



INITIATION PLAN
FOR A GEF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Project Title: Conservation-oriented management of forests and wetlands to achieve multiple benefits (Project Preparatory Grant)

Country: Belarus

Initiation Plan Start Date: 17 August 2015

Initiation Plan End Date: 1 July 2016

UNDAF Component: Outcome 3. Environmental sustainability is increased.
ATLAS Project Award: 00088793
ATLAS Project ID: 00095301
PIMS Project ID: 5495
Management Arrangement: DIM

Total PPG budget: **US\$ 120,000**
Allocated resources:
• GEF **US\$ 120,000**

AGREED BY UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Resident Representative

Signature

Date: day/month/year

Sanaka Samarasinha

14 Aug 2015

A. Brief Description of Initiation Plan:

The objective of the PPG is to develop a full-sized project that aims to support protection and sustainable management of globally important biodiversity at key sites in Belarus in harmony with sustainable development of local communities.

During the initiation plan period, a number of studies and stakeholder consultations will be undertaken with the view to further develop the approved PIF into a fully formulated project document. The final output of the initiation plan will be a UNDP-GEF project document and GEF CEO endorsement template ready for submission to UNDP and GEF.

UNDP Belarus will lead the project development process and manage the PPG budget. The PPG Atlas budget is presented in the Section III. "Total Budget and Work Plan". UNDP Belarus will be responsible for the selection and recruitment of PPG consultants (local and international), developing TORs, arranging travel and meetings, maintaining project disbursements.

Quality assurance and technical advice for the full project development will be provided by the UNDP GEF Regional Technical Specialist (Istanbul, Turkey).

A PPG working group will be established to guide, review and endorse PPG outcomes. The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources will oversee project preparation from the Government side. Regular consultations (working meetings) will be carried out among key PPG stakeholders to ensure that the PPG phase delivers the full size project document in line with UNDP and GEF requirements.

B. Project preparation activities:

A. Component A: Technical review

- I.** The following baseline studies are expected to be undertaken during the preparation of the full-size project document:
 - a. Provision of quantitative details, facts and figures to corroborate and expand the section on the drivers of degradation as outlined in the PIF (1) ineffective management of wetland ecosystems, 2) weak management of forest biodiversity areas outside protected area system, (3) inadequate research and monitoring of globally threatened biodiversity, keeping note of properly addressing the STAP related to the description of root causes.
 - b. Feasibility study for the engagement of the private sector in protected area management as envisaged in Outcome 1.1.
 - c. Feasibility study for the introduction of mosaic forest planning (as envisaged under Outcome 1.2)
 - d. Business plan for the implementation of the biomass activities as envisaged under Outcome 1.3
 - e. Business plan for the cranberry picking and livestock management projects at Olmany Mires and Turov Log under Outcome 1.4
 - f. Action plan and budget for the implementation of the sustainable forestry and peatland management activities under Outcomes 2.1. and 2.2
 - g. Action plan for the restoration of the degraded habitat of the Aquatic Warbler under Outcome 3.1
 - h. Action plan and budget for the program on support of the genetic diversity of the European Bison and Aquatic Warbler (as envisaged in Outcomes 3.2 and 3.3) as well as Greater Spotted Eagle (outcome 3.4)

- i. Analysis of the capacity building needs (trainings, public awareness) for protected areas management and finalizing the project's capacity training strategy and activities.
 - j. Assessment of current land, forest and pasture related practices within the project target areas.
 - k. To collect the baseline data for the BD, LD and SFM indicators that will then inform the Project Logical Framework and the Tracking Tools. To determine exact means of measurement, baselines and targets for all the indicators listed in *Table A.1.4&5 Incremental cost reasoning and global environmental benefits* in the PIF, including population levels of key species, degradation of habitats and avoided deforestation, as well as indicators related to Tracking Tools and areas over which project site interventions are carried out.
 - l. To address specific technical issues and questions raised by the GEF Sec; Council members and STAP
- II. Studies to address any opportunities/risks identified during an environmental and social screening of the project proposal.
- III. Confirmation of specific sites for intervention (given relevant to globally significant biodiversity and degradation of grasslands and forests are key criteria).
 - i. For Component 1.1: confirmation and description of the Protected Areas at the 280,500 ha
 - ii. For Component 1.2 identify and describe 50,000 ha of forests targeted by SFM activities
- IV. Describe and cost the baseline projects; analyse weaknesses and gaps in these, and identify opportunities for joint action/identification for co-financing.
- V. Completion of GEF tracking tools: Financial Sustainability Scorecard, METTs for the targeted protected areas, LD PMAT, SFM Tracking Tool, CCM Tracking Tool.
- VI. Stakeholder consultations during technical review: Mobilize and engage stakeholders during project design. Negotiate partnerships with on-going projects to align their activities and the project to build synergies.

