

Biological Diversity

N°02: BD-4464: Nepal: Integrating traditional crop genetic biodiversity into technology: using a biodiversity portfolio approach to buffer against unpredictable environmental changes in the Nepal Himalayas; (UNEP); GEF: 2.3 million USD; total: 7.7 million USD

General Commentaries

Protecting the gene pool of wild forms of key agricultural crop species is undoubtedly of paramount global importance, especially in view of the ever increasing global food shortages attributed to the world's population explosion, a recognized root cause for climate change.

The key question is: will the proposed project be able to make a significant contribution to effectively protecting the seven targeted wild crop species in the high Himalayas and protecting local farmers against the increasingly dominating influence of powerful multi-national seed production monopolies? This is an enormous challenge!

Challenges, Questions and Concerns for further Project Preparation

- (1) It is very difficult for the proposed project to produce climate-change-adapted crop hybrids within a five-year trial when it took centuries of cross-breeding and plant selection to produce the currently used hybrids which appear well adapted to the high mountain climate and the rather sophisticated irrigation, terracing and cultivation techniques used by ethnic groups of the high Himalayas.
- (2) It remains unclear of how exactly the project will protect the wild relatives of the seven targeted crop species (i.e., in situ and/or ex-situ protection; habitat protection, creation of protected areas, etc.) in light of existing shortages of land suitable for agriculture.
- (3) It is unclear of how exactly the project will contribute to sustainable protection of agrobiodiversity beyond the current use and practices that have evolved over centuries in the target area.
- (4) A more precise explanation would be helpful on the proposed certification scheme of agricultural crops and practices; it is unclear what exactly should be certified and how this will benefit the poor subsistence farmers.
- (5) The proposal is too vague regarding the target area; it is not clear whether the proposed interventions encompass the entire country or specific pilot areas.
- (6) It is unclear how the proposal will promote "ecosystem services" which appear to be already well recognized within a land-use system that has evolved over centuries. It also is not clear how the promotion of "ecosystem" services will be linked to biodiversity conservation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Switzerland recognizes the importance of this project, but it considers that the PIF leaves some questions open (see above).

It is suggested that this highly ambitious and broadly-based proposal would benefit from streamlining and a focus on practical interventions within suitable pilot areas offering enabling framework conditions.

The proposal refers *inter alia* to the current Swiss-funded establishment of biodiversity-rich housegardens in the Nepalese high Himalayas, a project that is practical and concrete, providing visible and measurable benefits to the rural poor and isolated subsistence farmers and contributing to agricultural biodiversity conservation, and that allows for easy monitoring and evaluation. For the further planning of the current GEF proposal, we therefore recommend an experience exchange with mentioned bilateral project.

Last but not least, this proposal appears to be more in line with GEF's "Multi-focal Area" Program rather than "Biodiversity".

N°03: ID-4494: Sao Tome and Principe: Integrated Ecosystem Approach to Biodiversity Mainstreaming and Conservation in the Buffer Zones of the Obo National Park, (IFAD); GEF cost: 2.4 million USD; total project cost: 10.8 million USD

Overall Commentaries

The project aims at mainstreaming the sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity in the buffer zone of Obo National Park by improving coordinated and integrated ecosystem approaches at institutional and community level as well as through Public Private Partnerships. The project will specifically promote cropping and marketing of high-value organic coffee and cocoa under forest shade. The main issue that will be addressed is logging and forest clearing for cropping. The project aims at contributing to the conservation of about 7000 ha of shade forest, other key habitats, and to protect and conserve some endangered species such as: the Mulberry Tree (*Melícia excelsa*), the Quebra-machado (*Homalium henriquensii*), the Malagueta tuatúa (red pepper), the black and white Viros, and the Marapião.

