

GEF-8 REQUEST FOR CEO CHILD ENDORSEMENT/APPROVAL

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General Child Project Information

Child Project Title

Catalyzing transformation to sustainable food systems in Eswatini

Region Eswatini	GEF Project ID 11226
Country(ies) Eswatini	Type of Project FSP
GEF Agency(ies) FAO	GEF Agency Project ID 744377
Project Executing Entity(s) Ministry of Agriculture, Eswatini Eswatini Water and Agricultural Development Enterprise (ESWADE), Eswatini	Project Executing Type Government Government
GEF Focal Area (s) Multi Focal Area	Submission Date 3/31/2025
Type of Trust Fund GET	Project Duration (Months) 60
GEF Project Grant: (a) 3,519,725.00	Agency Fee(s) Grant: (b) 316,775.00
PPG Amount: (c) 150,000.00	PPG Agency Fee(s): (d) 13,500.00
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d) 4000000	Total Co-financing 32,216,462.00

Project Sector (CCM Only)

AFOLU

Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
Principal Objective 2	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2	Principal Objective 2

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, to offer a snapshot of what is being proposed. The summary should include: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? ii) as a child project under a program, explain how the description fits in the broader context of the specific program; (iii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative,

how will this be achieved? and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Eswatini’s food systems face rising challenges driven by low agricultural productivity, reliance on rain-fed subsistence farming, and unsustainable agricultural practices. Despite agriculture being the primary livelihood source for 79% of the rural population, food production has consistently been declining, and the country remains a net importer of staple and livestock products. Additionally, drought, water scarcity, and volatile global markets are further presenting challenges in the sugar and beef export sectors, further weakening food and economic security.

Environmental degradation is also a key concern. Over 200,000 hectares of biodiversity-rich ecosystems have been converted to agriculture, with significant emissions from deforestation, monocropping, overgrazing, and livestock methane production. Invasive alien species and unsustainable land and water use are intensifying pressures on already vulnerable ecosystems. Meanwhile, climate change and shifting dietary demands are accelerating degradation, especially in rural landscapes where poverty affects 70% of the population.

In response, this GEF-8 project will catalyse the transformation to sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food systems in Eswatini, aligned with the national Food Systems Integrated Programme (FSIP). The project aims to deliver environmental benefits while strengthening food and nutrition, security and rural livelihoods.

The interventions are structured around four components:

- Strengthened food system governance through institutional capacity building and policy coherence
- Improved access to sustainable financing mechanisms
- Enhanced management of production landscapes and value chains to restore ecosystem integrity; and
- Knowledge generation, innovation, and monitoring & evaluation to support adaptive management and scaling of best practices.

Child Project Description Overview

Project Objective

To catalyse the transformation to sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems, delivering environmental benefits and contributing to food and nutrition security and livelihoods of Emaswati

Project Components

1. Strengthened food system governance

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
138,188.00	4,618,435.00

Outcome:

Outcome 1. Strengthened collaboration and governance enabling food systems transformation in Eswatini.

Indicators:

- Institutional arrangement for FS transformation in place
- Number of legal frameworks reviewed and aligned for FS transformation and gender equity
- Traceability system fully developed and operational.

Output:

Output 1.1: Strengthened institutional arrangements and multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) for cross-sectoral planning, dialogue and action for the transformation of food systems towards sustainability and resilience

Output 1.2: Legal frameworks (including sectoral subsidy programs) reviewed and aligned for food systems transformation

Output 1.3: Sustainability standards, transparency and traceability systems established and/or strengthened

2. Improved financing

Component Type	Trust Fund
Investment	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,529,721.00	2,677,974.00

Outcome:

Outcome 2. Increased availability of and access to finance in support of sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems.

Indicators

- Number of blended financial products aligned with food systems developed (10) – tailored to inclusively serve men, women and youth smallholders and SMEs.
- At least 5 insurance products developed and piloted.
- Number of grant beneficiaries, with a larger participation of youth and women (2000, 50% men, 50 % women, at least 30 % youth)
- At least \$3 million increase in total value of loans and grants received by smallholder farmers and SMEs (#men, women, youth) and women-led enterprises in support of sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems (gender disaggregated).

Output:

Output 2.1: Capacity of Eswatini Agricultural Investment Multi-Stakeholder Platform strengthened

Output 2.2: Innovative financial products and incentive instruments aligned with food systems sustainability

Output 2.3: Tools for monitoring performance and impact (including gender aspects) of investments in food systems strengthened

Output 2.4: Strengthened Agriculture Integrated Information System (AIIS).

Output 2.5: Strengthened, inclusive and gender-sensitive value chains and business models.

3. Strengthened management of production landscapes and value chains

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,300,153.00	20,411,456.00

Outcome:

Outcome 3. Management of target production landscapes and value chains enhanced to deliver environmental (biodiversity, carbon and land degradation neutrality) and food and nutrition security and livelihoods benefits.

Indicators

- At least 6 ILM plans updated and under implementation.
- **Core indicator 3:** 20, 000 ha of communal land under restoration.
- **Core indicator 4:** 80,000 ha of landscapes under improved practices.
- **Core indicator 6:** 3.255 million metric tons of CO2e mitigated.
- **Core indicator 11:** At least 25,000 people (50% women and at least 30% youth) benefiting from improved production, strengthened value chains and business models, and livelihoods.

Output:

Output 3.1: Support to participatory implementation of ILM plans

Output 3.2: Improve innovation and extension systems to support smallholder and SME access to sustainable technologies and practices (including those addressing post-harvest losses and waste along value chains)

Output 3.3: Integrated conservation of biodiversity (in-situ and ex-situ) and rangeland management practices strengthened

Output 3.4: Strategies for the generation of Indigenous seed varieties developed

Output 3.5: Community Development Plans strengthened

Output 3.6: Integrated water management approaches developed and strengthened

Output 3.7: Incentives embedded into ecosystem restoration activities

4. Knowledge management, innovation

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
221,057.00	1,381,837.00

Outcome:

Outcome 4.1 Knowledge on innovations shared through the global platform and relevant platforms.

Indicators:

- Number of knowledge products (including gender aspects) shared.
- Number of impact stories and best practices on gender and women empowerment shared
- Number of engagements with the IP Global platform
- Number of new initiatives in Eswatini influenced and adopting FSIP approaches and best practices from the project.

Output:

Output 4.1: Gender-responsive knowledge and M&E systems linked to ENAIP implemented

Output 4.2: Engagement with the IP Global Platform and other projects under the FSIP to improve knowledge sharing, coordination, and scaling up of results

Output 4.3: Gender-responsive communication strategy for behavioural change implemented

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
163,000.00	1,592,643.00

Outcome:

Outcome 4.2 Effective and efficient project coordination and M&E for impact.

Output:

M&E system implemented.

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1. Strengthened food system governance	138,188.00	4,618,435.00
2. Improved financing	1,529,721.00	2,677,974.00
3. Strengthened management of production landscapes and value chains	1,300,153.00	20,411,456.00
4. Knowledge management, innovation	221,057.00	1,381,837.00
M&E	163,000.00	1,592,643.00
Subtotal	3,352,119.00	30,682,345.00
Project Management Cost	167,606.00	1,534,117.00
Total Project Cost (\$)	3,519,725.00	32,216,462.00

Please provide Justification

CHILD PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Since this is a child project under a program, please include an explanation of how the context fits within the specific program agenda.

Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Overview

1. Eswatini is the smallest landlocked country in Africa, in terms of land area and population – 17,364 km² and about 1.2 million people. The country is part of the Maputaland biodiversity hotspot, recognised as one of the most biodiverse regions in Southern Africa. The largest remaining intact altitudinal gradients of natural ecosystems in Southern Africa is found in Eswatini. However, these ecosystems face numerous threats, including land-use changes, invasive alien plants, overgrazing, deforestation, climate change, expanding agricultural land and human settlements. It is estimated that 200,000 ha of biodiversity-rich ecosystems have been converted into agricultural land.

2. Administratively, the country is divided into four regions: Hhohho in the north, Manzini in the centre, Shiselweni in the south, and Lubombo in the east. At the sub-national level, governance is managed through a traditional leadership system, consisting of 59 *Tinkhundla* (similar to counties) and 385 chiefdoms (similar to sub-counties). Eswatini is a constitutional monarchy, with the King serving as the Head of State, and parliamentary system operating.

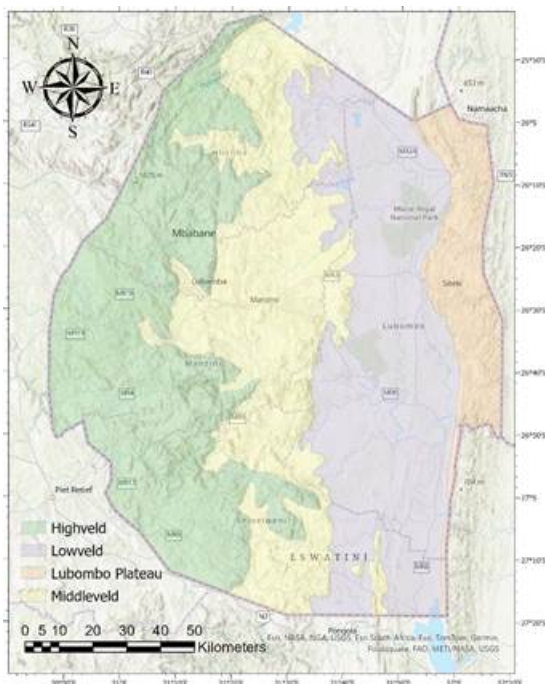
3. Eswatini is divided into four (4) physiographic zones: Highveld, Middleveld, Lowveld, E and Lubombo Range¹ ranging from humid and near-temperate climates to arid climates (Figure 1).

- ***Highveld***: This is situated in the western part of the country and is characterised by high rainfall and upland terrain. It has generally poor and shallow soils, with the land predominantly used for commercial forest plantations. While only 3% of this region boasts excellent arable land, an additional 10% is classified as having fair potential for crop cultivation.
- ***Middleveld***: To the east, the Middleveld covers approximately 28% of Eswatini's total area. Warmer and drier than the Highveld, the Middleveld exhibits varying agricultural potential. The upper Middleveld features good to fair arable soils on nearly 20% of its land, while the lower Middleveld has a slightly lower proportion of suitable soils (around 10%). Due to its favourable conditions, the Middleveld is

the most densely populated region in terms of both human and livestock populations.

- ***Lowveld:*** It is a relatively flat and low-lying area, that faces a significant drought risk but possesses fertile soils. This zone is primarily dedicated to irrigated agriculture, particularly sugar and citrus production.
- ***Lubombo:*** The Lubombo plateau, rising sharply from the Lowveld, comprises about 12% of the region with good or fair arable land. Its vegetation is predominantly wooded bushland.

a)



b)

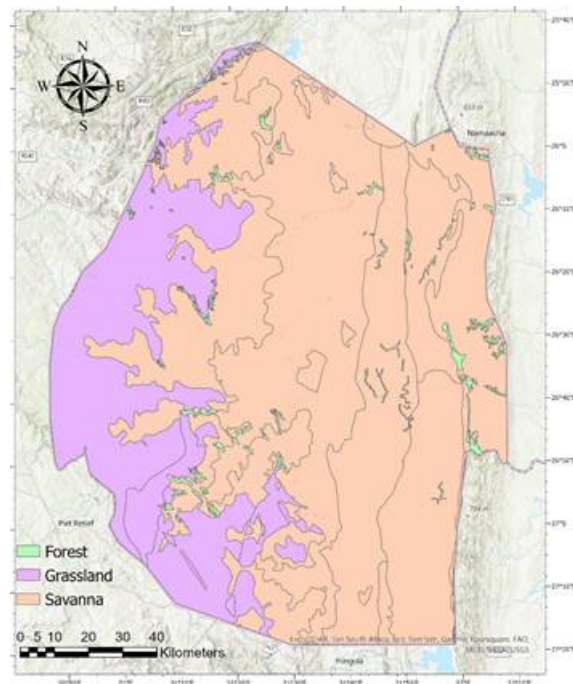


Figure 1. a) The agro-ecological zones of Eswatini and b) The ecosystems of Eswatini.

Socio-Economic Context

4. The country has a population of approximately 1.2 million people, predominantly rural population with 79.4% relying on subsistence farming. The majority lives in regular households, with a small minority in collective households. The country has a young population, with 56.9% under the age of 25. Eswatini's annual population growth rate is 1.0%, and its population density is 67 persons per km². The rural population accounts for 75.8 % of the total population. The country has an estimated per capita GDP of \$3,823,133 though it faces significant challenges such as high poverty levels (63% in 2023), income inequality, and unemployment (47.1% in 2023). Food insecurity, biodiversity loss, and land degradation are critical issues affecting agricultural productivity.

5. Eswatini is a member of the Common Monetary Area (CMA), has a relatively diversified economy. Agriculture, forestry, and mining contribute about 13 % to the country's GDP, while manufacturing—chiefly textile and related processing—accounts for 37 %. The remaining 50 % of GDP is dominated by services, with government services playing a leading role^{[2]²}. The country maintains close economic ties with South Africa, which accounts for over 70 % of its imports and approximately 65 % of its exports^{[3]³}. Eswatini's economy is heavily dependent on regional growth and inflows from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), which represent 42 % of its earnings was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic^{[4]⁴}.

6. Historically, agriculture was considered the backbone of Eswatini's economy. However, its contribution to GDP has declined substantially, from 23% in 1980 to an estimated 8.4% in 2020^{[5]⁵}. The decline in agricultural output is largely attributable to climate change, which has brought about severe droughts, floods, and hailstorms. The 2015–2016 El Niño-induced drought, the worst in 50 years, led to a 40 % reduction in maize production—Eswatini's staple food. Other factors impeding agricultural productivity, especially for smallholder farmers and rural enterprises, include inadequate infrastructure, limited access to improved agricultural technologies, insufficient finance and markets, scarcity of water, and low investment in inputs and equipment. Small-scale farmers, who manage approximately 61 % of SNL (Swazi Nation Land) farm holdings, typically have low output and productivity^{[6]⁶}. They tend to rely on traditional tools, use limited improved inputs such as fertilizers, and have minimal capital expenditure. These farmers primarily focus on maize production, often combined with traditional livestock-keeping practices.

7. Eswatini is a food-deficit country and relies heavily on food imports to meet the needs of its population. The country's low agricultural productivity results in grain yields of only 1.5 tonnes per hectare, far below the ideal 4–6 tonnes per hectare. As a result, local production only satisfies about half of the national grain requirements. This issue is further compounded by significant food losses—an average of 30 %—due to material and financial waste throughout the value chains, as well as the impacts of climate change^{[7]⁷}. A combination of economic decline, the effects of COVID-19, rising unemployment, climate-related shocks, and reduced agricultural productivity has contributed to widespread food insecurity in Eswatini. The IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis^{[8]⁸} for June 2023–March

2024 reported that over 183,000 people (16% of the population) are facing high levels of acute food insecurity, with 14,000 people in an emergency state. For rural households, food insecurity is further exacerbated by a reliance on rain-fed crop production and the high cost of food and agricultural inputs. The Lubombo and Shiselweni regions are the worst affected, with a large proportion of poor and extremely poor households experiencing low productivity due to recurrent dry spells. Women-headed households are more vulnerable to food insecurity, primarily due to limited access to land and minimal decision-making power—issues rooted in land ownership challenges previously discussed.

Agriculture and Food Systems

8. The agricultural sector in Eswatini is key to achieving national and household food security, and a source of foreign earnings. The sector comprises mainly the sugarcane industry, cotton, forestry, maize, vegetables, forestry, citrus fruits, banana, livestock (beef, dairy, poultry, piggery, goats, sheep, etc), and exports of agro-based commodities including sugar, timber, citrus fruits, canned fruits, meat and textiles. Food production in Eswatini is steadily declining due to the reliance on imports, including processed foods, especially from South Africa. Sugar production and exports are also under pressure due to drought, water scarcity and uncertainty about world market prices, among other factors. Dietary patterns indicate high reliance on maize and other starches and low consumption of fruits and vegetables. Food consumption habits increasingly include packaged and processed foods, especially in urban areas.

9. There are two basic forms of land tenure. freehold or title deed land (TDL) comprises about 40 % of the total arable land area; the other 60 % is customary Swazi Nation Land (SNL), which is held in trust by the King for the country. TDL is mainly used for commercial farming in which significant areas are under irrigation. Approximately 79 % of this land is planted, and title deed land contributes approximately 80 % of overall agriculture production⁹. SNL is mainly used for rainfed cropping and grazing, with approximately 55 % of these lands under crops. These croplands are allocated by the local chiefs to individual households and SNL grazing lands are communal. Only 11 % of the total land area is used for crops, while approximately 48 % is used for communal grazing, 19 % for commercial ranching and 6 % for commercial forests. The rest is used for residential purposes, natural reserves, reservoirs and orchards¹⁰. The total area of crop land in Eswatini entails 195,000 ha, of which 60 % is SNL and 40 % is TDL.

10. Agricultural production is dominated by two crops: rainfed maize and irrigated sugar. In the rainfed farming systems, maize occupies 84 % of the crop area (more in the higher rainfall areas such as the Highveld and upper Middleveld) that is mainly produced by small-scale individual (subsistence) farmers that normal engage Informal small-scale operators in activities such as transportation, storage and distribution. The Maize that is

produced by small-scale farmers are sold informally through open air markets in rural areas, town markets and farm-gate sales to informal vendors or roadside farm stalls. Smallholder farmers also sell their produce to the few millers available in the country as well as to National Maize Corporation. There are, however, few commercial actors, such as large-scale maize farmers, millers and packaging industries like the Ngwane Mills that is involved in milling of maize and animal feeds. Consequently, there is an annual shortfall in maize production of about 30,000 tonnes, which is made up through imports. Approximately 70,337 ha of maize and 58,523 ha of sugar cane were harvested in 2019^[11]¹¹.

11. Livestock production plays a pivotal role in Eswatini's agricultural sector, serving as a crucial source of income, cultural value, and economic development. There are three animal production systems that are predominate in the country, that includes the traditional smallholder system on SNL with minimal inputs, high stocking rates and uncontrolled mating, which accounts for approximately 82 percent of grazing livestock; commercial ranching on TDL; and modern industrial-scale pig and poultry production^[12]¹², the sector faces several challenges, including high costs of feed and vaccines. Despite the potential for regional and international export markets, productivity remains low, limiting the sector's ability to meet both domestic and international demand, leading to an increased reliance on imports. In recent years, the livestock population has declined due to factors such as droughts, overgrazing, invasive alien plant species (IAPS), and land reallocation for human settlements and agricultural schemes. The 2015/16 El Niño-induced drought, in particular, was devastating, resulting in the loss of 47,000 cattle and causing significant economic damage, especially in the Lubombo and Shiselweni regions^[13]¹³. Despite these challenges, the demand for livestock meat continues to grow due to population increases and changing dietary patterns. This rising demand has led to an increase in livestock production, which, in turn, contributes to higher methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas that exacerbates climate change. A Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory^[14]¹⁴ of Eswatini conducted in 2018 revealed that the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector was a net emitter of 1,551.14 Gg CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e). This marked a significant 128.35 % increase (excluding Land and Harvested Wood Products) in emissions compared to 1990 levels, when Eswatini was a net carbon sink, contributing -1,090.61 Gg CO₂e. A significant (24 %) of these emissions were attributed to livestock, specifically from enteric fermentation and manure management.

12. The Government of Eswatini is committed to reforming the agricultural sector by revitalising and modernising its performance. The government believes that shifting to a competitive market-based system can produce significant gains in agricultural

productivity, and a stronger focus on value-added and enhanced employment opportunities. robust private sector is needed for economic diversification and sustainable growth. Substantial private investment in the agricultural sector is required to meet these challenges and enable the sector's potential contribution to growth, diversification, food security and employment generation in the context of the overall development policies. Yet, there are currently no incentives for private sector investment in food and agriculture.

Land degradation

13. Land degradation in Eswatini is a significant environmental concern, with soil erosion, particularly gully erosion, being the most visible manifestation. Beyond the degradation of soil, landscapes, natural vegetation, and forests are also widely affected. Poor range management practices, such as overstocking, have contributed to the overgrazing of rangelands. Nearly a third of the country's total land area, and over half of its communal grazing lands, suffer from serious to very serious erosion^[15]¹⁵. Forests, too, are severely impacted, with certain types showing a marked decrease in regeneration capacity. This degradation of forests is particularly concerning, given their role in ecosystem stability and biodiversity support. Climate change is expected to aggravate land degradation further in Eswatini. Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns will likely reduce vegetation cover and alter species composition, leading to increased deforestation, desertification, and disaster risks such as floods and droughts. These climate-driven changes exacerbate the existing issues of soil erosion and land degradation, placing additional stress on ecosystems already under pressure from human activities and unsustainable land-use practices.

14. A major factor contributing to land degradation in Eswatini is the conversion of natural habitats to other land uses, particularly for agriculture and urban development. This has led to habitat fragmentation and the degradation of remaining ecosystems, which in turn results in significant biodiversity losses, and subsequently increased GHG emissions. The 2018 GHG inventory^[16]¹⁶ indicates that of the 1,551.14 Gg CO₂e total AFOLU emissions, 59 % were attributed to deforestation through forests conversion and cropland expansion. The extensive fragmentation of savanna habitats by intensive agricultural practices is a critical threat to biodiversity. According to the Swaziland Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biodiversity, nearly a quarter of the country's terrestrial ecosystems have been converted to other land uses. Approximately 4,280 km² of biodiversity-rich ecosystems have been transformed, primarily into industrial timber plantations, sugarcane plantations, and urban areas^[17]¹⁷. Aquatic ecosystems are also

under threat, particularly wetlands, which are often drained for development or harmed by changes in their catchment areas, further degrading these vital ecosystems.