B. Component B: Institutional arrangements, monitoring and evaluation

The outputs of Component A will be used as technical input to Component B for the formulation of the UNDP-GEF project document.

- I. Finalization of project results framework: Further define the results framework with appropriate objective-level and outcome-level quantitative and qualitative SMART indicators, and end-of-project targets. Special attention will be made to include socio-economic and sex disaggregated indicators. The long frame indicators among others will include: (i) state indicators (e.g. spatial coverage, ecosystems quality, species populations or degree of land degradation); (ii) pressure indicators (threats and drivers); and (iii) response indicators. For SFM this will include carbon estimates. Baseline values for indicators will be quantified.
- II. Definition of monitoring and evaluation (M&E): A detailed M&E work plan will be developed, including clear identification of responsibilities and accountabilities, as well as an appropriate M&E budget. The plan will be based on the standard template provided in the UNDP-GEF project document template that reflects the mandatory requirements of the GEF M&E Policy.
- III. Define sustainability plan: The sustainability plan will outline the principles and guidelines for ensuring the long-term sustainability of project achievements. It will also outline an exit strategy, seeking the continuation of key activities/achievements without the need of long-term international financing.
- IV. Definition of management arrangements: The organisational structure governing the project will be decided. This will include identification of the project board.

- V. Stakeholder consultations during Component B: Involve key agencies in the development of the project strategy to ensure a strong national ownership. In close collaboration with key government representatives and other stakeholders ensure full participation in the development of the project results framework and ensure agreement on the project objectives and outcomes. Undertake consultations to secure agreement(s) on project implementation arrangements, including roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of lead and partner agencies. Document these consultations.

C. Component C: Financial planning and co-financing investments:

- I. Prepare a detailed multi-year budget following the standard template provided in the UNDP-GEF project document template that reflects the mandatory requirements of the GEF M&E Policy.
- II. Explore multilateral and bilateral co-financing opportunities: Undertake series of consultations with partners to ensure a coherent and sustainable financing package for the project including post - GEF grant phase.
- III. Ensure completion of required official co-financing letters.
- IV. Stakeholder consultations during Component C: During the financial planning stage of the project preparation, consultations with stakeholders will be carried out to identify development interventions contributing to the project's objective, and/or implemented within the same geographic territory. These consultations will serve as a platform to re-confirm available co-financing for the project, both in-cash and in-kind, and solicit co-financing letters. These consultations will include a scoping assessment of potential financing package for post-GEF grant phase, as part of future exit strategy for the project.

D. Component D: Validation workshop

A validation workshop will gather representatives from all relevant stakeholders to present, discuss and validate the final draft project document.

E. Component E: Completion of final documentation

- I. Consolidation of all technical and consultation inputs into a clearly written UNDP Prodoc document with all relevant sections and annexes
- II. Completion of a CEO endorsement request form
- III. Translation of UNDP Prodoc document into host country language and any further documentation required for preparing implementation

Note: templates may be subject to change, the person responsible for this consolidation and drafting will be required to obtain guidance by the UNDP/GEF Regional Technical Advisor and UNDP CO on applicable formats and templates and ensure that his/her work is compliant with UNDP/GEF and UNDP CO requirements

B. Total Budget and Work Plan

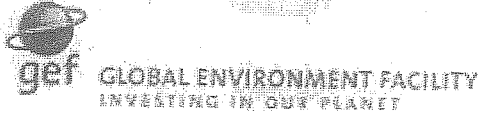
Award ID:	00088793
Award Title:	Conservation-oriented management of forests and wetlands to achieve multiple benefits
Business Unit:	BLR10
Project Title:	Conservation-oriented management of forests and wetlands to achieve multiple benefits
Project ID:	00095301 (PIMS ID 5495)
Implementing Partner (Executing Agency)	UNDP

GEF Outcome/Atlas Activity	Responsible Party/	Fund ID	Donor Name	Atlas Budgetary		ATLAS Budget Description	Amount US\$	Budget Notes
				Account Code				
Project preparation grant to finalize the UNDP-GEF project document for project Conservation-oriented management of forests and wetlands to achieve multiple benefits (Project Preparatory Grant)	UNDP	62000	GEF TRUSTEE	71200	International Consultants	33,000	1	
				71300	Local Consultants	52,050	2	
				71600	Travel	20,000	3	
				74500	Miscellaneous Expenses	4,950	4	
				75700	Trainings	10,000	5	
PROJECT TOTAL						120,000		