The project is linked to the IFAD Participatory Smallholder Agriculture and Artisanal Fisheries Development Programme (PAPAFPA) which has been setting up farmers' organizations and working on productive landscapes and seems firmly anchored at the institutional and local level. This is an important basis to succeed in increasing revenues resulting from diversification activities to the communities living around the park, which will contribute to reducing the pressure on the natural resources both in and around the national park and in coastal areas.

Challenges, Questions and Concerns for further Project Preparation

Benefits to global biodiversity are so far not sufficiently addressed for a project running under the focal area biodiversity. Eco-compatible production or organic farming does not *per se* contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. Furthermore, the project's approach to the habitats and species to be conserved and protected is so far not sufficiently tangible.

Further project elaboration must therefore put emphasis on a strategic approach to biodiversity conservation, i.e. on the specification of the benefits for global and local biodiversity to be achieved and on the ways and means with which these will be achieved.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Switzerland welcomes this project which targets the buffer zones of the Obo National Park on both islands of Sao Tome and Principe, and requests that in further project preparation the approach to biodiversity conservation be specified and addressed in a strategic way.

N°07: CC-4500: China: GEF Large-City Congestion and Carbon Reduction Project; (World Bank); GEF cost: 18.2 million USD; total project cost: 106.5 million USD

Overall Commentaries

The project aims at reducing traffic congestion in large cities by encouraging people to shift to public transport modes. The goal of the project is to develop and demonstrate a comprehensive package of measures including infrastructure, policies, economic incentives and capacity building, to discourage private car use while supporting high-capacity, low-carbon transport modes. Three large cities are selected for pilot demonstrations under this project.

Traffic congestion is a serious problem in all large cities, thus the topic of the project is well justified. The main goal - shift of private car transportation to public transport modes - can be fully supported. However, we miss measures to encourage and promote non-motorized transportation.

Challenges, Questions and Concerns for further Project Preparation

A comprehensive strategy to reduce traffic congestion should not only promote a shift from private motorized to public motorized transportation, but also a shift from motorized to non-motorized transportation.

PIF shows that average travel speeds of motor vehicles will drop from 25 km/h today to below 15 km/h by 2015 in many large cities in China (p.5). The average travel length by motorized vehicle in cities is relatively short, e.g. in Chengdu 8 kilometres (p.8). Thus there is a big potential in cities to shift from motorized to non-motorized transportation, primarily cycling.

For this reason development and promotion of non-motorized transport should be included in the project (non-motorized transport policies, cycling lane infrastructure, pedestrian facilities etc.). Such measures can reduce traffic congestion, energy use and air pollution. Development of non-motorized transportation is in line with the 12th Five-Year Plan approved by the Government of China in March 2011 (PIF p.5) and with STAP recommendations (GEF-STAP 2010 "Advancing Sustainable Low-Carbon Transport through the GEF, A STAP advisory document")

Conclusions and Recommendations

We support approval of the project, but expect that in further planning special attention is given to amending the project by including substantial measures in the field of non-motorized transportation.

N°08: CC-4488: China: Green Energy Schemes for Low-Carbon City in Shanghai; (World Bank); GEF cost: 4.34 million USD; total project cost: 247.23 million USD

Overall Commentaries

The Government of China is operating a pilot programme on low-carbon city development in 13 cities and provinces. The NDRC low-carbon pilot cities and provinces are expected to lay the groundwork for a national low-carbon planning, assessment and management system that should include guidelines for industry, society and economy. This project's objective is to contribute to this concept development in Changning district in Shanghai. The project focuses on green buildings, low-carbon energy mix, low-carbon innovative technologies and integration of low-carbon integrated urban transport options. It will support the Chinese government's 12th five-year plan.

While the overall concept is sound and well anchored in China's national priorities, some concerns are raised and suggestions are made for more detailed analysis with regard to the low-carbon transport options proposed for inclusion. As GEF funds are limited considering the size of the envisaged overall investment, the project will benefit from a clearer focus in the use of GEF resources.