15. The country's food systems are also a significant contributor to land degradation and the depletion of both renewable and non-renewable resources^[18]¹⁸. Soil erosion, salinisation, and water depletion are some of the key outcomes of unsustainable agricultural practices. Additionally, deforestation and the encroachment of uncontrolled settlements into forested areas are depleting forest resources. These dynamics threaten the very resources that are essential for food production, thereby increasing food insecurity and poverty. The degradation of productive land and natural resources endangers the long-term sustainability of Eswatini's food systems, rendering the country more vulnerable to climate change and further challenging its socio-economic stability. Deforestation is particularly pronounced in the eastern half of Eswatini, where natural woodlands and bushlands have been significantly reduced. Between 1990 and 2015, the country lost approximately 42,620 ha of these ecosystems, with an average deforestation rate of 1,704 ha annually^[19]¹⁹. The drivers of deforestation include the expansion of small-scale sugarcane plantations, the demand for firewood, and the clearing of land for human settlements. Deforestation has severe consequences for both the environment and the economy, as forests play a crucial role in maintaining biodiversity, soil fertility, and carbon sequestration. The loss of these forests undermines efforts to combat climate change and degrades the natural resources upon which local communities depend.

16. Several drivers are responsible for the continuing degradation of land resources in Eswatini. These include unsustainable land use practices, uncontrolled fires, pests, diseases, overgrazing, and the improper management of water resources. Additionally, severe weather events, such as droughts and floods, have exacerbated the situation, as have human activities such as settlement expansion and the clearing of land for agriculture. According to the Land Degradation Neutrality Assessment, five major land degradation hotspots have been identified across the country's eco-geographical regions, each with its own set of drivers.

17. Invasive alien plant species (IAPS) pose enormous threats to many of Eswatini's ecosystems and the very livelihoods of Eswatini. Over the years, many exotic plant species have been introduced in the country, some of which have become invasive. These invasive alien plants exhibit challenges that have the propensity to diminish ecosystems services such as reducing water supplies, exacerbating wildfires, degrading valuable rangelands, reducing agricultural productivity, threatening human and livestock health and impacting negatively on biodiversity. IAPS have direct impacts on livestock food systems – through reduction of the quantity and quality of forage for livestock (invasive plant species generally are less palatable and are low in nutritional value and can be toxic),

reduced water availability, and replacement of native species. These ultimately contribute to the reduction of livestock productivity, and more pressure on rangelands and overall landscapes. Barriers to the control of IAPS are limited collaborative approach between landowners, community groups, industries and all levels of government at a landscape scale. Limited adoption of risk-based prevention and early intervention which is most cost-effective for managing IAPS, considering feasibility, likelihood of success and impact. Inadequate funding and financial capacity are made available for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In the Highveld region, overgrazing, over-exploitation of vegetation, and improper soil management on steep slopes contribute to excessive water runoff and erosion. In the Middleveld, deforestation due to human settlement and the expansion of sugarcane plantations, combined with overgrazing and poor soil management, are the primary causes of land degradation. The Lowveld faces similar issues, with high rates of deforestation driven by the conversion of forested land into sugarcane plantations and other commercial crops. In the Lubombo region, improper soil management and deforestation are compounded by the invasion of alien plant species, such as *Chromolaena odorata*, which further threatens native ecosystems. Eswatini has recognised the urgent need to address land degradation and has begun implementing measures under the framework of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). This approach seeks to balance land degradation with restoration efforts, ensuring that future land use is sustainable, and that degraded land is rehabilitated.

Climate Change

18. Climate change is already affecting Eswatini's key economic sectors. The Annual Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Report^{[20]²⁰} indicates a concerning 3°C increase in average annual temperatures between 1961 and 2010. Minimum temperatures have risen more rapidly than maximum temperatures, exacerbating the impact on water resources. As temperatures continue to rise, evaporation rates accelerate, leading to a decline in open-water bodies. Projections suggest a 40 % decrease in streamflow by 2050 due to reduced precipitation. The country has witnessed significant shifts in precipitation patterns, higher temperatures, and an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. Recent disasters, including the 2025/26 El Niño, Cyclone Eloise, and widespread hailstorms, have caused substantial damage to households, infrastructure, and agriculture. The agriculture sector, a cornerstone of Eswatini's economy, is particularly vulnerable to climate change. Dry spells during the 2022/23 agricultural season negatively impacted crop yields, especially maize, leading to food shortages and highlighting the interconnectedness of climate change and food insecurity.

19. Several climate predictions derived from the Coupled Model Inter-comparison Projects (CMIPs), used by the World Climate Research Program (WCRP), are available to forecast future climate scenarios. Climate change data for Eswatini, based on the

CMIP6 model, were sourced from the World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal^{[21]²¹} for Development Practitioners and Policy Makers and utilised to illustrate the projected changes in climate (temperature and precipitation) for the periods 1950–2014 and 2020–2100 (Figure 3). Eswatini is projected to experience significant warming across all future scenarios, with the extent of this warming highly dependent on global greenhouse gas emissions. Under the most severe emissions scenario, SSP5-8.5, temperatures could rise by nearly 10°C by 2100. In contrast, the most optimistic scenario, SSP1-1.9, predicts a more limited warming of around 2°C. While projections for precipitation show high variability, the total annual rainfall is not expected to undergo drastic changes in any scenario. However, increased variability in rainfall patterns—particularly under higher-emissions scenarios—could result in more frequent droughts and heavy rainfall events. This variability poses serious risks to agriculture and water resources, both of which are critical to Eswatini's economy and food security.

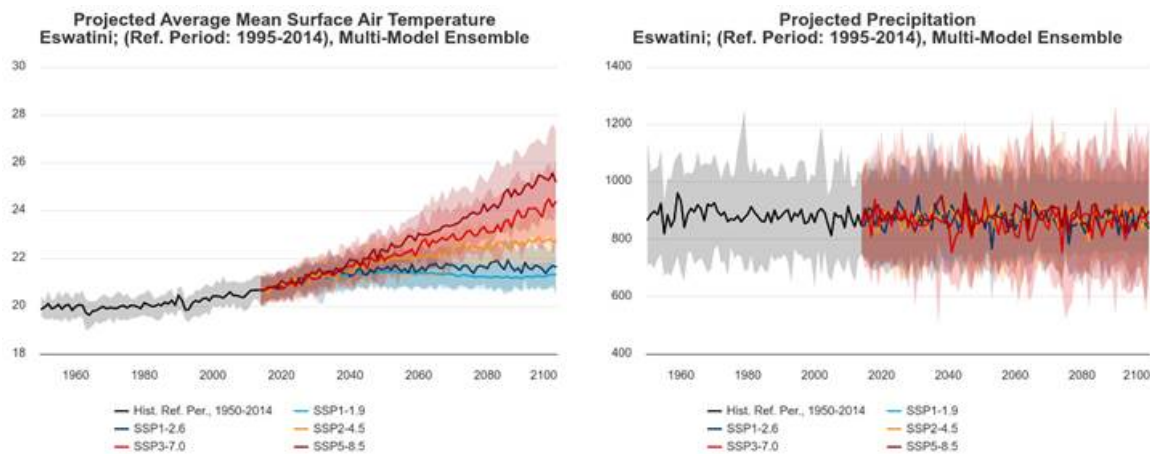


Figure 2. a) Projected temperature and b) precipitation for Eswatini.

20. The rural poor, heavily reliant on rain-fed agriculture, are disproportionately affected by climate change. Their limited financial resources hinder their ability to invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and technologies. As ecosystems face strain due to changing climatic conditions, biodiversity, water availability, and agricultural productivity are threatened. The update of the State of Environment Report highlights the vulnerability of Eswatini's biomes. Grasslands are being replaced by savannah, and invasive plant species are expanding, especially on rangelands due to rising temperatures. Additionally, climate change is altering insect ranges and increasing the emergence of new pests and diseases.

Barriers to be Addressed

21. The barriers to be addressed by the project include:

- a) **Policy gaps and misalignment (including unsupportive sectoral subsidies) accompanied by poor implementation at the landscape level (land governance, ambiguity in land policies, repurposing of agricultural subsidies, absence of M&E on input subsidies. Eswatini's agricultural sector suffers from significant policy gaps characterized by ambiguous land governance, unsupportive sectoral subsidies that favours large scale farms over smallholders, ineffective repurposing strategies for subsidies without adequate stakeholder involvement, poor implementation at local levels due to infrastructural deficits, and a critical absence of M&E systems that could guide policy adjustments based on real-world outcomes. Addressing these issues requires a coordinated effort among government agencies, stakeholders in agriculture, and international partners to create a more equitable and effective agricultural policy framework.**
- b) **Current financial instruments are not blended enough and not capable of effectively de-risking / incentivizing private sector investment in sustainable and resilient food systems. This barrier is rooted in a combination of factors at multiple levels including lack of capacity, lack of awareness, the absence of proper coordination, and proofing of identified blended financial instruments for upscale. There are public, private and DFI funds including vertical climate funds which are designed to support players in the agrifood systems. However, these facilities are uncoordinated and, in many cases, operate in isolation, which makes it difficult for government to coordinate and effectively implement blended mechanisms for agriculture value chains. Additionally, fragmented investments across agriculture value chains make it difficult for government to implement provision of incentives that have impact.**
- c) **The existing regulatory framework in Eswatini does not adequately address sustainability issues. Although there are some environmental management-related policies, they often lack specificity regarding sustainable practices or fail to enforce compliance effectively. Effective sustainability standards require collaboration among government agencies, private sector stakeholders, NGOs, and local communities. Stakeholder engagement has been low in Eswatini, which has caused a gap between the creation of policies and the realities on the ground. There is a significant gap in capacity building for both policymakers and practitioners in Eswatini. Stakeholders may find it difficult to embrace best practices if they lack the tools and training necessary to comprehend and apply sustainability standards. The absence of sustainability standards and traceability systems in Eswatini presents significant barriers to adopting climate-smart technologies and environmentally friendly practices. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach involving regulatory reform, stakeholder engagement, capacity building, financial incentives, technical support programs, public awareness campaigns, and partnerships with various organizations.**
- d) **Absence of structured consumer engagement processes to facilitate a shift in consumption patterns, healthy diets and improved nutrition. High rates of obesity, diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and malnutrition are just a few of the**

nutritional problems that Eswatini has been facing. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that undernutrition and overnutrition are two common forms of malnutrition in Eswatini. Because of shifting dietary habits that prioritize processed foods high in sugar and fat over traditional diets full of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, the nation's obesity rates have increased. The lack of structured consumer engagement processes means that there is insufficient communication between health authorities, food producers, and consumers regarding healthy eating practices. This gap hinders efforts to promote nutritional education and awareness about the benefits of balanced diets.

- e) **Uncoordinated knowledge, innovation and information systems, with weak support to smallholder farmers and agribusinesses.** Smallholder farmers in Eswatini often lack access to timely and relevant information regarding market prices, weather forecasts, pest management, and best agricultural practices. This lack of information can lead to poor decision-making and reduced productivity. Developing integrated information systems that provide real-time data on weather patterns, market trends, and best practices could empower farmers to make informed decisions.
- f) **An extension system that is not taking full advantage of the potential of ICT's and digitalization.** Currently, the extension service that sits in the Ministry of Agriculture is based on an old system that was established at the onset of the service in the early 80s. It was founded based on the placement of officers in regional development areas (RDAs), with farmers accessing extension support through physical visits from extension officers. To this end, there has been limited utilisation and investment by the Government and partners on the use of existing and emerging technologies.

Project Intervention Areas

22. The project adopts a multi-layered approach, implementing activities at both the national and community levels to address systemic challenges in food systems and land degradation. While the focus of the interventions will be on specific landscapes, the project's activities are designed to have far-reaching impacts across the country. At the national level, efforts will include reviewing and aligning legal and policy frameworks with sustainable food systems, ensuring that the enabling environment supports the transformation of agricultural practices and land use across Eswatini. At the community level, the project will target three landscapes (Figure 3): Ngwempisi (Ntondozi and Luzweleni communities), Malolotja (Luvinjelweni and Mvembili) and Lubombo (Ndzangu and Mhlumeni). These communities have been strategically identified as starting points for piloting the proposed interventions due to their ecological significance and vulnerability to land degradation. While these specific landscapes will serve as focal points, the lessons learned and practices developed are expected to spill over to other communities, fostering a countrywide impact. LDN assessments also identify these landscapes as land degradation hotspots driven by overgrazing, unsustainable crop production practices including poor soil management, deforestation, uncontrolled fires, invasive species encroachment and climate change. The main land uses across the

landscapes are extensive communal grazing and commercial ranching, small-scale subsistence rainfed agriculture, large-scale commercial irrigated agriculture, buffer zones of nature reserves, and forest plantations. Maize and livestock systems are dominant. The landscapes contain key biodiversity areas identified among 9-priority protection-worthy areas in Eswatini.

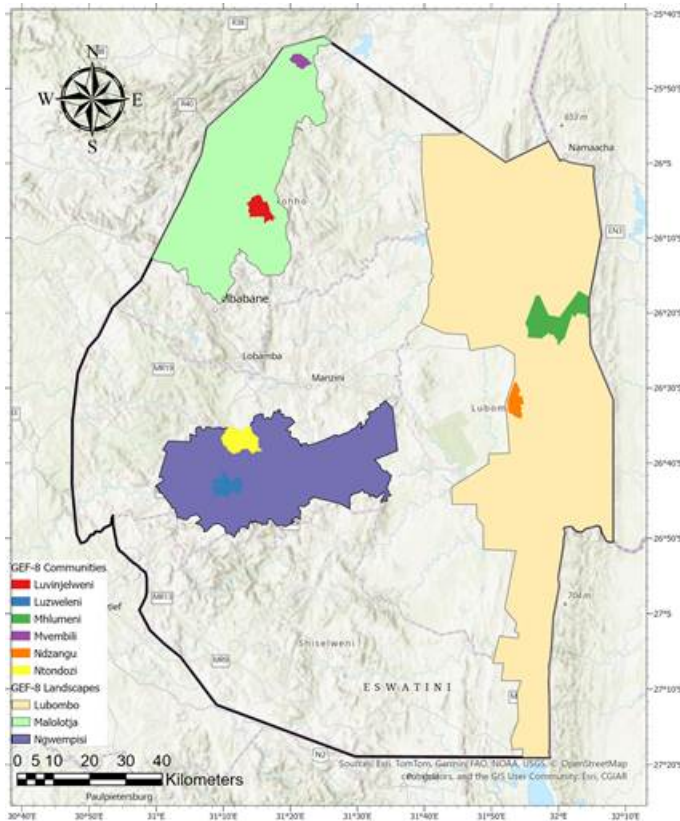


Figure 3. The project intervention areas with the specific communities.

Land use change analysis

Malolotja landscape

23. A change analysis on the land cover and land use of Malolotja landscape was undertaken using Sentinel-2 satellite imagery for the years 2017 and 2023. The results were validated through ground-truthing conducted during the PPG and using the national datasets generated during the 2023 Forest reference Level report compilation to the UNFCCC. This work helped to identify key characteristics and emerging trends of the project landscape, as follows:

- a) Using Sentinel-2 datasets, land use and land cover changes across the landscape were. In 2017, a significant portion of the area was classified as rangelands, totalling 81,039 hectares (ha). The next most significant class in 2017 was Trees category, which accounted for 38,058 ha, while Cropland covered a total of 8,205 ha. Additionally, built-up areas occupied 3,193 ha, while less significant categories

comprised of Waterbodies, Bare ground and Flooded vegetation which accounted for 1,116 ha, 120 ha and 0.03 ha, respectively in the landscape.

- b) From 2017 to 2023, the most dominant land category, rangelands, decreased by 6,043 ha to 74,997 ha in 2023. In the same years period, tree coverage in the landscape increased by 7,200 ha, resulting in a total of 45,357 ha by 2023. However, the ground truthing exercise highlighted that such an increase is mainly attributed to encroachment by shrubs and scrubs of rangelands that were otherwise open grassland. Such encroachment is further exacerbated by invasion by alien plant species (see Figure 4), and thus giving the feeling that forest coverage was on the rise. Cropland, however, was found to have declined by 2,216 ha, to 5,989 ha in 2023. Built-up areas also grew by 1,232 ha, reaching a total of 4,425 ha across the landscape by 2023. In 2023, the landscape composition was approximately 34% trees, 5% cropland, 57% rangelands, 1% water, and 3.3% built-up areas.
- c) As highlighted above, IAPs have heavily infested most parts of the landscape. This was validated through observations made in the field during the PPG, where communities and areas within the landscape had high levels of IAPS. This is aligned with a national map dataset for *Chromolaena Odorata* which when overlayed with the boundaries of Ekuvinjelweni and Mvembili communities that were visited during the PPG, this invasive species was found to be covering more than 70% and 85% of the communities, respectively (Figure 4). Infestation is found in forest areas, rangelands, waterways and cultivated areas as well.

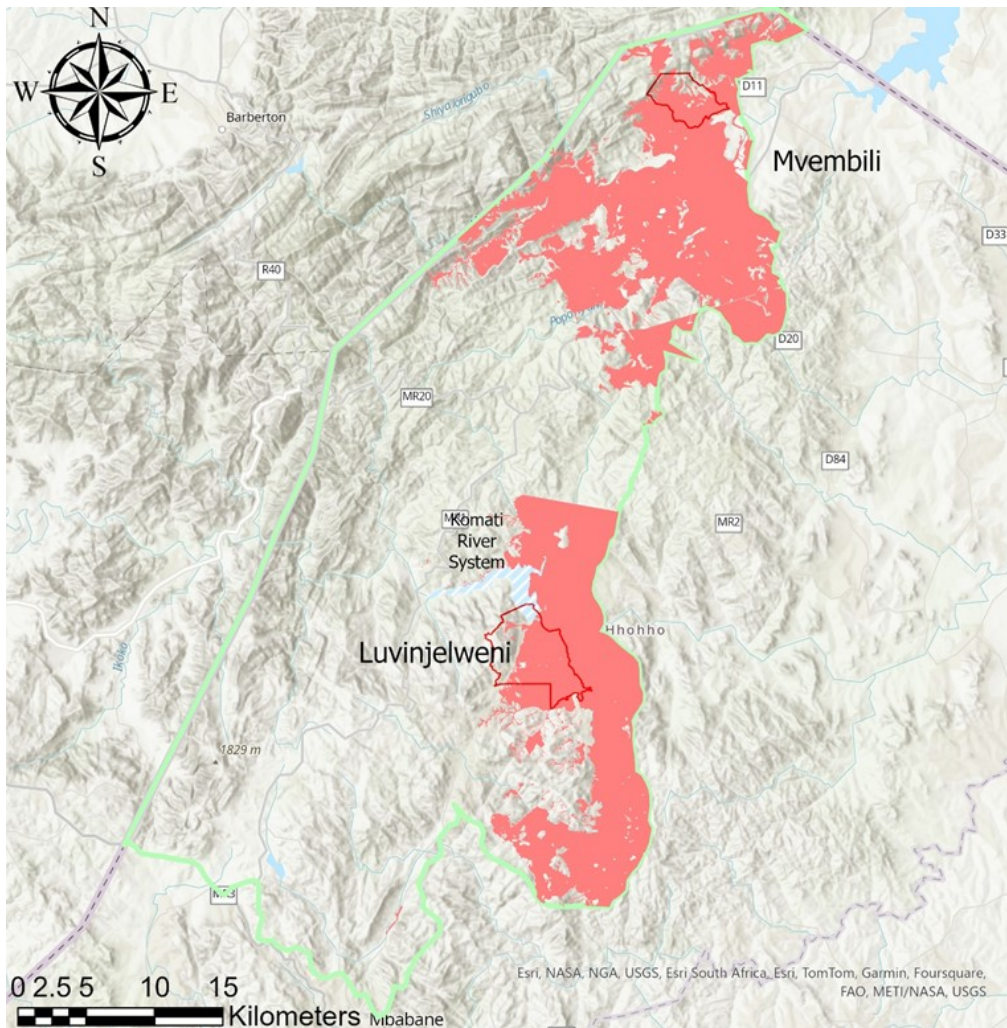


Figure 4. Spatial coverage of *Chromolaena odorata* IAPS in Malolotja landscape, with an overlay of visited communities during PPG.

Ngwempisi landscape

24. A change analysis on the land cover and land use of Ngwempisi landscape was undertaken using Sentinel-2 satellite imagery for the years 2017 and 2023. The results were validated through ground-truthing conducted during the PPG and using the national datasets generated during the 2023 Forest reference Level report compilation to the UNFCCC. This work helped to identify key characteristics and emerging trends of the project landscape, as follows:

- a) Using Sentinel-2 datasets, land use and land cover changes across the landscape were analysed. In 2017, a significant portion of the area was classified as Rangelands, totaling 64,923 hectares (ha), closely followed by the Trees category, which accounted for 41,440 ha. Cropland in Ngwempisi landscape was found to be low as it accounted for only 9,065 ha. Built-up areas occupied only 1,250 ha, while less significant categories comprised of Waterbodies, Bare ground and Flooded vegetation which accounted for 492 ha, 18 ha and 0.1 ha, respectively across the landscape.**

b) From 2017 to 2023, the most dominant land category, rangelands, decreased by 14,462 ha to 50,461 ha in 2023. In the same period, tree coverage in the landscape increased by 12,741 ha, resulting in a total of 54,181 ha by 2023. Of the three landscapes, the ground truthing exercise highlighted that this was the landscape that still had pristine forest environment, and with the least infrastructural development, which is seen in the improvement in forest areas over the years. That said, it was, however, noted that the forests and local rangelands were also infested with alien plant species. Cropland was found to have remained very comparable between 2017 and 2023, having been found to have declined by only 9 ha, to 9,056 ha in 2023. Built-up areas were found to have almost doubled in the landscape as it grew by 1,250 ha, reaching a total of 2,539 ha across the landscape by 2023. In 2023, the landscape composition was approximately 46% trees, 8% cropland, 43% rangelands, 0.8% water, and 2.2% built-up areas.

c) As noted in the landscapes of Malolotja and Lubombo, Ngwempisi landscape was found not to have been spared by the infestation of IAPS, even though to a much lesser extent. During the PPG, field visits to the communities of Ntondozi and Luzweleni in the landscape showed that, IAPS were mostly invading rangelands and forest areas. In the community of Ntondozi that is reach with wetlands, it was noted that the IAPS such as *Chromolaena Odorata* were affecting the wetlands, while the highlands were being encroached by *Chromolaena Odorata* and wattle forests in the central northern part of the community, as shown in the map. Luzweleni community, which, as noted above, has remained relatively covered in pristine natural forests has also started being invaded by the alien plant species, which has been mapped in about 40% of the northern part of the community. The observations made during the PPG were validated using a national map dataset for *Chromolaena Odorata* which when overlaid with the boundaries of the two communities were found to be true to the field observations (Figure 5).