BUDGET NOTES:

- 1- THIS IS THE AMOUNT TO BE PAID FOR THE SERVICES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT, AS OUTLINED IN THE TOR.
- 2- THIS IS THE AMOUNT TO BE PAID FOR THE SERVICES OF THE LOCAL CONSULTANTS, AS OUTLINED IN THE TOR.
- 3- INCLUDES ABOUT 10,000 USD IN LOCAL DSA, AND TRAVEL COSTS RELATED TO FIELD WORK, AND 10,000 RELATED TO COMPENSATION OF MISSIONS OF INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT
- 4- INCLUDES PROCUREMENT OF STATIONARY, OFFICE SUPPLIES, FIELD CLOTHING, LABORATORY TESTS, MAP PROCUREMENT UNDER VARIOUS ASSIGNMENTS OF LOCAL CONSULTANTS TO ENABLE THEM TO IMPLEMENT THEIR TASKS AS PER TORs
- 5- INCLUDES TWO WORKSHOPS – INITIAL AND VALIDATION WORKSHOP.

Annex 1: GEF CEO PIF approval letter



Natasha Jahlil
CEO and Chairperson

April 28, 2015

Mr. Adriano Diaz
GEF Executive Coordinator
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Diaz:

I am pleased to inform you that I have cleared the project concept detailed below for inclusion in the upcoming work program. I have also approved your request for project preparation grant.

Decision Sought:	Project Identification Form (PIF) Clearance for Work Program Inclusion and Project Preparation Grant (PPG) Approval
GEFSEC ID:	7993
Agency:	UNEP
Agency ID:	1495
Focal Area:	Multi-Focal Area
Project Type:	Full Size Project
Country:	Belize
Name of Project:	Convention-assisted Management of Forests and Wetlands to Achieve Multiple Benefits
Indicative GEF Project Cost:	\$4,261,567
Indicative Agency Fee:	\$495,038
PPG Grant:	\$120,000
PPG Agency Fee:	\$11,401
Funding Source:	GEF Trust Fund

Agency	Trust Fund	US\$ Fee to be committed at Council Approval	Fee to be committed at CEO Endorsement	Total (US\$)
UNEP	GEF	\$182,015	\$243,023	\$495,038

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This PFC clearance and PFC approval is subject to the comments made by the GEF Secretariat in the attached project review document. It is also based on the understanding that the project is in conformity with GEF focal area strategies and in line with GEF policies and procedures. Please ensure that your final project document, with all Secretariat and Council comments fully addressed, is submitted such that CFC endorsement can be provided within 18 months of Council approval of the work program.

Sincerely,



Marko Ilić
Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson

Attachment: GEF/SEC Project Review Document
Copy to: Country Operational Field Unit, GEF Agencies, STAR, Tróise

Annex 2: Summary of Consultants Financed by the Initiation Plan

Type of Consultant	Position / Titles	\$/Person Week ¹	Estimated PWS ²	Tasks to be Performed
International	Project Development Specialist - 5 years experience in successful GEF project development - English as native language - Biodiversity/natural resource management background - Experience working in Europe and CIS	3,000	11	He/she assists to the work of national consultants, primarily maintaining the contact with the national Biodiversity Expert / Team Leader, in close consultations with the Country Office Environmental Focal Point and GEF RTA. He/she is responsible for delivering the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviews baseline information delivered by the local experts, and provides feedback on the quality of data and further information required; - Compiles and shares with the national PPG team and stakeholders the international best experience in policy development, legal and regulatory frameworks and enforcement systems for protected area management and economic instruments, such as those envisaged in the PIF; - Provide support and guidance to the team leader in both planning and management of the PPG implementation and in regard to technical tasks. - Based on the inputs from national experts and in close cooperation with the key national stakeholders compiles final baseline/situational analysis for the FSP. This will include a precise definition of baseline projects, activities, budgets, goals and co-financial links to GEF outcomes; definition of GEF incremental value per outcome and output; presentation of results of the incremental cost-analysis in matrices. - Based on the inputs from national experts and the best international practice, prepares a quantified assessment of global environmental benefits for biodiversity. - Based on the international experience, assists in reconfirming/specifying the project strategy, finalizing project sections on: (a) An assessment of the social, economic and financial sustainability of proposed project activities; (b) Assessment of alternatives to the project strategy and establishing the cost effectiveness of the preferred strategy and suite of activities; (c) A replication strategy for project activities; (d) Assessment of the risks to the proposed project activities and identifying measure to mitigate these risks; (e) incremental cost analysis;