Challenges, Questions and Concerns for further Project Preparation

- ▶ The information contained in the tables on the “*strategic*” and on the “*project framework*” in the PIF document seems not to be fully consistent. While the *strategic framework CCM-1* on “innovative low carbon technologies” expects “new business models for electric vehicles demonstrated (EV in use as passenger cars)”, the green transport section of the *project framework* provides “Electric vehicle (buses) feasibility studies piloted” as expected output. Considering that the budget allocation for green transport is quite limited and electric buses pilot trials are anyhow ongoing in different Chinese cities, a clearer focus of the urban transport intervention at a district level is recommended. A district in a large city like Shanghai only has a limited planning capacity influencing particularly the urban mass transport system as a whole. Focusing on **innovative business models for captive EV fleets** or **pilot measures enhancing the share of citizens using non-motorized transport** seem **more promising** for implementation at a district level. For successfully testing new business models for electric vehicles (EV), the project duration of 48 months is in itself quite a challenging task as the economic viability of such a scheme will depend on the capacity to resolve several of the still remaining down-to-earth challenges linked to application of the EV technology. These challenges are particularly linked to the level of service and reliability of EVs in different seasons and under different user patterns of companies.
- ▶ What will be the strategy for replication in other cities?

Conclusions and Recommendations

Switzerland welcomes this ambitious World Bank project proposal and recommends its approval by GEF. In the further process of Project document preparation more effort however should be made to integrate more detailed analysis particularly related to the urban transport part and integrating this into the overall project design. Considering the entire project, this is a minor revision.

N°09: CC-4490: Nigeria: Small-scale Associated Gas Utilization; (World Bank); GEF cost: 2.7 million USD; total project cost 33.4 million USD

Overall Comments

The project aims at deploying existing technologies that are not adopted in Nigeria yet in order to use the associated gas that would otherwise be wasted in the process of oil exploitation. The project addresses an important source of GHG emissions in Nigeria (gas flaring represents approx. 30% of Nigerian CO₂ emissions). The project is closely linked to a project financed by the World Bank ("Nigeria Rural Access and Renewable Energy Project"): the associated gas will be used to provide energy for rural populations, which are especially disadvantaged people. In addition, the project is consistent with the World Bank's Global Gas Flare Reduction Partnership.

Questions, Concerns and Challenges for further Project / Programme Refinement

- ▶ The project document identifies two barriers for the lack of deployment of technologies to avoid gas flaring, namely a technological barrier and policy one (lack of enforcement of rules by the government to stop gas flaring). Therefore, how will the question of enforcement be dealt with in the framework of this project? "The dissemination of the results of the successful demonstration project will (...) assist the Federal Government of Nigeria to develop effective policies to support gas flare reduction" (p. 7). Should the policy aspect not be developed at the same time as the demonstration project, so that the appropriate framework is ready for the replication phase? This aspect is important in order to go beyond the technological barrier that is only one of two obstacles.
- ▶ The project is designed as a demonstration project, to be replicated in a second step (with five similar projects at least). What is the strategy for replication and dissemination of results? What are the obstacles and risks for the replication phase? The project document mentions that "there is a risk that replication will be slow to materialize" (p. 9). What are the possible solutions?
- ▶ Why has the CDM not been able to work for gas flaring in Nigeria yet? What are the possible links between this project and the development of CDM projects to take over the GEF financing?
- ▶ It seems that the project will help solve the issue of lack of access to modern energy services thanks to the production of electricity with the associated gas. What is the potential for contributing to solve this issue in the medium term?

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project addresses an important issue and has the potential to help addressing additional problems in Nigeria such as the lack of access to energy (World Bank project on access to energy). These synergies are positive.

Thus, Switzerland supports the approval of this project.

It recommends however that the project addresses right from the beginning a) the policy issue (lack of enforcement of rules by the government to stop gas flaring) and b) the strategy for replication, so that the project has a greater potential to have results on a wider scale and over time.