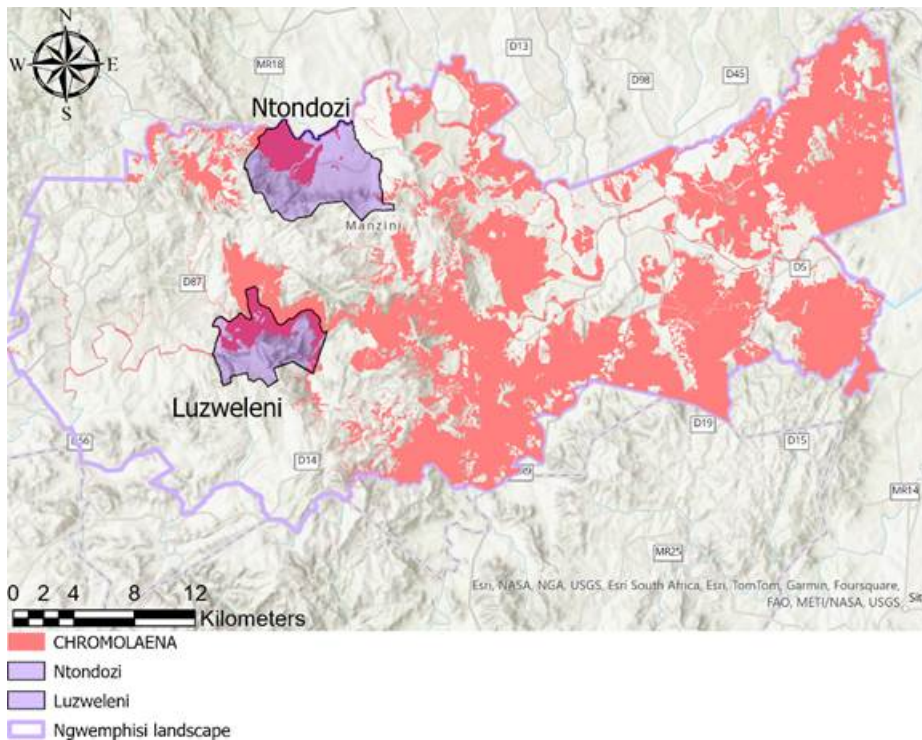


Figure 5. Spatial coverage of *Chromolaena odorata* IAPS in Ngwempisi landscape, with an overlay of visited communities during PPG.

Lubombo landscape

25. A change analysis on the land cover and land use of Lubombo landscape was undertaken using Sentinel-2 satellite imagery for the years 2017 and 2023. The results were validated through ground-truthing conducted during the PPG and using the national datasets generated during the 2023 Forest reference Level report compilation to the UNFCCC. This work helped to identify key characteristics and emerging trends of the project landscape, as follows:

a) Using Sentinel-2 datasets, land use and land cover changes were analysed across the landscape. In 2017, a significant portion of the area was classified as Trees, totalling 143,797 hectares (ha). The next most significant categories in 2017 were Rangelands and Cropland, which accounted for 148,998 ha and 84,782 ha, respectively. Built-up areas occupied 9,114 ha, while less significant categories comprised of Waterbodies, Flooded vegetation and Bare ground which accounted for 2,543 ha, 9 ha and 43 ha, respectively in the landscape.

b) From 2017 to 2023, the most dominant land category, tree coverage, saw a huge increase of 51,559 ha, to 195,356 ha in 2023. In the same period, rangelands in the landscape decreased significantly by 56,620 ha, resulting in a reduced total of 92,379 ha by 2023. Cropland, however, was found to have remained stable, having slightly increased by 1,755 ha, to 86,537 ha in 2023. Built-up areas also increased by 2,151 ha, reaching a total of 11,265 ha across the landscape by 2023. The waterbodies category increased by 1,890 ha between 2017 and 2023. In 2023, the landscape composition was

approximately 50% trees, 22% cropland, 24% rangelands, 1% water, and 2.9% built-up areas.

c) Ground truthing during the PPG showed that across the landscape, IAPS were invading rangelands, converting these areas into high density forests and shrublands. This has resulted in reduced rangelands, with the ones that remain having heavily reduced livestock carrying capacity. This has led to a community like Mhlumeni initiating a project aimed at controlling IAPS in the highly limited and heavily infested rangelands. However, due to limited resources, the project has remained on the pilot stage and with very limited spatial coverage area. In general, IAPS have heavily infested most parts of the landscape, from forest areas to the highlighted rangelands, but including waterways and cultivated areas as well. The observations made during the PPG were further interrogated using a national map dataset for *Chromolaena Odorata* which when overlaid with the boundaries of the community of Mhlumeni showed that, indeed, the community was almost 100% infested (Figure 6). In the community of Ndzangu which was also visited during the PPG, the species of IAPS was also found to spatially cover over 50%.

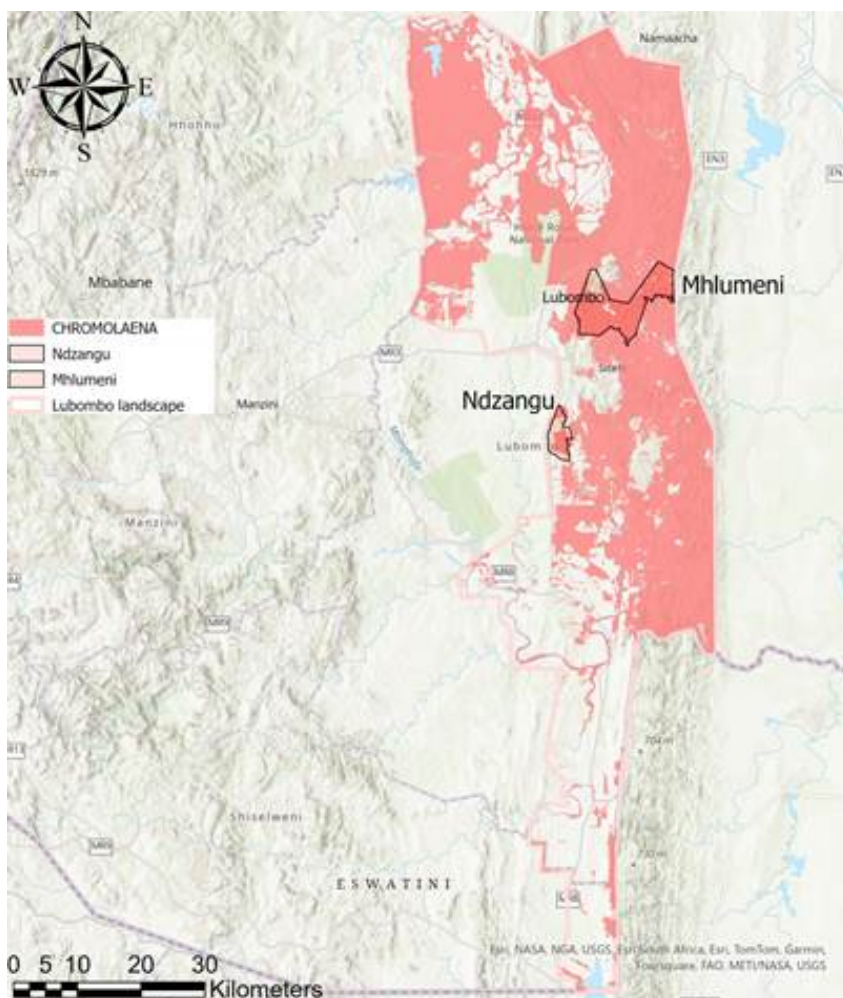


Figure 6. Spatial coverage of *Chromolaena odorata* IAPS in Lubombo landscape, with an overlay of visited communities during PPG.

A detailed discussion of the project areas is provided in Annex F: Project map and coordinates.

Baseline Scenario and Projects

26. The Kingdom of Eswatini is challenged by weak food systems, coupled with unsustainable land and water resources management practices. Under agricultural production, key challenges include climate change and its effects, unreliable and/or erratic weather that result in crop failure and food shortage. Farmers have remained primitive in their farming approaches and practices, and update of new technologies have remained very low. IAPS have also shown to be a challenge, leading to high weeds in cropland.

27. Other challenges in the target landscapes include notable conflicts between communities and nearby protected areas, worsened by lack of agreements between the neighbouring communities and the protected areas. There is also generally limited knowledge in the efficient and sustainable use of land, no coordinated landscape-wide management, limited capacity on rangeland management, fodder production and crop production. It is averaged that annually, value chains experience food losses as high as 30%. There remains very poor national coordination in rehabilitation efforts and continued overgrazing leading to soil erosion, soil compaction and land degradation. Water resources too are poorly mapped and documented in the country, even though there is a national effort now to establish a water resources management master plan.

28. Consultations were conducted with the specific communities under each landscape and the findings informed the project interventions.

29. To respond to these challenges, Eswatini has been actively undertaking sustainable land management and integrated landscape management initiatives. This is undertaken through projects undertaken by different governmental ministries/departments, developmental partners and NGOs. For example, the Eswatini National Trust Commission is currently implementing a basin-wide project under GEF 7 is aimed at strengthening sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation in the Mbuluzi River Basin. Another project undertaken by Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC) in 2015 is the Strengthening National Protected Areas Systems (SNPAS) project that was undertaken across different landscapes nationally. One of the key outcomes of the project were integrated landscape management (ILM) plans for communities that were developed through a community based participatory approach. However, due to limited capacity and knowledge on the implementation of the plans, their implementation has remained limited. Most of them are even outdated now and need to be updated. In addition, there is limited capacity in communities on the linkages between ILMs and chiefdom level plans such as the chiefdom development plans (CDPs). Even though community development committees (CDCs) were key stakeholders during the CDPs development, and further trained on the plans, some traditional leaders and community members do not adhere to the CDP as communities develop, especially infrastructurally.

30. COSPE (Co-operation for the Development of Emerging Countries) Eswatini is an NGO that has worked closely with local communities towards building resilience in local food systems. It has already assisted the Government and local communities in establishing community seed banks at Kalanga and Lomahasha. There is also a national seed bank at Malkerns Research Centre. These initiatives are still very limited, and the existing banks need strengthening and the addition of more banks in communities. Currently no agreements in place to promote the use and conservation of indigenous seed varieties.

31. The local agriculture sector, especially at community level, has always heavily relied on the provision of extension service by the Ministry of Agriculture. However, over the years, the service provision has dwindled, mostly due to lack of resources. This has seen limited number of extension officers accessible to communities, especially those remote and harder to access. There is now limited training targeting training of extension officers and trainers on innovative technologies. SMEs in communities also poorly capacitated on innovative technologies. There is also the Eswatini Environment Fund has supported numerous communities in the past five years to fence, rehabilitate and protect critical indigenous plants in different communities across the country.

32. Regarding resources/funding for agricultural activities and production, it is critical to note that the current agricultural finance architecture does not provide the necessary conditions for Government resources to catalyse and leverage private sector finance for development of agriculture finance products. To mitigate this, there are several initiatives aimed at improving access to finance for MSMEs in Eswatini, including the Central Bank Loan Guarantee Scheme, Financial Inclusion and Cluster Development Project (FINCLUDE) loan guarantee scheme, the Regional Development Fund, and the Youth Revolving Fund loan guarantee scheme and the newly established Eswatini Agricultural Development Fund (EADF). The year 2024 also saw the National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBoard), National Maize Corporation (NMC) and Eswatini Bank launching the E10 million revolving fund specifically for Maize and Horticultural value chains actors. However, challenges to access funds remain due to systemic issues within the banking sector and broader economic conditions. Local commercial banks also consider small-scale agriculture high-risk, hence they normal require immovable collateral and the interest rates charged on agricultural loans are normal very high. Agriculture insurance is also very limited due to its risky nature, hence very high premium costs and few insurers that offer agricultural insurance facility (Ludwala Insurers and Eswatini Royal Insurance Corporation).

33. There have been efforts to train farmers on climate-smart agriculture using farmer-based organisations (e.g. Eswatini National Agricultural Union [ESNAU]), local and international NGOs (e.g. Lilima Eswatini – ACAT, World Vision Eswatini), all having been involved in training programs focusing on climate-smart practices. Notably, these programs are less focused on climate-smart bankable projects. There is also a fully developed Agriculture Integrated Information System (AIIS) that is housed under the

Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) designed to enhance the agricultural sector by serving as a centralized platform for information and data sharing among farmers, agricultural stakeholders, and government entities. The system facilitates improved access to critical information, including market prices, weather forecasts, and agricultural resources. However, the number of registered users remains low, indicating the need for increased outreach and user engagement efforts.

34. In Eswatini, agrifood systems are governed through a cosmos of legislative and policy instruments which form the baseline for this child project. Additionally, there several strategies, programmes and projects which also form part of the baseline scenario, providing important entry points for this child project through complementarities and synergies which will formed throughout the child project's cycle.

Key overarching plans include:

National Development Plan (2023/24 – 2027/28) provides a comprehensive overview of Eswatini's development priorities and strategies for the next five years. It outlines specific sectoral outcomes related to agriculture, emphasising the need to modernise agriculture for increased production and value addition. Additionally, the plan highlights the management of water resources, improved land governance, and the equitable and sustainable management of energy and natural resources.

Eswatini National Agriculture Investment Plan (ENAIP) (2023-2028) designed to strengthen Eswatini's agri-food sector through seven (7) strategic axes by empowering public sector capabilities, fostering private sector-led growth, and improving the business environment to support smallholder farmers and value chains. The ENAIP is developed under the rubric of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. Which is an Africa wide continental programme on agriculture. It promotes sustainable land and resource management to enhance climate resilience and invests in technology, innovation, and infrastructure development. The framework also provides targeted state support and direct transfers to key value chain participants, along with strategies for emergency preparedness, nutrition, and social protection.

Key Acts include:

Seeds and Plant Varieties Act (2000) guides the quality and type of seeds that can be marketed and used by farmers to protect all stakeholders taking part in the seed trade.

Co-operatives Societies Act (2004) facilitates the mobilisation of farmer groups, with a common bond to pool together resources to enhance the marketing for their commodities and access to finance.

Eswatini National Agricultural Research Authority Act (2017) provide for the establishment and functions of the Eswatini National Agricultural Research.

Plant Health Protection Act (2020) seeks to prevent the spread of transboundary plant pests and to facilitate trade in plants and plant products following the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) standards to which the country has been a signatory since 2005.

Key Policies include:

National Forest Policy (2001) aims to guide the conservation of forest biodiversity across both Eswatini Nation Land and Title Deed Land, setting principles for the protection of Eswatini's indigenous forests. It also establishes a framework for the fair distribution of benefits derived from forest conservation efforts.

Rural Resettlement Policy (2003) provide a practical framework for the planning of resettlement activities and the sustainable management of land in rural Eswatini.

Comprehensive Agricultural Sector Policy (2005) outlines policy options and measures that promote sustainable agriculture sector development, contributing to overall economic growth, poverty alleviation, food security, and the sustainable management of natural resources. It seeks to stimulate growth in the agricultural sector while ensuring the sustainability of food systems and production practices. However, a limitation of the policy is its limited recognition of the impacts of climate change on agriculture, which hinders a more comprehensive approach to long-term sustainability.

National Irrigation Policy (2005) offers guidance on the measures that should be implemented to expand the national irrigated area and enhance agricultural water management, as well as improve existing irrigated agriculture, thus increasing the value of labour and natural resource productivity in Eswatini.

Livestock Development Policy (2006) focuses on improving animal health, production, marketing, and processing while promoting entrepreneurship and cost-effective livestock initiatives. It prioritises herd improvement through selective breeding and research, protects indigenous breeds, and ensures compliance with international disease prevention standards. The policy also covers livestock nutrition, legislation, sanitation, and sustainable grazing management.

National Food Security Policy (2009) aims to address the threats and opportunities relating to food security.

Draft Agriculture Extension Policy (2016) aims to strengthen agricultural extension in the country.

Food and Nutrition Policy (2017) provides a guide for planning nutrition-sensitive interventions and ensures a well-nourished and healthy population that contributes effectively to the sustainable socio-economic development of the country through multi-sectoral and coordinated efforts.

Fisheries Policy (2011) outlines the strategic approach for the regulation and management of fisheries development in the country.

National Climate Change Policy (2016) serves as a comprehensive framework for addressing the challenges posed by climate change across various sectors, including agriculture. The policy recognizes the critical role of the agriculture sector in the country's economy and acknowledges the need to enhance its resilience to climate change impacts while promoting sustainable practices. It provides a strategic roadmap for adapting to climate change and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions within the agricultural context.

National Gender Policy (2019-2030) outlines the country's vision for gender equality and is designed to guide stakeholders and institutions at all levels on how to advance gender equality and equity, and to mainstream gender across all sectors. The policy has recommended the uptake of interventions to realise equal access to economic resources including ownership and control over land and other productive resources.

National Wetlands Policy (2020) promotes the conservation and sustainable and wise use of wetlands. It provides a framework for actions to improve legal, institutional, and organizational arrangements.

Key Strategies include

National Wetlands Strategic Action Plan (2021-2030) ensures that wetland resources are managed and used sustainably; that their functions are valued, conserved, and restored to sustain biodiversity; and that they provide ecosystem services for present and future generations of Eswatini.

National Development Strategy outlines the country's long-term development plans and recognises the importance of sustainable agriculture.

Invasive Alien Plant Species Strategy (2021) outlines how different players and sectors are to collectively manage the invasion of natural resources and agricultural productive lands by alien plant species.

National Framework for Food Security in Schools (2013) serves as a guide to pursuing food security in schools.

Other Ongoing Programs and Investments Forming Part of the Baseline

FAO Initiatives: There are number of FAO initiatives informed by the FAO /Government of Eswatini Country Programming Framework priorities, which are deeply rooted in transforming agrifood systems in Eswatini. The FAO/GOE CPF priorities include i) environment and systems for enabling business of agriculture and food system transformation; ii) Inclusive, broad-based participation and partnerships in agricultural value chain development and, iii) Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, climate action, resilience building and environmental sustainability. These initiatives are basic underlying anchor for the child project. In alignment with the CPF, Various FAO programmes and projects provide technical assistance and demonstration of climate smart and green technologies and natural resources management. FAO key programmes include:

Hand in hand Initiative (HiHi) and Agrinvest Initiatives: Includes ongoing processes applying data, high end analytical processes including typologies for mapping and identification of hidden investment potential, stochastic frontier analysis, financial, economic and costs benefit analysis to support robust implementation of Eswatini's food system pathways. Eswatini's agrifood transformation pathways include i) systemic value chain development, ii) Eswatini agricultural development fund, iii) Institutional reengineering—support commodity and industry associations, iv) agricultural information and data systems, and v) specialized nutrition programmes. Some notable achievements under HiHi/Agrinvest is the support to establishment of ADF, creation of the Eswatini Horticulture Association and Eswatini Grains association (similar associations for beef currently in the process of being established)

One Country One Priority Commodity (OCOP): One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) is a five-year programme (2021-25) to promote the agricultural products with unique qualities and special characteristics at global, regional and local levels. Given this broader context, the Government of Eswatini has requested FAO to be part of this Global Action, focusing on baby vegetables. The baby vegetable value chain in Eswatini is primarily export oriented, combining smallholder and medium scale commercial farmers, private and public sector organizations. In Eswatini, it aims to empower young men and women in rural Eswatini to participate in the export baby vegetables value chain under the OCOP initiative. This will be achieved through i) capacitating youth men and women farmers in Eswatini in innovative green agricultural technologies to produce selected baby vegetables for export; ii) linking young men and women baby vegetable farmers to export markets through a variety of green enabling actions.

Other Various Trust funded and TCP projects with potential links to the child project: FAO has other trust funded projects which are complimentary to the child project. The recently (December 2025) activated UN-UN project with United National Development programme which will be rolling out green technologies and is linked to the OCOP initiative explained in the preceding section is one. Others include various Green Climate Fund Readiness Projects that are aligned to the CPF (inter alia i) Laying the foundations for increased climate adaptation and mitigation in Eswatini's Agricultural Sector, ii)

Preparing Eswatini's Urban and Peri-Urban Communities for Public and Private Investment in Sustainable Green Infrastructure, Green Open Spaces and Urban Agriculture, and others). FAO also implements Technical Cooperation Projects under the CPF with the most relevant and complimentary being the TCPs on support to ENAP processes, Food systems and feasibility of community level value chain investments.

Eswatini Livestock Value Chain Development Programme (ELVCDP): ELVCDP, led by the Eswatini Water and Agricultural Development Enterprise (EWADE), is designed to enhance the agricultural sector while contributing to broader economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction, and women's empowerment. The programme focuses on improving smallholder livestock productivity, which includes the management and assessment of livestock at both the community and household levels.

Lower Usuthu Sustainable Land Management. The project aims to combat land degradation and protect biodiversity in Eswatini through the widespread adoption of sustainable land management practices. By focusing on preserving the health of ecosystems, the project not only safeguards natural resources but also contributes to mitigating the impacts of climate change. One of its key objectives is to enhance the capacity of communities to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, ensuring long-term resilience and sustainability.

MTN Foundation and Inhlanyelo Fund: The Inhlanyelo Fund supports grassroots entrepreneurship by providing micro-loans to micro and small businesses in collaboration with community leadership structures. The MTN Foundation is implementing an initiative that promotes youth entrepreneurship through youth-owned and managed enterprises, offering seed capital and enhancing connections between youth enterprises and relevant stakeholders.

Financial Inclusion and Cluster Development Project (FINCLUDE): FINCLUDE supports the growth of small and medium enterprises through their loan guarantee scheme, by fostering the development of business clusters, and supporting entrepreneurship and economic activities that can boost livelihoods through enhancing financial inclusion in Eswatini.