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based on national experts inputs, develops project monitoring and evaluation system for the FSP including the completed tracking tools, including a set of indicators, baselines and targets. - Elaborates a Logical Framework of the project based on the guidance on UNDP SP IRRF Outcome and Indicator(s). - Prepares M&E plan and budget; - Analysis of the training, public awareness raising and other capacity building needs and finalizing the project's capacity training strategy and activities; - Based on national experts input, elaborates Stakeholder Involvement and Public Participation plans, along with an action plan for incorporation of the gender aspects in the project. - Based on inputs of local experts, prepares the draft of the quantified description of the global environmental benefits of the project; - Reviews and improves the METTs, LD PMAT, CCM TT and SFM Tracking Tools; - Guiding the inputs of local and international experts working for the project and finalizing the project design and presentation.
Local	<p>Chief Biodiversity Expert and Team Leader</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 10 years experience in research and applied conservation activities in Belarus - Good English language - Familiarity with the project target areas - Proven managerial skills 	400	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develops practical steps required to develop the full sized project proposal, including an overall workplan and detailed TORs and workplans for all local consultants - Coordinates project preparation with all partners engaged (co-financiers, local authorities, Government). - Develops the section on the Baseline National Programs - Guides the work of consultants and subcontractors and oversee compliance with the agreed work plan; - Develops a risk analysis table, and development of risk mitigation strategy for the project to be reviewed by the international expert. - Develops a plan for the replication of project activities, assisted by the international expert. - Designs project monitoring and evaluation plan, and budget, building on information from all national experts, and jointly with the international expert. - Determines exact means of measurement, baselines and targets for all the indicators listed in <i>Table A.1.4&5 Incremental cost</i>

				<p><i>reasoning and global environmental benefits</i> in the PIF,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develops a costing table for all expected project outcomes and outputs, and the indicative procurement plan - Finalizes the project logical framework, with particular emphasis on ecological indicators, bird & mammals. - Monitors PPG expenditures, commitments and balance of funds under the project budget lines, and draft project budget revisions; - Liaises with project partners to ensure their co-financing contributions are provided within the agreed terms; - Drafts an initial Action plan for incorporation of gender aspects in the project, with quantifiable baseline and target indicators, as per GEF and UNDP guidance. - Select the sites (protected areas) for work under Output 1.1 (total area 280,500 ha), describe them, the biodiversity values, and the proposed economic activities - Develops a detailed action plan for the Cranberry picking scheme (to be piloted under Outcome 1.4) <p>Develops an action plan for the implementation of the willow clearing, hydrological restoration and revegetation envisaged under Output 3.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develops the action plan for the implementation of the following three outputs of the PIF: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Outcome 3.3 Populations of globally threatened Aquatic Warbler supported through placement of fledglings (relocated from neighboring micro-populations) at the restored wetland sites o Outcome 3.4 Population of the globally threatened Greater Spotted Eagle strengthened through artificial nests, regulation of the disturbance factor and advocacy activities with local communities o Outcome 3.5 Up to date research on and monitoring of population status, trends, threats and conservation needs for IUCN threatened species
Local	Forestry and biodiversity	350	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defines the sequence of activities to implement Output 1.2 on the mosaic forestry

	<p>expert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 7 years experience in developing practical solutions in the area of sustainable forest management in Belarus 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - planning at 50,000 ha - Defines the sequence of activities for the introduction of conservation-orientated forest management at 150,000 ha (PIF Output 2.1) - Develops a plan of activities on the introduction of a decision making model for the peatland forests under Output 2.2
Local	<p>Wetlands biomass use specialist and GHG calculation expert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 3 years of experience in biomass management - Experience with calculation of greenhouse gas emission avoidance and sequestration capacities of ecosystems 	400	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jointly with biodiversity team leader, defines the sequence of activities to implement Outcome 1.3 Financially self-sustainable wetland and woody (shrubs, willow) biomass harvesting and processing program launched over 2,000 ha/y in partnership with private sector at three key PAs improving the status of habitat of over 50% of the global populations of the Aquatic Warbler and Greater Spotted Eagle - Design an economic plan for harvesting, processing and use wetland biomass, indicating roles and responsibilities of actors involved, technological requirements and time table for the implementation. - Assists in the calculation of GHG benefits of the project and completion of the CCM TT and SFM tracking tools.
Local	<p>Expert on European Bison management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proven record of academic research on genetic diversity of European Biison 	300	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defines the sequence of activities to implement Output 1.2 on Improved feeding base of the globally threatened European Bison resulting from the project's new financial mechanism to sustain and raise productivity of the natural meadows and forests, involving local communities the mosaic forestry planning at 50,000 ha. - Defines the sequence of activities to be implemented under PIF Outcome 3.2 The genetic status of Nalibokskaia Puscha micro population of the European Bison improved through a program on the exchange of individuals across micro-populations