Multi-Focal Area

N°10: MFA-4511: Regional*: Sahel and West Africa Program in support of the Great Green Wall Initiative; (World Bank); GEF cost: 105 million USD; total project cost: 1915 million USD

* Burkina Faso, Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Senegal, Chad, Togo

General Comment

Switzerland welcomes the program proposed as a significant and most relevant component. It offers an important opportunity for the 12 countries of the Sahelian Africa. For further development of the program together with the countries involved we propose the following:

- Strengthened regional cooperation elements with associated knowledge management components
- Appropriate results and indicator framework for SLM
- Co-financing

Questions, Concerns and Challenges for further Project Preparation

▶ Regional exchange and learning in view of a more effective knowledge management.

One concern is that not enough is invested in regional exchange and learning in view of a more effective knowledge management. This should be one of the major benefits of a regional program.

Indeed, these aspects are mentioned repeatedly in the PFD. There is a project of 10 Mio USD as a baseline and 3 Mio USD as GEF co-financing. However, this represents less than 1% of the total funding.

Only 5 implementing regional bodies are mentioned in the proposal. They have to deal with wide-ranging and complex issues such as degradation monitoring, SLWM practices, agrometeorology, nature conservation and others. Many other scientific and technical organizations and networks could be mentioned which would also be able to contribute to knowledge management and learning.¹ Even considering that the individual projects would also invest in knowledge management, the very existence of a regional program would justify higher investments.

The scientific basis of the program is not very strong and scientists still have problems in defining desertification, SLM and define adequate indicators and methods for M&E. Thus investments in knowledge generation and sharing of good practices, in order to avoid implementation of approaches and technologies without adequate information on their costs, benefits, impacts and barriers to implementation.

▶ Open questions regarding performance indicators for the program

Naturally at this stage, the key performance indicators of the program are very generic and defined only in qualitative terms. As long as they are not quantified, the evaluation of the performance will be rather arbitrary. Regarding the key performance indicators (2) and (4): to what degree can a change of trends be attributed to the program's interventions? The proposed program is not the only effort which interferes with the indicators mentioned.

▶ Open questions regarding the considerable amount of 1.8 billion USD of indicative co-financing.

We very positively appraise the enormous amount of co-financing of 1.8 billion USD. No doubt, the existence of important co-financing influences positively on the assessment of the pro-

¹ For instance, WOCAT, an international network, and recognized in UNCCD circles as the leading network on SLM practices, with partners in the region, could contribute effectively to knowledge management for SLM and support monitoring and assessment of SLM.

gram. However, there are questions regarding the nature of this co-financing and if it can be qualified as such.

On page 3, the PDF clarifies that this co-financing refers to planned baseline investments in the 12 countries! Therefore the question is whether all that baseline cost can be qualified as co-financing, in accordance with GEF policy. Please note that if baseline costs are considered as co-financing, the proponents should provide detailed information on it.

Moreover, according to the PDF's table (C) on the indicative co-financing by source and by name, the GEF agency is indicated as source of co-financing for the amount of 1.735 billion. More clarification would be needed.

N°11: MFA-4468: Belarus: Landscape approach to management of peat-lands aiming at multiple ecological benefits (UNDP); GEF cost: 2.7 million USD; total cost: 13.1 million USD

General Commentaries

The attention given by the proposal to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity-rich peat-lands in Belarus appears well justified in view of the past large-scale destruction of this important ecosystem in favour of agriculture and other un-sustainable use in the country and the region at large. Also peat-land ecosystems are currently under-represented within the country's protected area system. Central to the project is the enhancement of peat-lands currently under protection, the rehabilitation of degraded peat-lands, and the creation of new protected areas with focus on peat-land ecosystems and corresponding support zones. The creation and proper planning of support zones of protected areas is commendable.