Smallholder Market Led Project (SMLP): SMLP led by EWADE, aims to reduce rural poverty in Eswatini by enhancing food security and income among smallholder families. It focuses on diversified agricultural production and creating market linkages in 37 Chiefdoms in different regions of the Kingdom. Key activities include the construction of water infrastructure, installation of ferrocement water tanks to improve water access for homesteads. The project also focuses on land rehabilitation. In addition, hundreds of farmers are engaged in producing a variety of crops, with significant collaboration with organizations such as NAMBoard and the National Maize Corporation (NMC). Livestock farming, particularly goats, indigenous chickens, and honey production, is also supported as part of the value chain development. To enhance knowledge sharing among farmers,

several innovation platforms have been organized, focusing on horticulture and legume production.

High Value Crop and Horticulture Project (HVCHP): The HVCHP project (under EWADE) aims to reduce poverty by fostering pro-poor growth, securing the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, and providing locally produced, diverse food to the market. This is achieved through the creation of commodity chains, focusing on horticulture, and strengthening market access, production, and distribution systems. The project has developed cold storage facilities and supported local farmers with land development and business structuring, although challenges such as limited loan repayment and delayed production have affected progress.

Comprehensive Training Program for Horticulture Farmers: The Comprehensive Training Program for Horticulture Farmers is a joint initiative by the Eswatini Government, the EU, and the International Trade Centre, in partnership with NAMBoard and the Eswatini Standards Authority (SWASA). The program aims to equip small and medium horticulture farmers with the skills needed to achieve Global Good Agricultural Practices (Global GAP) certification. It also seeks to develop local GAP standards, providing farmers with a pathway to certification while ensuring food safety.

Central Bank of Eswatini - Small-Scale Enterprise Loan Guarantee Scheme (SSELGS): Established in 1991, the scheme provides credit guarantees for business start-ups as well as existing micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The CBE trains participating financial institutions to enhance the operation and uptake of the scheme. In 2021, the terms and conditions were revised to further improve access for MSMEs.

Regional Development Fund (RDF): The RDF is a grant facility provided through the annual government budget, allowing local communities to access funds for the development of infrastructure projects, such as rural electrification, irrigation systems, and potable water supply, aimed at improving sustainable livelihoods. To be eligible for support, potential beneficiaries must first organise themselves into groups, associations, or cooperatives.

Youth Revolving Fund: This has the aim of providing funding to the youth's business ideas in the kingdom, including agribusinesses.

Community Poverty Reduction Fund: The objective of the fund is to alleviate and eventually eradicate poverty by supporting viable co-operative or commercial projects or schemes that will create jobs and further contribute to the economic growth and development of rural communities.

Government Subsidy and Tractor Hire Programme: This programme provides subsidized agricultural inputs and tractor hire services to farmers in Eswatini. The farmer pays a subsidized price for services such as ploughing, ridging, harrowing and planting. The

programme also has an option for farmers to receive subsidized fertilizer, herbicides or pesticides, maize and beans seeds, among others.

Eswatini Agriculture Development Fund (EADF): The ADF is a key tool accompanying the ENAIP. Established through the Public Finance Management Act of 2017, in July 2023 the EADF started operating, 1 August 2024 with the purpose to transform agrifood systems by providing catalytic investments for growth and private sector participation in agricultural value chains. It has the following specific objectives:

- a) Catalyse investments along potentially transformative value chains through de-risking investments by private sector players and farmers.
- b) Blended agriculture financing products including smart subsidies, guarantees, and grants for producers or VC actors.
- c) Provide a special vehicle for strategic investments by Government in public infrastructure to catalyse further value chain investments by farmers and private sector.
- d) Mobilise additional financial resources for investment in the Country's agricultural sector from domestic and international.
- e) Streamline financial investments in agricultural value chains by all players including Government Ministries, state institutions, private sector and development partners.
- f) To create confidence of partners to invest in the agriculture sector

EADF operations began on July 1, 2024, with full staff recruitment completed by October 1, 2024. The initial government injection amounted to USD 2.9M, while the target for the fund is USD 54,869,684 over four years, averaging USD 13,717,421 annually.

Applications for accessing the first financial instrument (i.e., the subsidised loan facility) in collaboration with Eswatini bank and other financial institutions were opened on the 28th of November 2024 for value chain players. In May 2025, the EADF has successfully disbursed a total amount of USD561,571 (SZL10,063,010.00) to 14 beneficiaries as business loans for grain, livestock, and horticulture value chain actors. The first financial instrument currently under deployment is carefully designed and rolled out in collaboration and blended with private financial institutions (with Eswatini Bank having the MoU with EADF on behalf of other players) to minimise crowding out financial sector players effectively unleashing the de-risking power of the fund. Eligibility criteria require applicants to be individual farmers, farmer companies, agro-dealers, or companies affiliated with an industry association. Successful candidates receive mentorship and coaching from extension officers operating at the regional level.

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B. CHILD PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole, including how it addresses priorities related to the specific program, and how it will benefit from the coordination platform. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF’s policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

1. Eswatini’s agriculture and food systems are predominantly subsistence-based, with smallholder farmers focusing on maize and livestock production. However, these systems face numerous challenges, including low productivity and environmental degradation. Natural ecosystems are declining, with over 200,000 hectares of biodiversity-rich land already converted to agriculture. This has led to the erosion of landscape diversity and resilience, driven by monocultures, overgrazing, and unsustainable water use. Additionally, the rising population and changing dietary patterns are increasing the demand for food, particularly livestock products. This has contributed to the expansion of livestock production, which exacerbates methane emissions and further stresses the environment.

2. The proposed alternative pathway seeks to transform Eswatini’s food systems through integrated agrifood system governance, improved and innovative financing for agrifood system players including women and youth small scale producers and MSMSEs and strengthening management of production landscapes and value chains. This approach will address policy gaps and align sectoral investments to promote sustainability. It will establish sustainability standards, transparency, and traceability systems, engaging value chain actors and consumers in the process. Leveraging ongoing processes under the Agricultural Development Fund, innovative blended financial instruments and incentives will be developed to support resilient and sustainable food systems, with a focus on inclusivity—particularly for smallholders, women, and youth. These instruments may include de-risking mechanisms, risk-sharing models, and smart subsidies.

3. The underlying architecture of blended finance instruments is the use of GEF funds in combination (pooling with) with GoE funds deployed through ADF and other funds from others sources such as private sector and development partners, to provide a range of customised financial products such as subsidies (including digressive), matching grants, guarantees etc. Furthermore, the pathway emphasizes deployment of these instruments to

integrated landscape management and value chain interventions. This includes promoting sustainable technologies and practices, such as climate-smart agriculture (CSA), crop diversification, rangeland management, and agroforestry. Capacity-building initiatives will support the adoption of these practices, along with integrated pest management and other sustainable approaches. Ultimately, this transformation will enhance the resilience of both landscapes and livelihoods while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation.

4. The objective of the project is to catalyse the transformation to sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems, delivering environmental benefits and contributing to food and nutrition security and livelihoods of the Ewaswati.

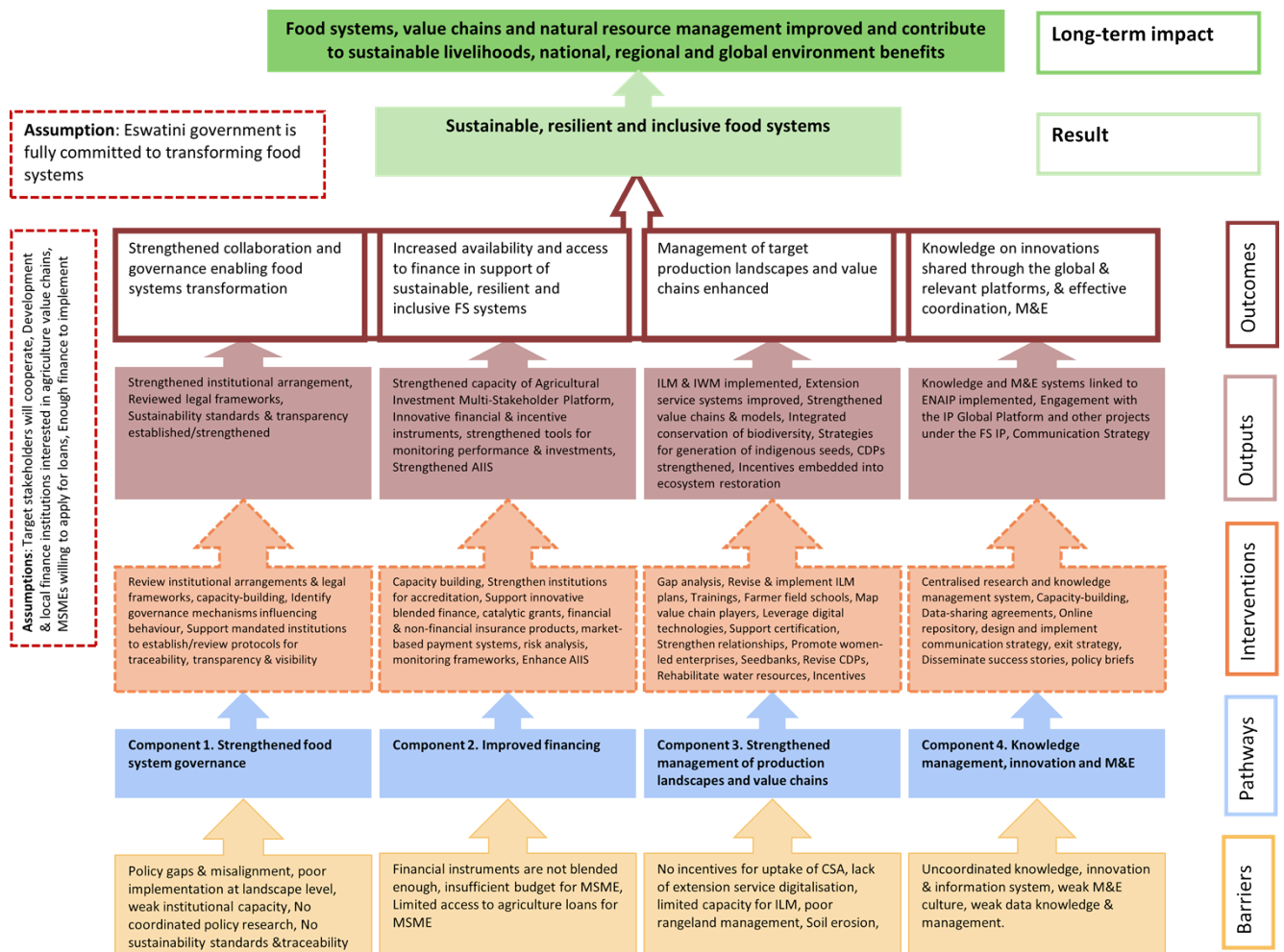


Figure 7 Theory of change

5. The objective will be accomplished through the following components.

Component 1: Strengthened food system governance

Outcome 1.1. Strengthened collaboration and governance enabling food systems transformation in Eswatini.

Indicators:

- *Institutional arrangement for FS in place*
- *Number of legal frameworks reviewed and aligned for FS and gender equity*
- *Traceability system fully developed and operational.*

6. This component is aligned with FSIP Pathway 1 (Strengthening the enabling environment to catalyse food systems transformation at global, regional and national levels), as it aims to improve governance, institutional capacity, and policy coherence to support sustainable and inclusive food systems. Under this component the project interventions will involve nurturing and expanding the newly established ENAIP institutional arrangements and multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) developed under Hand In hand and Agri Invest initiatives in implemented by Ministry of Agriculture and FAO. These platforms, both at the national (horizontal) and landscape (vertical) levels, will ensure the active participation and representation of all key stakeholders, including women and youth, linking to initiatives like the Women Agribusiness Development Forum. A critical part of this component is conducting policy analysis, reviews, and dialogues facilitated by the MSPs. The goal is to address policy gaps and improve the alignment of policies and investments with Eswatini’s Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and its national food systems transformation objectives. Recent policy reviews have highlighted gaps and inconsistencies, such as in the Crop Production Inputs Subsidy programme, which primarily promotes maize monoculture without environmental conditionality. The third focus will be on establishing sustainability standards, transparency, and traceability systems across value chains. This will be done in collaboration with value chain actors through MSPs and policy dialogues, with engagement from consumer groups to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach.

Outcome 1. Strengthened collaboration and governance enabling food systems transformation in Eswatini

7. This outcome will focus on strengthening collaboration and governance to enable the transformation of food systems. Under the outcome, the project will work to enhance institutional arrangements and foster multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) to facilitate cross-sectoral planning, dialogue, and collective action. Existing policies including subsidy programs will be reviewed and aligned to ensure they support the transformation of food systems. Sustainability standards, transparency and traceability will be developed or strengthened to make sure that production and supply chains are more accountable and environmentally sound.

Output 1.1: Strengthening institutional arrangements and multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) for cross-sectoral planning, dialogue and action for the transformation of agrifood systems towards sustainability and resilience

8. In this output, the current institutional settings and legal framework will be reviewed to identify gaps and constraints, particularly in relation to gender issues and the specific needs of food systems. The review will ensure that the legal and institutional landscape is adequately equipped to support inclusive and sustainable transformation, with a strong emphasis on addressing the unique challenges faced by women and other marginalised groups in the food system. Targeted capacity-building programmes will be conducted for officials from ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs), as well as traditional leaders and community members. These programmes will focus on food systems transformation, sustainability standards, and global trends, ensuring that all stakeholders, particularly women and youth, are empowered with the knowledge and tools necessary to drive change. An interactive digital platform designed to facilitate real-time dialogue among key stakeholders such as government, the private sector, civil society, and community groups will be developed. This will enable users to engage in meaningful discussions, share resources, and provide feedback on ongoing projects, fostering a more collaborative and transparent approach to food systems governance.

9. The project will ensure equal participation of youth, women and men in the consultations (i.e., at least 50% of both female and youth participants) in multi-stakeholder platforms.

Output 1.2: Legal frameworks (including sectoral subsidy programs) reviewed and aligned for food systems transformation

10. Under this output, activities will involve reviewing and reforming policies to align with sustainable food systems transformation and addressing gender issues. This includes strengthening anti-deforestation regulations for communities and ensuring that subsidy programs do not negatively impact the environment. The national environmental policy and legislative framework will be enhanced to support effective land use planning and management, in line with the country's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets. A particular focus will be placed on updating the Flora Protection Act of 2000 and National Forest Regulations in support of the 2016 Forest Bill to reduce the ongoing loss of environmental resources. Integrated policy frameworks will also be encouraged, aligning sectoral objectives across ministries, with special attention to gender considerations.

Output 1.3: Sustainability standards, transparency and traceability systems established and/or strengthened

11. Under this output, activities will involve supporting the mandated institutions such as Eswatini Standards Authority (SWASA), National Maize Cooperation (NMC) and National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBoard) to establish and or review the protocols for value chains as well as building capacity through offering training on sustainable standards, transparency and traceability systems through the entire value chains (Farmers, production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption) that will

make sure that the production and supply chains are more accountable and environmentally sound within the three targeted landscapes.

Component 2: Improved financing.

Outcome 2. Increased availability of and access to finance in support of sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems.

Indicators:

- *Number of blended financial products aligned with food systems developed (10) – tailored to inclusively serve men, women and youth smallholders and SMEs.*
- *At least 5 insurance products developed and piloted.*
- *Number of grant beneficiaries, with a larger participation of youth and women (2000, 50% men, 50 % women, at least 30 % youth)*
- *At least \$3 million increase in total value of loans and grants received by smallholder farmers and SMEs (#men, women, youth) and women-led enterprises in support of sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems (gender disaggregated)*

12. This component aligns with FSIP Pathway 2 (Improved and increased financing deployed in support of food system transformation) by developing and enhancing financial instruments and incentives that promote sustainable agricultural production, equitable value chain participation, and environmentally responsible investment. A central baseline program under this component is Eswatini’s Agriculture Development Fund (EADF), which currently provides subsidized loans as a form of blended finance to smallholder producers and value chain actors, aiming to de-risk agricultural investments. The EADF is further supported by a forthcoming Eswatini Agricultural Investment Multi-Stakeholder Platform that aims to consolidate public and private agricultural finance and improve coordination among stakeholders. The EADF was originally designed to include a broad range of financing instruments such as smart and digressive subsidies, risk-sharing facilities, grants, anchor farm/aggregator financing, insurance, certification support, technical assistance, and R&D facilities. However, due to limited resources, only the subsidized loan instrument is currently operational. The additionality of the GEF intervention lies in unlocking the full potential of the EADF through catalytic and systemic support. Specifically, GEF financing will:

- a) **Catalyse deployment of additional financial instruments envisioned in the EADF design, including grants, risk-sharing facilities, and technical assistance thereby accelerating the shift towards diversified and resilient financing options.**
- b) **Support the design and piloting of blended finance mechanisms and associated financial derivatives tailored to sustainable food systems.**
- c) **Build institutional capacity of the EADF through targeted training on financial instruments, risk analysis, and results-based financing.**

- d) Enhance capital mobilization and partnerships, enabling the EADF to attract and coordinate funding from domestic and international development partners, and from other Ministry of Agriculture entities.**
- e) Support end-user readiness, by strengthening the capacity of individual, aggregated, and clustered farmers—especially women, youth, and vulnerable groups—to access and effectively utilize EADF instruments.**

Outcome 2. Increased availability of and access to finance in support of sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems

13. This outcome will focus on increasing the access and availability of finance to support sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems. Under this outcome the project will focus on strengthening the Eswatini Multi-Stakeholder Platform to promote the collaborations between government entities and private financial institutions that can help mobilize resources for agricultural financing. For instance, initiatives that provide guarantees or subsidies that can encourage banks to lend more freely to the agricultural sector. It will also facilitate the development of innovative financial products and commodity-backed finance instruments (e.g. warehouse receipt system, value chain financing) that are aligned with sustainable food systems. The outcome will also offer the provision of technical support to integrate food systems sustainability standards and social inclusion—focusing on the empowerment of women, youth, and vulnerable groups.

Output 2.1: Capacity of Eswatini Agricultural Investment Multi-Stakeholder Platform strengthened

14. Under this output, the project will strengthen the Multi-Stakeholder Platform by building knowledge and capacity through technical assistance, allowing for research engagements and sectoral analysis that incorporates or focuses on finances. It is important to involve specific key stakeholders in the Multi-Stakeholder Platform such as the Development Financial Institutions and commercial banks, who have a local infrastructure; public and private investors; clients (traders, aggregators, producers, farmers), Government, academic institutions, NGOs, and women and youth associations. Another activity will aim to clearly define the role of each stakeholder as well as its stake in the MSP governance. The platform aims to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders to create an enabling environment for agricultural investments. This output will bring together diverse voices from different sectors to identify common goals and develop coordinated strategies that will lead to sustainable agricultural practices in the targeted landscapes.

Output 2.2: Innovative financial products and incentive instruments aligned with food systems sustainability developed

15. Under this output, the project will focus on facilitating for effective engagements with all financial service providers to develop innovative blended finance instruments tailored

for value chain players in the target landscapes (e.g. warehouse receipt system, value chain financing for the maize and livestock sector). Targeted activities will include the provision of grants that will allocate funds specifically for initiatives led by women or those that directly benefit women in the agricultural sector. The project will also collaborate with insurance companies to create tailored products such as crop insurance linked with perennial crops financing or explore index-based insurance models that provide payouts based on predetermined weather conditions rather than actual losses. Additionally, the project will develop a warehouse receipt system where farmers can deposit their produce in certified warehouses and receive receipts that can be used as collateral for loans.

Output 2.3: Tools for monitoring performance and impact of investments (including gender aspects) in food systems strengthened

16. Under this output, the target will be to strengthen the tools tailored for the local environment to be used for monitoring performance and the impact of any investment made in the food systems and related sectors. Activities in this output will include the development of an integrated farm-to-table monitoring framework with a user-friendly dashboard. This is the product that will be adopted for tracking performance and investment across the entire food system. Another activity will be the training of stakeholders on how to use the monitoring framework effectively to interpret data accurately and make informed decisions based on insights gained from the dashboard. The focus on this output will also be on conducting a gender-sensitive risk analysis that involves identifying the unique challenges and vulnerabilities that different genders face within food systems investments across the target landscapes.

Output 2.4: Strengthened Agriculture Integrated Information System (AIIS)

17. Under this output, the AIIS will be strengthened to improve data-driven decision-making in the agricultural sector, and specifically the food systems. Specific activities will include conducting a gap analysis to identify areas for improvement in the existing AIIS. In addition, enhancements will be undertaken on the AIIS, to achieve better integration with multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs), ensuring interoperability and efficient data exchange. Furthermore, awareness raising and building the capacity of all stakeholders, particularly youth and women, on effectively using the AIIS will be undertaken as it is crucial for widespread adoption. Additionally, registering value chain players on the system will be undertaken to enhance traceability, improving transparency and accountability across agricultural processes within the targeted landscapes. AIIS can be integrated with other data systems; To monitor soil health, erosion, and land degradation trends the AIIS can be linked to the Land Degradation Surveillance Framework (LDSF). The LDSF's field survey data (soil samples, vegetation cover) can be used to inform AIIS on land suitability for crops. The composite drought index (CDI) can be integrated with AIIS, to predict and mitigate drought impacts on agriculture. CDI data can be fed into AIIS for drought early warning which can trigger adaptive measures, like the use of drought tolerant crops and irrigation scheduling. To promote urban agriculture and

sustainable land use, AIIS can be linked to the green cities' observatory. The use of green cities observatory developed urban land use maps can assist in identifying peri-urban farming zones. For improved market access, pricing and food security, AIIS can be used to provide yield forecasts to NAMBoard's Eswatini Horticultural Information System (EHIS) for market stabilization. EHIS's market data can assist in AIIS recommending high demand crops.