Local	Expert on sustainable use of floodplain pastures - Economic or agricultural background - At least 3 years of experience in developing solutions in the area of sustainable pasture management in Belarus	300	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design an economic plan for pastures and hen harvesting on flood plain meadows indicating roles and responsibilities of actors involved along with technological requirements and timing. - Defines the sequence of activities to be implemented under PIF Outcome 1.4 Financial sustainability of key Ramsar sites supported through a community based sustainable livestock management at Turov Lug and community-based eco- and agro-tourism at several sites.
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Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, administered by UNEP, advises the Global Environment Facility
(Version 5)

STAP Scientific and Technical screening of the Project Identification Form (PIF)

Date of screening: May 08, 2015

Screeners: Lev Neretin

Panel member validation by: Brian Child
Consultant(s):

I. PIF Information *(Copied from the PIF)*

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 7993

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Belarus

PROJECT TITLE: Conservation-oriented Management of Forests and Wetlands to Achieve Multiple Benefits

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Ministry of Forestry

GEF FOCAL AREA: Multi Focal Area

II. STAP Advisory Response *(see table below for explanation)*

Based on this PIF screening, STAP's advisory response to the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agency(ies): Minor issues to be considered during project design

III. Further guidance from STAP

1. The objective of this project Conservation-oriented management of forests and wetlands to achieve multiple benefits in Belarus is "To introduce conservation-centered and financially self-sustainable approach to management of forests and wetlands bearing internationally important biodiversity and important for climate and land integrity".
2. Component 1 of the project aims to improve management and financial sustainability of 280,500 ha of protected areas through business planning and partnerships with private sector, work with local communities to conserve 50,000 ha of key connective habitat for European Bison, pilot wetland rehabilitation (2,000ha) through harvesting invasive woody species for biomass, and protect key Ramsar sites through community engagement in cranberry picking, tourism and livestock management. Component 2 aims to improve biodiversity management on 150,000 ha of managed forests through biodiversity mapping and awareness, and on 250,000 ha of peat through improved stock-taking (?) and information. Component 3 will target 1,500ha of critical habitat for Aquatic Warbler, Greater Spotted Eagle, Great Snipe and other species by controlling invasive woody species and managing water tables, improve

genetic diversity of a micro-population of European Bison, artificially enhance Aquatic Warbler populations on restored wetland sites, provide artificial nests for Greater Spotted Eagles, and update research and monitoring of status and needs of IUCN threatened species in Belarus.

3. The case for conserving globally important biodiversity is strong. The section on drivers of degradation is useful, but would be strengthened through the use of maps and if it was made more concise with additional editing and organization. The baseline scenario shows reasonable commitment to these issues in Belarus. This is further validated by the coordination of this project with, for example, the World Bank Forest Sector GEF-6 project through the Ministry of Environment. The narrative for the proposed alternative scenario is written and organized in a way that is hard to read, and does not always appear to match the much stronger project description. This may well simply be a question of editing and text organization. The incremental cost reasoning table is strong, although it is not always easy to reconcile the numbers provided. Under climate change, for instance, there is "avoided deforestation on 11,000ha resulted from redesigned management plans for globally important forests at 150,000 ha". What does this mean, exactly? Peatland forest restoration of 10,000 ha and peat restoration of 2,000 ha is difficult to reconcile with the figures in the Project Summary table. These figures seem to be repeated in different parts of this table, and are difficult to follow. It is therefore particularly important that these outcomes are carefully summarized (as indicators) in the Project summary table.