Challenges, Questions and Concerns for further Project Preparation

(1) The proposal claims to adopt a "landscape approach" to peat-land management without further specification and/or explanation of how this will be achieved in the absence of meaningful participatory multi-stakeholder integrated spatial land-use planning on the national, regional and local level in Belarus. In this context it is suggested that there is an urgent need to critically review the existing "territorial planning and land stratification" system in the country and to re-classify land-use polygons which obviously are of a wrong land-use designation (category). It should be noted that "territorial planning" during the Soviet era as applied to all CIS countries - Belarus being no exception - strictly aimed at maximizing agricultural productivity and expanding agricultural land with little concern given to land-use sustainability and/or conservation needs, a practice seemingly still adhered to today. Further details are needed in the full project document on how this issue will be addressed.

In this context it also would be interesting to learn how the UNDP-implemented GEF project on "mainstreaming biodiversity management into territorial planning" (2010) in Belarus intends to deal with the issue of participatory integrated spatial land-use planning.

- (2) It appears that the overriding objectives of current Government sponsored activities related to peat-lands and interventions proposed by this project (i.e., peat-land rehabilitation and enhancement) are lop-sided, favouring economic enhancement/opportunities rather than biodiversity conservation and optimal land-use (i.e., hydro-technical facility improvement of degraded agricultural peat-land aims at improvement of agricultural productivity rather than conservation). This attitude may also be reflected by the project's intention to create new protected areas of peat-land ecosystems by using the equivalent of IUCN categories 4 and 6 representing multiple-use areas of the lowest legal protection status, contributing only marginally to biodiversity conservation.
- (3) Under the baseline scenario of the proposal, the current lack of local community participation in protected area management is highlighted but is not addressed under the incremental value discussion. Further details are needed in the full proposal of how to achieve co-management of protected areas in the absence of the legal basis for different forms of PA governance in Belarus.
- (4) Further detail is needed on the proposed "mosaic landscape planning" approach in context with the establishment of support zones of protected areas. Further detail is also required on the land tenure issue related to multiple use peat-lands and protected areas.
- (5) The risk assessment of the proposal fails to address the lack of integrated spatial land-use planning and the lack of corresponding legal and policy framework (i.e., important prerequisite for wise land-use planning and land-use decisions regarding support zones of protected areas).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project addresses protection and sustainable management needs of important ecosystems in Belarus and offers options and strategies of how this will be achieved. It is expected that the full project document, however, will provide more detail and in-depth discussions of issues mentioned above. The proposed project meets GEF criteria and should be endorsed in principle.

N°13: MFA-4454: Jamaica: Integrated management of the Yallahs River and Hope River Watersheds; (IADB); GEF cost: 3.77 million USD; total project cost: 12.58 million USD

Overall Commentaries

The project seems to correspond to the GEF's objectives. However the STAP raises doubts on the global environmental benefit of the output "...*developing land-use plans at the national and local levels which incorporate valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services.*" (focal area strategic framework, BD-2, 2.2).

The document explains the need for the project with the threats of the "business as usual scenario" (PIF, p.5 and 10). However the project justification argues that the high number of organizations implementing activities in the watersheds consist of an insufficient national response lacking *planning and data to inform land-use decisions and protected area management.* Nevertheless the proposed project is mainly adding new activities to the many already existing ones and does not clearly show the complementarity of these outputs to lead to better outcomes. To do so, the project would need conceptual coherence.

Conceptual weakness is visible in the rationale and concept of sustainability. *SLM, SL/WM, and SFM* are used in the sense of mainstream understanding without any concept of how to achieve it by the consequent integration of the local resource users by integrating local knowledge and participation of stakeholders in designing of solutions. *Sustainable financing* of park areas is to be achieved by payment for environmental services (PES) without consideration of the risks of the approach and the general concept of institutional compensation which may be more coherent for the specific situations.

Challenges, Questions and Concerns for further Project Preparation

The major question remains on the added value of the project joining many other programmes and project in a rather focused area (the real size remain unclear). In this situation the goals of the project should show a clear complementarity in the approach and the outputs fostering thus sustainable resource management.