Output 2.5: Strengthened, inclusive gender-sensitive value chains and business models

18. In this output, activities will aim to strengthen value chains and business models by promoting inclusivity, capacity-building, and market access. The first step will involve mapping key value chain actors with a focus on ensuring gender inclusivity and identifying roles and gaps for youth and women. A value chain assessment will follow to pinpoint the most viable value chains in each landscape. Building on Output 3.2, targeted training will be provided to value chain players, enhancing their skills and knowledge. The design of context-specific agribusiness value chain models will support local MSMEs through value addition, while access to investment and working capital will be facilitated, potentially using blended finance innovations. Market access will be improved through several innovative solutions such as structured dialogues, matchmaking, and offtake agreements. Communities will be encouraged to participate in commodity associations and clusters, fostering collaboration. Digital technologies will be leveraged to provide comprehensive business support, and efforts will be made to support certification and branding for sustainably produced food, linking to Output 1.3 (Sustainability standards, transparency and traceability systems established and/or strengthened).

Component 3: Strengthened management of production landscapes and value chains

Outcome 3. Management of target production landscapes and value chains enhanced to deliver environmental (biodiversity, carbon and land degradation neutrality) and food and nutrition security and livelihoods benefits.

Indicators:

- *Number of ILM plans updated (6)*
- *Core Indicator 3: Area of land under restoration (20,000 ha)*
- *Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (80,000 ha)*
- *Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (3.255 million metric ton of CO₂e)*
- *Core indicator 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (25,000, 50% women; 50%men, at least 30% youth)*

19. This component contributes to FSIP Pathway 3 (Transformation of the management of landscapes, farming systems and value chains) by promoting agroecological approaches, integrated land management, and the empowerment of women and youth through access to markets and technologies. The component focuses on enhancing the

management of targeted production landscapes and value chains to provide environmental benefits such as biodiversity preservation, carbon management, and land degradation neutrality, while also improving food security, nutrition, and livelihoods. In total, the project estimate to restore 20,000 ha of degraded land and improve sustainable and improved practices in 80,000 ha. Eswatini has adopted integrated landscape management (ILM), with ILM plans and governance structures already in place for many landscapes. These were informed by the Environment Management Act, 2002, Section 31 requires that strategic environmental assessments be conducted. An assessment report for priority protection worthy areas of Eswatini was produced in 2003. The Second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016) Target 10 and Target 11 require continued biodiversity surveys. In 2017, a biodiversity survey report was produced which upon integration of the Eswatini National Physical Development Plan (ENPDP), 1996 and chiefdom development plans processes were used to map integrated landscape management plans. These integrated the biodiversity management with different landowners/users to government regional administrative regions, for sustained coordination.

20. This component will support the strengthening and participatory implementation of these plans, ensuring alignment with sustainable food systems, and promoting gender and youth empowerment. The project will also improve innovation and extension systems to help smallholders and SMEs access sustainable technologies and practices, particularly those addressing post-harvest losses and waste in value chains. Market access for sustainably produced food will be enhanced by forming agribusiness clusters, benefiting smallholders, women, and youth farmers. This will include leveraging public and private procurement models, such as schools, hospitals, and food aid programs, to integrate smallholder producers—especially marginalized women and youth—into mainstream markets. The Government of Eswatini/FAO/WFP Home Grown School Feeding program will be a key institutional market, ensuring stable market access for smallholders. Additionally, the project will facilitate collaboration among agricultural value chain stakeholders, connecting producers with buyers and consumers.

21. All capacity building and training activities will aim for a minimum of 50% female participation, and M&E systems will include gender-specific indicators to track knowledge access and use among women and men. Data systems will be designed to produce gender-disaggregated outputs, and gender outcomes will be reported on regularly in project M&E reports.

Outcome 3. Management of target production landscapes and value chains enhanced to deliver environmental (biodiversity, carbon and land degradation neutrality) and food and nutrition security and livelihood benefits

22. This outcome will focus on improving the management of the target production landscapes, and on enhancing the value chains to ensure that there is environmental sustainability, while also attaining sustainable food systems and a strengthened nutrition security. Under this outcome, the project will support the strengthening of ILM plans and their implementation through a participatory approach. It will also improve innovation and extension systems to support smallholder and SME access to sustainable technologies and practices, ensuring that these include those addressing post-harvest losses and waste along value chains, while also strengthening value chains and business models. It will also strengthen integrated conservation of biodiversity and rangeland management practices, strengthen CDPs and develop strategies for the generation of Indigenous seed varieties, while also ensuring that a framework for incentivising ecosystem restoration activities is developed and implemented.

23. To note, the ILM plans are directly informed by and aligned with Eswatini's existing land use planning frameworks. The Environment Management Act of 2002 (Section 31) mandates the use of Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs), which serve as a foundation for integrating environmental considerations into land use planning. A key SEA report produced in 2003 identified priority protection-worthy areas, forming a basis for spatial planning and natural resource management. Further alignment comes through the Second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP II, 2016), particularly Targets 10 and 11, which call for continued biodiversity surveys and integration of biodiversity considerations into national development planning. In 2017, a national biodiversity survey was conducted, which provided spatial data and guidance used in land planning processes. These outputs have been integrated into the Eswatini National Physical Development Plan (NPDP, 1996) and the Chiefdom Development Planning processes. The ILM Plans build upon these foundations by coordinating land use and biodiversity management at the landscape level across different land tenure systems (e.g., communal, private, and government land). They are implemented through regional administrative structures to ensure consistency with national land use priorities and sustained multi-stakeholder coordination.

Summary of interventions to be implemented in the target landscapes

1. 70,000 ha of cropland that has been degraded through mainly monocropping will be improved through crop diversification and sustainable farming practices, including agroecological maize production and conservation agriculture. This will be supported by farmer training, improvements in water management including investments in infrastructure, and improved access to finance through blended financing instruments.
2. To restore 10,000 ha of degraded forests through agroforestry, shaded perennial systems will be established alongside replanting of indigenous tree species. These efforts will be complemented by control of invasive species, site assessments for suitable crop-tree combinations, and targeted irrigation support.
3. 10,000 ha of tropical dry forests will emphasize biomass regrowth, supported by invasive species control and the development of land management plans to prevent fire and further deforestation.
4. 10,000 ha of degraded rangelands will move from high intensity grazing to non-degraded through improved grazing practices, such as rotational grazing, water infrastructure development, and training for pastoral communities to promote sustainable rangeland management

Output 3.1: Support to participatory implementation of ILM plans

24. Communities in the Landscapes are faced with degradation of wetlands and other water resources, encroachment of settlements in rangelands, outbreak of AIPS in rangelands resulting in the degradation of the rangelands, uncontrolled rangelands burning, outbreak of forest fires, growing conflict between communities and nearby protected areas due to wild animals feeding on crops grown in the communities. In this regard, under this output, activities will focus on supporting all players, both at the landscape level and national level, in implementing the existing ILMs which outline governance and coordination to mitigate conflict, detail wetlands, water resources management and other natural resources to control IAPS, control burning and prevention of deforestation. Having adopted the ILM approach and developed ILM plans and with governance structures already in place for many landscapes, activities under the project will aim to bring together all stakeholders, including communities, private landowners, protected areas and public offices to jointly spearhead the ecosystem conservation at the landscape level for sustainable management and utilisation of natural resources. A gap analysis on participatory implementation of ILM plans will be undertaken to gain insights of the status of the ILMs, strengths and their weaknesses. Based on the outcome of the gap analysis, the project will then facilitate the updating of the existing ILM plans to ensure they integrate food systems and gender issues. Communities will also be sensitised on participatory ILM and its importance, as well as capacitated on its implementation. Another key activity will be the strengthening of linkages between the updated ILM and any existing chieftdom-level plans, to ensure there are synergies.

Output 3.2: Improved innovation and extension systems to support smallholder and SME access to sustainable technologies and practices (including those addressing post-harvest losses and waste along value chains)

25. In this output, the project will conduct gender-sensitive training of trainers including women and youth, and extension officers on innovative technologies such as reduced tillage, nature-based solutions, fertiliser tea, integrated pest management, push-pull methods, food processing, post-harvest losses, sustainable rangeland management etc. These technologies require substantial knowledge and without this capacity-building activity, the adoption rates may be minimal. Extension system will be supported to disseminate information on innovative technologies to farmers and MSMEs. Farmer field schools will be established to ensure practical, hands-on-learning and adoption of these technologies.

Output 3.3: Integrated conservation of biodiversity and rangeland management practices strengthened

26. Under this output, activities will aim to strengthen the integration of the conservation of biodiversity and rangeland management practices, which are currently very limited and poorly coordinated in communities. This will include facilitating community engagements and agreements between protected areas and the communities. This will be key for reducing the hike in incidences of conflicts between protected areas and surrounding communities. These are mostly rooting from livestock straying into protected areas, leading to disagreements when community members are found within protected areas. In addition, some community members and park rangers have lost their lives on incidences associated with poaching. This activity will aim to avail a roundtable for all players to engage, and to develop agreements to respond to the conflicts. Also, taking into consideration the unique agroecological zones of the country, agroecological production will be promoted to ensure that food systems are further strengthened through the planting/production of the most suitable crops, plants and trees where they are best suited. For example, this will eliminate the overreliance on maize crop, irrespective of the zone a farmer lies. In addition, existing nurseries of indigenous plants within the target landscapes will be strengthened as means conserve and strengthen biodiversity. Another activity will be the development and implementation of a programme for rangeland management best practices, that include restoration/rehabilitation and controlling IAPS.

Output 3.4: Strategies for the generation of Indigenous seed varieties developed

27. Under this output, activities will aim to develop strategies for the generation of indigenous seed varieties in the targeted landscapes. This will include strengthening the existing community seedbanks, while also ensuring access of and participation by women and youth across the landscapes. There will also be the promotion of seed loans using a cluster model at community level across the landscapes, as well as the

establishment of indigenous knowledge-sharing circles through seed fairs, field visits and digital seed libraries, linked to Output 3.2. Partnerships between research institutions, the national gene bank and farmer-based organizations will be developed and/or strengthened, with the aim of promoting the use and conservation of indigenous seed varieties.

Output 3.5: Community Development Plans strengthened

28. Under this output, activities will focus on strengthening community development plans, in line with Output 3.1 that aims to strengthen linkages between ILM plans and any existing chiefdom-level plans, ensuring there are synergies. CDPs are one such chiefdom level plan that the project aims to ensure are strengthened through synergies and alignment to the ILM plans. Key activities will include the review and updating of the existing CDPs that were developed under the SNPAS project around 2015. The aim will be to ensure that these updated plans integrate and mainstream the key aspects of sustainable food systems, land use and natural resources management. For communities without CDPs, these will also be developed with the above-mentioned aspects of sustainability. For effective and sustainable implementation of the CDPs, the Community Development Committees (CDCs) and the Traditional Authorities (TAs) will be trained on how the CDPs need to be implemented to successfully enhance sustainable land use, food systems and natural resources management. Training will further be extended to community members for greater buy-in and success their implementation.

Output 3.6: Integrated water management approaches developed and strengthened

29. Under this output, activities will focus on the development and strengthening of integrated water management approaches. This will involve the mapping and assessment of the status of all water resources across the target landscapes. This will form the basis for a programme for the rehabilitation and/or restoration of the water resources in the landscapes, informed by the state and needs identified through the assessment. The two national institutions mandated with the use of water resources for sustainable food systems, MoA and EWAVE will be engaged to facilitate for the establishment of MOUs with other partner institutions such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy (MNRE) and other key development partners and NGOs for improved institutional arrangement and to create an enabling environment for integrated water resources management. Communities in the targeted landscapes will then be trained/capacitated on integrated water resources management.

Output 3.7: Incentives embedded into ecosystem restoration activities

30. Under this output, activities will focus on the establishment and embedding of incentives into ecosystem restoration activities, as currently, there are no incentives for individual and community efforts aimed at restoring ecosystems in the landscapes and nationally. There will be an activity that will aim to develop a framework for incentivising ecosystem restoration activities, as highlighted that there has been no prior work or systems towards the provision of incentives. This framework will ensure that both men and women, particularly those in marginalised or vulnerable communities, are equally considered and benefit from incentives for engaging in restoration efforts. It will outline specific roles, responsibilities, and rewards tailored to different groups, promoting gender equity while driving ecological outcomes. Due to the limited exposure and expertise of national experts and institutions in the provision of such incentives, an international consultant will be recruited to lead the process of developing the framework. Furthermore, the consultant will play a lead role in its implementation across the targeted landscapes.

Component 4: Knowledge management, innovation and M&E

Outcome 4.1. Knowledge on innovations shared through the global platform and relevant platforms.

Outcome 4.2. Effective and efficient project coordination and M&E for impact.

Indicators:

- *Number of knowledge products (including gender aspects) shared.*
- *Number of impact stories and best practices on gender and women empowerment shared*
- *Number of engagements with the IP Global platform*
- *Number of new initiatives in Eswatini influenced and adopting FSIP approaches and best practices from the project.*

This component supports FSIP Pathway 4 (Leverage and transformation of knowledge systems). This component will play a crucial role in driving knowledge management, fostering innovation, and ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms. A centralised research and knowledge management system will be developed and linked to ENAIP, allowing for coordinated research efforts and efficient data sharing between stakeholders such as research institutions and government bodies. Capacity-building workshops will be conducted to enhance stakeholder's skills in managing and utilising knowledge, while data-sharing agreements will be established to ensure that research findings are accessible to inform policymaking and project implementation. These efforts will improve the availability and use of data, aiding in evidence-based decision-making across the food system. Furthermore, under this component, the project will actively engage with global platforms and other initiatives to share innovations, knowledge and results, facilitating collaboration and the scaling of successful interventions. An online repository will be created to house research findings, making them accessible

to a wide range of stakeholders. In addition, a comprehensive communication strategy will be implemented to raise awareness of innovative technologies and promote the adoption of CSA practices. This will include organising trade shows, expos and disseminating success stories and case studies to encourage behavioural change.

Outcome 4.1 Knowledge on innovations shared through the global platform and relevant platforms

32. Under this outcome, the project will enhance knowledge sharing on innovations by promoting collaboration and linking monitoring and knowledge management systems to global and regional platforms. By aligning with the ENAIP and engaging with initiatives under the Food Systems IP, the project will ensure data-driven decision-making and continuous learning. Additionally, collaboration through the IP Global Platform and other relevant initiatives will enable Eswatini to contribute to and benefit from a broader pool of insights, success stories, and lessons learned.

Output 4.1: Gender-responsive knowledge and M&E systems linked to ENAIP implemented

33. Under this output, key activities will focus on the establishment of a comprehensive knowledge and monitoring & evaluation (M&E) system that is closely aligned with the National Agriculture Investment Plan (ENAIP). This will include the development of a centralised project research and knowledge management system, which will serve as a critical hub for collecting, storing, and disseminating data on sustainable food systems and related environmental practices. This system will support evidence-based decision-making and foster collaboration among stakeholders. Moreover, the project will develop an exit strategy to ensure that the benefits and progress achieved in promoting sustainable food systems continue long after the project's lifecycle. This strategy will outline measures for maintaining the momentum of transformative activities and ensuring the resilience of food systems in Eswatini. In addition, establishing data-sharing agreements between research agencies and government bodies will be vital for coordinated research efforts, enabling a more integrated approach to addressing the challenges of biodiversity, food security, and sustainable land use.

Output 4.2: Engagement with the IP Global Platform and other projects under the FS IP to improve knowledge sharing, coordination, and scaling up of results

34. In this output, collaboration and knowledge exchange within the FS-IP will be strengthened. Results, success stories, lessons learned will be fed into the GEF-IFAD knowledge sharing hub for child projects and shared with other countries under this

program and all relevant stakeholders for learning and best practices. Additionally, knowledge sharing and exchanging of lessons and experiences will be undertaken by the PMU in countries with expertise in food systems transformation in the region. This will ultimately contribute to scaling up successful interventions leading to more sustainable and resilient food systems.

Outcome 4.2 Effective and efficient project coordination and M&E for impact

35. In this outcome, the project will ensure its implementation is underpinned by strong coordination and robust monitoring and evaluation systems. These systems will provide the framework for assessing impact and ensuring that interventions are both efficient and effective. This outcome also includes the implementation of a comprehensive communication strategy aimed at behavioural change, increasing public awareness and promoting the adoption of sustainable food systems practices.

Output 4.2 Communication strategy for behavioural change implemented

36. Under this output, a communication strategy will be designed and implemented to promote behavioural change and the adoption of sustainable practices. To facilitate knowledge sharing, networking, and the demonstration of successful practices, the project will host trade shows, field days, workshops, and expos. Additionally, the development and distribution of policy briefs, success stories, and case studies will further strengthen the message and promote the uptake of innovative approaches.

37. All capacity building and training activities will aim for a minimum of 50% female participation, and M&E systems will include gender-specific indicators to track knowledge access and use among women and men. Data systems will be designed to produce gender-disaggregated outputs, and gender outcomes will be reported on regularly in project M&E reports.

Alignment with GEF-8 Food Systems Integrated Program

38. The project has been designed to align with the framework of the Food Systems Integrated Program (FSIP) under GEF-8. The FSIP prioritizes the transformation of global food systems to address critical environmental and social challenges. Its core objectives include reducing environmental degradation caused by unsustainable agricultural practices, promoting the sustainable use of land, water, and other natural resources, enhancing climate resilience through support for adaptation measures, and protecting biodiversity while restoring ecosystems impacted by agricultural expansion and intensification. Additionally, the program seeks to achieve food security in a manner that addresses social and

environmental equity concerns. In line with these objectives, the Eswatini Child Project directly contributes to the FSIP framework by focusing on key priority areas. The project addresses land degradation and biodiversity loss, reduces the vulnerability of ecosystems to climate change, and promotes sustainable practices through improved access to finance and the adoption of sustainable practices. Furthermore, it strengthens governance within food systems by addressing critical policy gaps, fostering better alignment of food systems policies, and enhancing knowledge sharing among stakeholders.

Incremental Cost Reasoning

39. Scenario without the GEF-8 FSIP: Without the GEF-8 project, the food systems governance of the Kingdom of Eswatini will remain weak, negatively affecting any efforts aimed at improving food systems and addressing associated environmental degradation across the target landscapes and at a national level. There will also be lack of improved financing options within the Kingdom, which would lead to stagnation in key sectors as businesses remain underfunded, and without an enabling environment. Markets will remain limited and not accessible to farmers, and there will also be limited technological advancement, and lack of financial and insurance products tailored for farmers. Landscapes will remain degraded and natural resources across the landscapes utilized and managed unsustainably. Even though ILM plans and CDPs are available, capacity of their sustainable implementation will remain low. There will still be very weak knowledge management, innovation and M&E systems.

40. Scenario with GEF-8 FSIP: The GEF-8 project will strengthen the governance and institutional arrangements aimed at driving food systems transformation in the country. It will strengthen multistakeholder platforms, that will ensure active participation and representation of all key stakeholders, including women and youth. This project will enhance the financing mechanisms, leading to greater access to credit for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). It will lead to the development of insurance products tailored for local farmers. Importantly, it will enhance the management of the target production landscapes and value chains, thus providing environmental benefits that include biodiversity conservation, carbon management, and land degradation neutrality. Capacity will be developed in communities across the target landscapes on sustainable and integrated land management, as well as sustainable water resources management. These interventions are expected to directly contribute to restoring 20,000 ha of degraded land, improving practices on 80,000 ha, and reducing GHG emissions by 3.255 million metric tons of CO₂e. The project will also strengthen knowledge management, thus fostering innovation and ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms. At least 25,000 people, including 50% women and 30% youth, will benefit from GEF-financed activities such as training, extension

services, value chain support, and access to inclusive financing and institutional markets.

Innovativeness

41. The project embraces an innovative approach by applying systems thinking to address food systems holistically, utilizing the food system wheel to foster transformative change across interconnected elements and stages rather than viewing them as isolated entities. This approach emphasizes the three core elements of food systems: actors and activities, their interconnections, and the overarching purpose of ensuring food and nutrition for all. Through the iceberg model, the project analyses underlying challenges in Eswatini's food systems, enabling targeted interventions at root causes. To support sustainable transformation, the project facilitates the development of innovative financial products and incentive instruments tailored to food system sustainability. It also prioritizes the design and implementation of comprehensive knowledge, innovation, and communication strategies, including the establishment of Eswatini's Food Systems Knowledge and Information Management System. Additionally, the project aims to establish an ecosystem of forward-thinking institutions essential for the transformation of agri-food systems, while fostering private sector investments especially those inclusive of youth and women that will drive the development of resilient value chains.

Sustainability

42. To ensure long-term sustainability, the project is dedicated to creating a robust enabling environment that strengthens government capacities for effective, enduring management of food systems. By working closely with central and local governments, communities, and parastatals, the project promotes collaboration across all levels and engages with local farmer cooperatives to introduce innovative training in sustainable practices and land management. This integrated approach fosters a climate that supports sustainable food systems. Partnerships with the private sector, local NGOs, retailers, and civil society organizations at both landscape and community levels will further establish a networked approach to food systems resilience. The project emphasizes capacity building both nationally and across landscapes, integrating innovative technologies to support food system sustainability. Community Development Plans will be adopted and strengthened, with participatory implementation aligned to ensure sustainability, gender inclusivity, and youth empowerment. The project will build capacity of the EADF, a unit in the MoA designed to drive the transformation of agrifood systems and already mandated to carry out most of the activities under component 1 and 2. Post the GEF support, the EADF will scale-up food systems interventions and as a mandated institution ensure sustainability. Additionally, the project will promote

knowledge sharing through extensive awareness campaigns, information dissemination, and training at local, landscape, and national scales. Lessons learned and best practices will be widely circulated in policy briefs, success stories, and case studies, facilitating broader adoption and upscaling of sustainable practices.

Replication / Scaling-up

43. In each of the three target landscapes, demonstration and pilot sites will be established in at least two communities per landscape to showcase innovative technologies and sustainable practices. The project will document and publish lessons learned and best practices to facilitate replication and will engage government and non-government agencies at national, landscape, *Tinkhundla*, and chiefdom levels. Dissemination efforts will extend to the private sector, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations to build a broad network of informed stakeholders. Implementing agencies will establish partnerships with relevant organizations and stakeholders, facilitating collaborative activities such as interactive monitoring and evaluation (M&E), workshops, pilot site restoration efforts, and surveys. This participatory and interactive approach will not only showcase the project's interventions but will also strengthen capacity and interest in replicating and scaling up these practices across wider areas beyond the original target sites.