4. As it currently stands, the project is largely a combination of valuable but individual actions to address a range of important biodiversity issues in Belarus. The process of implementing these changes is not really described, but could well be the most important contribution of the project if well designed. There may well be an intention to use these pilots to shift national norms and policies about biodiversity management in forests and peatlands, but the project would be stronger if it made this explicit, and also spent more time thinking through the process of how to implement these pilots in ways that established national norms, standards and even policy. A good example to learn from is the UNDP/GEF Grasslands Project in South Africa. In a somewhat similar manner to this project, it used high level facilitators to work with stakeholders to solve field-level problems, but importantly it ensured that these field practices were codified as guidelines by the stakeholders. Because of the widespread engagement of stakeholders in issues like urban protected areas, mine rehabilitation and offsets, and biodiversity management in forests, these guidelines were often adopted as national standards and norms. Perhaps Component 4 should be added and include 3.5 (monitoring and research) but also the codification of best practice?

5. The project makes an effort to reconcile delivery of multiple global environmental benefits in biodiversity, land degradation and climate change. The choice of peatland ecosystems is a strong case for this type of interventions. The project assumes that "release of carbon [will be] prevented and sequestration capacities restored of soil and vegetation at 250,000 ha of degraded peatland soils". Carbon cycle dynamics of peatland ecosystems is complicated. Peatlands store carbon in different parts of their ecosystem (biomass, litter, peat layer, mineral subsoil layer), each having their own GHGs (carbon dioxide, methane, and

often nitrous oxide) dynamics, both spatial and temporal (e.g., Parish, F., Sirin, A., Charman, D., Joosten, H., Minayeva, T., Silvius, M. and Stringer, L. (Eds.) 2008. Assessment on Peatlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change: Main Report. Global Environment Centre, Kuala Lumpur and Wetlands International, Wageningen.). There are multiple best management practices (BMPs) to restore degraded peatlands that would have measurable GHG benefits (reviewed recently by FAO (2014): <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4029e.pdf>). Most of these practices aim to sustain/increase waterlogging and restrict aerobic decay of carbon in peatland soils. This project proposes a range of practices within and outside of PAs (regulated cranberry picking, sustainable grazing, sustainable wetland biomass collection, reconstruction of drainage infrastructure and etc.) that could have opposite impacts on GHG emissions. STAP recommends that project proponents carefully review existing literature on the potential impacts of different management techniques for peatland and wetlands restoration on GHG emissions. In some instances, preserving biodiversity and local livelihoods could run counter to GHG reduction benefits and will be locally specific. Final choice of management options should be informed by the assessment of all potential benefits (biodiversity, sustainable land management and GHG benefits). GHG benefits, particularly, should be assessed for project model areas based on the existing information if not additional measurements. In assessing GHG impact of project activities, STAP recommends using new GHG accounting for GEF project framework that will be submitted as Information Document for GEF's 48th Council meeting.

6. It is surprising that the PIF does not mention any lessons learned from several completed projects on peatlands in Belarus and elsewhere including projects funded by the GEF (IDs: 2057, 2104, 2751, particularly 4468 focused on carbon stocks monitoring, 5764, and 6947 as well as SGP). Of particular relevance are experiences of the completed German government funded project summarized in: Carbon credits from peatland rewetting Climate-biodiversity - land use. Science, policy, implementation and recommendations of a pilot project in Belarus Ed.: Franziska Tanneberger; Wendelin Wichtmann, 2011. 223 pp. Assuming that this project could generate significant MRV carbon benefits potentially eligible for voluntary carbon markets, it is surprising that PIF does not mention this possibility.

7. Therefore, several primary recommendations stem from this review:

- Ensure consistency (especially numbers of ha conserved) between the narrative and key tables.
- Consider using the field pilots as a means of working with a range of stakeholders to create national guidelines, norms and standards.
- Analyze and capitalize on lessons learned from earlier activities.
- Assess multiple environmental benefits including GHG emissions of different proposed management strategies and select and prioritize them accordingly.

GEF Council Comments

Germany:

It is mentioned that major parts of the forests in Belarus are certified (e.g. FSC). The PIF should clarify the links to this certification approach, whether biodiversity aspects are respected in these areas and whether this can be adapted to non-certified areas.

NOTE: UNDP provided an initial responses as follows (this can be used as a basis for a more elaborate response in the UNDP Project Document):

Consideration of biodiversity values in the FSC certification is present, but does not cover all types of forests and all biodiversity values. FSC is a trade mechanism targeting forests that are logged for timber to provide exporters with additional market advantage. Wetland forests or forests in protected area are non-production forests important for biodiversity and they would normally be covered by FSC. The values that such conservation important non-production forests have for soil, species and climate would not normally be part of the FSC biodiversity assessment matrix and would require specialized assessments and careful conservation and management planning options.