The ecological situation and on-going degradation of resources are not coherently presented. It remains unclear why reforestation should take place whereby the deforestation is going on and agricultural land is reduced by settling pushing the dwellers into the upper watershed. It is also unclear how water scarcity arises in this humid agro-ecosystem. The objective of capacity development seems in this situation very reasonable but the activities proposed are not adequate to achieve progress. Learning on the community level should be related to learning in institutions at higher levels. Such approaches for integrative learning and trans-disciplinary action research exist and would create an added value for this project.

We agree with the comments from the STAP that the PES may create risks for the proposed project. The use of PES for investment and small grants is not in the logic of compensation of ecosystem services.

In the further project preparation it would be beneficial to review the fundamental approach and search for concepts and methods to respond to the specific weaknesses of the on-going and already planned interventions in the watersheds.

Conclusions and Recommendations

We recommend addressing the above mentioned issues in the further process.

N°15: MFA-4469: Turkey: Integrated approach to management of forests in Turkey, with demonstration in high conservation value forests in the Mediterranean Region. (UNDP); GEF cost: 7.1 million USD; total cost: 28.2 million USD

General Commentaries

The proposed project aims at the sustainable management and protection of Turkey's biodiversity-rich Mediterranean forests, capitalizing on its enormous potential as one of the largest forest carbon depositories in West Asia and Europe. The ecological integrity of the targeted forests is currently threatened through land alienation, unsustainable use, forest fires/pests, and fragmentation. The project offers interesting and innovative interventions expected to contribute to the solution of identified key problems. The proposal meets GEF financing requirements and builds on lessons learnt from past and on-going donor-supported activities in the target area and the region at large.

Challenges, Questions and Concerns for further Project Preparation

- (1) The promotion of solar collectors appears to be a key pillar of the proposed strategy in support of reducing the pressure on forests by the rural poor in need of fuel-wood for cooking and heating their homes. If solar energy is used exclusively to satisfy the hot water needs of households (see proposal), however, the demand of fuel-wood for heating and cooking would remain the same. Considering an average demand of 10 to 15 cubic meters fuel-wood per family, how will the demand be met or which alternative would be offered to the use of fuel-wood? Supporting data on the reduction in fuel-wood demand resulting from the proposed use of solar energy are missing. This issue is not mentioned in the risk analysis either.
- (2) Although the proposed creation of protected areas within the framework of the project is laudable, protected areas equivalent to IUCN categories 4 and 6 (lowest protection status of multiple use areas) as proposed by the project will add very little to the country's PA system under the CBD. Furthermore, such areas require inter-institutional and multi-stakeholder management due to overlapping jurisdictions and mandates which appears to be insufficiently addressed by the proposal.
- (3) A brief description and discussion of land tenure (issues) in the target area would be helpful.
- (4) The risk assessment proposes "engagement of local people in the design of management plans for protected areas" but fails to address the need for co-management of PAs as a prerequisite for PA neighbours to develop ownership in conservation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The proposal is well researched, logically conclusive and timely in view of expected adverse impacts due to global climate change. The proposal addresses key issues of local and global importance and offers feasible solutions to root causes of forest destruction and degradation in a selected pilot area. The multi-pronged approach to achieving sustainable forest management through tackling identified root causes is laudable. The project concept is scientifically and technically sound. Switzerland therefore recommends its approval by GEF.

Since the promotion of solar collectors appears to be a key component of measures aimed at the reduction of current fuel-wood demand, the proponent may want to stress the promotion of energy-saving measures on a household level (fuel-efficient stoves, energy-efficient house construction/materials, roof and window insulation etc.) in order to reduce heat loss in winter, hence reducing fuel-wood needs.

Other comments

- ▶ Please elaborate measures to be taken in context with "proactive pest management".
- ▶ Please explain how "income sources of local communities will be diversified through sustainable forest management".
- ▶ Please explain how "carbon pools in high value forests" will be enhanced; high value forests in ecological or economic terms?