Public Awareness, Communications and Mainstreaming Strategy

44. To improve public awareness and effectively mainstream the project's achievements in food systems, a comprehensive communication strategy will be developed and implemented. This strategy will be designed to inform and engage a diverse range of stakeholders, ensuring that innovative solutions and successes in sustainable food systems reach all relevant actors. Tailored messages and materials will address the specific informational needs of these stakeholders, with content available in both English and siSwati to maximize accessibility. The communication approach will employ a variety of platforms, combining broadcast media—such as national and community radio, and television with digital channels. FAO websites, the Agriculture Integrated Information System (AIIS), and social media will host short videos, policy briefs, reports, and success stories. Additionally, demonstration and pilot sites will offer firsthand insights, allowing stakeholders to observe project impacts and innovations in action.

Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

45. During the project preparation phase, a thorough stakeholder analysis was conducted to identify key stakeholders and clarify their roles in the project's

implementation and details are provided in ANNEX H: stakeholder engagement plan and grievance redress mechanism.

Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

46. Eswatini has made notable strides in advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls, particularly in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). The country has committed to various regional and international frameworks, such as the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development. Legislative reforms, such as amendments to the 1964 Marriage Act, the prohibition of child marriage, the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 2018, and the Gender Policy (2023-2033) reflect Eswatini's dedication to safeguarding women's and girls' rights. Moreover, gender mainstreaming has become a key focus in national development, with increasing attention paid to gender issues across sectors like health, education, and gender-based violence. However, despite these advancements, gender inequality remains a significant barrier to sustainable development. Women, who constitute 53% of the population, are disproportionately affected by poverty and have lower access to resources and economic opportunities. The government, civil society, and international organisations continue to work together to address these disparities. Still, deep-rooted gender norms and structural inequalities persist, particularly in sectors like agriculture and natural resources management as further discussed below.

Poverty and Vulnerability

47. Women's vulnerability to poverty is closely linked to food security in Eswatini, where most of the population relies on agriculture for livelihood. Women make up a significant portion of smallholder farmers, yet female-headed households, which represent a large segment of the population, are disproportionately affected by poverty, with 67% of female-headed households living below the poverty line. Poverty limits their ability to purchase inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, or access extension services, which directly impacts agricultural productivity and food security. Furthermore, women's lower adaptive capacities in the face of climate change make them more vulnerable to food shortages, as extreme weather events like droughts affect crop yields. Improving women's access to resources and enhancing their resilience is essential for transforming food systems to be more sustainable and equitable.

Economic Disparity and Employment Gaps in Agriculture

48. Women in agriculture are often confined to subsistence farming or small-scale agricultural activities, while men dominate more lucrative commercial farming and agribusiness. The 2013-2014 Labor Force Survey found that men’s earnings were 67% higher than women’s, and female labour force participation was just 45%. This disparity is stark in the agricultural sector, where women provide most of the labour but lack access to land ownership, credit, and other productive resources. As a result, women produce less, earn less, and have limited control over the food they produce. This inequality undermines the overall productivity of the agriculture sector and contributes to gender-based food insecurity, as women often have less decision-making power over the distribution of household food resources.

Gender Norms and Agricultural Sector Inequality

49. Entrenched gender norms in Eswatini further limit women’s roles. Although women dominate smallholder farming, they face restrictions in accessing formal markets, owning land, or controlling agricultural income. The 2022 WFP gender analysis revealed that while women are responsible for a significant portion of food production, they are often relegated to informal, less profitable markets. This limits their ability to scale their operations or diversify into more profitable value chains. In addition, women’s agricultural labour is often unpaid or undervalued, and their contributions to food production are overshadowed by the perception that farming is a male-dominated activity. These gendered roles not only reduce women’s economic empowerment but also create inefficiencies in the food system, as women’s potential to contribute to food security and sustainability is underutilised.

Gender-Based Violence

50. Gender-based violence (GBV) has profound effects on women’s participation in food systems. In Eswatini, violence against women, including within households, can limit women’s mobility, access to markets, and ability to make decisions about agricultural production or food distribution. The Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 2018 has helped to create a legal framework to address GBV, but enforcement remains weak, particularly in rural areas where women are most involved in food production. Women who experience violence are less likely to engage in community agricultural activities, access training, or participate in decision-making processes that affect food systems. Furthermore, GBV can lead to economic disempowerment, which in turn exacerbates food insecurity, as women have less control over household resources and food distribution.

Limited Gender Mainstreaming in Food and Natural Resource Management

51. Gender mainstreaming in the agricultural and natural resource sectors is still underdeveloped in Eswatini. While gender equality is increasingly recognized in national development planning, the National Gender Policy (NGP) lacks specific references to climate change and its impact on food systems. Women in rural areas, who are highly dependent on natural resources for both household food and agricultural production, are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Droughts, changing rainfall patterns, and land degradation disproportionately affect women, as they are responsible for tasks such as collecting water, managing household food supplies, and growing subsistence crops. Without targeted policies that address the intersection of gender, climate change, and food systems, women’s contributions to sustainable agriculture and food security will remain limited, and their vulnerability to food insecurity will increase.

Cultural Norms and Access to Food Resources

52. Cultural norms in Eswatini often dictate that women are responsible for managing household food resources, but they are rarely given equal access to the means of production or decision-making power over land and agricultural inputs. Women’s roles in food collection (e.g., water, firewood, and food crops) are critical to household food security, yet they often lack control over the land they cultivate, or the income generated from agricultural activities. This unequal distribution of power and resources reduces women’s ability to improve food production or invest in sustainable farming practices. Additionally, women’s extensive knowledge of local ecosystems and agricultural techniques is often overlooked in formal agricultural development programs, further marginalising them in food system decision-making. Addressing these cultural barriers is essential for ensuring that women can fully participate in transforming food systems toward sustainability and resilience.

Climate Change, Women’s Vulnerability, and Food Security

53. Climate change disproportionately affects women in Eswatini due to their roles in subsistence farming and food production. As the primary managers of household food supplies, women are often the first to experience the effects of food shortages caused by droughts or floods. The National Disaster Management Agency has identified women as a particularly vulnerable group in climate-related disasters, yet interventions that address their unique needs in the context of food security are still lacking. Women’s knowledge of climate adaptation strategies, such as water conservation and crop diversification, is vital for building resilient food systems, but without access to resources or decision-making power, their ability to implement these strategies is limited. Ensuring that women are part of climate adaptation planning is crucial for safeguarding food security in the face of climate change.

54. To address the above gender-related challenges, the project will adopt the following:

- **Access to financial services:** Women and youth often face difficulties in accessing financial resources for agricultural activities. The project will facilitate dialogue with financial institutions, including mobile money service providers, commercial banks and other financial providers to develop tailored financing instruments that align with the cash-flow needs of smallholder farmers, especially women and youth.
- **Capacity building through training:** The project will provide targeted training to women and youth involved in agricultural value chains. This technical assistance will include climate adaptation strategies, business development, value addition, and leadership skills to enhance their resilience and economic empowerment.
- **Promoting stakeholder platforms and virtual villages:** To improve access to information and extension services, the project will leverage the widespread cellular network coverage in Eswatini and existing informal platforms, such as WhatsApp and Facebook groups, to create stakeholder platforms. These will facilitate networking and knowledge sharing among women and youth in agriculture.
- **Reinforcing communication around land access:** Land ownership remains a critical barrier for women in agriculture in Eswatini. The project will develop training modules on gender and land rights to raise awareness and advocate for equitable land use planning.
- **Innovative initiatives for gender-sensitive livelihoods:** The project will build on existing initiatives to promote gender-sensitive food systems and inclusive value chains. Using a participatory, community-driven approach, the project will empower both men and women as economic, social, and political actors. Partnerships with organisations like World Vision, FAO, WFP, etc., will enhance agricultural production capacity and promote inclusivity in decision-making at both the household and community levels.

55. Detailed gender analysis and action plan is provided in Annex J: Gender analysis and action plan.

Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Please describe the Institutional Arrangements for the execution of this child project, including framework and mechanisms for coordination, governance, financial management and procurement. This should include consideration for linking with other relevant initiatives at country-level (if a country child project) or regional/global level (for coordination platform child project). If possible, please summarize the flow of funds (diagram), accountabilities for project management and financial reporting (organogram), including audit, and staffing plans. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The institutional setup for sustainable, resilient and transformative food systems in the target landscapes involves several key players operating at different levels or stages of the different value chains. Henceforth, the institutional setup includes government agencies, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, farmer organisations/associations, processors, retailers, distributors and communities. The key institutions that will be directly involved in the implementation of the project are indicated below.

Food and Agriculture Organisation: At the funding level, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will be the GEF Implementing Agency, and as such, will provide project cycle management services as established in the GEF Policy. FAO will be responsible for providing oversight, technical backstopping, and supervision of project implementation to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with agreed standards and requirements. As GEF Implementing Agency, FAO will: administer funds from GEF in accordance with the rules and procedures of FAO; oversee project implementation in accordance with the project document, work plans, budgets, and the rules and procedures of FAO; provide technical guidance to ensure that appropriate technical quality is applied to all activities; conduct at least one supervision mission per year; and report to the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Evaluation Office, through the annual Project Implementation Review, on project progress and provide financial reports to the GEF Trustee.

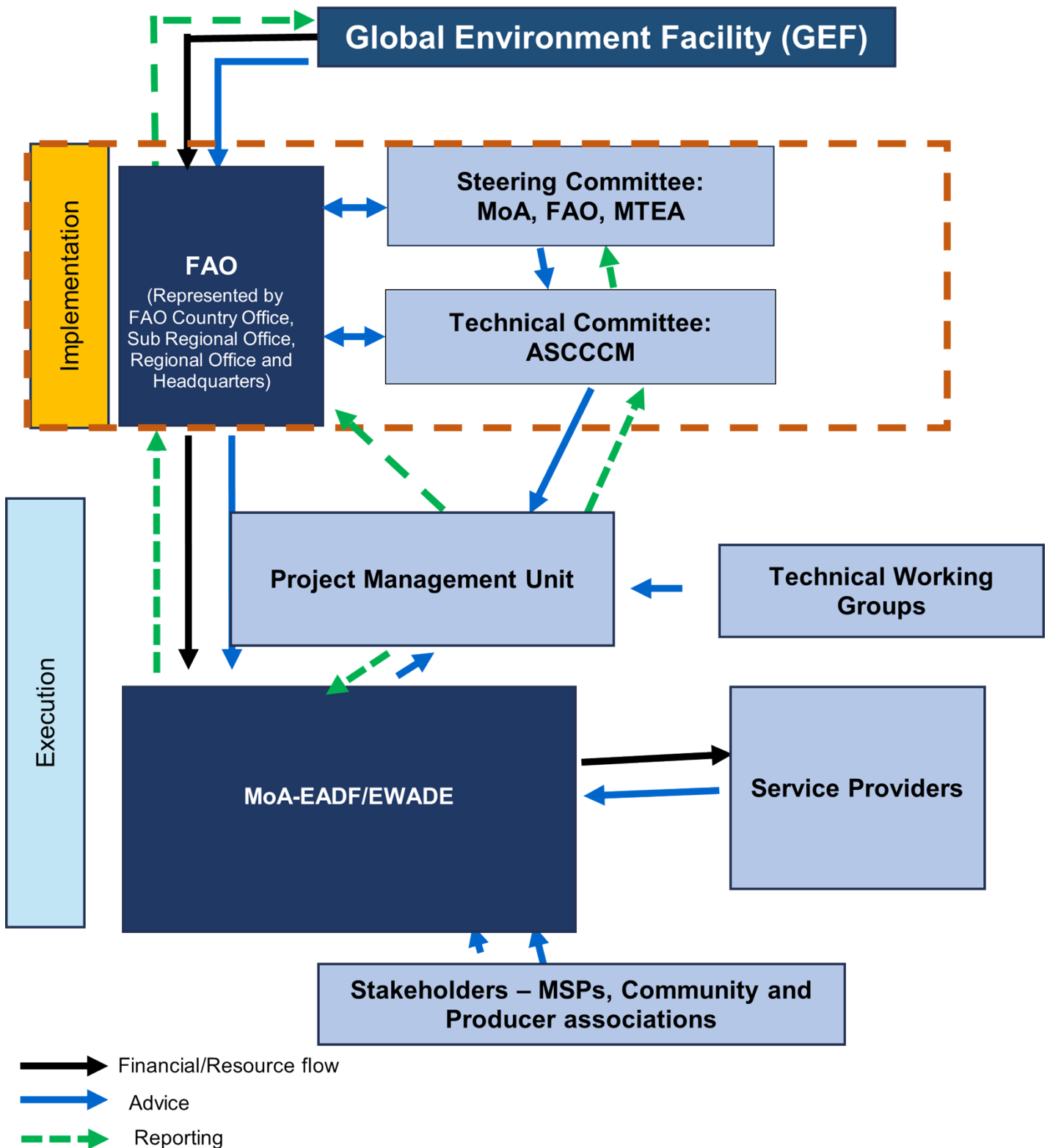
Eswatini Water and Agriculture Development: EWADE with the oversight of FAO will take the lead in the execution of all project activities. They will serve as the executing institution on behalf of the Government through the OPIM agreement between EWADE and FAO, which delegates the execution of activities from the GEF accredited implementing entity/delivery partner FAO to EWADE. Using their vast experience in working in the landscapes, they will assist farmers and communities implement the numerous activities aimed at strengthening landscape food systems and sustainably managing natural resources. They are expected to leverage support from the MoA- Eswatini Agricultural Development Fund (EADF) to execute the activities at policy level. EWADE will constitute the Project Management Unit (PMU) for day-to-day project delivery reporting to the project Technical Committee on a quarterly basis and to the Steering Committee on a biannual basis.

Eswatini Agriculture Development Fund (EADF): The EADF which is a unit in the MoA designed to drive the transformation of agrifood systems is already mandated to carry out most of the activities under component 1 and 2. However, the EADF has just begun operations and still needs in-depth knowledge and experience to deliver effectively on these activities. The EADF's Establishment was and supported by FAO from its conceptualisation as one of the five food systems pathways for Eswatini. EADF is expected to play a key role in supporting EWADE to implement the governance and access to finance activities (Component 1&2). This arrangement will allow the EADF to gain capacity, deepen its technical and knowledge base including in the design of blended financial instruments which is part of this proposal.

Ministry of Agriculture: The LUP section will be responsible for monitoring land degradation and landscape rehabilitation, as well as be involved in the rehabilitation/ restoration of earth dams. DVLS will provide technical advice on rangelands management and control of IAPS, as well as support the review and alignment of policies for management of rangelands and IAPS. The Department of Home Economics will provide technical advice and capacity building on income generating activities, value addition and promotion of nutrition at household levels. DARSS will research and provide evidence-based information on innovative agricultural technologies for improved agricultural production. It will also support strategies for developing the generation of indigenous seed varieties and seed banks. Key officials from the departments of the Ministry will form part of the Project Technical Working Groups and Technical Committee to provide technical advice in project implementation. The Principal Secretary will be part of the project Steering Committee for overall project results delivery monitoring.

Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development: MTAD is responsible for planning, implementing inclusive development, and mobilising resources for effective service delivery at regional and community level. Therefore, the Ministry will be responsible for coordinating and reviewing Chiefdom Development Plans and the mobilisation of communities and traditional leaders. The MTAD will be part of the project TWGs for technical advice.

Ministry of Tourism and Environment Affairs: The Ministry will support in reviewing, aligning and strengthening policies and actions that promote environmental sustainability and climate change resilience while conserving biodiversity to support livelihoods. It will also support the mapping and documentation of key biodiversity areas in target landscapes and degradation hotspots. Through the Department of Forestry, the Ministry will provide technical guidance to forest management and restoration of degraded land and agroforestry. The MTEA will be part of the project TWGs and TC for technical advice and the Principal Secretary will be part of the project Steering Committee for overall project results delivery monitoring.



Project Management Unit (PMU)

FAO will establish and oversee a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU) responsible for the implementation of project activities and ensuring effective coordination with the Project Steering Committee and Technical Committee. The PMU will constitute of key project personnel from FAO, MoA and EWADE for day-to-day project implementation. The Project Management Unit will ensure effective and efficient day-to-day project operations. The PMU will develop project-level annual workplans, budget and procurement plans with partners and prepare agenda and documentation for PSC meetings. The PMU will prepare financial plans, Terms of Reference and contracts for approval. The PMU will

prepare project progress reports and achievement of planned results as presented in quarterly Project Progress Reports and Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs). The PMU will further monitor project implementation and participate in periodic reviews and project evaluations, mid and terminal and conduct training needs assessments and facilitate training and capacity developments

Project Steering Committee

To ensure effective governance and strategic decision-making for the project, a Steering Committee (SC) will be established. The SC will consist of the Principal Secretary from MoA, the GEF Operational Focal Point/Principal Secretary MTEA and FAO as the secretariat. The primary objective of the SC is to ensure strong interinstitutional coordination and oversight. The SC engages with relevant stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and ensuring their input is considered in decision-making processes. Additionally, the SC will review and validate technical products, with a specific focus on avoiding any overlap or duplication of work being carried out by other ongoing projects in Eswatini.

Technical Working Group

The TWG will constitute of key technocrats from the relevant institutions and government ministries including the MoA departments, MTEA, MNRE and any other relevant ministries and their departments. The role of the TWG will be to provide subject-specific technical assistance to the PMU on both national level and community level activities. The TWG will contribute to a bottom-up planning approach and will be consulted by the PMU as and when necessary. With the support of the TWG activities at community level will be made in consultation with the district authorities and community-based organizations at the local level. The TWG will participate in sensitizing and mobilizing local leaders in communities and support participatory planning processes and assisting communities during the Community Development Plans (CDCs) formulation.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders include community members within the Landscapes who are project beneficiaries and their local institutions, NGOs and development committees. The stakeholders for activities at national level includes government ministries, their departments, MoA parastatals including value chain players in the food system continuum.

Will the GEF Agency play an execution role on this child project?

If so, please describe that role here and the justification.

Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The project will be coordinated with other ongoing projects with the national steering committee.

GEF Financed	
<p>GEF-7 Restoration of ecosystems, integrated natural resource management and promotion of SLM in Mbuluzi River Basin of Eswatini</p>	<p>The GEF-7 Mbuluzi River Basin Restoration Project aims to enhance the conservation of an eco-resilient and highly productive Mbuluzi River landscape, along with the effective management of protected areas that deliver critical ecosystem goods and services. By restoring ecosystems and improving natural resource management, the project will also contribute to food security and sustainable livelihoods within the Mbuluzi landscape.</p> <p>The proposed Food Systems Integrated Program will complement these efforts by introducing innovative technologies for integrated land management and sustainable agricultural practices. This program will focus on building capacity in sustainable land management (SLM),</p>

	<p>improved crop production techniques, and rangeland management. By enhancing sustainable practices across these areas, the program will amplify the impacts of the Mbuluzi project, particularly in food systems resilience and landscape productivity.</p> <p>Furthermore, collaboration with key partners, such as the Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC), will facilitate the sharing of lessons learned during the implementation of both projects, fostering a holistic approach to ecosystem restoration and food systems transformation.</p>
<p>Non GEF Financed</p>	
<p>Smallholder Agricultural Productivity Enhancement and Marketing Project (SAPEMP)</p>	<p>Funded by IFAD, GCF and the Government of Eswatini, the SAPEMP will transform the agriculture sector by establishing a resilient market driven and sustainable agriculture sector in Eswatini. The project is structured around three pillars; Climate-resilient, Sustainable Production, Market linkages and financial access and policy and institutional support.</p> <p>It aims to regenerate 40,000 hectares of land, benefiting approximately 24,500 households and nearly 150,000 individuals.</p> <p>SAPEMP is designed to achieve the following strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase smallholder agricultural productivity through climate-smart and sustainable practices. Improve market access and financial inclusion for SHFs by integrating them into structured market systems. Enhance resilience to climate change through adaptation strategies and robust infrastructure. Foster economic empowerment by generating employment opportunities and strengthening agricultural value chains. Strengthen institutional capacity to support rural agricultural development and inclusive growth.
<p>Eswatini Livestock Value Chain Development Programme (ELVCDP)</p>	<p>The Eswatini Livestock Value Chain Development Programme (ELVCDP) funded by the EU objectives is to improve the performance of the livestock value chain in Eswatini, with special emphasis on the beef and goat value chains. The main result areas of the program are:</p>

	<p>To improve smallholder livestock productivity, with a more inclusive and sustainable management of assets at the community/household level.</p> <p>Inclusive, efficient, and transparent VC actors' alliances strengthened in the livestock value chain.</p> <p>MSMEs/Social Enterprises' competitiveness and value addition capabilities strengthened more sustainably and inclusively.</p>
<p>The Mkhondvo–Ngwavuma Water Augmentation Project (MNWAP)</p>	<p>The Mkhondvo–Ngwavuma Water Augmentation Project (MNWAP) is strategically designed to drive economic growth, enhance food security, and mitigate the devastating effects of climate change in Eswatini. The project is primarily funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development. The project aims to uplift the rural poor especially in the Shiselweni Region by fostering sustainable agricultural development.</p> <p>MNWAP is designed to develop irrigation infrastructure across 30,000 hectares, including the construction of 2 dams and conveyance systems to support agricultural activities.</p>
<p>Public and Private Investment in Sustainable Green Cities, Green Spaces and Urban Agriculture</p>	<p>The Public and Private Investment in Sustainable Green Cities, Green Spaces and Urban Agriculture is funded by the GCF. The main objective is to prepare urban and peri-urban communities in Eswatini for public and private investment in sustainable green infrastructure, green open spaces, and urban agriculture as part of climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.</p> <p>The specific goals are to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address climate-driven environmental challenge Promote sustainable infrastructure investments Support policy development, awareness, and capacity building Enhance resilience of vulnerable urban and peri-urban communities.

Table On Core Indicators

Core Indicators

Indicate expected results in each relevant indicator using methodologies indicated in the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework Guidelines. There is no need to complete this table for climate adaptation projects financed solely through LDCF and SCCF.

