

04/15/2020 UA:

Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

UNDP Response, 8 April 2020

In discussion with the GEF OFP’s office the request for LD global set-aside has been removed as a revised LOE cannot be provided at this time. The PIF has been resubmitted as a national LD project using STAR allocation only.

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
03/25/2020 UA:
No. please address comments made in this review.

04/09/2020 UA:
No. Please address one outstanding issue (project title: see LOE).

04/09/2020 UA:
Yes. Program Manager recommends 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
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<td>PIF Recommendation to CEO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval</td>
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The UNDP/GEF project ID 10555 “Mahatma Gandhi Green Path (MGGP) Legacy Initiative” in India has the objective to achieve land degradation neutrality (LDN) along a “Green Path” covering the degraded transitional zone of Northwest India through policy improvements, operationalized multi-stakeholder partnerships and technical support for avoiding, reducing and reversing land degradation on forest, agricultural and pastoral lands. The area of the path will extend an average of 60 km on either side of the median and will run through 24 districts in three states, in Gujarat, Haryana, and Rajasthan. The multiple regulatory and provisioning ecosystem services to be strengthened by the project include carbon sequestration, improved water quality and flow (including groundwater resources), biodiversity conservation, improved soil health and provisioning of food, fuelwood, fodder and non-timber forest produce. GEF funds will also be contributing to the Government’s commitment to establish a Center of Excellence for South-South cooperation on sustainable land use management, including capacity building, dissemination of best practices and learning. The project will generate global environmental benefits by restoring 174,000 ha of dryland landscapes, bringing additional 404,000 ha of production landscapes under sustainable management, sequestering 9.8 million ton of CO2eq, and directly targeting 180,000 beneficiaries.