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	20000	0	0

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
Rangeland and pasture		10,000.00		

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	10,000.00		

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
100000	90000	0	0

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
20,000.00	20,000.00		

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
80,000.00	70,000.00		

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)	2700000	3255000	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)	0	0	0	0

Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)	2,700,000	3,255,000		
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting	2025	2026		
Duration of accounting	20	20		

Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Total Target Benefit	Energy (MJ) (At PIF)	Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)
Target Energy Saved (MJ)				

Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	12,500	12,500		
Male	12,500	12,500		
Total	25,000	25,000	0	0

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Core Indicator 3: Area of land and ecosystems under restoration (hectare): The project will support the restoration of 20,000 ha through improved grazing practices, such as rotational grazing, improvements in water management, and training for pastoral communities to promote sustainable rangeland management.

Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectare): The total area covered by the 3 landscape is 639,324 ha. The project is estimated to improve practices in 80,000 ha, which is ~12 % of the total area.

- 70,000 ha of cropland that has been degraded through mainly monocropping will be improved through crop diversification and sustainable farming practices, including agroecological maize production and conservation agriculture. This will be supported by farmer training, improvements in water management including investments in infrastructure, and improved access to finance through blended financing instruments.

- 10,000 ha of agroforestry shaded perennial systems will be established alongside replanting of indigenous tree species. These efforts will be complemented by control of invasive species, site assessments for suitable crop-tree combinations, and targeted irrigation support.

Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric ton of CO₂e): Through the area restored and the improved practices, the project is estimated to mitigate 3.255 million metric tons of CO₂e. The mitigation potential was calculated using the FAO NEXT tool (refer to Annex L for detailed methodology and the attached NEXT calculation sheet).

Core Indicator 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (count): The project through training, grants among several initiatives, aims to benefit at least 25,000, where 50% will be women, with at least 30 % youth.

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		

Climate	Moderate	Based on FAO climate risk assessment, observed climate hazards in the present (including droughts and high-intensity storms and flash floods) are likely to intensify and gain in frequency. Extreme events during the implementation period could undo benefits of project interventions. The project will support the integration and promotion of specific climate adaptation measures (climate-smart practices) in integrated land management plans, and the design of climate (weather) insurance products (output 2.2). Further, the project will enhance climate resilience through integrated water management (output 3.6), strengthening adaptation capacity and improving farmers' access to agro-climatological information.
Environmental and Social	Moderate	Some of the project interventions may have moderate to low environmental and social impacts. The moderate risk is related to: potential changes in access to natural resources, with the project landscapes adjacent to protected areas; temporary restricted access and use of rangelands for grazing, during restoration. Mitigation: A budgeted Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) outlining measures and actions that must be taken to mitigate or avoid negative impacts on the environment and local communities during project implementation has been developed. This is presented in detail in Annex G.
Political and Governance	Low	Political and governance risks are considered low because of the governance system in Eswatini. The country is a constitutional monarchy, with the King serving as the Head of State, and a parliament elected every 5 years. The last parliamentary elections were held on 29 September 2023. The political and governance context is relatively stable. The project will leverage governance structures which were put in place during the development of existing land use plans for the target landscapes. This and strong engagement of the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development, responsible for planning, implementing inclusive development, and mobilising resources for effective service delivery at regional and community level, and community organizations should minimize local-level governance risks.

INNOVATION

Institutional and Policy	Moderate	The risk is related to adoption of legal and policy reforms for food systems transformation – which could take a long time. Mitigation measures include establishing a multi-stakeholder project steering committee with high-level government leadership; and strong engagement of legal focal persons within ministries early in the implementation of the project and component 1 in particular.
Technological	Low	Risk: Low capacity at all levels hampers implementation and adoption of innovations and approaches promoted by the project. To mitigate the risk, the project will provide comprehensive capacity development programs for local and national stakeholders, including the private sector. It will build ownership and institutional capacity among governmental personnel and farmers to ensure project sustainability. Technical officers will be trained to support farmers beyond the project, with a focus on extension officers, farmer field

		schools, and national organizations and developmental partners. Localized capacity building and grassroots support for community-based groups will foster long-term behavioural change. Mentoring and coaching will ensure sustainability even after the project end life.
Financial and Business Model	Moderate	The project will support the design of innovative financial products under component 2. There is a risk of limited uptake by smallholder farmers – one of the lessons from past initiatives. Mitigation measures include close collaboration of smallholders in the design of these instruments, embedding financial and business skills components in the capacity building programs (delivered in an appropriate way) and awareness and communication.

EXECUTION

Capacity	Moderate	Integrated food systems projects like this one are complex. They require engagement of stakeholders and institutions across diverse thematic areas, beyond EWADE – along with strong capacities of lead executing agencies to coordinate and partner with multiple agencies and institutions. Mitigation measures: Implementation arrangements include a technical working group with key technocrats from relevant institutions and government ministries (agriculture, environment, natural resources, planning), research, community-based organizations. The role of the TWG will be to provide subject-specific technical assistance to the PMU on both national level and community level activities. With regard to capacities of stakeholders in the target landscapes, there are strong capacity building activities across all the components, particularly components 2 and 3.
Fiduciary	Low	Based on fiduciary assessment of EWADE conducted during PPG, this risk is low.
Stakeholder	Moderate	Related to the complexity of integrated food systems projects is need for engagement of multiple stakeholders across sectors, in execution. As mentioned, there is a risk of limited support of local authorities – who can play an important role in mobilizing community engagement. Mitigation: Consistent communication and collaboration between the project national and local governments and communities to ensure sustained commitment at all levels (supported by the project’s communication strategy). Engagement of the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development, with an important influence at local level.

Other		
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Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	The overall risk rating is moderate, taking into consideration all the risks outlined above, and the complexity of this integrated project – bringing together multiple food systems and stakeholders at local and national level.
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C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Explain how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies, including the specific integrated program priorities, and country and regional priorities, Describe how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements, such as through NDCs, NBSAPs, etc.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how.

(max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The project has been designed to align with the framework of the Food Systems Integrated Program (FSIP) under GEF-8. FSIP focuses on transforming global food systems from farm to table, so that they are sustainable, regenerative, nature positive, resilient, inclusive and pollution-free. It addresses the underlying drivers of unsustainability along the whole length of the food system, by transforming and strengthening value chains, business models, incentive and finance frameworks, and policy and institutional conditions, all of which support the application of models of integrated and sustainable landscape and farm management on the ground. In line with FSIP objectives, the Eswatini Child Project directly contributes to the FSIP framework by promoting the integrated management of landscapes and sustaining farming systems within these and improving access to finance to facilitate investments in sustainable food systems practices and technologies. Furthermore, it strengthens the enabling environment by addressing critical policy gaps, fostering better alignment of food systems policies, and enhancing knowledge sharing among stakeholders.

Consistency with national priorities:

Priorities	Alignment
<p>National Development Plan (2023/24 – 2027/28)</p>	<p>The project aligns with the NDP's goals of good governance, sustainable livelihoods, and a thriving agricultural sector. It aims to enhance food security, agribusiness, and agro processing while addressing policy reform, gender equity, climate change, and environmental sustainability through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Community-based natural resource management · Strengthening community development plans · Enhancing value chains and market access · Promoting diverse food production · Improving farmers' climate change adaptation · Sustainable land use and ecosystem conservation · Preserving biodiversity and natural resources · Investing in resilient agricultural infrastructure
<p>Eswatini National Agriculture Investment Plan (2023-2028)</p>	<p>The ENAIP aims to boost agricultural investment for food security and economic growth. It aligns with key investment areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Strengthening public sector capacity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fostering private sector-led agri-food systems · Improving the business environment for smallholder farmers · Sustainable land and natural resource management · Promoting technology, innovation, and infrastructure · Enhancing emergency preparedness, nutrition, and social protection <p>The project will support investments in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Water storage and drinking water infrastructure · Earth dam construction and rehabilitation · Donga rehabilitation · Rangeland and wetland conservation · Other relevant infrastructure projects
<p>Ministry of Agriculture Strategic Plan (2024-2028) and beyond</p>	<p>The project ensures alignment with the MoA strategic plan by enhancing better access to agricultural extension services to adopt new technologies and practices, promoting the use of drought-resistant crop varieties, promoting the use of seed varieties that adapt to local conditions, integrating traditional farming practices with modern techniques, and promoting practising Climate Smart Agriculture and Conservation Agriculture.</p>
<p>Updated Nationally Determined Contributions (2021)</p> <p>Agriculture - Increase the contribution of agriculture to economic development to support both food security and income generation. Reduce poverty and improve food and nutrition security through sustainable use of natural resources, improved access to markets and improved disaster and risk management systems</p> <p>Water - Improve water governance and compliance to help manage water resources more efficiently and effectively to adapt to resultant water shortages from climate change</p> <p>Ecosystems and Biodiversity - Scale up actions and investments in ecological infrastructure including actions for strengthening Regenerative Landscape Management of degraded lands/ecosystems of Eswatini</p>	<p>The project will contribute to Increasing agricultural contribution to the economy and food security through strengthening community seed banks and indigenous plant nurseries (Output 3.5), expansion of agroecological production systems (Output 3.1), establishment of Farmer Field Schools and SME access to climate-smart technologies (Output 3.2), as well as post-harvest value chain strengthening and reduction of food loss (Output 3.3)</p> <p>The project will contribute to implementation of integrated water management approaches and rehabilitation of water infrastructure (Output 3.7), training on water resource management and development of water use agreements (Output 3.7)</p> <p>The project will contribute through participatory implementation of Integrated Landscape</p>

Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) - Reduce land degradation (including in mountain ecosystems) through restoration

Gender - Enhance participation of women and girls in decision making to facilitate representation of gender issues and finding solutions to gender-based problems

Management (ILM) plans (Output 3.1), rangeland and ecosystem restoration, including control of invasive species and agreements with communities (Outputs 3.4, 3.8) and conservation of indigenous plant species and biodiversity (Outputs 3.4, 3.5)

The project will contribute to land rehabilitation and rangeland restoration, reducing carbon footprint through sustainable land use and invasive species management (Output 3.1 and 3.4)

The project will contribute through gender-sensitive trainings and inclusive participation in ILM and value chains (Outputs 2.1, 3.1, 3.3, 3.6), targeting women and youth for financial access and grant programs (Outcome 2), development of gender-sensitive risk assessments and frameworks (Outputs 2.2, 3.8)

The project will contribute to NDC commitments by:

- Increasing agricultural contribution to the economy and food security
- Reducing carbon footprint through sustainable land use and invasive species management
- Promoting diverse food production for improved nutrition
- Scaling up climate-smart agriculture for enhanced food security and income
- Managing invasive species to improve rangeland productivity
- Improving water governance for efficient water resource management
- Strengthening regenerative landscape management to restore degraded lands
- Conserving genetic resources and protecting wetlands
- Reducing pressures on biodiversity to enhance carbon sinks.

Eswatini Land Degradation Neutrality 2030 (LDN) Targets

Specific targets to avoid, minimize and reverse land degradation

Increase by 10% net land productivity in all land cover categories through SLM practices.

The project will contribute to Eswatini's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets by:

- Restoring degraded land: Rehabilitating 80,000 hectares of land under improved practices, restoring 20,000 ha degraded lands aligning with

<p>Rehabilitate 115,000ha of degraded and abandoned land for crop production by 2030.</p>	<p>national LDN goals to combat soil erosion and land degradation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sustainable land management (SLM): Promoting agroecological practices, integrated landscape management (ILM), and rangeland restoration to reduce land degradation hotspots identified in the LDN assessment. · Biodiversity conservation: Addressing invasive alien plant species (IAPS) and restoring ecosystems to enhance land productivity and resilience.
<p>KMGBF targets, 2030</p>	<p>The project supports the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ecosystem restoration: Contributing to Target 2, restoring 30% of degraded ecosystems, through ILM and biodiversity-friendly practices. · Invasive species control: Aligning with Target 6, reducing invasive species impacts, by managing IAPS in critical landscapes. · Sustainable use of biodiversity: Supporting Target 10, ensuring sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry via agroecological production and indigenous seed conservation. · Equitable benefits: Advancing Target 22, gender and youth inclusion, by empowering women and youth in sustainable food systems.

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed during Project Preparation as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the child Project Description (Section B).

Yes

1) Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive-measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

Yes

If the child project expects to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment, please indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality:

Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;

Yes

Improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or

Yes

Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

Yes

2) Does the child project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during Project Preparation as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes has been clearly articulated in the Child Project Description (Section B) and that a Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed before CEO endorsement.

Yes

Select what role civil society will play in the Project:

Consulted only;

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor;

Co-financier;

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body ; Yes

Executor or co-executor; Yes

Other (Please explain)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the Child project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in section B "Child project description"?

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguards

We confirm that we have provided information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed child project or program, including risk screenings/ assessments and, if applicable, management plans or other measures to address identified risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex E).

Please provide overall Project/Program Risk Classification

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
	Medium/Moderate		

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described during Project Preparation in the Project Description and that these activities have been budgeted and an anticipated timeline for delivery of relevant outputs has been provided. This includes budget for linking with and participation in knowledge exchange activities organized through the coordination platform.

Yes

Socio-economic Benefits

We confirm that the child project design has considered socio-economic benefits to be delivered by the project and these have been clearly described in the Project Description and will be monitored and reported on during project implementation (at MTR and TER).

The GEF-8 project will strengthen the governance and institutional arrangements aimed at revamping and boosting the food systems in the country. It will strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms that will ensure active participation and representation of all key stakeholders, including women and youth. This project will enhance the financing mechanisms, leading to greater access to credit for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. It will facilitate the development of insurance products tailored for local farmers.

The project will also improve innovation and extension systems to help smallholders and SMEs access sustainable technologies and practices, particularly those addressing post-harvest losses and waste in value chains. Market access for sustainably produced food stand to be greatly enhanced by the project as it aims to form agribusiness clusters that will benefit smallholders, women, and youth farmers. to integrate smallholder producers, especially marginalized women and youth, into mainstream markets.

Ultimately, the project will benefit at least 25,000 people, where 50% will be women, with at least 30 % youth.

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)

FAO	GET	Eswatini	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	Grant	2,639,794.00	237,581.00	2,877,375.00
FAO	GET	Eswatini	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	Grant	879,931.00	79,194.00	959,125.00
Total GEF Resources (\$)						3,519,725.00	316,775.00	3,836,500.00

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Was a Project Preparation Grant requested? true

PPG Amount (\$) 150000

PPG Agency Fee (\$) 13500

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
FAO	GET	Eswatini	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	112,500.00	10,125.00	122,625.00
FAO	GET	Eswatini	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	37,500.00	3,375.00	40,875.00
Total PPG Amount (\$)					150,000.00	13,500.00	163,500.00

Please provide Justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
FAO	GET	Eswatini	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	3,000,000.00
Total GEF Resources					3,000,000.00

Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
Food IP	GET	3,519,725.00	32216462

Total Project Cost		3,519,725.00	32,216,462.00
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Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type

Please include evidence for each co-financing source for this project in the tab of the portal

Sources of Co-financing		Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Government	Country	Ministry of Agriculture	Public Investment	Investment mobilized	3125000
Recipient Government	Country	Ministry of Agriculture	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1563000
Recipient Government	Country	Eswatini Water and Agriculture Development Enterprise	Public Investment	Investment mobilized	15000000
Donor Agency		European Union	Grant	Investment mobilized	8922337
Recipient Government	Country	Microprojects (Rural Development Fund)	Grant	Investment mobilized	300000
Recipient Government	Country	Eswatini Agriculture Development Fund	Loans	Investment mobilized	551125
GEF Agency		FAO	Grant	Investment mobilized	2755000
Total Co-financing					32,216,462.00

Please describe the investment mobilized portion of the co-financing

Investment mobilized from EWADE is from the Smallholder Agricultural Productivity Enhancement and Marketing Project. This project combines public funds from the Government of Eswatini, and contributions from additional sources including beneficiaries and development partners. Hence it is also labelled public investment per GEF co-financing guidelines.

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENT

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Coordinator	Date	Project Contact Person	Telephone	Email
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Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template.

Name of GEF OFP	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
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ANNEX C: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Please indicate the page number in the Project Document where the project results and M&E frameworks can be found. Please also paste below the Project Results Framework from the Agency document. For the Integrated Programs' global/regional coordination child project, please include the program-wide results framework, inclusive of results specific to the coordination child project. For any country child project, please ensure that relevant program level indicators are included.

Project objective	Objective level indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term	End of Project	Means of Verification	Assumptions	
To catalyse the transformation to sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems, delivering environmental benefits and contributing to food and nutrition security and livelihoods of Eswatini	GEF-8 core indicator 3: Area of land and ecosystems under restoration (hectare)	0	10,000 ha restored	20,000 restored	End of project reports, progress reports, monitoring reports	Eswatini Government remains committed to transforming food systems.	
	GEF-8 core indicator 4: Total area of landscapes under improved practices (in ha)	0	40,000 ha of landscapes under improved practices	80,000 ha of landscapes under improved practices			Stakeholders are committed to sustainable and resilient food systems.
	GEF-8 core indicator 6: Greenhouse Gas Emission mitigated (in metric tons of CO ₂ e)	0	-	3,255 million tons of CO ₂ e mitigated			-
	GEF-core indicator 11: Total number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender	0	10,000 (50 % men, and 50 % women)	25,000 (50 % men, and 50 % women, 30 % youth)			

Project outcome	Outcome indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term	End of Project	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Outcome 1. Strengthened collaboration and governance enabling food systems transformation in Eswatini	Institutional arrangement	The reporting and coordination structure for the kingdom is weak	Institutional arrangement developed		Stakeholder engagement reports	Strong and sustained government and stakeholder commitment and cooperation.
	Number of capacity-building programs conducted for MDA officials	Weak institutional capacity of Ministries, Departments and Agencies, minimal capacity building for officials and decision-	Capacity building plan Institutional capacity completed	Institutional capacity completed	Attendance register, Training reports	

Project outcome	Outcome indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term	End of Project	Means of Verification	Assumptions
		makers on emerging global trends in food systems transformation, sustainability and climate-smart innovations				
	Number of legal frameworks reviewed and aligned for food systems transformation and gender equity	<p>Policies are not aligned with emerging global trends in food systems transformation, sustainability issues and climate-smart innovations</p> <p>Subsidy program for crop production covers 3 crops thus promote monoculture</p>	Policies to be reviewed and aligned identified and the review process started.	Identified policies reviewed and aligned (drafts)	Reviewed policy documents, policy review workshop reports, policy review workshop attendance register	
	Number of sustainability traceability and transparency systems developed and or strengthened	<p>ENAIP has launched a livestock (cattle) information traceability system, land degradation surveillance system</p> <p>There are no sustainability standards and traceability systems, and incentives to facilitate uptake of CSA, and environmentally friendly technology and practices</p>	Traceability tool/system for CSA piloted	Traceability tool/system for CSA fully developed and operational	<p>Traceability tools developed</p> <p>Comprehensive report on linkages, action plans with targeted interventions done.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation plan to track sustainability implemented</p>	
Outcome 2. Increased availability of and access to finance in support of sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems	Number of grant beneficiaries, with a larger participation of youth and women	While there are several initiatives aimed at improving access to finance for MSMEs in Eswatini—such as the Central Bank Loan Guarantee Scheme; FINCLUDE loan guarantee scheme; Regional Development Fund; Youth Revolving Fund loan guarantee schemes challenges to access funds still remain due to systemic issues within the banking sector and broader economic conditions.	Catalytic grant developed	2000 beneficiaries (50% men, 50 % women, at least 30 % of both genders must be the youth)	<p>Grant disbursement records</p> <p>Beneficiary surveys</p>	<p>The government remains committed to strengthening agricultural investment funds</p> <p>Development and local financing institutions confirm their interest in agriculture value chains</p> <p>Private sector is interested in de-risking mechanisms</p>

Project outcome	Outcome indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term	End of Project	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Outcome 3. Management of target production landscapes and value chains enhanced to deliver environmental (biodiversity, carbon and land degradation	Total value of loans and grants received by smallholder farmers and SMEs (#men, women, youth) and women-led enterprises in support of sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems (gender disaggregated)		At least \$2 million	At least 3 million		MSMEs willing to apply for loans and grants Stakeholders are willing to contribute data to the central system
	Monitoring framework	The Eswatini Standards Authority (SWASA) has been actively involved in promoting agricultural standards through collaborations with various stakeholders such as NAMBoard, unfortunately there is no monitoring framework for food safety, quality, and traceability in the agricultural supply chain in the country,	Farm-to-table monitoring framework developed and functional	Farm-to-Table Monitoring Framework is fully operationalized, with data collection ongoing across all relevant stages of the value chain.	Stakeholder engagement reports Farm-to-table monitoring framework	
	Number of blended financial products aligned with food systems developed	Commercial banks consider small-scale agriculture high-risk hence their interest rate is high The National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBoard), National Maize Corporation (NMC) and Eswatini Bank in 2024 has launched E10 million revolving fund	6 tailored financial products developed	10 tailored-made financial products developed	Financial product descriptions and promotional materials	
	Number of insurance products tailored for agricultural enterprises developed	Agriculture insurance is limited due to its risky nature hence the premium costs are very high and there are very few insurers that offer agricultural insurance facility (Ludwala and Eswatini Royal Insurance Corporation)	At least 2 insurance products developed and being piloted	At least 5 insurance products developed and piloted	Insurance product descriptions and promotional materials	
	Number of community seed banks strengthened	COSPE Eswatini has already assisted the Government and local communities in establishing community seed banks at Kalanga and Lomahasha. There is also a national seed bank at Malkerns Research Centre. These initiatives	At least 1 seed bank strengthened	At least 3 seed banks strengthened	Community seed banks	Communities and other land users and managers committed to sustainable management of land and other natural resources.

Project outcome	Outcome indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term	End of Project	Means of Verification	Assumptions
neutrality) and food and nutrition security and livelihood benefits		are still very limited, and the existing banks need strengthening and the addition of more banks in communities. Limited investment and capacity in breeding and mass production of indigenous seed varieties				Sustainable production techniques and practices are economically viable
	Number of ILM plans updated	Communities have ILM plans that were developed through community based participatory approach under the SNPAS project	At least 3 ILM plans updated	At least 6 ILM plans updated and under implementation	Stakeholder engagement report Updated ILM plans	
	Area of land rehabilitated (ha)	Half of the communal land, especially rangelands, is degraded and has serious erosion status in the form of gully, rill and sheet erosion SLM program – Environment Fund Mbuluzi Ecosystem Restoration Project, Malolotja Songimvelo TFCA	4,000 ha of the degraded land restored	10,000 ha of the degraded land rehabilitated	Rehabilitated land	
	Area under agroecological production	UNDP, EWADE, PELUM Eswatini, Guba, Vusumnotfo and COSPE, are spearheading climate-resilient and agroecological methods of food production	5,000 ha under agroecological production	10,000 ha under agroecological production	Area under agroforestry	
	Number of indigenous plants nurseries strengthened	The sustainability of indigenous plants in the land is threatened since most are not protected, encroached by human activities and by livestock. The Eswatini Environment Fund has supported numerous communities in the past five years to fence, rehabilitate and protect critical indigenous plants in different communities across the country	6 nurseries strengthened	The 6 strengthened nurseries are fully operational and equipped with the necessary resources, training, and infrastructure to support the propagation and distribution of indigenous plant species effectively	Seedlings in nurseries Training reports	

Project outcome	Outcome indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term	End of Project	Means of Verification	Assumptions
	Number of agreements between protected areas and communities developed	<p>Notable conflicts between protected areas and communities</p> <p>No existing agreements between neighbouring communities and the protected areas</p>	At least 2 agreements being drafted	At least 2 agreements finalized	<p>Draft agreements</p> <p>Finalized agreements</p> <p>Meeting minutes</p>	
	Number of beneficiaries (women and youth) sensitised on participatory ILM	<p>Limited knowledge in the efficient and sustainable use of land</p> <p>No coordinated landscape-wide management</p>	10,000 beneficiaries	25,000 beneficiaries, 50% women	Attendance register, activity reports, Beneficiary surveys	
	Number of community members trained in rangeland management	<p>Limited capacity on rangeland management</p> <p>Livestock value chain development program to capacitate communities on sustainable rangeland management</p>	At least 1,000 beneficiaries trained	At least 2,000 beneficiaries trained, 50% women	Attendance register, Beneficiary surveys	
	Area of land cleared of IAPS (ha)	<p>Many rangelands are heavily encroached by bushes and IAPS.</p> <p>There is IAPS strategy.</p> <p>IAPS control through ENTC in several communities.</p> <p>Enactus Eswatini promotes charcoal making using IAPS</p> <p>Komati Water Basin Authority (KOBWA) works with communities to remove IAPS</p> <p>Mbabane City Council strategy to reduce IAPS by 70% by 2024</p>	At least 4,000 ha	At least 10,000 ha	Satellite and drone imaging	
	Number of reviewed and updated CDPs, that integrate and mainstream sustainable food	<p>CDPs are outdated</p> <p>Community leaders remain poorly capacitated</p>	At least 3 CDPs reviewed and updated	At least 6 CDPs reviewed and updated	<p>Stakeholder engagement reports</p> <p>Participants lists</p>	

Project outcome	Outcome indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term	End of Project	Means of Verification	Assumptions
	systems, land use and natural resources management					
	Number of traditional authorities (TAs), CDCs and communities capacitated on sustainable land use, food systems and CDPs	CDCs were trained and inputted when CDPs were developed. However, some traditional leaders and community members do not adhere to the CDP as communities develop. They lack training on the CDP process	At least 21 TAs and CDCs beneficiaries trained At least 150 community members trained, with 50% women and 50% men (30% youth)	At least 42 TAs and CDCs beneficiaries trained At least 450 community members trained, with 50% women and 50% men (30% youth)	Training reports Participants lists	
	Number of community members trained on value-addition techniques, crop production & rangeland management incorporating gender and youth	Limited knowledge on value addition techniques Income generation and livelihood program by Red Cross Limited capacity on fodder production and crop production Reduced grazing areas due increased human settlements have necessitated intensive livestock rearing Average 30% food losses throughout value chains	At least 3,000 beneficiaries trained	At least 6,000 beneficiaries trained	Training reports Participation lists Farmer feedback	
	Rangeland management best practice framework developed	Poor coordination in rehabilitation efforts and continued overgrazing leading to soil erosion, soil compaction and land degradation. Poor uptake in the implementation of rangeland management	Rangeland management framework	The framework is fully operationalized, with key stakeholders trained and actively implementing best practices across targeted landscapes	Framework Minutes of the consultative meetings and community engagements as framework was being developed	
	Number of water resources rehabilitated	Half of the communal land is degraded and has serious erosion status in the form of gully, rill and sheet erosion. Mbuluzi Ecosystem Restoration Project,	At least 1 earth dam restored At least 3 wetlands fenced and rehabilitated	At least 3 earth dams restored At least 6 wetlands fenced and rehabilitated	Rehabilitated water resources Restored wetlands	

Project outcome	Outcome indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term	End of Project	Means of Verification	Assumptions
		Malolotja Songimvelo TFCA.				
	Gender-sensitive framework on incentivising ecosystem restoration activities	No existing framework and poor implementation of activities	Gap analysis report Draft framework	Gender-sensitive framework developed	Stakeholder consultative report Validation report	
Outcome 4.1 Knowledge on innovations shared through the global platform and relevant platforms.	Operational research and knowledge management system in place.	0	1	1	Project reporting	Knowledge products reach intended audiences who apply their findings.
Outcome 4.2 Effective and efficient project coordination and M&E for impact	Number of institutions engaged knowledge sharing and # of knowledge products (including gender aspects) shared	0	3	8		
	Number of impact stories and best practices on gender and women empowerment shared	0	At least 6 stories disseminated	At least 12 stories disseminated	Project reporting	
	Number of engagements with the IP Global platform	0	At least 2 per year.	At least 3 per year	Project M&E reports	
	Number of new initiatives in Eswatini influenced and adopting FSIP approaches and best practices from the project.	0	2	At least 4	Project M&E reports	

ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
Inputs to preparation of key elements of the project document such as food systems policy and institutions, integrated landscape management, stakeholder engagement and knowledge management; sustainable agriculture; agribusiness	95,000.00	47,482.00	34,020.00

and value chains; finance and private sector engagement; socio-economic and gender analysis; environment and social safeguards, and GEBS (core indicator analysis) were provided by: Sustainable Agriculture & Value Chain Specialist; Food Systems Financing & Investment Specialist; Sustainable Land Management & Stakeholder Specialist, Socio-environmental safeguards and gender Specialist; GEF Project Design Expert (PDE); GIS expert; Financial management/ analyst; Gender Expert).			
Contract on Operational Partners Implementation Modality (OPIM) Capacity Assessment of the OP	12,000.00	4,550.00	
Travels including National and international	30,000.00	10,457.00	
Workshops including National PPG inception and validation; local and community consultations; PPG working group meetings	13,000.00	46,545.00	
General Operating Expenses (printings; small venues)		6,946.00	
Total	150,000.00	115,980.00	34,020.00

ANNEX E: PROJECT MAP AND COORDINATES

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Mvembili	-25.50	31.10	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

ILM plan implementation and improved and integrated livestock and crop production practices, integrated water management including irrigation water and equipment provision, crop diversification.

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Luvinjelweni	-26.10	31.15	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

ILM plan implementation - interventions include IAPS control, rangeland and wetland rehabilitation, improved livestock production practices, improved irrigation, and post-harvest training. Coordination mechanisms will be enhanced to address inter-community conflicts.

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
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Luzweleni	-26.45	31.08	
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Location Description:

Activity Description:

ILM plan implementation. Interventions will focus on wetland and rangeland rehabilitation, along with conservation agriculture practices and crop diversification, improved management of rangelands, scaling-up of beekeeping, value addition, and market access.

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Ntondozi	-26.35	31.10	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

ILM plan implementation. Interventions aim to improve improve the management of the landscape focusing on sustainable production on underused land through integrated water management and improved irrigation, crop diversification, particularly root and tuber crops.

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Mhlumeni	-26.20	31.75	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

ILM plan implementation. Interventions will focus on IAPS control, agroecological maize production, improved water management, and replanting of indigenous species. Implementation of land management plans will also address conflicts with Mlawula Nature Reserve, deforestation and fires, while training will support value addition, post-harvest handling, and market access.

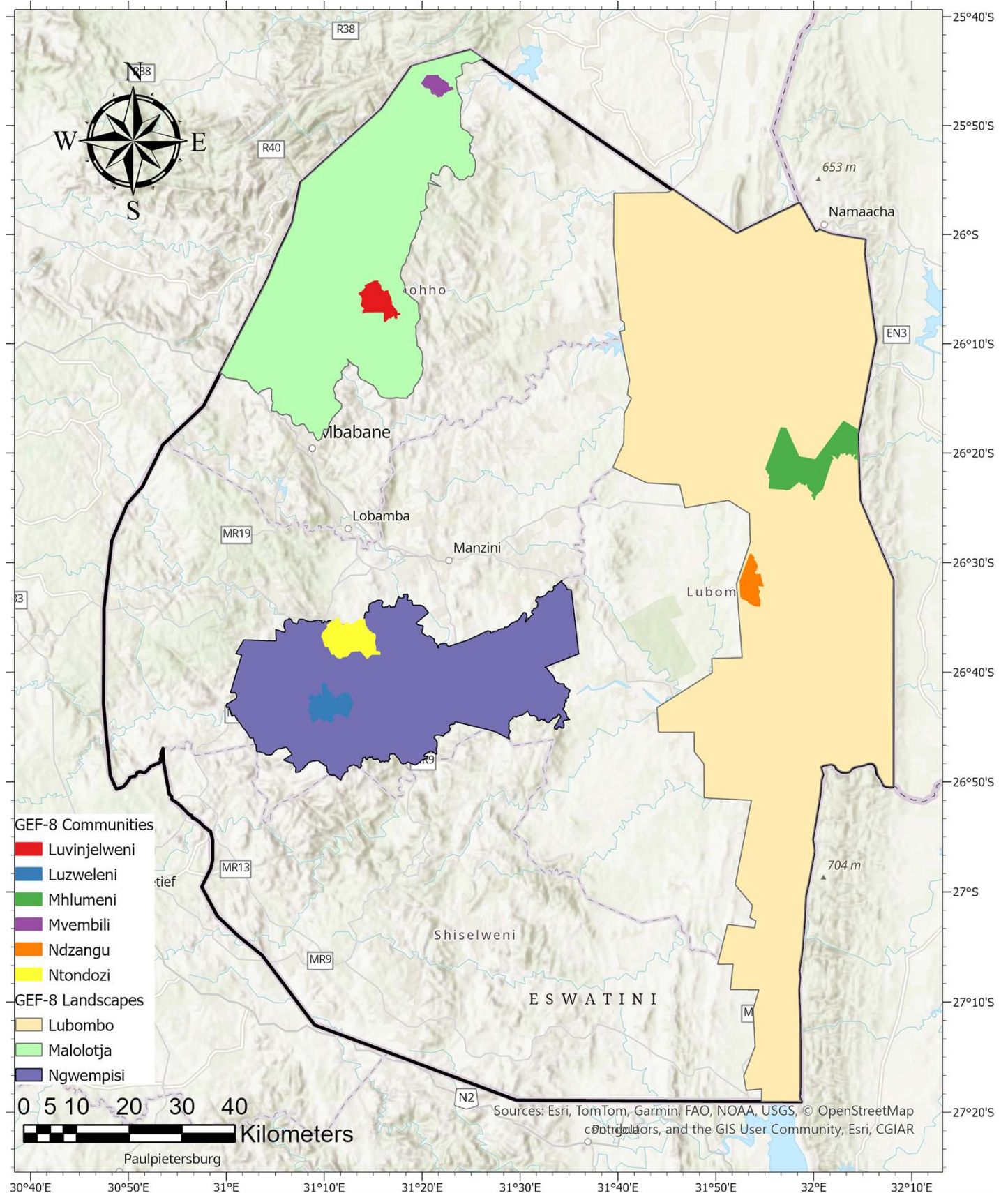
Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Ndzangu	-26.30	31.60	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

ILM plan implementation. Interventions will focus on IAPS control, agroecological maize production, improved water management, and replanting of indigenous species. Implementation of land management plans will also address deforestation and fires, while training will support value addition, post-harvest handling, and market access.

Please provide any further geo-referenced information and map where project interventions are taking place as appropriate.



ANNEX F: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS DOCUMENTS INCLUDING RATING

Attach agency safeguard datasheet/assessment report(s), including ratings of risk types and overall project/program risk classification as well as any management plans or measures to address identified risks and impacts (as applicable).

Title

Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan

ES_risk_screening_checklist_GEF8 Eswatini_28_03_25

ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE

Please upload the budget table here.

FAO Cost Categories	Unit	No. of units	Unit cost	Total cost	Compon ent 1	Compon ent 2	Compon ent 3	Compon ent 4	M&E	PMC	Total	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
					Total	Total	Total	Total				
5013 Consultants												
Chief Technical Advisor	month	12	4,125	49,500	8,250	13,750	19,250	8,250			49,500	EWAVE
<i>Sub-total International Consultants</i>					8,250	13,750	19,250	8,250	0	0	49,500	
National Project Coordinator	month	60	1,350	81,000	0	0	0	0	55,000	26,000	81,000	EWAVE
Finance and administration officer	month	60	800	48,000	0	0	0	0	0	48,000	48,000	EWAVE
Field Coordination Experts x 4	month	60	2,000	120,000	30,000	30,000	40,000	20,000	0	0.00	120,000	EWAVE
M & E Officer	month	60	1,050	63,000	0	0	0	42,000	21,000	0.00	63,000	EWAVE
Institutions and multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) Expert	days	60	350	21,000	7,875	7,875	0	5,250	-	0.00	21,000	EWAVE
Policy Expert	days	60	700	42,000	31,500	0	0	10,500	-	0.00	42,000	EWAVE
Sustainability standards, transparency and traceability systems Expert	days	60	350	21,000	15,750	0	0	5,250	-	0.00	21,000	EWAVE
Gender and ESS Expert;	days	60	350	21,000	7,875	7,875	0	5,250	-	0.00	21,000	EWAVE
Knowledge and communications officer	month	24	1,300	31,200	5,200	8,667	12,133	5,200	0	0.00	31,200	EWAVE
Integrated NRM Expert	days	60	350	21,000	0	0	21,000	0	0	0	21,000	EWAVE
Livestock and Range Manangement Expert	days	60	350	21,000	0	0	21,000	0			21,000	EWAVE
Value Chains Specialist	days	60	350	21,000	0	21,000	0	0	0	0	21,000	EWAVE
Seed Expert to strengthen community seedbanks	days	60	350	21,000	0	0	21,000	0	0	0	21,000	EWAVE
<i>Sub-total national Consultants</i>					98,200	75,417	115,133	93,450	76,000	74,000	532,200	
5013 Sub-total consultants					106,450	89,167	134,383	101,700	76,000	74,000	581,700	
5650 Contracts												
Working with a service provide, set-up catalytic grants to support smallholders and SMEs investments in sustainable production, value chains and business models.	lumpsum	1	1,300,000	1,300,000	0	1,300,000	0	0	0	0	1,300,000	EWAVE
Wokring with the National Agriculture Marketing Board (NAMBoard) establish farmer field schools, lead farmers and demonstration sites under Output 3.2	lumpsum	1	50,000	50,000	0	0	50,000	0	0	0	50,000	EWAVE

Working with the Eswatini National Trust Commission for strengthening integrated conservation of biodiversity and rangeland management practices (Output 3.4 and 3.6) and supporting mainstreaming of sustainable food systems in Chiefdom Development Plans (CDPs) and their implementation	lumpsum	1	769,000	769,000	0	0	769,000	0	0	0	769,000	EWADE
Working with the National Seed Bank for supporting generation and use of indigenous varieties under Output 3.5,	lumpsum	1	40,000	40,000	0	0	40,000	0	0	0	40,000	EWADE
Working with National Micro Project for rehabilitation of water resources including wetlands under Output 3.7	lumpsum	1	32,000	32,000	0	0	32,000	0	0	0	32,000	EWADE
Establishing monitoring framework for food systems investments (output 2.3) and support to project level data consolidation and M&E under Component 4	lumpsum	1	66,000	66,000	0	21,000	0	45,000	0	0	66,000	EWADE
Audit (1/year) 2 Ops	lumpsum	5	8,250	41,250	0	0	0	0	0	41,250	41,250	FAO
Spot-checks (OP low risk 1/year; 1OP mod risk 2/year)	lumpsum	15	2,750	41,250	0	0	0	0	0	41,250	41,250	FAO
Mid Term Review	lumpsum	1	40,000	40,000	0	0	0	0	40,000	0	40,000	FAO
Final Evaluation	lumpsum	1	40,000	40,000	0	0	0	0	40,000	0	40,000	FAO
Terminal Report	lumpsum	1	7,000	7,000	0	0	0	0	7,000	0	7,000	FAO
5650 Sub-total Contracts					0	1,321,000	891,000	45,000	87,000	82,500	2,426,500	
5021 Travel												
International Consultant travels	unit	1	4000	4,000	667	1,111	1,556	667			4,000	EWADE
International Travel for knowledge exchange on livestock and maize with producing countries in the FSIP	unit	1	25000	25,000	0	0	0	25,000	0	0	25,000	EWADE
National Consultant travels	unit	40	300	12,000	2,250	2,250	6,000	1,500	0	0	12,000	EWADE
Travels for operational and executing partners for technical support	unit	40	300	12,000	2,250	2,250	6,000	1,500	0	0	12,000	EWADE
5021 Sub-total travel					5,167	5,611	13,556	28,667	-	-	53,000	
5023 Training												
Training and workshop costs: Capacity-building and awareness programs for MSPs, MDA officials, traditional leaders, communities on food systems transformation, sustainability standards, and global trends (2 per landscape targeting 40 ppl per landscape); Capacity-building program on standards and traceability systems (40 ppl/landscape); Capacity building workshop for Multi-stakeholder platform on food systems for 50 ppl for 3 days; Multi-stakeholder and multi-actor meetings targeting 100 participants x2 per year; Awareness workshops on the deployment and accessing blended financial and insurance products targeting 30 ppl x2 per year; Awareness workshops on the use of AHS targeting 50 ppl for 4 days; training of extension officers (20 ppl x10 trainings); MOU development meetings targeting 10 ppl @usd15/p x 10 meetings; Trade shows, field days, workshops and expos focused on food systems targeting 50 ppl x 12 events; Training on business model for value chain players	lumpsum	1	93,000	93,000	26,571	39,857	0	26,571	0	0	93,000	EWADE

Training costs for Output 3.1 Workshop for development/update of ILM plans targeting 40ppl for 3 days; Output 3.1 Workshop on communities sensitization on participatory ILM targeting 50ppl for 3days; Output 3.1 Stakeholders capacitation on implementatin of ILM targeting 30ppl for 3 events in project life; Output 3.2 Training of trainers on use of CSA technologies targeting 30ppl, 3 day workshop x3 in project life; Output 3.3- and 3.4 Training of community members on agroecological production targeting 50ppl per landscape; Output 3.5 Multidisciplinary Task team of 15ppl, 20 days working session for reveiw and update of CDPs for communities within Landscapes; Output 3.6 Working sessions, consultations and validation workshop for developed CDPs including 15ppl Task Team, 30ppl consultantion and 30ppl validation workshop; Output 3.6 CDCs training on sustainable land use targeting 20p/chiefdom x 20 chiefdoms @usd15/p Output 3.7 Task Team (15p) sessions for development of manual on IWRM for communities @110/p for 3 days; Output 3.7 Task Team working session for development of der-sensitive framework for incentivising ecosystem restoration activities @usd110/p for 5 days	lumpsu m	1	116,00 0	116,00 0	0	0	116,000	0	0	0	116,00 0	EWADE
Inception workshop	lumpsu m	1	5000	5000	0	0	0	5,000		0	5,000	EWADE
Final workshop	lumpsu m	1	5000	5000	0	0	0	5,000		0	5,000	EWADE
5023 Sub-total training					26,571	39,857	116,000	36,571	0	0	219,00 0	
5024 Expendable procurement												
Procurement of production inputs including for Output 2.2 Non-financial insurance products (perennial trees), inputs for farmer field schools and demo sites (Output 3.2), inputs support for prioritized value chains (Output 3.3), certification and branding support (Output 2.5), inputs for promotion of agroecological production (Output 3.4), CDPs printing services (Output 3.6), procurements of inputs for rehabilitation of water resources (Output 3.7)	unit	1	203,30 0	203,30 0	0	58,086	145,214	0			203,30 0	EWADE
Production of Knowledge Management materials (publications, videos, media news etc)	lumpsu m	1	9,119	9,119	0	0	0	9,119	0	0	9,119	EWADE
5024 Sub-total expendable procurement					0	58,086	145,214	9,119	0	0	212,41 9	
6100 Non-expendable procurement												
Office supplies IT (computers)	lumpsu m	1	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	0		5,000	5,000	EWADE
Multi-stakeholder platforms/commodity associations capacitate with basic office work equipment (Output 2.1)	lumpsu m	1	5,000	5,000	0	5,000	0	0			5,000	EWADE
Basic software and hardware enhancement to update/enhance AIIS, integrating it with MSPs and farm to table monitoring framework for greater inter-operability (Output 2.3 & 2.4)	lumpsu m	1	16,000	16,000	0	16,000	0	0			16,000	EWADE
6100 Sub-total non-expendable procurement					0	16,000	0	0	0	5,000	26,000	
5028 GOE budget												
Office expenses (electricity, water, phone, internet etc)	lumpsu m	1	6,106	6,106	0	0	0	0		6,106	6,106	EWADE
6300 Sub-total GOE budget					0	0	0	0	0	6,106	6,106	
TOTAL					138,188	1,529,721	1,300,153	221,057	163,0 00	167,6 06	3,524,7 25	



Please explain any aspects of the budget as needed here

ANNEX I: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS

From GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF.