



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Annex 6

Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)

For the GCF-FAO Project “Ecosystems-based Adaptation for resilient Watersheds and Communities in Malawi (EbAM)”

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Executive summary

1. **Introduction.** Malawi is listed as a Least Developed Country (LDC) by the UN, and ranks among the 20 most vulnerable countries in the World by the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative Index 2021,¹ which measures vulnerability to climate change. Malawi's high exposure to climate change can be characterized by the rise of temperatures, intensification of aridity, rainfalls becoming more erratic, and increased frequency of climate change-induced disasters, including droughts and floods. At the same time, the country is very sensitive to climate change because of its high population density and growth, seriously degraded landscapes and ecosystems, large rural population in deepening poverty, high food insecurity and precarious health situation. Adaptive capacity is constrained by the limited literacy rate and low human development. The project's 11 targeted districts (Dedza in the Centre; Zomba, Mangochi, Thyolo, Neno, Mwanza, Nsanje in the South; Nkhata Bay, Rumphi, Karonga and Chitipa in the North) have all been selected because of their high climate vulnerability, with the South being extremely exposed to climate change, while Northern landscapes and ecosystem conditions are characterized by a severe climate sensitivity in relation with extreme soil loss and degradation. In all targeted districts, the main climate effects will alter the onset of the rainy season, translate into limited and modified water availability, increased water stress, with negative impacts on both cash and subsistence crops, resulting in adverse effects on the overall rural socio-economy.
2. In response to these challenges, this GCF project's objective is to increase the climate change resilience of the most vulnerable rural communities at watershed level in Malawi. The project will directly benefit 270 820 people, target about 88 800 hectares over 6 years and generate mitigation benefits of -2 577 998 tCO₂eq. These impacts will be achieved through the implementation of three interlinked components: (i) integrated landscape management; (ii) resilient livelihoods and food systems; and (iii) enabling institutional and financial environment.
3. **Environmental and Social Safeguards Management Framework (ESMF) approach.** The project has been developed in line with the FAO Environmental and Social Standards (2015). A consultant was hired to develop the ESMF, in close coordination with FAO and the project development team. The ESMF has been elaborated through a combination of literature review, expert interviews and intensive stakeholder consultations from sample communities in the 11 project regions conducted in June 2022 and September 2022. Findings and feedback from these consultations have been integrated into this document and other project-related documents.
4. As the exact location of proposed activities under the project have not yet been determined, a framework approach has been adopted. Under this approach, the present Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been prepared by FAO to (i) identify the potential but generic negative environmental and social impacts; (ii) propose mitigation measures; (iii) outline how screening of activities will take place during the early stages of implementation; (iv) list the type of instruments to be developed for individual activities during implementation; and (v) provide institutional arrangements, and grievance redress mechanisms (GRM) for environmental and social safeguards compliance. The ESMF covers all activities within the project.
5. **Risk categorization.** The project is expected to generate substantial positive environmental and social benefits, including, but not limited to strengthening the climate resilience of agroecosystems and local livelihoods, and reducing greenhouse emissions. Nonetheless, as is the case for most agricultural interventions, the project has the potential to generate adverse social and environmental impacts that need to be carefully managed and monitored.
6. As part of this ESMF, the FAO Environmental and Social Screening Checklist has been prepared, and the project has been categorized as a Category B (moderate risk) project, where:
 - There are identified potential environmental and social impacts requiring the need for environmental and social management plans, including issues associated with: the implementation of Village Level Action Plans (VLAPs); and the building of business relationships between actors of the food system. It is possible that the project activities, as described in Section 2, will trigger the following Environmental and Social Safeguard Policies: ESS1, ESS2, ESS3, ESS4, ESS7, ESS8 and ESS9;
 - Potential impacts are not unprecedented in the areas where project activities will be implemented;
 - Potential impacts are limited to the project's footprint; and,
 - Potential impacts are neither irreversible nor cumulative

¹ <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/rankings/>

7. Potential adverse impacts can be addressed using recognized good management practices.

8. **Positive impacts.** Overall, the project is expected to bring about major positive impacts, thanks to the socially inclusive participatory process, with a strong focus on women, youth and vulnerable groups; and the major environmental co-benefits resulting from Ecosystem-based Adaptation (enhanced biodiversity, soil and water conservation, land restoration, etc.), which will be promoted at farm and watershed level. The project will address the negative impact pathways from increased temperatures and rainfall variability leading to climate-induced disasters, all resulting in heightened ecosystem degradation and reduced agricultural production. The project's objective is to increase climate-change resilience of rural communities at watershed level in Malawi. The project aims to be a catalyst for a broad shift for ecosystems, livelihoods and agriculture in the country, from their baseline state of very high vulnerability to an alternative paradigm in which watershed ecosystems are restored, well-functioning and sustainably managed, thus granting their adaptation to climate change and their supply of services to communities, people and their farming systems. To achieve this, EbAM will promote the Ecosystems-based adaptation (EbA) approach combined with Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) to repair degraded ecosystems, and to allow agriculture and other livelihoods to become resilient to climate change. The EbA approach – which is the core transformational driver of the project, involving use of biodiversity and ecosystem services to assist people to adapt to climate change, is fully aligned with Malawi's Updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), 2021. EbAM will also follow a food system approach – that will aim to create linkages between farmers benefiting from EbA and national and international value chains. Thus combined, ILM, EbA and food system interventions yield social sustainability, together with environmental sustainability and resilience – hence delivering on GCF impacts ARA1, ARA2, ARA4 and MR4. Positive aspects are further outlined in Section 2.2.

9. **Negative impacts.** The screening checklist is attached as Appendix I, and an overview of standards triggered is presented in the table below. As a consequence of this risk categorisation, and due to the nature of planned project activities, this Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been developed in order to adequately assess, manage and mitigate any social and environmental risks that may eventuate from activities during the course of project implementation.

FAO safeguard category	Triggered	Safeguard instruments & mitigation measures
ESS 1 – Natural Resources Management	YES	<p>Standard 1 is triggered in this project due to its emphasis on managing soil and land resources, as well as water resources. The proposed interventions involve developing and implementing Village Level Action Plans (VLAPs) combining EbA and integrated landscape management (ILM) measures at watershed and village levels.</p> <p>The project will not have activities that would result in the degradation of soils, undermine sustainable land management practices or reduce the adaptive capacity to climate change or increase GHG emissions significantly, rather the project primary aims at promoting EbA practices and enhancing the adaptive capacity to climate change. The project doesn't invest in large-scale infrastructure and doesn't have activities that would result in any changes to existing tenure rights. The full transparency of land restoration planning is embedded in the project as a general principle and as part of the participatory process for VLAP preparation. As part of the same process, the establishment of Village Natural Resources Management Committee (VNRMC) charters, and participatory preparation of VLAP will guarantee that all local stakeholders are aware and agree with the restoration actions planned on communal/customary land. In addition, non-eligibility list of activities has been prepared (see appendix IV).</p>
ESS2 – Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Natural Habitats	YES	<p>Standard 2 is triggered as activities planned under sub-component 2.1. may result in farm-level activities that access genetic resources for their utilization, and/or access traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that is held by local communities and/or farmers.</p> <p>To address potentially adverse impacts associated with the utilisation of traditional knowledge and use of genetic resources, the project will ensure that benefits arising from utilization, and subsequent application and commercialization, are shared in a fair and equitable way in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity. The project has also been designed so as to ensure that activities are aligned with access to benefit sharing as specified in FAO's 2019 guidance: <i>ABS Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of Access and Benefit Sharing for Different Subsectors of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i></p>

FAO safeguard category	Triggered	Safeguard instruments & mitigation measures
ESS3 – Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	YES	<p>Standard 3 is triggered, as project supported activities prioritized within VLAPs may involve: (i) the introduction of crops and varieties not previously grown; (ii) providing seeds/planting material for cultivation; and (iii) establishment or management of planted forests.</p> <p>To manage adverse risk associated with the handling and supply of seeds for cultivation, the project will: (i) Avoid undermining local seed & planting material production and supply systems; (ii) Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are from locally/regionally adapted crops and varieties that are accepted by farmers and consumers; even if they have been forgotten and will need to be reintroduced; (iii) Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are free from pests and diseases according to norms; and (iv) Ensure, according to applicable national laws and/or regulations, that farmers' rights to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGFRA), and over associated traditional knowledge are respected, along with the sharing of the benefits accrued from their use.</p>
ESS 4 - Animal - Livestock and Aquatic - Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	YES	<p>Standard 4 is triggered as the project entails promoting integrated crop/ small livestock, and possibly crop/aquatic production systems (if identified by local residents through ILM) as part of EbA techniques.</p> <p>As a mitigation measure, the project prioritizes the use of native species in its activities, aligning with the principles of EbA/agroecology. The team took further mitigation measure by explicitly prohibiting the introduction of non-native and invasive species, thus including it in the ESMF non-eligibility list.</p>
ESS5 – Pest and Pesticide Management	NO	<p>N/A. The project primarily aims to enhance ecosystem functions and climate resilience through nature-based approaches, minimizing reliance on chemical interventions. The project is committed to promoting sustainable and EbA/agroecological practices. Synthetic pesticides will not be promoted through the project. The use of pesticides has been explicitly excluded through the ESMF non-eligibility list. While integrated crop and small livestock is among the EbA techniques promoted by the project, it will be implemented in a manner that minimizes environmental and social risks. By prioritizing agroecological principles and excluding harmful inputs such as pesticides, the project aims to safeguard against unintended consequences without necessitating the triggering of ESS5.</p>
ESS6 – Involuntary Resettlement and Displacement	NO	<p>N/A. The full transparency of land restoration planning is embedded in the project as a general principle and as part of the participatory process for VLAP preparation. As part of the same process, the establishment of VNRC charters, and participatory preparation of VLAP will guarantee that all local stakeholders are aware and agree with the restoration actions planned on communal/customary land. The project does not entail physical or economic displacement, whether full or partial, permanent or temporary, as a result of land or resource restriction. In addition, under the project's non-eligibility list, several activities are expressly prohibited. These include the use of the project to facilitate involuntary resettlement of local communities, as well as any form of land acquisition. Additionally, restrictions on resource access, such as farming land, that cannot be adequately mitigated and would negatively impact the livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples, ethnic groups, and disadvantaged populations are strictly prohibited.</p>
ESS7 – Decent Work	YES	<p>Standard 7 is triggered as the project may operate in: (i) sectors or value chains that are dominated by subsistence producers and other vulnerable informal agricultural workers, and more generally characterized by high levels of "working poverty"; (ii) situations where youth work mostly as unpaid contributing family workers, lack access to decent jobs and are increasingly abandoning agriculture and rural areas; and, (iii) in situations where major gender inequality in the labour market prevails e.g. where women tend to work predominantly as unpaid contributing family members or subsistence farmers, have lower skills and qualifications, lower productivity and wages, less representation and voice in producers' and workers' organizations, more precarious contracts and higher informality rates, etc.</p> <p>Specific measures and mechanisms will be introduced to empower the most vulnerable/disadvantaged categories of rural workers such as small-scale producers, contributing family workers, subsistence farmers, and agricultural informal wage workers. Complementary measures have been included in the design of project activities, which are aimed at training youth, engaging them and their associations in the value chains, facilitating their access to productive resources, credit and markets, and stimulating youth-friendly business development services.</p>

FAO safeguard category	Triggered	Safeguard instruments & mitigation measures
		As per FAO guidance on child labour, children under the age of 18 should not be engaged in work-related activities in connection with the project in a manner that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with their compulsory education or be harmful to their health, safety or morals. Where children under the age of 18 may be engaged in work-related activities in connection with the project, an appropriate risk assessment will be conducted, together with regular monitoring of health, working conditions and hours of work. It should be noted that, if children are involved, this would be limited to family labour that would be likely to occur without project.
ESS8 – Gender Equality	YES	<p>Standard 8 is triggered by the EbAM project since the project may face either passive or active opposition to women's involvement and efforts to enhance women's empowerment within the communities.</p> <p>As per GCF requirements a gender assessment and action plan has been developed, with specific gender-targeted activities built into the project design and social approaches.</p> <p>Moreover, mitigation measures include utilizing targeting mechanisms like direct, community-based, and self-targeting methods to ensure inclusivity of vulnerable groups such as female-headed households, female youth, girls, and persons living with HIV/AIDS. The use of the Dimitra Clubs involving all community members as well as the Household Methodology will promote gender equality through open discussions on gender and social inclusion related issues, including gender-based violence (GBV) and Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH). Training for religious, traditional, and community leaders, project team and facilitators will enhance their capacity to mobilize communities and promote gender equality. The project will promote Gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) and will monitor the progress using the Gender Action Plan (GAP) to ensure alignment with project objectives.</p>
ESS9 – Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage	YES	<p>Standard 9 is triggered by the EbAM project due to its potential impacts on Indigenous Peoples (IP). The project focuses on integrated landscape management and ecosystem-based adaptation, which inherently intersect with Indigenous territories and traditional practices.</p> <p>Mitigation measures for ESS9 include obtaining Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and conducting the assessment of Indigenous People Framework in addition to deliver training on FPIC for field facilitation. These measures aim to respect Indigenous rights, identify and protect cultural assets, and involve communities in decision-making, ensuring sustainable project outcomes while safeguarding Indigenous Peoples and cultural heritage. The project extends some of the safeguard activities for IPs to all beneficiary communities in recognition of their rights akin to those of the IPs.</p>

Source: Authors' own elaboration

10. **Institutional arrangements.** At the request of the Government of Malawi, FAO will serve as the Accredited Entity to the GCF for this project. The project will be executed by FAO and the Government of Malawi, acting through (i) the Ministry of Agriculture – MoA (specifically the Department of Land Resources Conservation - DLRC), (ii) the National Local Government Finance Committee (NLGFC); and, (iii) the Ministry of Finance (specifically the FARMSE Programme), in a co-execution modality to deliver the project activities funded by GCF proceeds.

11. Overall compliance with the project's ESMF and Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) will be assured by the project's Environmental and Social Safeguards International Technical Assistance and national Environmental and Social Safeguards specialist, hired within the CPIU, who will work closely together with a Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist (who will oversee the GAP). These experts will closely collaborate with the Regional PIUs. Regular updates and reporting on safeguards will be provided at PSC meetings by the Safeguard ITA, and regional counterparts.

12. Within the CPIU, the abovementioned experts will be responsible for ensuring that screenings of VLAPs is undertaken prior to their implementation, and then mitigate for any medium-risk activities using the project ESMP and associated implementation safeguards documents to be developed before the implementation of project activities, based on the screening. The approach allows for specificity under each project area and for the nature of the associated activities, rather than blanketing all sites with the same training/mitigation measures (some measures will only be applicable in a few areas, and this will only be discernible once specific villages/communities have been selected during implementation). Guidance for screenings and for preparation ESMPs is provided as part of this

ESMF (Appendices II and III). The Safeguards ITA, national Environmental and Social Safeguards specialist and Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist will also manage the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)/reporting for the environmental and social safeguards aspects of the project, working closely with the project's M&E Team.

13. In order to ensure long term sustainability of the project activities, most of the implementation at the field level will ensure involvement of government staff, especially Environmental District Officers, with support from the FAO team as required. Any government staffers involved with safeguards will receive training as well as technical support from FAO.

14. **Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH).** There will be zero tolerance of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH), and the project's ESMF and consequent ESMP will mainstream SEAH risk mitigation, in accordance with the FAO ESMG. The project will support gender sensitization and trainings for project staff and beneficiaries on gender equality and social inclusion and SEAH, and will elaborate a code of conduct for the implementation of the project. Specific procedures to minimize SEAH risk will be developed for the project GRM, to ensure the mechanism is survivor-centred and gender-responsive (including confidential reporting), and to facilitate linkages to related services and redress for anyone affected by SEAH.

15. **Grievance and Redress Mechanism (GRM).** The GRM will consist of four parallel systems. These systems are: (i) a community-based system; (ii) a formal system designed specifically for the project (project-level GRM); (iii) the FAO's approach to the GRM (FAO-level GRM), and (iv) GCF Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM). When an aggrieved person declares a grievance, they may elect to take the community-based route or the more formal one.

Stakeholder engagement. A detailed Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed, and constitutes Annex 7 to the Funding Proposal. It presents a full description of the extensive stakeholder consultations undertaken (i) during the development of the Concept Note, (ii) during the two project preparation missions (undertaken in June 2022 and September 2022) and (iii) after FP first submission, in April 2023.

16. This project has been the subject of a broad consultation process since inception, with involvement of various stakeholders ranging from governmental officials to members of local communities with a vested interest in the subject matter of the project.

17. **Human resources and budget.** The above-mentioned international environmental and social safeguards International Technical Assistance and national safeguards specialist will be appointed to work part-time (50%) and full time respectively over the six years of the project, and will directly support the formulation of the project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents associated with each VLAP. Budget has been allocated for monitoring and evaluation of the project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents. Table 1 below provides a summary of the budget allocated for safeguards work.

Table 1 - Summary of safeguards budget

Indicative Projection of Budget	Items	Budget (USD)
M&E of the project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents	1 contract	55 000
Environmental and social safeguards International Technical Assistance	6 years (part time 50%)	284 400
National Environmental and social safeguards specialist	6 years (full time)	255 384
National Environmental and social safeguards specialist #2	60 days (for the assessment of baseline and impacts)	15 060
National Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist	6 years (full time)	255 384
FPIC implementation (sub-activity 1.1.1.2)	15 FPIC facilitators	194 805
Trainings on FPIC and ESS (sub-activity 1.1.1.2)	3 trainings	73 865
GRM related costs	Phone, hotline connection, suggestion-box, communication material for dissemination of GRM information	60 000

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

18. The Ecosystems-based Adaptation for resilient Watersheds and Communities in Malawi (EbAM) project will be executed by FAO and the Government of Malawi, acting through the Malawi Ministries of Agriculture (MoA) and Finance (MoF), and the National Local Government Finance Committee (NLGFC). The total cost of the project is USD 51.25 million, with USD 40 million provided by the Green Climate Fund. The prime objective of the project is to increase the climate-change resilience of the most vulnerable rural communities at the watershed level.
19. The purpose of this Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) is to describe how environmental and social assessment and management will be undertaken once VLAPs are established during the first year of project implementation. Preparation of this ESMF complies with local laws on environmental and social impact assessment, and with FAO's Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (ESMG). Application of the screening procedures contained within the ESGM indicates that the project is classified as Category B, which suggests that it contains activities with potential limited adverse environmental and/or social risks and impacts that individually or cumulatively are few, generally site-specific, largely reversible, and readily addressed through mitigation measures.

1.2 Scope and objectives of the ESMF

20. The overall objective of the ESMF is to ensure that the EbAM project is implemented in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner as required by FAO's ESGM and the Malawi Environment Management Act of 2017. The ESMF provides project executing entities, beneficiaries, and stakeholders with information on potential positive and negative impacts associated with project initiatives, and prescribe possible mitigation measures.
21. The ESMF outlines the following:
- a systematic and clear methodology for screening EbAM activities for environmental and social risks;
 - procedures for predicting and assessing potential positive and negative impacts and proposed appropriate enhancement and mitigation measures associated with activities;
 - systematic review of national, regional, and international laws, policies, and regulations;
 - guidance on the production of environmental and social management plans for addressing negative impacts during implementation of activities;
 - mechanisms for public consultation and disclosure of project documents, as well as redress of possible grievances; and,
 - establish the funding required to implement the requirements of the ESMF.

1.3 Structure of the ESMF

- Section 2 presents a description of project components and sub-components as specified in the project design and implementation documents.
- Section 3 outlines relevant Malawi policies and legislation applicable to the EbAM project. The section also provides relevant FAO policies that are of relevance to the project's initiatives.
- Section 4 provides an overview of the environmental and social setting of the project, with a focus on the environmental challenges facing the country.
- Section 5 presents an Indigenous People Planning Framework.
- Section 6 analyses the potential social and environmental impacts and triggered FAO safeguard standards.
- Section 7 outlines the Environmental and Social Management process for the identified environmental and social impacts.
- Section 8 summarizes the stakeholder engagement process undertaken during the development of the Funding Proposal

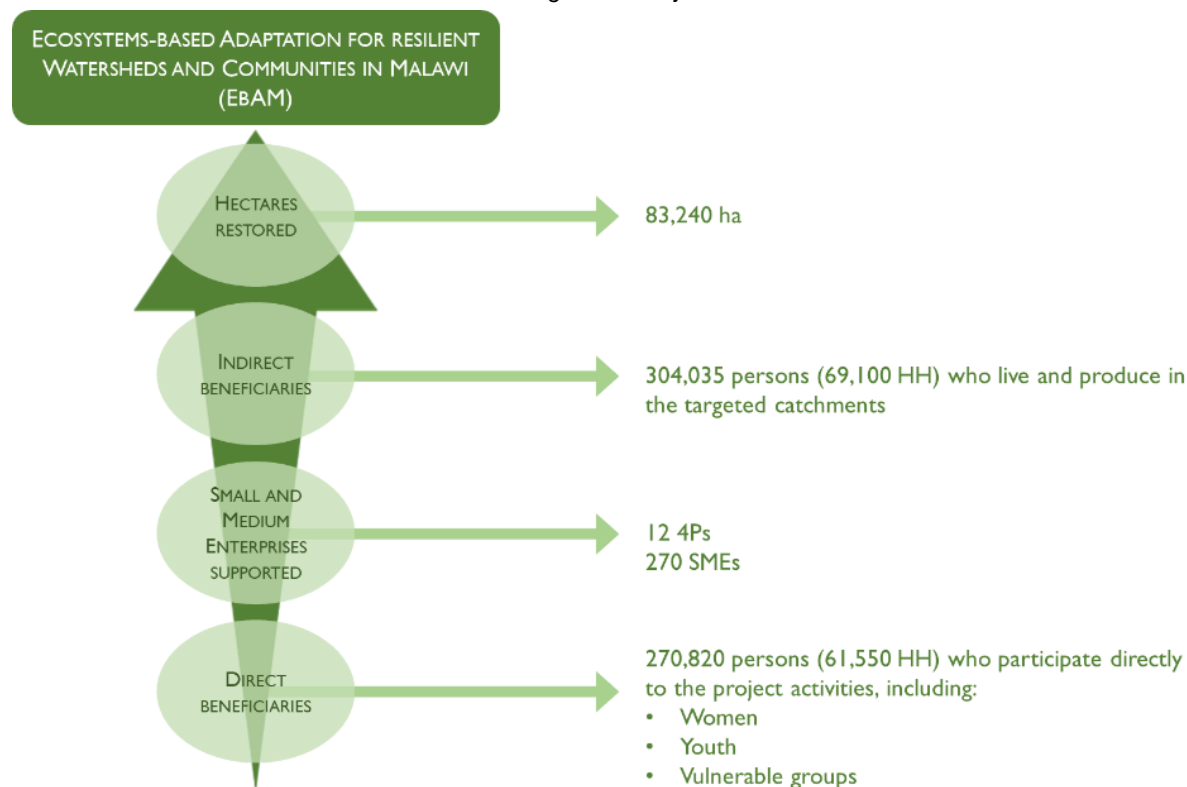
- Section 9 presents the proposed three-tier structure for addressing project-related grievances.
- Section 10 provides an overview of the proposed institutional arrangement for implementation of ESMF. The section highlights key institutions and their roles.
- Section 11 consists of nine Appendices dealing with the FAO screening checklist, guidance and an outline for ESMPs preparation, as well as other information on safeguards measures.

Section 2: Project description

2.1 Objectives and benefits

22. The project objective is to increase the climate-change resilience of the most vulnerable rural communities at watershed level in Malawi. The project will directly benefit 270,820 people, target about 88,800 hectares over 6 years and generate mitigation benefits of -2,577,998 tCO₂eq. These impacts will be achieved through the implementation of three interlinked components: (i) Integrated landscape management, (ii) Resilient livelihoods and food systems, and (iii) Enabling institutional and financial environment.

Figure 1 - Project beneficiaries²



Source: Authors' own elaboration

2.2 Summary outline of project components

2.2.1 Component 1: integrated landscape management

23. The objective (Outcome 1) of this component is to increase the climate resilience of watershed ecosystems. This component will aim at enhancing ecosystems' functions at a landscape (watershed) level large enough to facilitate climate change adaptation at scale. It will use EbA as the main tool to build climate resilience, which will be firmly integrated in local planning through integrated landscape management, at watershed and village levels. The component will improve communities' technical capacity, understanding and know-how, as well as increase stakeholders' engagement, including women and other vulnerable groups', to plan the respective landscape restoration and climate-change adaptation interventions based on EbA (sub-component 1.1). Through the implementation of integrated management plans (sub-component 1.2), the project will contribute to generating public goods, most importantly thanks to well-functioning ecosystems, that are more adapted to extreme climate, and hence increase resilience of landscapes and livelihoods.

² Beneficiaries were pre-estimated based on: (i) the total number of Catchment Management Committees (CMCs), and average surface per CMC, (ii) the number of person (which includes farmers and their farming field schools – FFS, their organizations) per traditional authority (TA) and rural villages, (iii) the number of TA per CMC and, (iv) the number of village natural resources management committees (VNRMCs) per CMC.

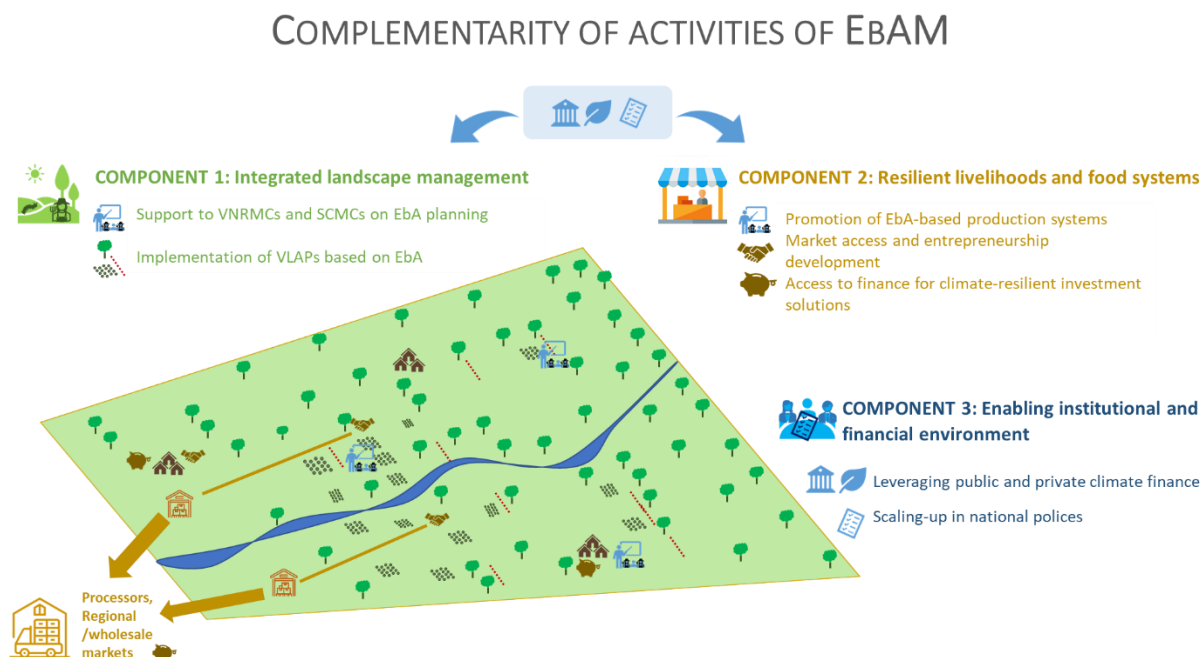
2.2.2 Component 2: resilient livelihoods and food systems

24. The objective (Outcome 2) of this component is to stabilize productivity and farmers' incomes thanks to more resilient livelihoods and food systems. By enhancing extension services through farmers field schools - FFS (sub-component 2.1), the project will increase farmers' understanding of technical responses to adapt to changing climatic conditions and enhance their capacity to integrate EbA into their farming systems. The component activities will support small and medium enterprises (SMEs), producers' organisations (POs) and farmers' groups within the local food system to access markets (sub-component 2.2) and finance – such as village savings and loans associations, micro-finance institutions and banks (sub-component 2.3), which are some of the key barriers to EbA adoption. The component's interventions, by boosting nature-positive food production and building resilience to vulnerabilities shocks and stresses, will contribute to build more resilient food systems at local level.

2.2.3 Component 3: enabling institutional and financial environment

25. The objective (Outcome 3) of this component is to enhance the enabling environment (finance and policies) to sustain, replicate and scale-up climate resilient watershed ecosystems and agriculture practices. It will contribute to ensure the sustainability of interventions promoted under components 1 and 2. This component will address the financial and policy barriers of low and volatile investments in integrated landscape management, as well as the need to propose innovative solutions (support to the National Climate Change Fund [NCCF] and local national conservation trusts; leveraging private sector experience on carbon credits with Climate Asset Management [CAM] and the Restore Africa programme) to attract more climate finance (sub-component 3.1). The integration of EbA in national plans will allow replication and scale-up of EbA through other projects and programmes. In addition, interventions mainstreaming and deep-rooting EbA in national policies and investment plans (sub-component 3.2) will bring the EbA agenda at sectoral policies level – for massive-scale impact and sustainability.

Figure 2 - Complementarity of activities and components of EbAM at the watershed Level



Source: Authors' own elaboration

2.3 Key project activities with potential safeguard issues

26. Section B.3 of the Funding Proposal outlines in detail the sub-components, activities, and sub-activities that make up the project's proposed interventions. There are 60 specific sub-activities. Of these interventions, the following could possibly be associated with environmental or social safeguard issues:

- (i) Under Component 1, the preparation of Village Level Action Plans (VLAPs), to be implemented at the landscape level under sub-component 1.2;
- (ii) Under Component 2.1, the implementation of VLAP priorities at farming systems level (see Annex 2 and 2.1 for details);
- (iii) Under Component 2, support to the establishment of public-private producer partnerships;
- (iv) Under Component 2, support to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs);

27. The environmental and social risk implications of these interventions are examined in Section 5. As VLAPs developed under Component 1 will guide all project activities, each VLAP will include an ESMP screening against the environmental and social risks, and providing associated mitigation measures. Guidance for the development of the ESMP and ESMP outlines are provided as appendix to the present Annex.

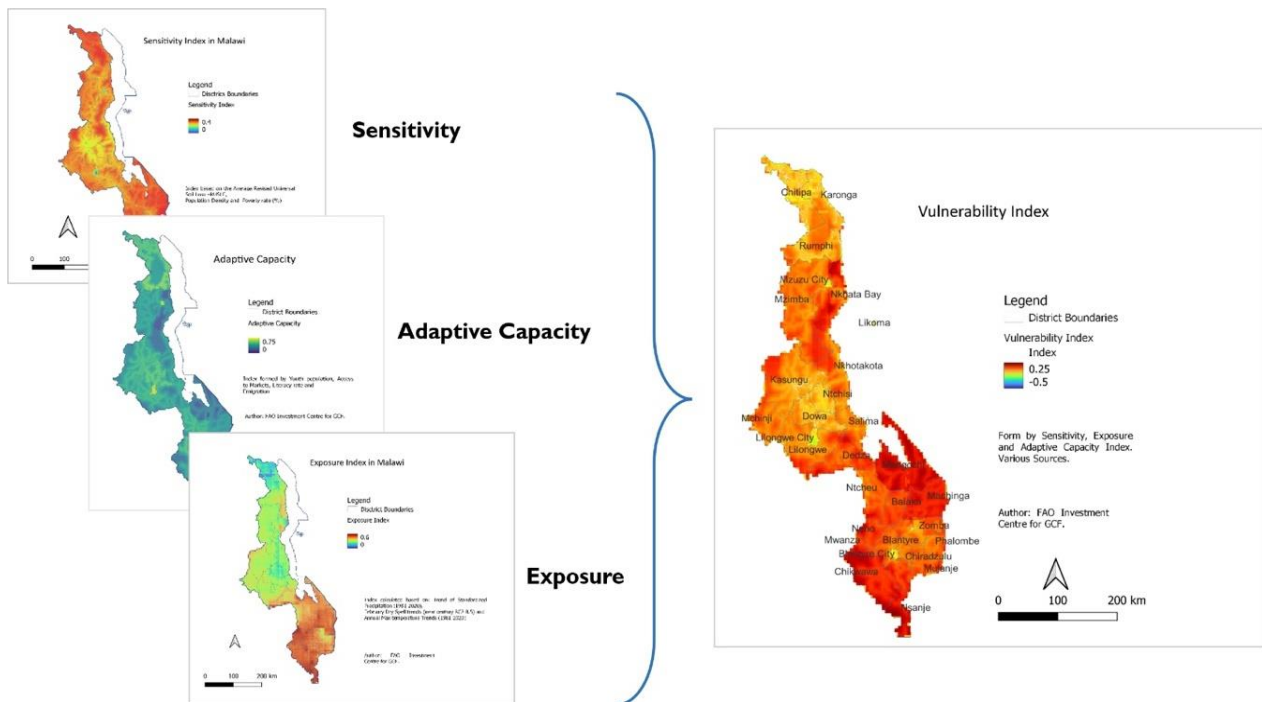
2.4 Target areas

2.4.1 Districts

28. The target areas of the proposed project were pre-identified based on climate vulnerability index defined as a function of *climate exposure*, *climate sensitivity*, and *climate adaptive capacity*. The degree of *climate exposure* was determined by three indicators: historical trends of standardized precipitation; February dry spell trends; and historical annual max temperature trends. *Climate sensitivity* was measured by: historical average Revised Universal Soil Loss (RUSLE) which is based on precipitation, Vegetation Index (NDVI), soil types and slopes; population density; and poverty rate. *Climate adaptive capacity* was approximated by: youth population rate; access to markets; literacy rate; and emigration rate. Low percentage of youth in the population and literacy rates as well as high emigration rates were interpreted as low adaptive capacity. Good access to markets was taken as existing adaptation opportunities that the proposed project could leverage.

29. Eleven districts characterized by high climate vulnerability were chosen: six in the south (Zomba, Mangochi, Thyolo, Neno, Mwanza, Nsanje); one in the central (Dedza); and four in the north (Nkhata Bay, Rumphi, Karonga and Chitipa). Site selection will be based on further analyses of watershed degradation. The 11 targeted districts have all been selected in relation with their high climate vulnerability, with the South being extremely exposed to climate change, while Northern districts landscapes and ecosystem conditions are characterized by a severe climate sensitivity, in relation with extreme soil loss and degradation. Figure 3 indicates how areas of high vulnerability were determined.

Figure 3 - Identification of high vulnerability areas



Source: Authors' own elaboration³

2.4.2 Finer-level focus on catchments and sub-catchments

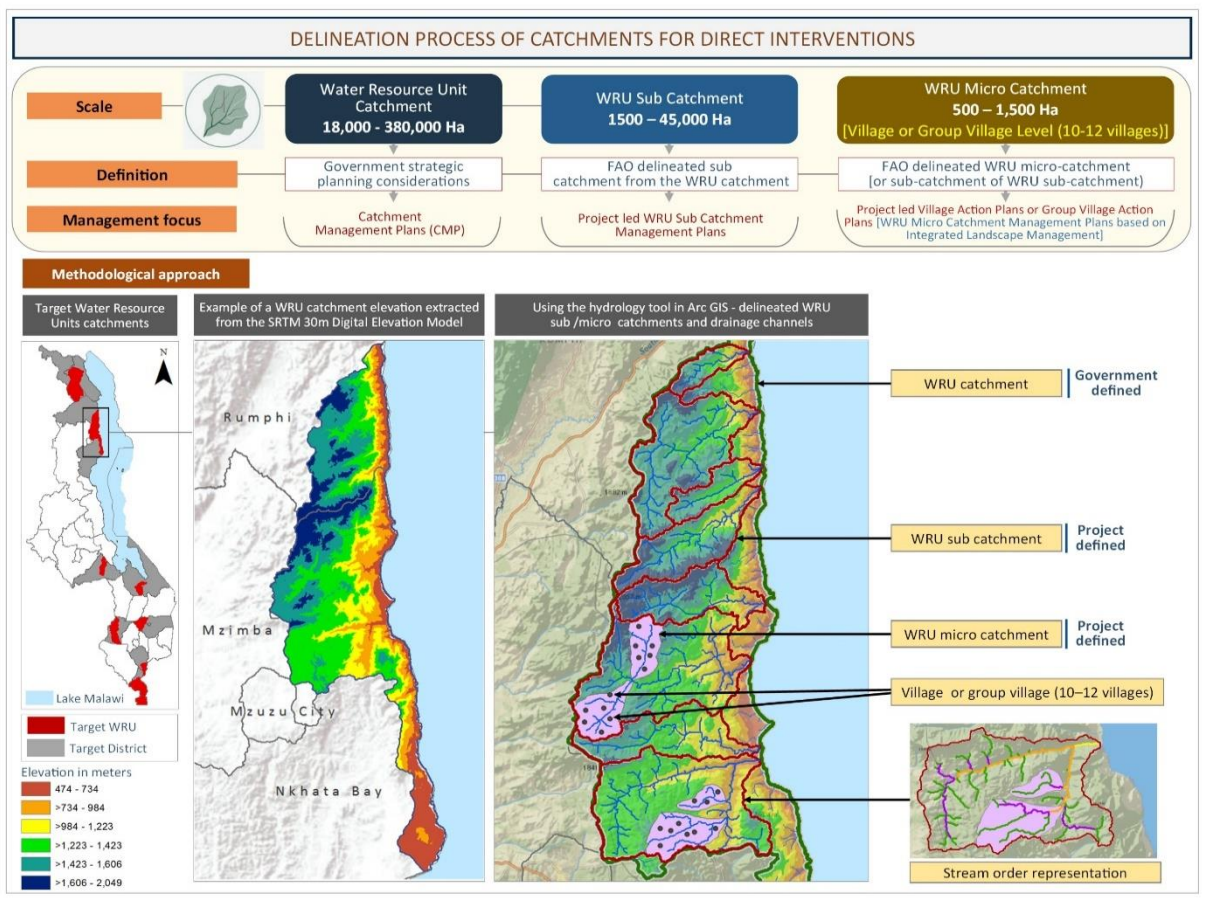
30. During the initial stages of implementation, the project will focus in more detail on geographic targeting. This will enable the project to concentrate on initiatives at the micro-catchment level. Table 2 indicates how catchments are defined at different levels in Malawi, and Figure 4 and Figure 5 indicate how micro-catchments will eventually be determined.

³ The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Table 2 - Catchments of various levels and characteristics

Catchment Unit	Indicative Size (ha)	Responsible Party for Delineation	Primary Stakeholders	Government Defined Management Tools	EbAM Interventions
Catchment (Water Resources Unit)	18,000-400,000	Government of Malawi	Communities, farmers (including pastoralists), other land users Local government officials, including higher-level officials than those for sub-catchments Traditional authorities, NGOs, private sector, etc.	Catchment Management Committee (CMC) Catchment Management Plan (CMP)	None
Sub- catchment (WRU sub-catchment)	1-500-45 000	EbAM taking other donor delineation into account	Communities, farmers (including pastoralists) Other land users Local government officials, including higher-level officials than those for micro-catchments Traditional authorities, NGOs, Farmers organisations, private sector, etc.	Sub-Catchment Management Committee (SCMC) Sub-Catchment Management Plan (SCMP)	Strengthening/ Formation of Sub-Catchment Management Committees (SCMCs) and Formulation of EbA-based Sub-Catchments Management Plans (SCMPs) (Activity 1.1.4)
Micro-catchment (sub-catchment of WRU sub-catchment)	500-1 500	EbAM	Communities (farmers, pastoralists, etc.) Other land users Local government officials and traditional authorities	Village Natural Resources Management Committee (VNRMC) Village Level Action Plan (VLAP) or Group VLAP (groups of 10 villages, in case their resources are commonly managed)	Strengthening/ Formation of Village Natural Resources Management Committees (VNRMCs) and formulation of EbA-based Village Level Action Plans (VLAPs) (Activity 1.1.3)

Figure 4 - Delineation of micro-catchments



Source: Authors' own elaboration⁴

Figure 5 - Selected WRUs (right) within selected districts (left), based on WRUs defined by the Government (centre)



Source: Authors' own elaboration⁵

⁴ The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

⁵ The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Section 3: Legal and institutional framework

31. This section outlines the country's regulatory policies and legal and administrative frameworks that are relevant to the safeguard issues raised by the EbAM project. The policies and legal and administrative frameworks are discussed with regard to their relevance in supporting compliance in the design and implementation of the ESMF. The review also includes FAO safeguard policies relevant to EbAM.

3.1 Policy framework

3.1.1 *The Malawi Vision 2063 (2021-2063)*

32. The Malawi 2063 is the successor to Vision 2020 and becomes the new overarching development strategy for Malawi aiming at transforming the nation into a wealthy and self-reliant industrialized upper middle-income country by the year 2063. The Malawi 2063 is designed to create a mindset shift from poverty reduction and aid dependency to wealth creation and self-reliance. The new agenda recognizes environmental sustainability as one of the 7 enablers for the country to transform. The vision emphasizes that development interventions must be based on minimizing depletion of natural resources and be sustained without causing further harm to the environment. The new vision recognizes that country's underlying concern as a nation is that while people might enjoy the spoils of the environment today, the nation owes it to future generations of Malawians to do so responsibly and sustainably with an ethic of care. Planning and implementation of EbAM sub-activities will ensure that principles of environmental sustainability are integrated.

3.1.2 *The National Environment Policy (2005)*

33. The National Environmental Policy as an umbrella framework guides different lead agencies and stakeholders in so far as their activities affect the environment and natural resources management, including how to minimize impacts of environmental degradation. The overall goal of the policy is to promote sustainable social and economic development through the sound management of the environment and natural resources. The policy promotes the rights of every person to a clean environment while also at the same time it advocates that every person has a duty to promote sustainable utilization and management of the environment and natural resources. The policy seeks among other things, to secure for all people and future generations an environment suitable for their health and well-being. The policy recognizes the need for trade-off between economic development and environmental degradation and calls for the use of EIA and environmental monitoring as tools for minimizing impact of development on the environment. Implementation of EbAM will therefore integrate the principles of the environmental policy so that the project is carried out in an environmentally responsible manner.

3.1.3 *National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), 1994*

34. The NEAP adopted in 1994 estimated that the discounted economic cost of the major forms of degradation, which include soil erosion, deforestation, water resources degradation, fisheries depletion and biodiversity loss amounted to 10% of the formal Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

35. Considering the small size of the economy this is a substantial economic loss to Malawi and therefore the NEAP addresses these problems by reshaping the mechanisms governing the management of natural resources in Malawi. NEAP recommended a number of mitigation measures that were outlined in the Environmental Support Programme whose main objective was to integrate environmental issues into the country's social and economic development programme. NEAP is still being used as a framework for all development plans in the country, to ensure environmentally sustainable development, in line with the strategic objectives of Agenda 2063.

36. Under the Environment Management Act of 2017, the Environmental Affairs Department is required to prepare a State of the Environment Report every year. These provide useful information for environmental planning purposes and other forms of social and economic development programmes and this is partly based on the District State of the Environment and Outlook reports.

3.1.4 *National Water Policy (2005)*

37. The National Water Policy seeks to promote the sustainable management and utilization of water resources, to provide water of acceptable quality in sufficient quantities. The protection of water resources for domestic water supply is one of the guiding principles in the policy. The policy advocates for proper management of water resources to prevent water depletion.

3.1.5 The National Land Policy (2002)

38. The 2002 Malawi National Land Policy recognizes the centrality of land as a basic resource common to all people of Malawi for their social and economic development. The policy provides opportunities for the people of Malawi to embark on a path of socially and environmentally sustainable development. The policy recognizes environmental impact assessment of all big land development projects, and those planned in fragile ecosystems in order to protect biodiversity and water resources.

39. The policy seeks to optimize utilization of Malawi's land resources for development. It provides an institutional framework for land management and outlines procedures for protecting land tenure rights, land-based investments, and management of development at all levels. The policy classifies land into three categories as customary, private and public. Customary land is land under the control of traditional leaders which is mainly used for subsistence farming and some for residential, graveyard and woodlot purposes. Private land is land under private ownership either through freehold or leasehold land. Public land covers land under government property such as buildings, roads, game reserves and forest.

3.1.6 The National Forestry Policy (1997) (amended 2016) and the National Forest Land Restoration Strategy 2017

40. The 2006 National Forestry Policy provides a framework for sustainable production and conservation of wood resources and recognises the importance of wood fuels in the national energy supply and the need to bring about improvements in their sustainable production and supply. The policy specifically mentions the wood fuel needs of farmers in its general objectives and strategies and recognises the importance of forest products in improving the quality of life in rural communities and providing a stable local economy. Additionally, the policy calls for a reduction in the dependence on wood fuel as a source of energy through switching to alternative sources of fuel and adopting wood fuel-saving devices so that 50 percent of energy should be sourced from non-biomass sources.

41. The Policy focuses on sustainable management of forest resources for the enhancement of life quality for all Malawians through conservation of existing forest resources, afforestation and re-afforestation. The policy prevents unnecessary changes in land-use that promote deforestation, or endanger the protection of forests which have cultural, biodiversity or water catchment values. This ESMF provides measures for protection of forest resources through promotion of efficient use of fuelwood, use of trees and other tree products from unsustainable sources, fragile areas such as on steep slopes, wetlands and riverbanks.

42. The National Forest Land Restoration Strategy builds on the National Forest Policy, and formulates a national strategy to address the social, economic, and biophysical realities of land degradation and deforestation, and in a way that is gender responsive. The Strategy involves tailoring interventions to the context of a particular area in order to improve the productivity of landscapes that are degraded and deforested while enhancing human well-being. The Strategy targets nearly 7.7 million hectares of degraded and deforested lands across the country and can potentially be restored through a range of forest landscape restoration interventions. The EbAM project will directly link to many of the proposed FLR interventions.

3.1.7 National Disaster Risk Management Policy (2015)

43. The overall goal of the National Disaster Risk Management (NDRM) Policy is to sustainably reduce disaster losses in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and of the nation. The policy is aimed at creating and providing an enabling framework for the establishment of a comprehensive disaster risk management system in Malawi. The priority areas the policy focuses on mainstreaming of disaster risk management into sustainable development, establishment of a comprehensive system for disaster risk identification, assessment and monitoring, development and strengthening of a people-centred early warning system, promotion of a culture of safety, adoption of resilience enhancing interventions and the reduction of underlying risks. The strategies to implement the policy cut across several sectors including infrastructure development, agricultural diversification, microfinance initiatives, disaster risk insurance, social support schemes, reforestation and river training. This policy is especially relevant to the EbAM project as some of the sub-activities, especially on-farm interventions, are vulnerable to disasters such as flooding and drought.

3.1.8 National Wildlife Policy (2002)

44. The National Wildlife Policy 2000 aims at ensuring proper conservation and management of the wildlife resources in order to provide for sustainable utilisation and equitable access to the resources and fair sharing of the benefits from the resources for both present and future generations. It recognizes that wildlife forms the basis for the

tourism industry in Malawi which is overwhelmingly nature-based and has potential for increased contribution to GDP. The National Wildlife Policy seeks to meet a number of objectives including ensuring adequate protection of representative ecosystems and their biological diversity through promotion and adoption of appropriate land and water management practices that adhere to the principles of sustainable use and enhancing public awareness and understanding of the importance of wildlife conservation and management and its close relationships with other forms of land use.

45. The ESMF considers the potential impacts posed by EbAM on the terrestrial and aquatic habitats of wildlife and proposes mitigation measures that would protect wildlife from negative impacts.

3.1.9 Nationally Determined Contributions (updated July 2021)

46. The contributions described in this updated submission build upon Malawi's existing first NDC, and reflect subsequent work supported by the NDC Partnership in developing quantifiable mitigation and adaptation targets, an NDC implementation plan and a monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) framework for tracking the NDC. This updated NDC represents a more detailed assessment of mitigation and adaptation measures in Malawi informed by in-depth analysis, improved information and data, and an extensive stakeholder-driven consultation process.

47. A number of the commitments made in the updated NDC would be addressed by the EbAM project. These include:

- Upscale climate-smart agriculture;
- Promotion of EbA as a climate change adaptation strategy
- Actively mainstream gender considerations within climate change measures and where relevant to track climate change issues and indicators according to gender and vulnerable groups;
- Pilot and upscale market-based approaches for the management of ecological services such as Payment for Ecosystem services;
- Upscale resource mobilisation and leveraging for climate and disaster risk financing and investment; and
- Promote and enhance climate change education, public awareness and capacity building through ongoing communication, training, information and knowledge management.

3.1.10 National Adaptation Plan Framework (2020)

48. The purpose of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Framework for Malawi is to guide the country in advancing its NAP process. The NAP Framework has built on the NAP Roadmap, validating and updating the vision, objectives and mandates identified therein. It reaffirms the structure and approach for the NAP process, linking it to existing or planned policies, plans, strategies and legislation that will enable Malawi to address its medium- and long-term adaptation needs. The NAP stocktaking report has also served as a key foundation for the NAP Framework.

49. The NAP Framework links to the objectives of the EbAM project through its focus on: sustainable development; uplifting the poor and vulnerable; gender; participation and ownership; and, incorporating traditional knowledge.

3.1.11 National Climate Change Management Policy (2016)

50. The goal of the National Climate Change Management Policy is to create an enabling policy and legal framework for a pragmatic, coordinated and harmonized approach to climate change management. The Policy provides strategic direction for Malawi's priorities for climate change interventions and outlines an institutional framework for the application and implementation of adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and capacity building measures.

3.1.12 National HIV/AIDS Policy (2012)

51. The national HIV/AIDS policy highlights that HIV/AIDS impact on the country is quite significant and affects a range of socio-economic activities be it in agriculture, fisheries, public sector, private sector, tourism, urban areas, rural areas among others. HIV/AIDS prevalence in the country varies from one region to the other and from rural to urban areas. The highest rate is in the Southern Region and the lowest in the Northern Region. Prevalence rate is high in urban areas as compared to rural areas.

52. National HIV/AIDS Policy identifies migrant workers and women as being highly vulnerable to the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

3.1.13 National Gender Policy (2000 amended 2015)

53. The National Gender Policy recognizes that women play important roles in the socioeconomic development of the country. This contribution is however not matched with their access to and control over resources such as land and capital and their enjoyment of benefits from management and use of natural resources. The project affected people will include women, men, the youth, and girls including some who may be vulnerable. The National Gender Policy advocates for gender mainstreaming in the planning and implementation of projects to ensure that the needs of different groups of people affected by a project are taken care of in a manner that promotes equity. The EbAM project will ensure that principles that promote equity among different beneficiaries are applied during planning and implementation of sub-activities. Further details on gender-related issues are presented in Annex 8.

3.1.14 Decentralization Policy (1998)

54. The policy aims at integrating governmental agencies at the district and local levels into one administrative unit, through the process of institutional integration, manpower absorption, composite budgeting and provision of funds for the decentralized services; diverting the centre of implementation responsibilities and transfers these to the districts; assigning functions and responsibilities to the various levels of government; and promoting popular participation in the governance and development of districts. This policy has implications for EbAM considering it is a nationwide project and screening of sub-activities at the local level will ensure close collaboration with environmental district officers.

3.2 Legal framework

3.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1995)

55. The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi of 1995 sets out a broad framework for sustainable environmental management at various levels in Malawi. It provides a framework for the integration of environmental consideration into any investment project/programme. The Constitution provides the fundamental principles that require the State to promote the welfare and development of the people by progressively adopting and implementing policies and legislation aimed at achieving gender equality, adequate nutrition, adequate health care and responsible management of the environment.

56. The Constitution of Malawi also provides the basis for and against land acquisition. Section 28 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi states that “No person shall be arbitrarily deprived of property” and section 44 (4) states that “Expropriation of property shall be permissible only when done for public utility and only when there has been adequate notification and appropriate compensation, provided that there shall always be a right to appeal to a court of law for redress.

57. The implication of this provision is that the proposed project has a responsibility of ensuring that the implementation of sub-activities is undertaken in an environmentally sustainable manner to prevent environmental degradation and not to compromise the socioeconomic environment.

3.2.2 Environment Management Act (2017)

58. In Malawi, the Environment Management Act (EMA), provides the basic legal framework for environmental planning including the preparation of environmental management plans for projects likely to have negative impacts on people and the environment. The Act makes provisions for protection and management of the environment and the conservation and utilization of natural resources.

59. In line with the Environment Management Act, Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) were established in 1997, and these were being updated at the time of writing. All programmes and projects are required to follow the Guidelines for EIA, integrating environmental considerations in line with national development strategies. The Guidelines specify how projects should be screened and categorized. Higher risk projects are required to undertake environmental impact assessment. Environmental and social management plans are also required. The Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) and the Malawi Environment Protection Authority oversee the implementation of the Act. The EAD will be engaged during ESMP preparation through close collaboration with Environmental District Officers (EDOs).

3.2.3 *Water Resources Act (2013)*

60. The Water Resources Act has a bearing on effluent and storm water discharges into the environment. The legislation regulates water resources protection, conservation and planning and catchment management. Specifically, the Act controls the use of water resources, water rights and pollution of public water. The Act provides for the establishment of the National Water Resources Authority, and Catchment Management Committees, the latter of which will be of importance in the implementation of Component 1 of the EbAM project. Sub-activities to be supported under EbAM will also have to ensure that riverbanks and the water bodies are not negatively affected by on-farm and off-farm interventions.

3.2.4 *Forest Act (1997)*

61. The Forest Act (1997) guides the management of forests on customary and private land; forest reserves and protected forest areas; woodlots and plantation forestry; and it also deals with cross-cutting issues including law enforcement and fire management. It provides for establishment of Forest Management Agreements between communities and the Department of Forestry that enhance co-management of forest resources. Forest Management Agreements lay the foundation for sustainable forest management. The Act also provides for penalties for forest offences as well as seizure of forest products by forestry officers and police officers.

62. The country has a number of forest reserves, community managed woodlots, game reserves, private forests and indigenous trees. The Act establishes Village Natural Resources Management Committees (VNRMCs), which are responsible for sustainable forest management including the protection of water catchments and fragile areas as well as rehabilitation of degraded areas. VNRMC link directly to the implementation of Component 1.

63. This ESMF will ensure that Component 1 and Component 2 sub-activities are properly screened before being supported (as part of ESMPs associated with each VLAP), to ensure that forest resources are protected.

3.2.5 *Local Government Act (1998, as amended in 2017)*

64. The Act provides legal mandate to local councils in the planning, administration and implementation of various issues and development programmes in their respective geographical districts. One main function of the councils is local environmental planning and management. Some of the environmental and management functions provided in section 2 of the second schedule of functions outlined in the Act include town planning, building control, local afforestation programmes, control of soil erosion, and appropriate management of solid and liquid wastes.

65. The Local Government Act provides for local governance structures through which these guidelines should be implemented. The Act establishes local government areas for administration of local government such as district, town, municipality and city councils. The Local Government Act provides for the formulation of development plans for local authorities including environmental development.

66. The Act mandates the District Council to undertake environmental protection services. It also provides for the establishment of the following committees and sub-committees:

- The District Executive Committee (DEC) is the technical arm of the District Council
- The District Environment Sub-Committee (DESC) is the DEC focal point on issues of the environment.
- Area Development Committees (ADCs) under the current institutional structure, are decision-making institutions located at area level (i.e. at the levels of the Traditional Authority).
- Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Community Development Committees are at village level.
- The Area Executive Committee (AEC) is the technical body of the ADC.

67. Aligning implementation of this ESMF with district council structures will be critical to effectively address environmental management issues that may be associated with project implementation, and that are expected to remain of limited scale.

3.2.6 *National Parks and Wildlife Act (1994, as amended 2004)*

68. The provision of the National Parks and Wildlife Act are among other things meant for:

- the conservation of selected examples of wildlife communities in Malawi;
- the protection of rare, endangered and endemic species of wild plants and animals;
- the sustainable use of wildlife and minimization of conflict between human beings and animals;
- conservation and management of wildlife; and
- the protection and management of protected areas.

69. The screening process will make it clear that no financial support received from EbAM will be used in illegal wildlife trafficking.

3.2.7 Pesticides Act, 2000

70. Pesticide Act No. 12 of 2000, provides the legal and administrative framework for registration, procurement, distribution, export, importation, storage, usage and disposal of the pesticides and related materials. Largely, the provisions of the Pesticide Act are intended to minimize the potential adverse effects from pesticides to the people or non-target species and the environment in general.

71. Pesticides use is not planned under EbAM. The agreement between implementing partners and beneficiaries will emphasise Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as the main means of dealing with pests and diseases.

3.2.8 Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare Act (2014)

72. The Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare Act regulates work conditions with respect to safety, health, and welfare of workers. The Act seeks to ensure that workplaces are safe, and that the welfare of workers is protected. The act also provides that workers should be provided with protective wear to ensure that they are safe while they are working. These may include gloves, heavy duty boots, helmets and overalls.

3.2.9 Land laws

73. In 2016 a number of laws which were first proposed in the National Land Policy of 2002 were enacted. These are:

- Land Act 2016
- Physical Planning Act 2016
- Land Survey Act 2016
- Customary Land Act 2016
- The Registered Land (Amendment) Act 2016
- Public Roads (Amendment) Act 2016
- Forestry (Amendment) Act 2016
- Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act 2016
- Local Government (Amendment) Act 2016
- Malawi Housing Corporation (Amendment) Act 2016

74. For the purposes of the EbAM project, the most relevant are the Land Act and the Land Acquisition Act. The Land Act classifies land as being either public or private. Public land can either be “government land”, or “unallocated customary land”. Private land can either be “customary estate”, “leasehold”, or “freehold”. The Customary Land Act allows the creation of Customary Estates, so that smallholder farmers in Traditional Land Management Areas (TLMAs) can get legal title to their land and thus be protected from encroachment and other interests including those of Traditional Authorities.

75. The Land Act provides for the management of land tenure and land use issues. Section 27 and 28 of the Act guarantee landholders appropriate compensation in the event of disturbance of or loss or damage to assets and interests on land. The Act also provides procedures of acquisition of one class of land to another.

76. The Land Acquisition Act covers procedures relating to the acquisition of land by either the government or individuals or developers from any form of the land tenure system in Malawi. The act makes provision for preliminary investigation, preliminary survey of the area and the procedure to be followed where land should be acquired. The procedure for land acquisition starts with issue of a formal notice to persons who have existing interests in the land. Such notices are issued under section 6 of this Act. Sections 9 and 10 of the Act covers the steps for assessment of land, crops, fruits and other landed properties and subsequent procedures for payments of the compensations to the displaced people. Section 11 to 14 outlines the necessary steps for land surveying and land transfer following notices in government gazette. The responsibility of identifying alternative land for those affected people rests with their village headman, their traditional authority and District Commissioner. The District Commissioner assists in transportation and provisions of necessary services on new sites of resettlement.

3.3 International conventions and treaties

77. The Government of Malawi has signed various international environmental conventions which must be adhered to. These include:

- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- Kyoto Protocol;
- The Convention on International Plant Protection;
- The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources For Food and Agriculture;
- The Convention on Wetland of Significant Importance;
- The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage;
- The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals;
- The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat;
- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- The African Convention on Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources;
- The Convention on Desertification and Drought;
- The FAO International Undertaking on Plant and Genetic Resources;
- The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;
- The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships;
- The Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade;
- The Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal;
- The Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants;
- The Montreal Protocol for Protection of the Ozone Layer;
- The Convention on Biological Diversity; and
- Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

78. Table 3 summarizes the relevant international social agreements to which Malawi is a party.

Table 3 - Summary of relevant international social agreements

Name of Convention	Date of Signature	Date of Ratification/Accession
Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment		June 11 th , 1996
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights		December 22 nd , 1993
Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance		July 14 th , 2017
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	December 18 th , 1979	March 12 th , 1987
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination		June 11 th , 1996
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	December 16 th , 1966	December 22 nd , 1993
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	December 16 th , 1966	December 22 nd , 1993
African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	June 17 th , 1981	November 17 th , 1989
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	July 13 th , 1998	September 16 th , 1999
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	September 23 rd , 2022	September 23 rd , 2022
Convention on the Rights of the Child	N/a	January 2 nd , 1991
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	September 7 th , 2000	September 21 st , 2010
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	September 27 th , 2007	August 27 th , 2009
Forced Labour Convention	November 19 th , 1999	In Force (date unknown)
Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention	November 19 th , 1999	In Force (date unknown)
Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention	March 22 nd , 1965	In Force (date unknown)
Equal Remuneration Convention	March 22 nd , 1965	In Force (date unknown)
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention	March 22 nd , 1965	In Force (date unknown)
Minimum Age Convention	November 19 th , 1999	In Force (date unknown)

Occupational Safety and Health Convention	November 7 th , 2019	In Force (date unknown)
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention	November 19 th , 1999	In Force (date unknown)
Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention	November 7 th , 2019	In Force (date unknown)

Source: Authors' own elaboration

3.4 Review of applicable FAO and GCF policies and guidelines

79. FAO and GCF relevant policies for this project are:

- **FAO Accountability Policy (2014).** FAO is committed to designing and operating its approach to accountability, based on FAO's core values of commitment, respect for all, integrity and transparency, and according to the following principles: (i) Focus on FAO's purpose and outcomes for beneficiaries and partners; (ii) Define clear roles and responsibilities; (iii) Take informed and transparent decisions and communicate clearly, providing the basis for acting with a focus on outcomes and within clearly defined roles; (iv) Put FAO's values into practice through consistent application of a shared ethos and culture in the development of policy and the behaviour of employees; (v) Engage with stakeholders to make accountability real; (vi) Establish a culture of consequences - to be meaningful, accountability must be felt.
- **FAO whistleblower protection policy** (administrative circular N°2019/06) applying to any FAO personnel when internal or external reporting according to the consideration of the circular.
- **GCF Policy on the Protection of Whistleblowers and Witnesses (2018)** aims to empower GCF-project related persons to report suspicions of wrongdoing in good faith and without fear of retaliation so that the GCF can effectively protect its interests, resources, and mission.
- **FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020-2030** strives to achieve equality between women and men in sustainable agriculture and rural development for the elimination of hunger and poverty.
- **GCF Gender Policy (2019)** reinforces the responsiveness of GCF to the culturally diverse context of gender equality to better address and account for the links between gender equality and climate change.
- **FAO Protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (PSAE) N° 2013/27.** The principles of integrity, professionalism, respect for human rights and the dignity of all peoples underpin FAO's commitment to preventing and addressing acts of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)
- **FAO Policy on the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority N° 2015/03 (2015) and FAO policy on sexual harassment (13 February 2019)** which state that Sexual Harassment in all its forms is contrary to the United Nations Charter, the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules of the Organization and the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service.
- **GCF Revised Policy on the Prevention and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, and Sexual Harassment (2021)** sets clear obligations for GCF-project related persons to prevent and respond to SEAH and to refrain from condoning, encouraging, participating in, or engaging in SEAH.
- **GCF Revised Environmental and Social Policy (2021)** requires that the accredited entities provide and implement the environmental and social management system to manage the environmental and social risks and impacts associated with the activities, allow meaningful and inclusive multi-stakeholder consultation and engagement throughout the lifecycle of activities and that the activities proposed for GCF financing are properly screened, assigned appropriate environmental and social risk categories and that the environmental and social risks and impacts are properly and sufficiently assessed.
- **FAO Policy against fraud and other corrupt practices N° 2015/08 (2015)** Fraud and other corrupt practices pose a grave threat to the effective implementation of the Organization's policies and objectives.
- **GCF Policy on Prohibited Activities (2019)** prohibits GCF-project related persons to engage in: corrupt, fraudulent, coercive, collusive, or obstructive practices; or abuse, etc. to maintain the highest levels of integrity, accountability and efficiency.
- **GCF Indigenous People Policy (2018)** recognizes that Indigenous Peoples often have identities and aspirations that are distinct from mainstream groups in national societies and are disadvantaged by traditional models of mitigation, adaptation, and development. In many instances, they are among the most economically marginalized and vulnerable segments of the population, and in many cases, they do not receive equitable access to project benefits, or benefits are not devised or delivered in a form that is culturally appropriate. The economic, social, and legal status of Indigenous Peoples frequently limit their capacity to defend their rights to, and interests in, land, territories, and natural and cultural resources, and may restrict their ability to participate in and benefit from development initiatives and climate change actions.

Section 4: Environmental and social baseline conditions

4.1 Purpose of baseline conditions analysis

80. Significant co-benefits of the EbAM project include the positive contribution to the biophysical and social fabric of Malawi in the areas of intervention. Project activities will positively impact the existing baseline situation. To understand the extent of positive contributions, it is therefore imperative that the existing condition of the environment and socio-economic baseline are generally understood. An in-depth baseline assessment will also be conducted during the first year of project implementation.

81. This section begins with a general description of the physical and socio-economic contexts within which the sub-activities will take place. It then outlines the status of the agro-ecological zones, cropping and livelihood systems in the regions where the project will take place. It concludes with a discussion on the degradation of the biophysical environment.

4.2 General physical context

82. The country has a total area of 118 484 square kilometres, of which 94 080 square kilometres are land and 24 404 are water. Lake Malawi runs from north to south across the country with a considerable network of tributaries, which altogether account for the significant portion of water area in the country.

83. The terrain is also characterized by an elongated plateau, resulting in rolling plains, hills, and some mountains. This terrain creates micro-climates, principally due to the variation in rainfall across locations, while the overarching climate is sub-tropical and influenced by the Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) and El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO). The lakeshore in the Northern and Central regions experiences the highest rainfall, typically occurring from December to May. Central and Southern Malawi have a single rainy season from December to February.

84. As such, there are two characteristic climate patterns, specifically one for the North of the country and another for the Central and Southern regions. Accordingly, higher temperatures are experienced in the South compared to the North. Areas along the lake also experience cooler temperatures. Climate projections have shown that rainfall variability and temperatures are due to increase across the country, causing a disproportionate impact across geographies. The South, a particularly vulnerable context where food and income insecurity is highest, will be most affected.

85. The physical configuration of Malawi is divided into four zones being: The Rift valley floor, rift valley escarpment, hill zones, plains and plateaus. The Rift valley floors consist of lakeshore plains and Lower Shire Valley. The Rift Valley Floor is among the rich agricultural regions of Malawi due to fertile alluvial soils. Other important agricultural regions are plains such as Lilongwe–Kasungu Plains and Phalombe Plains. These areas contain latosols (red–yellowish soils). These soils support a range of arable crops including maize, tobacco, rice, pigeon peas, groundnuts and beans which are both food and cash crops.

86. The country is divided into three regions: the Northern, Central, and Southern Regions. There are 28 districts in the country. Six districts are in the Northern Region, nine are in the Central Region, and thirteen are in the Southern Region. Administratively, the districts are subdivided into traditional authorities (TAs), presided over by chiefs. Each TA is composed of villages, which are the smallest administrative units, and the villages are presided over by village headmen. The smallest unit of administration is the traditional authority (TA), and there are 208 TAs. For the purpose of registration, these TAs are divided into 9 235 enumeration areas (EA).

4.3 General socio-economic context

87. Malawi is very sensitive to climate change because of high population density and growth, a large rural population in deepening poverty, high food insecurity and precarious health situation. Malawi is a landlocked country with a population of 19 million, growing at the annual rate of 2.7 percent as of 2020. Population density is extremely high all over the country, averaging 203 persons/km², compared to 48 persons/km² in Sub-Saharan Africa. Less densely populated areas are found in: West Rumph; Nkhotakota; Kasuna; Machinga; Mulanje; Chikwawa; and Nsanje districts⁶.

⁶ WorldPop and Center for International Earth Science Information Network, 2018; Global High Resolution Population Denominators Project

88. More than half of the total population was below the national poverty line in 2016, a bleaker situation than in 2010. Approximately 84 percent of the population lives in rural areas⁷, where poverty rates are the highest⁸. The COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to have pushed an additional 1.6 million people into poverty, mostly in rural areas⁹. According to the Global Hunger Index 2021, the country is ranked the 36th most serious in terms of hunger out of 116 countries¹⁰.

89. Malawi's population surged from 3.6 million in 1960 to 19.6 million in 2021, with women comprising 50.7 percent. The 2018 Malawi Population and Housing Census (2018 PHC) revealed nearly a fourfold increase since 1966 and a 1.3 time increase from 2008. With an annual growth rate of 2.9 percent, the population rose by 35 percent between 2008 and 2018. The sex ratio stood at 94.2 nationally, with Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu, and Zomba having more males. The Southern region housed the most significant population (44 percent), followed by the Central (43 percent) and Northern Regions (13 percent). Population density increased from 138 to 186 persons per square kilometre between 2008 and 2018, with the Southern region having the highest density (244), followed by the Central (211) and Northern regions (84). Rural areas accommodated 84 percent of the population in 2018, while 12 percent lived in major cities and 4 percent in other urban areas.

90. In 2019, most deaths were caused by communicable, maternal/neonatal and nutritional diseases¹¹. The incidence of these diseases is expected to increase with climate change, especially among marginalized groups. Sensitivity is also impacted by the Russia-Ukraine war, which is aggravating food insecurity and poverty through the price hikes of fertilizer and fuel. For example, in April 2022, it was reported that farmers were paying 27 000 MKW (equivalent to USD 33.35 at the time) per 50-kg bag of fertilizer, which would reach 70 000 MKW in December of the same year¹². As the real GDP of the country falls, national household consumption is expected to shrink, with larger impacts on poorer and rural households and leading to an increase in inequality¹³.

91. Malawi's Land Policy (2002) recognizes three categories of land: public land; private land; and, customary land. In rural areas, Malawi predominantly has a customary land ownership system whereby chiefs administer land on behalf of the Government. Between 65 percent and 75 percent of land in Malawi is customary land. This land is held in trust and administered by chiefs on behalf of people in a community. However, the 2016 Land Act categorises land into public and private land only.

92. Approximately 49 percent of Malawi's total land area is dedicated to agricultural use, with only approximately 2 percent of the crop land being irrigated. Large scale farms (in the range of 10-500 hectares) are relatively unusual and tend to focus on the production of cash crops such as tobacco, sugar cane, and tea. Meanwhile, small farms are responsible for most of Malawi's agricultural production, and the majority of the country's 2 million small farms are rainfed, cultivating on less than one hectare. Forested areas makeup approximately 36 percent of Malawi's total land area, with approximately 19 percent of it protected.

4.4 Agroecological zones, cropping and livelihood systems of project areas

4.4.1 Agro-ecological zones

93. There are two distinct seasons in Malawi: a single rainy season from October to April; and a dry season from May to September. Its climate differs with altitude and on small scales.^{14 15} The country is divided into four agroecological zones that are mainly delineated by altitude: Lower Shire Valley (<200 m), Lakeshore, middle and upper Shire (200–760 m), Mid-elevation Upland Plateau (760–1300 m), and Highlands (>1300 m). The difference in altitude gives rise to three climates: semi-arid, with an annual rainfall of around 600mm (Shire Valley and some parts

⁷ National Statistical Office, Government of Malawi, 2019. "2018 Malawi Population and Housing Census: Main Report."

⁸ Particularly affected were: Chitipa; Karonga; west Kasungu; west Nkhosha; central Nkhosha Bay; Mangochi; Machinga; Mwanza; central Ntcheu; east Zomba; Chikwawa; and Nsanje. Source: Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology, 2016; and Nyengere, J., 2021. "Report on Collect Earth Mapping and Analysis for Project Targeting."

⁹ IFPRI, 2020. "The Short-term Impacts of COVID-19 on the Malawian Economy, 2020–2021, A SAM multiplier modelling analysis." Lilongwe: IFPRI.

¹⁰ Global Hunger Index, 2021. "Global Hunger Index Scores by 2021 GHI Rank." <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/ranking.html> (accessed November 2021).

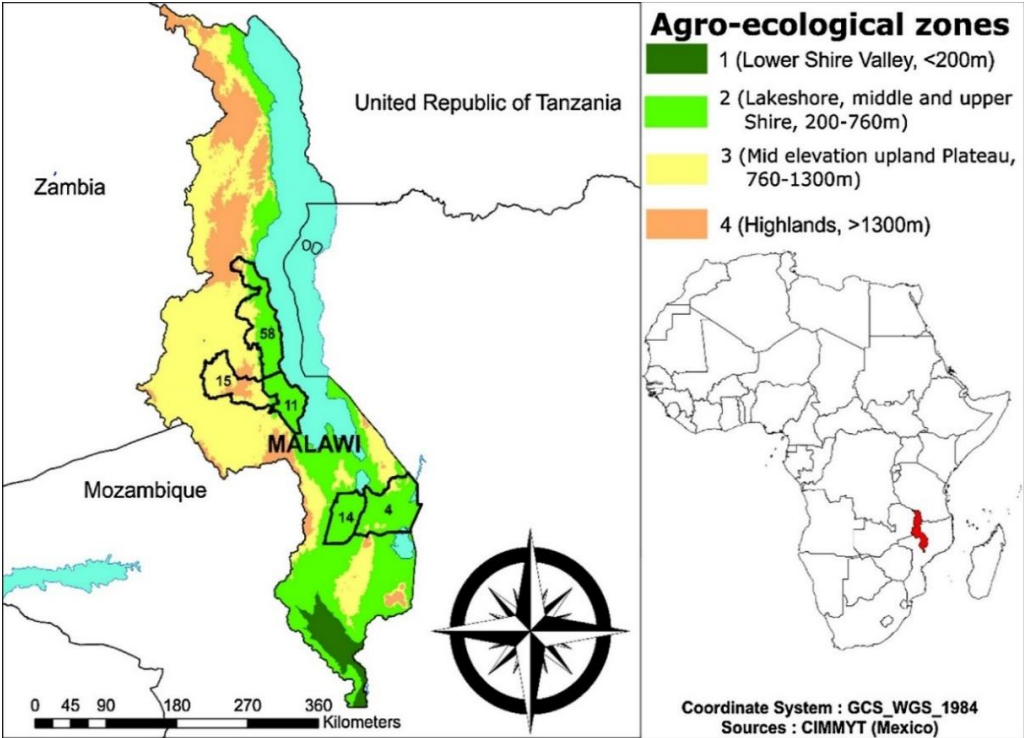
¹¹ University of Washington, 2020. "Malawi." IHME. <http://www.healthdata.org/malawi> (accessed November 2021). The diseases include HIV/AIDS; neonatal disorders; lower respiratory infect; tuberculosis; diarrheal diseases; and malaria.

¹² Kateta, M. W., 2022. "Malawian farmers turn to organic alternatives as fertilizer costs rise." Inside Development, Food Systems. Devex <https://www.devex.com/news/malawian-farmers-turn-to-organic-alternatives-as-fertilizer-costs-rise-102980> (accessed October 2022).

¹³ Diao, X. *et al.*, 2022. "Brief: Impacts of the Ukraine and Global Crises on Poverty and Food Security in Malawi July 6, 2022." Global Crisis Country Brief 10. IFPRI. <https://ebrary.ifpri.org/utils/getfile/collection/p15738coll2/id/135959/filename/136170.pdf> (accessed October 2022).

along the Lakeshore Plain); semi-arid to sub-humid, with annual rainfall of 700-900 mm per year (Medium Altitude Plateaus); and sub-humid with annual rainfall at 1,000-1,100 mm (High Altitude Plateaus and hill areas). The mean temperature during 1981-2010 varied from place to place; with the low-lying and lakeshore areas recording 20-25°C and the highlands 12-15°C. Winter rains are more common in high altitudes, while the central plains are largely dry but warm in winter. These climate characteristics have resulted in the delineation of agroecological zones as indicated in Figure 6 and Table 4.

Figure 6 - Agro-ecological zones in Malawi.



Source: Berre et al. (2017) Thinking beyond agronomic yield gap: Smallholder farm efficiency under contrasted livelihood strategies in Malawi,Field Crops Research, (Volume 214)¹⁶

¹⁶ The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Table 4 - Agro- ecological zones description

Agro-ecological Zones	Characteristics	Challenging conditions	Enabling factors
Lower Shire Valley	Rainfall: <600mm Slope: Gentle to medium Soil type: Alluvial Soils (Hydromorphic in the marshlands) Soil texture: Sandy Clay Loam Soil loss average: 0.4-10.3 t/ha/yr Average temperature: 25°C	Dry spells Low rainfalls for most crops Flood Hazards High temperatures	Young alluvial soils, fertile Vast marshes and wetlands for livestock grazing Low slope Relatively good soil water retention
Lakeshore, Middle and Upper Shire	Rainfall: 600-800mm Slope: Gentle to medium Soil type: Cambisol and luviosol Soil texture: Sandy loam Soil loss average: 0.-39.3 t/ha/yr Average temperature: 24°C	Dry spells Low rainfalls for most crops Flood Hazards High temperatures Poor water holding capacity of soils	Medium soil fertility Flat areas with appropriate water drainage
Mid-elevation upland Plateau	Rainfall: 800-12 000 mm Slope: Gentle to medium Soil type: luviosol, lixisols and leptisols Soil texture: Sandy Loam Soil loss average: 0.48-20.3 t/ha/yr Average temperature: 19°C	Lixisols are not adapted for agriculture, more suited for grazing Declining soil fertility Dry spells	Moderately good average rainfall Leptisols have a high cation-exchange capacity, fertile Good water holding capacity Moderately good average temperature, especially for livestock
Highlands	Rainfall: >1 200mm Slope: medium to steep Soil type: Cambisols lixisol Soil texture: Clay Loam Soil loss average: 0.4-39 t/ha/yr Average temperature: 17°C	High soil erosion, surface runoff High rainfall	Optimal temperatures, grasses and shrubs for livestock grazing

Source: Authors' own elaboration

4.4.2 Land tenure

94. Access to land and land tenure is quite unequal in Malawi, where the wealthy own more land and have better tenure security. Land tenure is classified into customary, public and private lands, and accounted for 68 percent, 20 percent and 12 percent of the land, respectively, in 2012.¹⁷ The estates held 13 percent of total land in 1998;¹⁸ the biggest estates were located in Thyolo, Mulanje and Nsanje districts in the South (for tea production) and some areas in the Central and Northern regions (for tobacco production). Smallholders own 69 percent of the land and are mostly subsistence farmers who cultivate maize, rice, cassava, legumes and sweet potato. The average holding size is 0.61 ha nationally. Only 32 percent of agricultural landholders are women.

¹⁷ Jere, P. 2012. "Improving Land Sector Governance in Malawi: Implementation of the Land Governance Assessment Framework." <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/28526/119627-WP-P095390-PUBLIC-7-9-2017-10-17-22-MalawiFinalReportJuly.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (accessed October 2012).

¹⁸ Jere, P. 2012. "Improving Land Sector Governance in Malawi: Implementation of the Land Governance Assessment Framework." <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/28526/119627-WP-P095390-PUBLIC-7-9-2017-10-17-22-MalawiFinalReportJuly.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (accessed October 2012).

4.4.3 Production systems

95. **Cropping system: Maize.** Maize-based farming systems are dominant across the country, although the crop is not suited to all the country's diverse agroecological conditions. One of the most common narratives about agriculture in Malawi has been "maize is life", indicating strong cultural attachment of the people to the crop. Malawian farmers believe that they have been growing maize – introduced by the Portuguese in the late 18th century¹⁹ and replaced sorghum and millet in the beginning of the twentieth century²⁰ – as their primary crop for hundreds of years and to replace this crop would be defiance of cultural practices and associated ideas. The global rise of industrial agricultural systems, including the promotion of monocropping and fertilizer, has greatly influenced farming in Malawi.²¹ Maize is of low drought tolerance and limited nutritional benefits, but the recent efforts for diversification has not changed the low crop diversity in the country and maize monoculture continues to reign. Stunting among children is common, particularly in rural areas, and only a minority of the population is consuming adequate foods from all the food groups.²² Food shortages in the "lean season" (pre-harvest months, typically January-March) is a significant source of labour loss and revenue, which have been described as an annual problem.²³ A household survey indicated that 40 percent of households were too hungry to work in their fields, losing an average of 10.6 days of labour in 2016.²⁴

96. **Cropping system: Rice.** Rice provides food and income to many households in Malawi. It is the second food crop after maize and is mostly consumed in urban areas. In rural communities, rice consumption is significant along the lakeshore of Lake Malawi. The crop is grown by smallholder farmers under irrigation schemes and in wetlands during the rainy season. Most of these farmers have a land holding size averaging 0.5 hectare.²⁵

97. **Cropping system: Tobacco.** In 2015, Malawi was one of the largest tobacco producers in Africa.²⁶ At that time, the country devoted more than 5 percent of its farming land to the crop – the highest percentage globally – and recorded the fourth fastest deforestation rate in the world.²⁷ Apart from the environmental impacts of this monoculture crop, several health disorders are directly associated with its production. Child labour is also a big issue particularly in this sector. Lately, Malawi has been seeking to switch from tobacco to other crop productions that respect the environment and affects less the health; in the past years tobacco production has been reduced, but the farmers have found themselves without a replacement cash crop.

98. **Cropping system: Pearl Millet and Sorghum.** Pearl millet originated in Western Africa and has been naturalized widely in Africa, including Malawi. It has a short life cycle of three months. It is drought-tolerant, disease-resistant and can be stored for long periods without insect damage, making it an important food during periods of drought. It is the third most important food grain in semi-arid regions of Africa and Asia.²⁸ Finger millet has traditionally been grown as part of a shifting cultivation system, known locally as *visoso*. Sorghum is grown in Central and Southern Malawi, as part of an intensive rainfed cropping system, planted at the start of the rainy season and intercropped with cowpea and sometimes with maize and finger millet. It is grown as part of an annual cropping system. Compared to millets, sorghum requires more weeding, more fertilization and ways to reduce bird damage (typically by having children posted in the fields to chase away birds during the growing period). Both grains perform better than maize under drought conditions and in storage. Unlike maize, which has a leafy cover, both grains are unprotected from bird damage in the field.²⁹

¹⁹ ReliefWeb, 2022. "Malawi: Maize dominance worsens food crisis." Originally published in 2002 by the New Humanitarian. <https://reliefweb.int/report/malawi/malawi-maize-dominance-worsens-food-crisis> (accessed October 2022).

²⁰ Jakobsen, J. and Westengen, O. T., 2021. "The imperial maize assemblage: maize dialectics in Malawi and India." *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. Vol. 49, Issue 3, 536-560.

²¹ Rachel Bezner Kerr, 2014. "Lost and Found Crops: Agrobiodiversity, Indigenous Knowledge, and a Feminist Political Ecology of Sorghum and Finger Millet in Northern Malawi." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. Vol. 104, No. 3, 577-593.

²² Van den Berg, H. et al., 2020. "Is the farmer field school still relevant? Case studies from Malawi and Indonesia." *NJAS - Wageningen Journal of Life Sciences*. Vol. 92, 100329.

²³ Jew, E. K. K. et al., 2020. "Farming Systems and Conservation Agriculture: Technology, structures and agency in Malawi." *Land Use Policy*. Volume 95, 104612.

²⁴ Jew, E. K. K. et al., 2020. "Farming Systems and Conservation Agriculture: Technology, structures and agency in Malawi." *Land Use Policy*. Volume 95, 104612.

²⁵ Before, J. T. et al., 2018. "Constraints to Rice Production in Malawi: A Case of Nkhulambe Irrigation Scheme in Phalombe District, Southern Malawi." *Journal of Rice Research*. Vol. 6, No.4, 200.

²⁶ WHO and UNCTAD, 2015. *Status of Tobacco Production and Trade in Africa: Factsheets*. Geneva: WHO and UNCTAD.

²⁷ Vidal, J., 2015. "Malawi's forests going up in smoke as tobacco industry takes its toll." *The Guardian*, 31 July 2015.

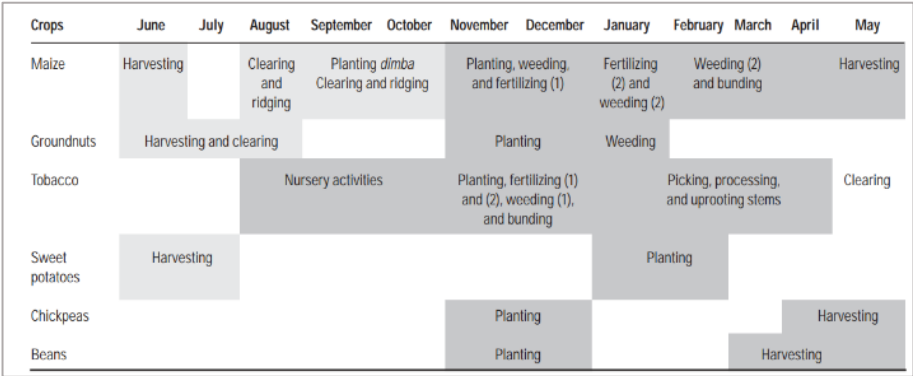
²⁸ Rachel Bezner Kerr, 2014. "Lost and Found Crops: Agrobiodiversity, Indigenous Knowledge, and a Feminist Political Ecology of Sorghum and Finger Millet in Northern Malawi." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. Vol. 104, No. 3, 577-593.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

99. **Livestock production.** Livestock production is concentrated in the Northern region and practiced mostly with extensive grazing in communal lands. The most common livestock animals are cattle, goats, pigs and poultry. Approximately 51 percent of households nationally own livestock. It is mostly female-headed households that keep goats across all of 18 livelihood zones in the country, while cattle are kept in 10 livelihood zones, mostly by the wealthy, who use them for milk and, in the case of oxen, for draft power.³⁰

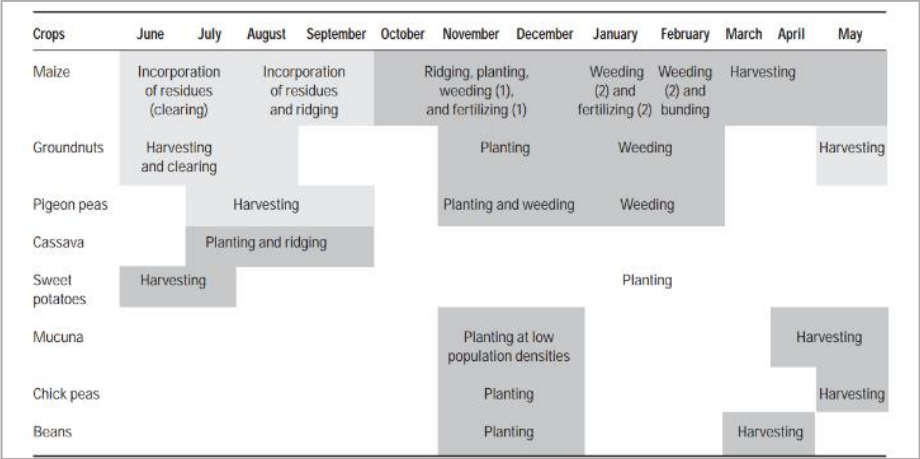
100. **Crop Calendar.** A complete common crop calendar for the Central region of Malawi is shown in Figure 7~~Error! Reference source not found.~~,³¹ including leguminous, tobacco and sweet potatoes. It indicates that main farming activities such as planting coincide with the beginning of the rainy season in October/November. Figure 8³² shows a similar crop calendar, but for Southern Malawi, which includes cassava production. In the Southern region, the planting season starts in October, one month before than in the Centre, and cassava is planted even earlier in July; the crop season in the South is longer and more varied than in the Centre. Figure 9 and Figure 10 show the crop calendar for the North (Nkhata Bay and Karonga districts). The main crops cultivated are cassava, sweet potatoes and beans.

Figure 7 - Central region general crop calendar



Source: Kamanga (2002) Crop Calendar in Malawi

Figure 8 - Southern region general crop calendar



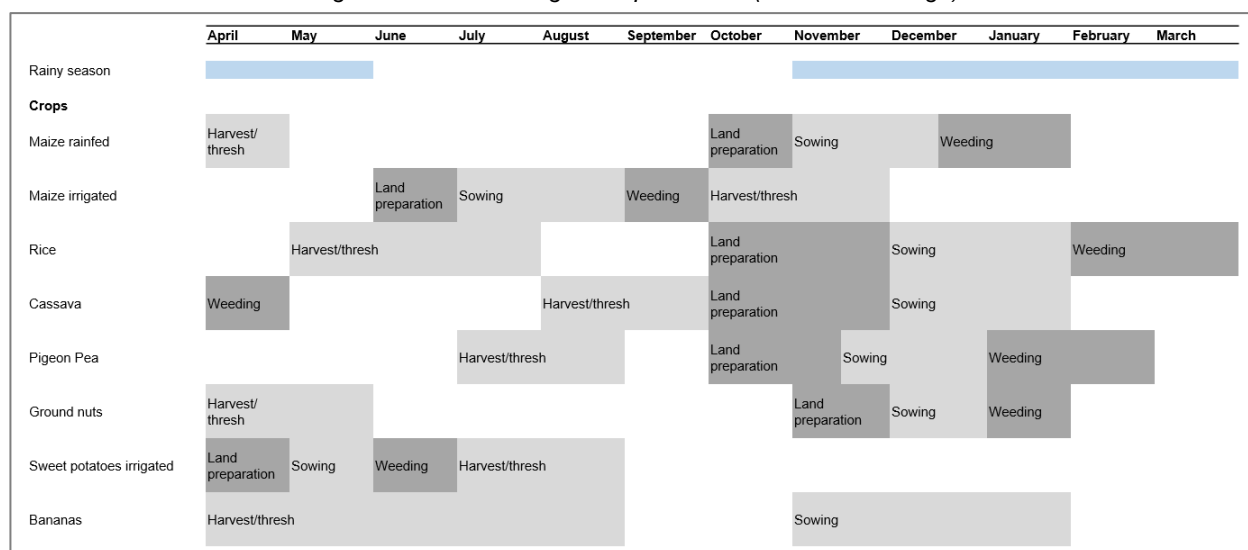
Source: Kamanga (2002) Crop Calendar in Malawi

³⁰ CIAT and World Bank, 2018. “Climate-Smart Agriculture in Malawi.” CSA Country Profiles for Africa Series. Washington, D.C.: CIAT and World Bank. https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/CSA%20_Profile_Malawi.pdf (accessed October 2022).

³¹ Kamanga, B.C.G.. 2002. “Understanding the Farmer’s Agricultural Environment in Malawi.” Risk Management Project Working Paper 02-01. <https://repository.cimmyt.org/bitstream/handle/10883/1042/76435.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y> (accessed October 2022).

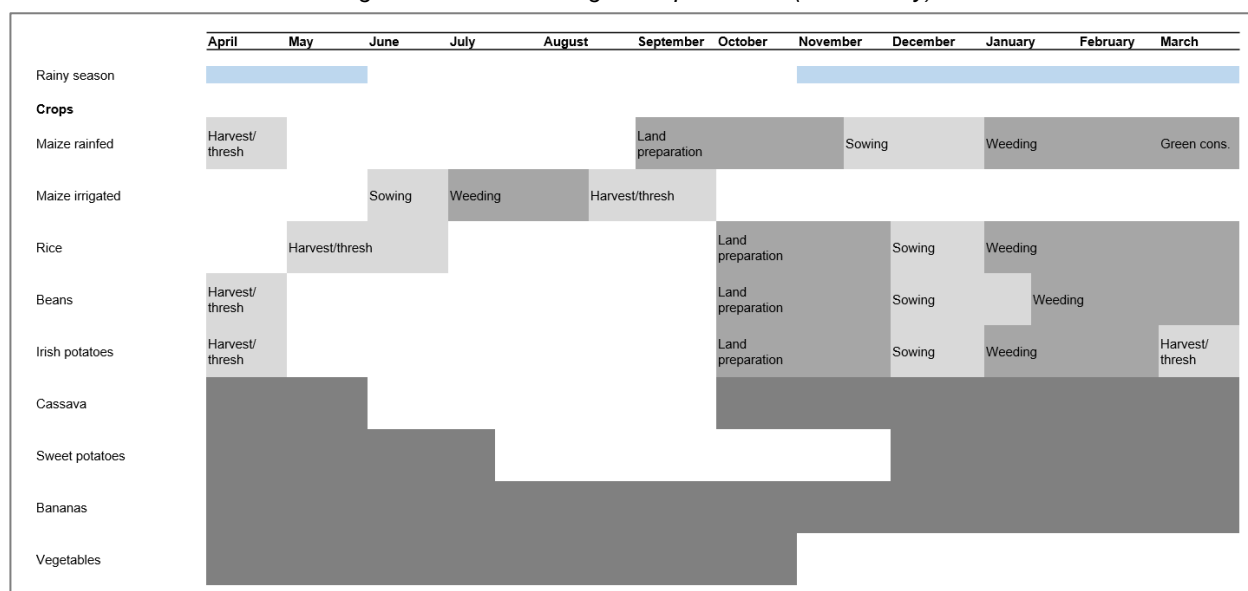
³² *ibid.*

Figure 9 – Northern region crop calendar (Northern Karonga)



Source: Malawi Livelihoods Profile (2016).

Figure 10 – Northern region crop calendar (Nkhata Bay)



Source: Malawi Livelihoods Profile (2016).

4.4.4 Livelihood systems

101. A livelihood zone analysis was carried out during 2015-2016,³³ describing 18 livelihood zones, within which people broadly shared the same patterns of access to food and markets. Table 5 summarizes the livelihood types within the WRUs targeted by EbAM. Figure 11 shows the livelihood zones in Malawi.

Table 5 - Livelihood zones in selected WRUs

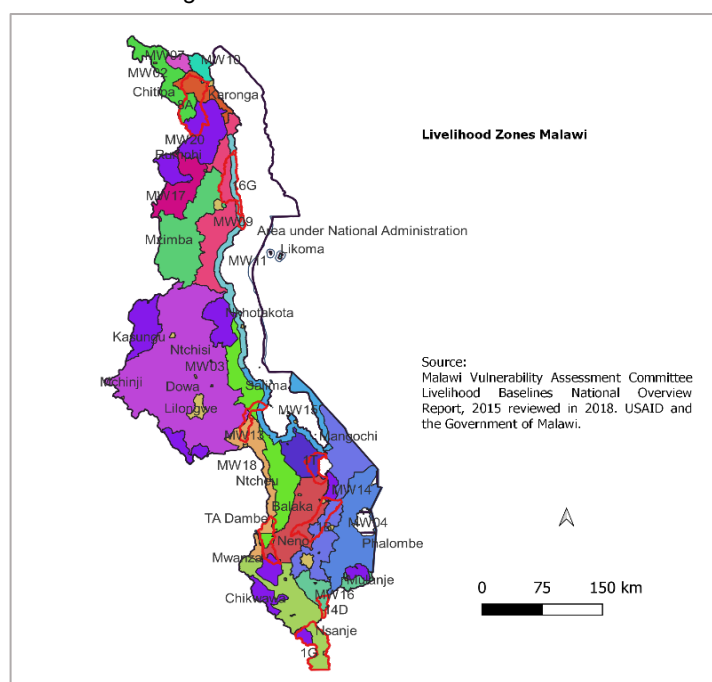
Selected WRU	Livelihood Zone Name	Districts
8A	Central Karonga	Chitipa, Karong, Rumphi
	Chitipa Millet & Maize	

³³ FEWS NET, 2016. "Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee Livelihood Baselines National Overview Report 2015." <https://fewsn.net/sites/default/files/documents/reports/Malawi-livelihood-baseline-profiles.pdf> (accessed October 2022).

16G	Northern Lakeshore	Nkhata Bay and Rumph
	Nkhata Bay Cassava	
4A	Border Productive Horticulture	Dedza
1T	Phirilongwe Hills	Mangochi
1B	Middle Shire Valley	Zomba
	Shire Highlands	
1M	Border Productive Horticulture	Neno, Mwanza
	Rift Valley Escarpment	
	Middle Shire Valley	
	National Park	
14D	Thyolo Mulunje Tea Estates	Thyolo
	Lower Shire	
1G	Lower Shire	Nsanje

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Figure 11 - Livelihood zones of Malawi



Source: Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee Livelihood Baselines National Overview Report (2015), review in 2018, USAID and the Government of Malawi³⁴

102. Two main farming systems prevail in Malawi and in selected districts: (i) one in zones with temperate weather conditions and higher rainfalls (Chitipa, Karonga, Rumph, Nkhata Bay, Dedza, Mwanza), and (ii) another in dry areas, with high average temperatures (Mangochi, Neno, Zomba, Thyolo, Nsanje). Common characteristics of the two

³⁴ The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

farming systems include: (i) home gardens, (ii) croplands (depending on the area, it can be upland and/or lowland) and (iii) mixed farming with livestock (chickens, goats, cattle mainly). In temperate weather and higher rainfalls zones, farming systems either do not have home gardens or have few crop varieties, such as cassava, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and peppers. Croplands always produce maize under mono-cropping or can be intercropped with legumes (groundnuts, soya, pigeon pea, etc.) and/or cassava. Rainfed, conventional agriculture with no soil cover is practiced. In lowlands areas, rice is produced through mono-cropping, with large-scale sugar cane plantations. The use of fertilizer is reserved to people who have access to the Affordable Inputs Program (AIP – which replaced the earlier Farm Input Subsidy Program FISP in 2020), and AIP beneficiaries vary from a year to another. Little or no manure is added, and when added is not composted. Livestock (mainly small ruminants and chickens) is part of the livelihood system, but it is poorly integrated to the farming system. For instance, the use of manure for agriculture is not extended and it is normal for farmers to leave livestock free-grazing, particularly during the dry season. In dry areas, farming systems and practices are very similar with the addition that agriculture yields are lower as weather conditions are more difficult. In croplands, maize and cassava are the main crops, with some legumes intercropped. Home gardens are not very common or produce little amount (with few varieties of crop) and operate mainly in rainy season due to low water availability. When home gardens are present, sweat potato, cassava, tomatoes and peppers are found. Table 6 shows the common characteristics of farming systems in Malawi.

103. Table 7 shows the rural livelihoods according to wealth (labelled as ultra-poor, poor, middle and better-off) in the targeted WRUs.

Table 6 - Main existing farming systems in Malawi

Agro ecological Zones, Districts and Livelihood Zones	Farming System		
	Home Garden/Crop Land/Livestock	Crops and Animals	Farming Practices
Mid-elevation upland Plateau and Highlands Rainfall: 800-1300mm Districts (and WRU) Karonga (8A) Chitipa (8A) Nkhata Bay (16G) Thyolo (14D) Rumphi (16G) Nsanje (1G) Mwanza (1M) Mangochi (1T) Dedza (4A) Livelihood zones Central Karonga Chitipa Millet & Maize Northern Lakeshore Nkhata Bay Cassava Border Productive Horticulture Shire Highlands Border Productive Horticulture Phirilongwe Hills Thyolo Mulunje Tea Estates	Home Garden	Not always present If present: cassava, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, peppers are grown.	Use of hand or hoe Plowing with oxen or with hoe
	Crop Land	Maize mono-cropping Or maize intercropped with legumes (groundnuts, soya, pigeon pea, etc.) and/or cassava	2 weeks of land preparation by one person for 1 ha No soil cover
	Lowland (if present)	Rice during rainy season	Low diversity of crops and foods produced Rainfed mostly, only watering of home gardens Use of synthetic fertilizer only when obtained through the government subsidy programme.
	Livestock Few agropastoralists, concentrated in the North	Goats Chickens Cattle	No integration of livestock with the cropping system Uncontrolled and free grazing in dry season
Lower Shire Valley Lakeshore, Middle and Upper Shire Rainfall: 400-800mm High temperatures above 25°C Districts (and WRU) Neno (1M) Thyolo (14D) Zomba (1B)	Home Garden	Not always present If present: some cassava, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, peppers	Use of hand or hoe Plowing with oxen or with hoe
	Crop Land	Maize monocropping Or maize intercropping with leguminous (groundnuts or soy, or beans, like pigeon peas)	2 weeks of land preparation by one person for 1 ha No soil cover Low diversity of crops and foods produced

Livelihood zones Lower Shire Middle Shire Rift Valley Escarpment			Rainfed mostly, only watering of home gardens Use of synthetic fertilizer only when obtained through the subsidize programme.
	Livestock	Goats Chickens	No integration of livestock with the cropping system Uncontrolled and free grazing in dry season

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Table 7 - Type of farmers summarized from the different livelihood zones present in the project area

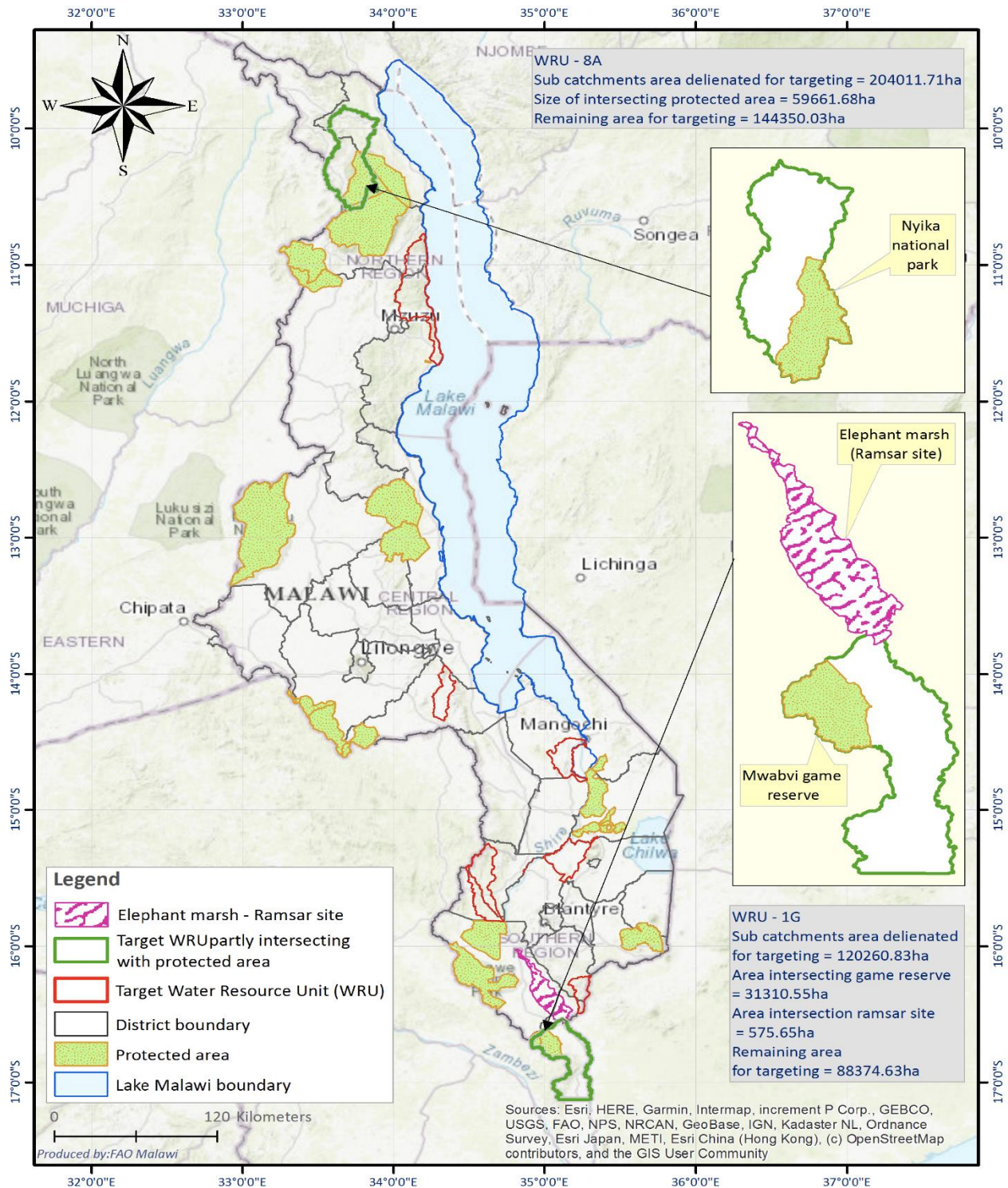
Type of Farmer Household	General Characteristics	Land Owned per Household (ha)	Land Cultivated per Household (ha)	Livestock per Household
Ultra-poor	Small sizes of land No livestock or very little Few or no tools Not food secure during lean period Dependence on off-farm income Renting of their land to better off Low yields due to low input and less time to work on own fields not rented to others	0.3-1.5	0.3-1	0-2 goats 0-1 pigs 2-10 chickens
Poor	Small landholdings Few livestock Food insecure during lean season Off-farm labour	0.3-1.7	0.3-1.5	1-4 goats 0-5 pigs 3-20 chickens
Middle	Livestock and plough oxen Larger sizes of land without renting to others. Possession of resources for hiring labour.	0.8-2	0.8-1.5	2-8 goats 2-8 pigs 2-4 oxen 2-5 cattle 1-3 sheep 7-15 chickens
Better off	Food secure (low purchasing of food, enough production to cover self-consumption) High production of cash crops.	1.5-2.42	1.5-3.2	4-15 goats 2-10 pigs 2 oxen 6-18 cattle 3-5 sheep 10-25 chickens

Source: Authors' own elaboration

4.5 State of the environment

104. **Protected areas.** Malawi is endowed with several natural ecosystems. About 11 percent of the total dry land area is designated as national parks and wildlife reserves. The national parks and protected areas, which are spread across the country, include Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve in the North of Malawi; Kasungu National Park and Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve in Central Malawi; Liwonde and Lengwe National Parks and Majete and Mwabvi Wildlife Reserves in the Southern region of Malawi; and the Lake Malawi National Park. Malawi also currently has 2 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), with a surface area of 286 356 hectares: Lake Chilwa and Elephant Marsh. Figure 12 below includes the delineation of targeted Water Resource Units and relevant protected areas.

Figure 12 - Targeted water resource units and protected areas³⁵



105. During the selection of WRUs, attention has been paid to avoiding the siting of activities close to protected areas. This has resulted in only two of the eight WRUs selected by the project intersecting with protected areas (i.e. Chitipa in the North and Nsanje in the South). As a consequence, preliminary site selection at the level of micro-catchments in the two WRUs in question has taken care to avoid physical proximity to protected areas. As such, protected areas will be de-facto excluded from sub-catchment and micro-catchment selection.

³⁵ The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

106. **Pressure on land resources and land degradation.** One of the most significant environmental issues in Malawi is pressure on land resources and land degradation, leading to soil erosion and decreasing soil fertility. This issue is reported to affect up to 60 percent of the land area and soil loss occurred at the rate of 0.90-19.8 ton/ha/year in 2014. Between 2000 and 2014, accelerating soil loss was observed mostly in the North.³⁶ According to the historical Average Revised Universal Soil Loss (RUSLE) 2021,³⁷ the loss has been most prominent in Chitipa, Karonga, East Rhumpi, Nkhata Bay, Ntchisi, East Dowa, Dedza, Ntcheu, Thyolo, Mulanje and West Zomba districts. Heavy rains have contributed to soil loss³⁸ and are expected to contribute more under climate change according to a study based on Soil Loss Estimation for South Africa (SLEMSA).³⁹ ENSO is one of the important determinants of crop yield in East and Southern Africa,⁴⁰ whose effects are expected to become more dipolar with the changing climate.⁴¹

107. The key drivers of degradation are unsustainable farming practices, coupled with increasing demand for agricultural land and wood fuels associated with a growing population⁴². In the first decade of the 21st century, land degradation is estimated to have cost Malawi USD 244 million (6.8% of GDP), and poor farming practices that degrade croplands for maize, rice and wheat resulted in a loss of USD 5.7million per year⁴³. The worst degradation is in the densely-populated Southern region. Erosion has major effects on services such as water, fisheries, lake and river transport, electricity generation, agriculture and irrigation⁴⁴.

108. **Natural forests** represent the remainder of the Miombo forests that once covered almost the whole country. The Miombo woodland zones are the most dominant terrestrial eco-zones. Montane forests occur in high altitude and rainfall areas. Mopane woodlands frequently occur on fertile soils in the South around Shire River and the lakes. Forest and woodlands account for 5 percent of the country's total wealth and 12 percent of natural capital. However, these values are declining steadily as forest resources continue to be depleted. It is estimated that harvests exceed sustainable yield from forests by about 71 percent. The national income accounts suggest that the forest sector contributed only 1 percent of value added in 2010. Yet, if non-commercial uses are included, notably firewood and charcoal (which 98 percent of the population depends on for household energy), the figure rises to 7.9 percent⁴⁵. Over half of the natural forests of Malawi were lost between 1972 and 1992—a rate of 2.5 percent per year for this period. Information presented in Malawi's most recent Nationally Determined Contribution (2021) submission suggests that forest degradation, caused largely by overharvesting of remaining forests for firewood and charcoal, now accounts for a larger share of forest-resourced emissions than from forest clearing and conversion⁴⁶.

109. Overreliance on **biomass** for cooking is the leading cause of deforestation and degradation in Malawi given that more than 97 percent of households rely on forests (biomass and charcoal) for energy⁴⁷ (GoM, 2017). Inaccessible, unreliable, and unaffordable electricity supplies are the main reason for this high dependency on biomass fuels. There is also a strong cultural preference for cooking with charcoal for certain foods. As a result, up to 90 percent of households with access to electricity continue to use charcoal⁴⁸. This reliance on biomass for energy has resulted in high levels of deforestation and forest degradation throughout the country, with downstream negative impacts on water availability, hydropower-generating capacity, and more broadly, vulnerability of Malawians to climate change. Charcoal is a fully-commercialized commodity produced almost exclusively for urban markets. There are highly organized charcoal value chains, and yet around 80 percent of charcoal producers are rural based and operate on a small scale⁴⁹. Between 2008 and 2016, urban household demand for charcoal increased by 35 percent.

³⁶ Vargas, R. and Omuto, C., 2016. "Soil Loss Assessment in Malawi." Rome: FAO UNEP and UNDP.

³⁷ CHIRPS; MODIS Vegetation Index (NVDI), 2021; Copernicus Dynamic Global Land Cover layer at 100m, 2015 and SoilGrids, ISRIC 2019; and STRM Digital Elevation Model, NASA.

³⁸ Vargas, R. and Omuto, C., 2016. "Soil Loss Assessment in Malawi." Rome: FAO UNEP and UNDP.

³⁹ Department of Land Resources Conservation, 2021. "Soil Loss Estimates for Assessment of Watershed Vulnerability: A Case study of Eleven Catchments in Malawi."

⁴⁰ Sahib, N. et al., 2020. "Assessing the Impact of ENSO on Agriculture Over Africa Using Earth Observation Data." *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*. 23 October 2020. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsufs.2020.509914/full> (accessed February 2022).

⁴¹ Yun, K.-S. et al., 2021. "Increasing ENSO–rainfall variability due to changes in future tropical temperature–rainfall relationship." *Communications, Earth & Environment*. Vol. 2, No.43.

⁴² Vargus, R., & Omuto, C. (2016). *Soil Loss Assessment in Malawi*. Nairobi: FAO, UNEP, UNDP & MoAIWD.

⁴³ World Bank (2019), Malawi Country Environmental Analysis. Government of Malawi (2010), State of the Environment and Outlook Report

⁴⁴ Kirui, O. K. (2015). Economics of Land Degradation and Improvement in Tanzania and Malawi. *Economics of Land Degradation and Improvement – A Global Assessment for Sustainable Development*, 609-649. Retrieved March 28, 2021, from https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-3-319-19168-3_20

⁴⁵ Hecht, J., and V. Kasulo. 2013(a). Development of Forest Valuation Systems Malawi Policy Briefing Report. Oxford, United Kingdom: Cardno Emerging Markets (UK) Ltd. <http://www.joyhecht.net/professional/papers/2013%20Hecht%20Malawi%20forest%20valuation%20policy%20brief.pdf>

⁴⁶ Government of Malawi (2021), Updated Nationally Determined Contributions.

⁴⁷ Government of Malawi (2017), Integrated Household Survey, 2016-2017.

⁴⁸ Government of Malawi (2009), Biomass Energy Strategy.

⁴⁹ Kambewa et al. 2007. Charcoal: The Reality—A Study of Charcoal Consumption, Trade and Production in Malawi.

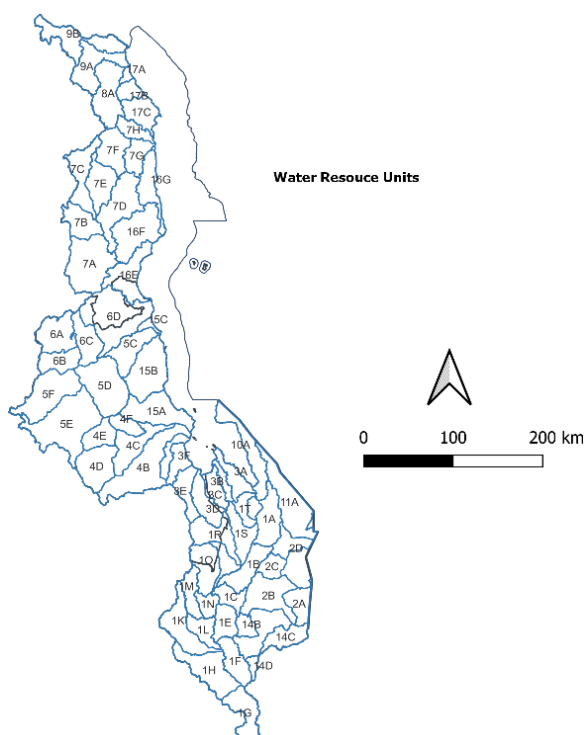
Household demand was worth more than USD 66 million in 2016 and provided employment opportunities for over 235,000 people.

110. Malawi is among the countries with the highest exposure to household air pollution with a Household Solid Fuels Exposure Score of 9.3 and ranking 162 against 180 counties in the world⁵⁰. This is attributed to high use of biomass for cooking. Overall, 99 percent of households in Malawi use solid fuels as the main fuel for cooking.

111. Terrestrial and aquatic **biodiversity** in Malawi is in decline. This decline is due to the same combination of underlying factors that have driven forest loss and degradation—a combination of increasing human pressure and poor governance of natural resources. Malawi has a variety of unique ecosystems ranging from woodlands, swamps, seasonal wetlands, perennial wetlands, lakes and rivers. Some exist on customary land while others are found within areas designated as protected such as nature sanctuaries, national parks and wildlife reserves. Malawi's ecosystems are threatened by human pressure, and around 60 percent of the country has been modified, leaving only 36 percent under natural vegetation⁵¹. The biggest pressure on wildlife biodiversity is through destruction of habitat by forest clearing for wood, charcoal, timber and for subsistence agriculture in traditionally marginal production areas.

112. Malawi is endowed with a significant expanse of surface **water systems**, which include its network of rivers and four major lakes. The major rivers are the Shire, Ruo, Bua, South Rukuru, Linthipe, Songwe and Dwangwa. The country is divided into 17 Water Resources Areas (WRAs) corresponding each to one river basin and, as indicated in Section 2.3.2 and Figure 13 below, they are subdivided into 78 Water Resources Units (WRUs).

Figure 13 - Water Resources Units



Source: Republic of Malawi, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) (2014) Project for National Water Resources Master Plan in the Republic of Malawi: Final Report (Volume I: Summary). Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)⁵²

113. As of 2012, 2 percent of available water was classified as groundwater, and 98 percent was surface water from Lake Malawi, which accounts for 95 percent of all surface water resources in the country. Malawi's water resource availability has reduced from an estimated 1.7 mega litres per person per year in 2012 to 0.9 mega litre per

⁵⁰ Yale University. (2020). *Environmental Performance Index - Malawi*. Retrieved from Yale University Web site: <https://epi.yale.edu/epi-results/2020/country/mwi>

⁵¹ EAD. (2013). *Malawi State of Environment and Outlook Report*. Lilongwe: Environmental Affairs Department, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Management.

⁵² The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

person per year in 2017. This is mainly due to population increase. This decline has moved Malawi from a “water vulnerable” to a “water scarce” country⁵³. This situation could be made worse by climate change and insufficient water infrastructures and management systems such as dams, wells, and municipal extension services. Deforestation and land degradation also put pressure on water resources. These are causing high rates of erosion and sedimentation, which, in turn, leads to high sediment loads and negative impacts on aquatic life. Biological and chemical pollution from urban areas and industrial waste are additional concerns. So is runoff from the overuse of fertilizers and pesticides (particularly during wet seasons).

Section 5: Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF)

5.1. Indigenous Peoples in Malawi

114. In Malawi, there are numerous ethnic groups like the Chewa, Yao, Tumbuka, Lomwe, Sena and Ngoni. However, it is essential to acknowledge that while some of these groups have deep historical ties to the land and unique cultural traditions, whether they qualify as Indigenous Peoples according to international standard is uncertain.

115. Malawi has implemented various legal and policy frameworks aimed at protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of Indigenous Peoples. The Malawi Constitution, adopted in 1994, guarantees equality and non-discrimination for all citizens, including Indigenous populations. Additionally, the National Policy on Gender and Development recognizes the specific vulnerabilities faced by Indigenous women and seeks to empower them through targeted interventions. Additionally, there is growing recognition of the importance of Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices in adapting to climate change and building resilience, leading to increased collaboration between Indigenous communities, government agencies, and civil society organizations.

116. Efforts to empower and recognize Indigenous Peoples in Malawi are essential for promoting social inclusion, protecting cultural diversity, and upholding human rights. Recognizing their land rights, supporting community-led development initiatives, and fostering dialogue and collaboration with government agencies and civil society organizations are crucial steps towards achieving greater equality and justice for Indigenous communities in Malawi.

117. To ensure the strongest possible engagement of the local resident beneficiaries in EbAM, the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) procedure will be conducted for all potential target communities, not only for the Indigenous Peoples (IPs). The consultation will consist of separate meetings with: the entire community; women; youth; and other vulnerable groups. The IPs under EbAM will be identified during the FPIC process according to the pre-defined criteria, and this Framework will be applied to them.

5.2. Laws and policies on Indigenous People

118. In Malawi, the legal framework concerning Indigenous Peoples is anchored in both international agreements and domestic legislation. Internationally, Malawi has ratified key instruments such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). UNDRIP recognizes the inherent rights of Indigenous communities to self-determination, land, and resources, emphasizing the importance of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in decision-making processes affecting them. Additionally, Malawi’s commitment to addressing climate change, as evidenced by its participation in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), underscores the significance of Indigenous knowledge and practices in developing effective climate strategies.

119. On a national level, Malawi has enacted several laws and policies aimed at safeguarding the rights and promoting the welfare of Indigenous Peoples. The **Constitution of Malawi (1994)** recognizes the rights of all citizens, including Indigenous populations, to equality, non-discrimination, and protection of their cultural heritage. Additionally, the Constitution acknowledges the role of customary law and traditional governance systems in Indigenous communities, affirming their right to self-determination and autonomy.

120. The **National Policy on Gender and Development (2000)** seeks to address gender disparities and promote gender equality, including among Indigenous communities. The policy emphasizes the importance of women’s participation in decision-making processes and recognizes their contributions to community development and resilience.

⁵³ MoAIWD. (2012). *Malawi Water Sector Investment Plan I*. Washington, D.C: World Bank.

121. The **Education Act (2013)** promotes inclusive and quality education for all Malawian children, irrespective of cultural background, thereby acknowledging the importance of preserving Indigenous languages and cultures within the education system.

122. The **Customary Land Act (2002)** recognizes and protects customary land rights, establishing mechanisms for resolving disputes related to land ownership and emphasizing community involvement in land management decisions.

123. The **Land Act (2016)** provides a legal framework for land governance, recognizing customary land tenure systems and outlining procedures for registering and managing customary land rights. This Act ensures Indigenous community participation in land administration and decision-making processes, safeguarding their rights to ancestral lands.

124. Furthermore, **Malawi's Wildlife and National Parks Act (2017)** ensures Indigenous community participation in wildlife management and benefits-sharing, recognizing their traditional knowledge and practices in sustainable resource management. The Forestry Act of 1997 involves Indigenous communities in forest management activities and benefits-sharing, acknowledging their rights to forest resources and emphasizing sustainable forestry practices.

125. The **Cultural Heritage Act (2018)** protects and promotes Malawi's cultural heritage, including that of Indigenous Peoples, safeguarding their cultural expressions, traditional knowledge, and heritage sites from unauthorized use or exploitation. Similarly, the Gender Equality Act of 2013 promotes gender equality and prohibits discrimination based on gender, ensuring Indigenous women's inclusion in decision-making processes and protecting their rights within their communities.

126. The **Land Act (1965)** and the **Land Policy (2002)** delineate three distinct categories of land ownership: public, private, and customary. Public land encompasses areas utilized or controlled by the Government for public interests, including parks, conservation sites, and historical landmarks. Additionally, land utilized for government projects falls under this classification. Private land comprises parcels owned, leased, or held under freehold or leasehold agreements, as well as those officially registered as private property according to the Registered Land Act. Conversely, customary land refers to territory utilized or occupied by community members in adherence to customary laws. This land is held in trust by the President for the benefit of Malawi's population, with disputes resolved through customary law channels. While customary tenure is typically administered by traditional leaders on behalf of communities, individual or familial ownership is also possible.

127. The **National Land Policy (2002)** extends recognition to the importance of customary land tenure systems, aiming to safeguard land rights for Indigenous communities. Emphasizing secure tenure and equitable land access, the policy advocates for sustainable land management practices. Moreover, it promotes the involvement of traditional leaders in land governance and decision-making processes, acknowledging their pivotal role as stewards of Indigenous territories and resources. Despite the policy's stance on protecting customary land, its provisions regarding the transfer of land outside the community remain ambiguous.

128. The lack of parliamentary enactment raises uncertainty regarding the enforceability of this aspect of the policy. Despite these legal and policy frameworks, challenges persist in their implementation. Limited awareness among stakeholders, inadequate resources, and competing interests often undermine efforts to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Malawi. Therefore, there is a need for strengthened institutional capacity, increased community engagement, and enhanced coordination among relevant stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of these laws and policies.

5.3. Possible indigenous communities in the target area of EbAM

129. The GCF-FAO *Ecosystems-based Adaptation for resilient Watersheds and Communities in Malawi (EbAM)* EbAM project encompasses a vast geographical area spanning multiple districts in Malawi, including Zomba, Mangochi, Thyolo, Neno, Mwanza, Nsanje, Dedza, Nkhata Bay, Rumphii, Karonga, and Chitipa. Within these diverse regions, possible Indigenous communities, including hunter-gatherers and pastoralists, form the backbone of the cultural and ecological landscape. Their traditional knowledge, adaptive practices, and deep connection to the land play a pivotal role in shaping the resilience and sustainability of these environments.

Box. Possible indigenous communities

Insights into hunter-gatherer communities:

The Northern districts of Nkhata Bay, Rumphu, Karonga, and Chitipa harbor resilient hunter-gatherer communities deeply rooted in their connection to the natural environment. Among these communities are the Chewa, Tonga, and Tumbuka, whose livelihoods revolve around hunting, fishing, and gathering wild plants. Through generations, they have cultivated an intimate understanding of the forests, rivers, and wildlife, fostering a harmonious coexistence with their surroundings⁵⁴.

Despite their deep-rooted traditions and sustainable practices, hunter-gatherer communities in Northern Malawi confront mounting challenges. Deforestation, driven by commercial interests and unsustainable resource exploitation, poses a threat to their way of life. The loss of forest cover not only diminishes crucial habitats for wildlife but also disrupts the delicate ecological balance upon which these communities depend. Furthermore, the encroachment on their traditional territories exacerbates their vulnerability. Competition for land, often fueled by agricultural expansion and infrastructure development, marginalizes hunter-gatherer communities and restricts their access to essential resources⁵⁵. Additionally, the commercialization of natural resources, such as timber and wildlife, further undermines their livelihoods and cultural integrity.

In the face of these mounting pressures, hunter-gatherer communities demonstrate resilience through their adaptive strategies and collective solidarity. Drawing upon their traditional knowledge and communal networks, they seek innovative ways to navigate the changing landscape while preserving their cultural heritage. Community-led initiatives, supported by governmental and non-governmental organizations, play a crucial role in promoting sustainable land management practices and empowering these marginalized communities.

Efforts to address the underlying drivers of vulnerability among hunter-gatherer communities require a multi-faceted approach. Sustainable land-use planning, coupled with inclusive decision-making processes, can safeguard their traditional territories and promote equitable resource distribution. Moreover, investing in education, healthcare, and alternative livelihood opportunities can enhance their resilience and foster socio-economic empowerment.

Pastoralist communities in southern districts:

In the southern districts of Zomba, Mangochi, Thyolo, Neno, Mwanza, and Nsanje, a few pastoralist communities have established a way of life centred around animal husbandry and land management. Comprised of ethnic groups such as the Ngoni, Tumbuka, and Yao, these communities rely on semi-extensive herding practices to sustain their livelihoods. Their movements are based on the availability of water and rangelands for their livestock, with seasonal migrations ingrained in their cultural identity. Despite grappling with challenges like land tenure insecurity and climate variability, pastoralists exhibit resilience through their adherence to collective traditions and adaptive strategies⁵⁶.

In these regions, pastoralist families navigate a delicate balance between human needs, animal husbandry, and environmental conditions. The cyclic nature of their lifestyle sees them moving with their herds in search of optimal grazing grounds and water sources. This mobility, passed down through generations, reflects not only practical survival tactics but also cultural heritage and identity.

Yet, pastoralist communities face numerous hurdles in maintaining their way of life. Access to rangelands, often arising from encroachment on traditional territories, poses a significant threat. Additionally, the unpredictability of climate patterns, including prolonged droughts and irregular rainfall, further exacerbates their challenges⁵⁷.

Pastoralists are not immune to the impacts of modernization and environmental degradation. Encroachment from agricultural expansion and land-use changes disrupt traditional grazing patterns and diminish available resources.

⁵⁴ Smith, K., et al. (2023). "Challenges and Resilience of Hunter-Gatherer Communities in Northern Malawi: Insights from the Chewa, Tonga, and Tumbuka." *Ethnographic Studies in Sustainable Development*, 8(1), 112-129.

⁵⁵ Jones, A., et al. (2023). "Sustaining Hunter-Gatherer Livelihoods in Northern Malawi: Challenges and Resilience in the Face of Environmental and Socioeconomic Pressures." *Journal of Environmental Anthropology*, 15(3), 78-95.

⁵⁶ Smith, J., et al. (2023). "Pastoralist Livelihoods in Southern Malawi: Challenges and Resilience in the Face of Environmental and Socioeconomic Pressures." *Journal of Sustainable Livelihoods Research*, 10(2), 45-62.

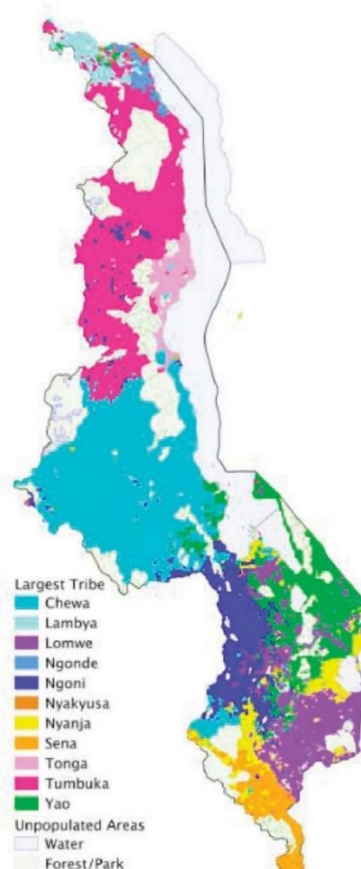
⁵⁷ Johnson, L., et al. (2023). "Adaptive Strategies and Resilience of Pastoralist Communities in Southern Malawi: Insights from Zomba, Mangochi, and Thyolo Districts." *Journal of Sustainable Development Studies*, 12(1), 87-104.

Table 8 Ethnic groups in Malawi

Ethnic Group	Livelihood	Population Estimate (Approx.)
Chewa	Agriculture is the primary livelihood, with farming practices central to their way of life.	8 million
Tumbuka	Agriculture forms the basis of their livelihood, with farming being the primary occupation.	2.5 million
Yao	Engage in agriculture and trade, with a focus on Islamic heritage and skilled craftsmanship.	1.8 million
Ngoni	Traditionally engaged in cattle-herding and agriculture.	1.2 million
Tonga	Rely on fishing and hunting for sustenance, with fishing being a primary livelihood activity.	800 000
Batwa	Depend on hunting, fishing, and gathering wild plants for sustenance. Hunter-gatherer community residing in the northern districts of Malawi.	50 000

Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census (2018)

Figure 14 Spatial distribution of ethnic groups in Malawi



Source: Daniel Chris Khomba & Alex Trew (2022) Aid and Local Growth in Malawi, The Journal of Development Studies⁵⁸

Challenges and Resilience:

130. In addition to historical marginalization and land rights disputes, pastoralist and hunter-gatherer communities in the target area of EbAM confront profound socio-economic challenges that impede their progress and well-being. The lack of access to vital services like healthcare, education, clean water, and sanitation compounds their vulnerability, perpetuating cycles of poverty and widening disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous

⁵⁸ The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

populations. Many Indigenous communities endure inadequate infrastructure, facing significant barriers to reaching quality healthcare facilities and educational opportunities. This leaves them marginalized and further marginalized, limiting their ability to break free from poverty and improve their standard of living.

131. Furthermore, the adverse effects of climate change present a looming threat to the traditional livelihoods and cultural heritage of these communities. The unpredictable weather patterns, extended periods of drought, and the heightened occurrence of natural disasters disrupt the agricultural cycles vital for sustaining pastoralist livelihoods. These disruptions lead to the depletion of water sources and the degradation of grazing lands, compounding the challenges faced by pastoralists. Similarly, the rampant deforestation, loss of habitat, and diminishing wildlife populations jeopardize the survival of hunter-gatherer communities. These environmental changes undermine their food security and erode the cultural practices deeply rooted in their reliance on the natural world. As a result, both pastoralist and hunter-gatherer communities struggle to adapt to these changing conditions.

132. Based on the initial assessment, it is determined that Indigenous Peoples (IPs) reside in or hold collective ties to the project area. Consequently, a Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process will be enacted in accordance with FAO guidelines to ensure the comprehensive and inclusive engagement of potentially impacted Indigenous communities. FPIC, a fundamental human rights principle, upholds the rights of IPs to their lands and participation in decision-making processes affecting their livelihoods, rights, and traditional practices. Subsequent to the FPIC outcomes, if deemed necessary, an Indigenous People Plan (IPP) will be developed in collaboration with the concerned IPs. All project endeavors must respect IPs' tenure rights, both formal and informal, and consider the traditional and customary rights of these communities, ensuring their access to land and resources remains intact. Moreover, all interactions with IPs will prioritize cultural sensitivity, aiming to empower Indigenous communities and safeguard and promote their ancestral knowledge and rights.

5.4. Potential risks and impacts of the project on ethnic minorities and marginalized communities

133. Considering the intricate social landscape of the EbAM project site and the mounting pressure on natural resources, there is a possibility of unintended impacts on Indigenous Peoples/communities. The project is expected to generate substantial positive environmental and social benefits, including, but not limited to strengthening the climate resilience of agroecosystems and local livelihoods, and reducing greenhouse emissions.

134. However, it is crucial to recognize and address potential risks associated with the project's activities, particularly concerning Indigenous Peoples/communities. Risks may include inadequate inclusion of IPs in project activities and planning processes, which could exacerbate existing socioeconomic gaps within Indigenous populations. Additionally, there is a risk of increased tension and competition for resource access and use between different Indigenous communities and marginalized groups. Unclear tenure on forest lands and communal lands, coupled with changing lifestyles such as migrations, could hamper the effective adoption of agroecological measures. Moreover, potential restrictions on land use and access to natural resources, particularly those under traditional ownership or customary use, may impact IPs' livelihoods and cultural practices.

135. To mitigate these risks and ensure equitable access to project benefits, several measures will be implemented. These include voluntary participation in the project, ensuring FPIC is obtained prior to implementing any activities where IPs are present, involving IPs in decision-making bodies/structures throughout the project lifecycle, and conducting consultative meetings according to IPs' own rules and traditions. Additionally, the project will establish inclusive channels for feedback and grievance redress, adhere to FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure Governance, and support the integration of traditional knowledge and practices within project activities. Training programmes will be inclusive, and efforts will be made to produce information and capacity-building materials in IP languages or dialects. Sensitization campaigns will also be conducted to raise awareness among project staff and executing entities about IPs' rights and potential project impacts on marginalized and vulnerable groups.

136. Despite potential risks, the project also presents opportunities for positive impacts, such as promoting inclusive decision-making processes, integrating women, youth, and IPs in key value chains, enhancing gender equality and social inclusion, and improving food and nutrition security. Moreover, the project aligns with practices to increase climate resilience and enhance carbon sequestration through agroecology, agroforestry, integrated pest management, integrated water management, reforestation, and the promotion of renewable energy. By recognizing, valuing, and supporting small-scale farming and Indigenous knowledge, the project aims to contribute to sustainable food security, poverty reduction, and biodiversity conservation while dynamizing rural economies and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

5.5. Free, Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) process

137. In accordance with FAO E&S guidelines and standards, the *EbAM* project is designed in collaboration with local resident beneficiaries, ensuring their full, effective, and meaningful consultation and participation. The objective is to obtain their Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) before initiating any project activities. The project aims to provide local residents with fair and equal opportunities supported by activities and commercial development of their lands or resources in a culturally appropriate and inclusive manner, with due consideration given to gender equality and social inclusion. FPIC is usually applied only to IPs - it is a specific right recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) - but *EbAM* recognizes the rights of peasants and other people working in the rural areas (as in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, or UNDROP) and its concerns which are similar to those of UNDRIP; *EbAM* applies FPIC to all local residents who are potential beneficiaries and encompasses principles of good practice in terms of stakeholder engagement. All elements within FPIC are interconnected, forming a holistic process where qualitative aspects are paramount. The IPs under *EbAM* will be identified during the FPIC process according to the pre-defined criteria, and this Framework will be applied to them.

138.

- Free: Independent decision-making process.
- Prior: Right for Indigenous Peoples to undertake their decision-making process regarding any project concerning them before its implementation.
- Informed: Right to be provided with sufficient information for decision-making.
- Consent: Collective and independent decision of impacted communities after undergoing their own decision-making process.

139. Consent should be sought before any project, plan, or action takes place (prior); it should be independently decided upon (free); and based on accurate, timely, and sufficient culturally appropriate information (informed) to be considered a valid outcome of collective decision-making. FPIC enables local communities to give or withhold consent to a programme or project that may affect them or their territories, allowing them to withdraw consent at any stage of the project cycle. It also empowers them to negotiate project conditions and tailor benefits in a gender-responsive and culturally appropriate manner.

140. The FPIC process within the *EbAM* project aims to:

- Ensure the positive engagement of local residents and the adequate participation of youth, women and other vulnerable groups in the programme or project.
- Prevent adverse impacts, or when avoidance is impractical, minimize, mitigate, or compensate for these impacts in accordance with the agreement of local residents.
- Tailor benefits in a gender-responsive and culturally appropriate manner.

141. Participation in the *EbAM* project is voluntary, with continuous effective engagement serving as a core underlying principle with all community-based organizations. A full and formal FPIC process will be employed when engaging with local communities, adhering to FAO Indigenous and Tribal People Policy, FAO FPIC Manual for Project Practitioners, and other institutional complementary guidelines compatible with GCF Indigenous Policy, including Cultural Survival's FPIC Manual.^{cccxI}

142. FAO recognizes the value of Indigenous and traditional knowledge in identifying and addressing potential risks, including hazards and disaster risks. *EbAM* further recognizes that it is not only the IPs who are in possession of such knowledge. This knowledge should be integrated into the entire programme or project cycle, encompassing the development of ESMP, FPIC, and IPPs, with due consideration given to the perspectives of local/Indigenous groups.

Criteria	Yes	No	Details
Are there any Indigenous communities in the project area or will the project activities involve Indigenous Peoples directly?	Yes		The <i>EbAM</i> project area may encompass various Indigenous communities (possibly including nomadic herders and hunter-gatherers – see box above), some of whom reside in the project lands while others migrate seasonally. These communities, comprising individuals of all demographics, will actively participate in awareness programmes, capacity building, farmer field schools, and local planning initiatives. To mitigate this, the project will ensure through FPIC and ongoing engagement that

			local communities understand their land rights, the project's activities and impacts, and have equitable access to project benefits.
Are project activities likely to have adverse effects on local communities/ Indigenous Peoples' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (tangible and intangible)?		No	In the EbAM project, certain activities may impact Indigenous Peoples' rights, lands, resources, livelihoods, and traditions, such as loss of access to grazing land or interference with pastoralist livelihoods. To prevent this, Indigenous groups will be represented in key project committees, ensuring their inclusion in planning and decision-making processes. Any restrictions on land use or access to natural resources will be addressed by respecting Indigenous rights and involving them in strategy development. Consent will be informed through ongoing stakeholder consultations, FPIC, and capacity-building activities, ensuring all vulnerable groups have a voice. The project will integrate the needs and priorities of Indigenous communities in culturally appropriate ways, guided by responsible tenure governance principles. Activities will be closely monitored to avoid encroaching on Indigenous rights, territories, and traditions.
Are local/Indigenous communities outside the project area likely to be affected by the project?		No	It is not expected that local/Indigenous communities outside the area will be affected. FPIC processes will address any risks to these rights. Additionally, the project aims to involve local communities, including Indigenous groups, in decision-making processes, respecting their customary rights throughout the project lifecycle.
Will the project activities result in displacement of local communities/ IPs?		No	In the EbAM project, there will be no involuntary resettlement or displacement of people or communities. Project resources will not be used for land acquisition or resource extraction. Activities will primarily involve communities on a voluntary and demand-driven basis. Every project activity will undergo Environmental and Social Screening to ensure there is no displacement or resettlement.
Will there be project activities involving research on Indigenous knowledge, systems and practices related to agriculture, forestry, watershed and resource management systems and technologies (held either by the local communities or IPs)?	Yes		The EbAM project may integrate Indigenous knowledge and practices into Climate-Resilient Land and Water Management practices, respecting customary sustainable use of biodiversity. This could involve incorporating traditional knowledge into land management and watershed strategies. FPIC or approval from Indigenous and local communities will be required, with consent needed for sharing information with third parties.

Source: Authors' own elaboration

5.6. Recommendations for implementation: implementation arrangements

143. FAO will establish a dedicated Project Task Force (PTF) in accordance with FAO project cycle guidelines, comprising the Budget Holder (BH), a Lead Technical Officer (LTO), a Funding Liaison Officer (FLO), HQ Technical Officers, and other relevant technical officers at the FAO Malawi Country Office level. Additionally, a Central Project Implementation Unit (CPIU) will be formed, including a national project coordinator, as well as other several technical, administrative and operational support staff (see Annex 2, Feasibility Study). More particularly, the CPIU will include an Environmental and Social Safeguards Experts (International Technical Assistance – ITA) and a national safeguards specialist.

144. Prior to implementation, each sub-activity will undergo an assessment using the screening list (Appendix I) to identify potential adverse impacts on local communities and Indigenous Peoples (IPs). FPIC, which under EbAM includes the self-declaration of being IPs or not, will determine the need for an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP). This screening process will be conducted under the supervision of the international Environmental and Social Specialist, within the CPIU. to identify potential adverse impacts on Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and determine the need for an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP). This screening process will be conducted under the supervision of the international Environmental and Social Specialist, within the CPIU.

145. Implementation of the IPPF and related documents will be led by FAO and CPIU Technical Specialists, in collaboration with County Offices and executing entities. All CPIU staff, executing entities, and contractors will undergo awareness-raising and capacity-building activities to ensure culturally appropriate interaction and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and compliance with mitigation measures to respect IPs' rights and provide equitable access to project benefits.

146. All community members, including women, youth, elders, and Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWD), will be equally involved in the FPIC process. However, in communities with prevailing Indigenous self-governance

systems that differ (e.g., those with strong patriarchal hierarchies), good practices will be employed to ensure a participatory and inclusive consultation process. This includes separate discussions with specific groups, provision of accessible information materials, selection of discussion venues inside the community, and the provision of feedback mechanisms during the FPIC process. EbAM plans *a priori* to conduct separate meetings with: the entire community; youth; women; and other vulnerable groups.

147. No project activities that may adversely affect local communities/Indigenous Peoples shall proceed before the FPIC process with affected communities is completed. Dissemination of project information and consultation processes will be conducted through preferred communication channels in accessible formats and locations, considering gender constraints. The consultation processes will be documented in writing and through audio-visual recording, respecting cultural protocols.

Monitoring and reporting

148. Terms of Reference (ToRs) for FPIC facilitators, ILM facilitators and CPIU technical specialists will be prepared, outlining their competencies and responsibilities for implementing IPPF and related plans (FPIC, IPPs), as well as monitoring and reporting on their implementation status. FPIC facilitators will be implementing FPIC under sub-activity 1.1.1.2. FAO, as the accredited entity, will be responsible for project monitoring and reporting, including overall environmental and social performance and the status of implementing different plans and mitigation measures.

149. Following the results of the screening and FPIC processes, an IPP will be developed with the support of FAO Indigenous People Specialist/Unit and in consultation with involved and affected communities. The IPP will ensure continued consultations, avoid adverse effects, and ensure IPs receive appropriate benefits. It will include baseline information, analyses of impacts, measures to mitigate negative impacts, consultation results, costs, budgets, timetables, and organizational responsibilities for IPP implementation.

150. Participatory and transparent monitoring arrangements and progress indicators will be agreed upon with affected communities. Grievance mechanisms will be accessible and culturally appropriate, and conflict resolution mechanisms will be based on existing customary dispute settlement mechanisms, unless stated differently by local communities. Regular on-ground monitoring and independent third-party evaluations are advised for the terminal report.

5.7. Grievance mechanism for indigenous communities

151. A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is an essential component of the EbAM project. Specifically tailored for Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and marginalized groups, the project-level GRM will be thoroughly discussed and agreed upon with the involved communities as part of the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) process. This could involve establishing a panel or committee of community representatives and independent advisors, conducting periodic interviews with community members by impartial entities, providing a collection box for written and anonymous feedback, among other methods. If customary grievance mechanisms exist and communities opt to follow them, FAO and other stakeholders will respect their choice.

152. The identification and discussion of local GRMs will occur during the early stages of the project, once specific site locations for activities have been determined and a comprehensive mapping of Indigenous Peoples has been completed. Agreements will be reached regarding:

- Review and investigation processes for grievances (including tracking and response systems).
- Resolution options such as compensations or sanctions.
- Monitoring and reporting mechanisms for grievances and investigation results (ensuring access to information).
- Formalization of GRMs consistent with customary norms.
- Agreed-upon GRMs with local communities should be:
 - Legitimate: Featuring clear, transparent, and sufficiently independent governance structures.
 - Accessible: Publicized and providing assistance to overcome barriers to access.
 - Predictable: Offering clear procedures with defined time frames and outcomes.
 - Equitable: Ensuring reasonable access to information and expertise for all parties.
 - Rights-compatible: Aligning outcomes and remedies with international human rights standards.
 - Transparent: Providing transparency of process and outcomes, particularly for non-state mechanisms.

153. Before commencing any project activities, a comprehensive FPIC process will be conducted in relevant communities, confirming the community-specific GRMs required. These GRMs, detailed in any Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) developed under the project, will adhere to the guiding principles outlined above and in line with the GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy⁵⁹. Additionally, they will prioritize customary law, cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, transparency, anonymity where necessary, and timely action. Budget considerations for FPIC implementation, including documentation, food, transportation, and facilitation, have been accounted for, with monitoring costs included in the project's monitoring and evaluation component.

Section 6: Potential social and environmental impacts and triggered safeguard standards

6.1 Relevant FAO and GCF environmental and social safeguard requirements

154. FAO is an Accredited Entity of the Green Climate Fund, and so FAO's Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (ESMG) (2015) apply to the EbAM project⁶⁰. The ESGM includes general principles and nine Environmental and social standards as outlined below. The ESGM includes a section outlining how FAO projects should manage risks. That section deals with stakeholder engagement; risk screening and categorisation; environmental and social analysis/impact assessment; environmental and social commitment plans; implementation; monitoring and reporting; capacity development for environmental and social standards; disclosure; and grievance redress mechanism.

155. Possibly the most important section of the ESGM is the set of nine Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs). A summary outline of the Standards is presented in Table 9.

Table 9 - Main considerations of the FAO environmental and social standards

Environmental and social standards	Main considerations
<i>ESMG: General principles</i>	Impact assessment methodology, Stakeholder engagement principles, GRM system, GBV referral pathways
<i>ESS 1: Natural Resource Management</i>	Land-use planning and land resource planning; Water resource and small dam planning; Land; Climate.
<i>ESS 2: Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Natural Habitats</i>	Protected areas, buffer zones and natural habitats; Conservation of biodiversity; Use of exotic or non-Indigenous species; Living natural resources.
<i>ESS3: Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i>	Introduction of new crops and varieties; Provision of seeds and other planting materials; Modern biotechnology; Forest plantations.
<i>ESS 4: Animal - Livestock and Aquatic - Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i>	Promote sustainable management of animal and aquatic genetic resources; Prevent loss of valuable livestock and aquatic genetic diversity; safeguard against actions resulting in unintended environmental and social consequences.
<i>ESS 5: Pest and Pesticide Management</i>	Pesticide selection; Removal/treatment; Responsibility.
<i>ESS 6: Involuntary Resettlement and Displacement</i>	Prohibit forced eviction; Avoid, and when avoidance is not possible, minimize adverse social and economic impacts from restrictions on land or resource use or from land and resource acquisition; Improve or at least restore living conditions of persons who are physically or economically displaced, through improving and restoring their productive assets and security of tenure.
<i>ESS 7: Decent Work</i>	Creation of better employment opportunities, particularly for women and young people; Non-discrimination and equal opportunities; Occupational health and safety; Prevention of child labour; Forced labour; Workers' and producers' organizations.
<i>ESS 8: Gender Equality</i>	The fight against discriminatory practices; Equal opportunities for men and women to take part and to benefit;
<i>ESS 9: Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage</i>	Identification of Indigenous Peoples; Rights to land, territory and natural resources; Reference impact analysis on Indigenous Peoples; Free, prior and informed consent; Plan for Indigenous Peoples.

Source: Authors' own elaboration

⁵⁹ [jp-policy.pdf \(greenclimate.fund\)](#)

⁶⁰ It should be noted that the ESGM (2015) have been substantially redrafted and approved in 2022, as the Framework for Environmental and Social Management (FESM). Because the EbAM Concept Note was approved prior to the promulgation of the FESM, the requirements of the ESGM apply.

156. The GCF has provisionally adopted the International Financial Corporation (IFC) ESS Performance Standards for the purposes of safeguarding GCF projects. Under these standards, there are eight which cover the main environmental and social questions that must be considered when starting a project and determining safeguards, using best international practices. This project has been screened against FAO environmental and social standards, ensuring that the project is consistent with the objectives of GCF Performance Standards (see Table 10 below):

Table 10 - IFC Performance Standards & corresponding FAO environmental and social safeguards

IFC Performance Standards (PS)	FAO Environmental and Social Safeguards
PS 1 – Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	ESMG - General principles (Impact assessment methodology, Stakeholder engagement principles, GRM system, GBV referral pathways) ESS 1 – Natural Resources Management ESS8 – Gender Equality
PS2 – Labour and Working Conditions	ESS7 – Decent Work
PS3 – Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention	ESS5 – Pest and Pesticide Management
PS4 – Community, Health, Safety, and Security	ESS7 – Decent Work (partially)
PS5 – Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement	ESS6 – Involuntary Resettlement and Displacement
PS6 – Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources	ESS2 – Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Natural Habitats ESS3 – Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture ESS4 – Animal – Livestock and Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
PS7 – Indigenous Peoples	ESS9 – Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage
PS8 – Cultural Heritage	

Source: Authors' own elaboration)

6.2 Overview of potential environmental and social impacts

6.2.1 Positive impacts

157. Overall, the project is expected to bring about major positive impacts, thanks to the socially inclusive participatory process, with a strong focus on women, youth and vulnerable groups; and the major environmental co-benefits resulting from Ecosystem-based Adaptation (enhanced biodiversity, soil and water conservation, land restoration, etc.), which will be promoted at farm and watershed level. The project will address the negative impact pathways from increased temperatures and rainfall variability leading to climate-induced disasters, all resulting in heightened ecosystem degradation and reduced agricultural production. The project's objective is to increase climate change resilience of rural communities at watershed level in Malawi. The project aims to be a catalyst for a broad shift for ecosystems, livelihoods and agriculture in the country, from their baseline state of very high vulnerability to an alternative paradigm in which watershed ecosystems are restored, well-functioning and sustainably managed, thus granting their adaptation to climate change and their supply of services to communities, people and their farming systems. To achieve this, EbAM will promote the Ecosystems-based adaptation (EbA) approach combined with Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) to repair degraded ecosystems, and to allow agriculture and other livelihoods to become resilient to climate change. The EbA approach – which is the core transformational driver of the project, involving use of biodiversity and ecosystem services to assist people to adapt to climate change, is fully aligned with Malawi's Updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), 2021. EbAM will also follow a food system approach – that will aim to create linkages between farmers benefiting from EbA and national and international value chains. Thus combined, ILM, EbA and food system interventions yield social sustainability, together with environmental sustainability and resilience – hence delivering on GCF impacts ARA1, ARA2, ARA4 and MR4. Positive aspects are further outlined in Section 2.2.

6.2.2 Negative impacts

158. As per the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines of FAO (ESMG), all projects are screened to establish an overall ESS risk categorisation. The proposed EbAM project has been screened and assessed as having a Moderate (i.e. Category B) ESS risk rating. The screening checklist is attached as Appendix I, and an overview of

standards triggered is presented in Table 11 below (summarizing the outcomes of the application of FAO's screening checklist).

Table 11 - FAO's screening checklist applied to EbAM

FAO Safeguard Category	Triggered	Safeguard Instruments & Mitigation Measures
ESS 1 – Natural Resources Management	YES	<p>Standard 1 is triggered in this project due to its emphasis on managing soil and land resources, as well as water resources. The proposed interventions involve developing and implementing Village Level Action Plans (VLAPs) combining EbA and integrated landscape management (ILM) measures at watershed and village levels.</p> <p>The project will not have activities that would result in the degradation of soils, undermine sustainable land management practices or reduce the adaptive capacity to climate change or increase GHG emissions significantly, rather the project primary aims at promoting EbA practices and enhancing the adaptive capacity to climate change. The project doesn't invest in large-scale infrastructure and doesn't have activities that would result in any changes to existing tenure rights. The full transparency of land restoration planning is embedded in the project as a general principle and as part of the participatory process for VLAP preparation. As part of the same process, the establishment of VNRMCharters, and participatory preparation of VLAP will guarantee that all local stakeholders are aware and agree with the restoration actions planned on communal/customary land. In addition, non-eligibility list of activities has been prepared (see appendix V).</p>
ESS2 – Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Natural Habitats	YES	<p>Standard 2 is triggered as activities planned under sub-component 2.1. may result in farm-level activities that access genetic resources for their utilization, and/or access traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that is held by local communities and/or farmers.</p> <p>To address potentially adverse impacts associated with the utilisation of traditional knowledge and use of genetic resources, the project will ensure that benefits arising from utilization, and subsequent application and commercialization, are shared in a fair and equitable way in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity. The project has also been designed so as to ensure that activities are aligned with access to benefit sharing as specified in FAO's 2019 guidance: <i>ABS Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of Access and Benefit Sharing for Different Subsectors of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i></p>
ESS3 – Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	YES	<p>Standard 3 is triggered, as project supported activities prioritized within VLAPs may involve: (i) the introduction of crops and varieties not previously grown; (ii) providing seeds/planting material for cultivation; and (iii) establishment or management of planted forests.</p> <p>To manage adverse risk associated with the handling and supply of seeds for cultivation, the project will: (i) Avoid undermining local seed & planting material production and supply systems; (ii) Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are from locally/regionally adapted crops and varieties that are accepted by farmers and consumers; even if they have been forgotten and will need to be reintroduced; (iii) Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are free from pests and diseases according to norms; and (iv) Ensure, according to applicable national laws and/or regulations, that farmers' rights to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGFRA), and over associated traditional knowledge are respected, along with the sharing of the benefits accrued from their use.</p>
ESS 4 - Animal - Livestock and Aquatic - Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	YES	<p>Standard 4 is triggered as the project entails promoting integrated crop/small livestock, and possibly crop/aquatic production systems (if identified by local residents through ILM) as part of EbA techniques.</p> <p>As a mitigation measure, the project prioritizes the use of native species in its activities, aligning with the principles of EbA/ agroecology. The team took further mitigation measure by explicitly prohibiting the introduction of non-native and invasive species, thus including it in the ESMF non-eligibility list.</p>
ESS5 – Pest and Pesticide Management	NO	<p>N/A. The project primarily aims to enhance ecosystem functions and climate resilience through nature-based approaches, minimizing reliance on chemical interventions. The project is committed to promoting sustainable and EbA/agroecological practices. Synthetic pesticides will not be promoted through</p>

FAO Safeguard Category	Triggered	Safeguard Instruments & Mitigation Measures
		the project. The use of pesticides has been explicitly excluded through the ESMF non-eligibility list. While integrated crop and small livestock is among the EbA techniques promoted by the project, it will be implemented in a manner that minimizes environmental and social risks. By prioritizing EbA/agroecological principles and excluding harmful inputs such as pesticides, the project aims to safeguard against unintended consequences without necessitating the triggering of ESS5.
ESS6 – Involuntary Resettlement and Displacement	NO	N/A. The full transparency of land restoration planning is embedded in the project as a general principle and as part of the participatory process for VLAP preparation. As part of the same process, the establishment of VNRMCharters, and participatory preparation of VLAP will guarantee that all local stakeholders are aware and agree with the restoration actions planned on communal/customary land. The project does not entail physical or economic displacement, whether full or partial, permanent or temporary, as a result of land or resource restriction. In addition, under the project's non-eligibility list, several activities are expressly prohibited. These include the use of the project to facilitate involuntary resettlement of local communities, as well as any form of land acquisition. Additionally, restrictions on resource access, such as farming land, that cannot be adequately mitigated and would negatively impact the livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples, ethnic groups, and disadvantaged populations are strictly prohibited.
ESS7 – Decent Work	YES	<p>Standard 7 is triggered as the project may operate in: (i) sectors or value chains that are dominated by subsistence producers and other vulnerable informal agricultural workers, and more generally characterized by high levels “working poverty”; (ii) situations where youth work mostly as unpaid contributing family workers, lack access to decent jobs and are increasingly abandoning agriculture and rural areas; and, (iii) in situations where major gender inequality in the labour market prevails e.g. where women tend to work predominantly as unpaid contributing family members or subsistence farmers, have lower skills and qualifications, lower productivity and wages, less representation and voice in producers’ and workers’ organizations, more precarious contracts and higher informality rates, etc.</p> <p>Specific measures and mechanisms will be introduced to empower the most vulnerable/disadvantaged categories of rural workers such as small-scale producers, contributing family workers, subsistence farmers, and agricultural informal wage workers. Complementary measures have been included in the design of project activities, which are aimed at training youth, engaging them and their associations in the value chains, facilitating their access to productive resources, credit and markets, and stimulating youth-friendly business development services.</p> <p>As per FAO guidance on child labour, children under the age of 18 should not be engaged in work-related activities in connection with the project in a manner that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with their compulsory education or be harmful to their health, safety or morals. Where children under the age of 18 may be engaged in work-related activities in connection with the project, an appropriate risk assessment will be conducted, together with regular monitoring of health, working conditions and hours of work. It should be noted that, if children are involved, this would be limited to family labour that would be likely to occur without project.</p>
ESS8 – Gender Equality	YES	<p>Standard 8 is triggered by the EbAM project since the project may face either passive or active opposition to women's involvement and efforts to enhance women's empowerment within the communities.</p> <p>As per GCF requirements a gender assessment and action plan has been developed, with specific gender-targeted activities built into the project design and social approaches.</p> <p>Moreover, mitigation measures include utilizing targeting mechanisms like direct, community-based, and self-targeting methods to ensure inclusivity of vulnerable groups such as female-headed households, female youth, girls, and persons living with HIV/AIDS. The use of the Dimitra Clubs involving all community members as well as the Household Methodology will promote gender equality through open discussions on gender and social inclusion related issues, including gender-based violence (GBV) and Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH). Training for religious, traditional, and community leaders, project team and facilitators will</p>

FAO Safeguard Category	Triggered	Safeguard Instruments & Mitigation Measures
		enhance their capacity to mobilize communities and promote gender equality. The project will promote Gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) and will monitor the progress using the Gender Action Plan (GAP) to ensure alignment with project objectives.
ESS9 – Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage	YES	<p>Standard 9 is triggered by the EbAM project due to its potential impacts on Indigenous Peoples. The project focuses on integrated landscape management and Ecosystem-based Adaptation, which inherently intersect with Indigenous territories and traditional practices.</p> <p>Mitigation measures for ESS9 include obtaining Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and conducting the assessment of Indigenous People Framework in addition to deliver training on FPIC for field facilitation. These measures aim to respect Indigenous rights, identify and protect cultural assets, and involve communities in decision-making, ensuring sustainable project outcomes while safeguarding Indigenous Peoples and cultural heritage. The project extends some of the safeguard activities for IPs to all beneficiary communities in recognition of their rights akin to those of the IPs.</p>

Source: Authors' own elaboration

159. As a consequence of this risk categorisation, and due to the nature of planned project activities, this Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been developed in order to adequately assess, manage and mitigate any social and environmental risks that may eventuate during the course of project implementation.

160. FAO safeguard standards which have been triggered during the environmental and social screening exercise conducted during the development of the Funding Proposal include:

161. **Standard 1: Natural Resources Management.** Standard 1 is applicable, as project supported activities focus on the management of soil and land resources, as well as water resources. The proposed interventions revolve around the development and implementation of Village Level Action Plans (VLAPs), which combine EbA and integrated landscape management (ILM) measures at sub- and micro-catchment levels.

162. The project does not involve activities that would degrade soils, undermine sustainable land management, reduce adaptive capacity to climate change, or significantly increase greenhouse gas emissions. Instead, its primary focus is on promoting EbA practices and enhancing adaptive capacity to climate change. Large-scale infrastructure investments are not part of the project, nor are there activities that would alter existing tenure rights. Transparency in land restoration planning is a fundamental principle of the project, integrated into the VLAPs. Through this process, the establishment of Village Natural Resource Management Committee (VNRMC) charters and participatory VLAP preparation ensures that all local stakeholders are informed and in agreement with planned restoration actions on communal or customary land. Additionally, a non-eligibility list of activities has been prepared (see appendix V) to further delineate activities that are not permissible under the project.

163. **Standard 2: Biodiversity Ecosystems and Natural Habitats.** Standard 2 is applicable, as interventions supported by the project may involve access to genetic resources, as well as access to traditional knowledge held by local communities/farmers. To address potentially adverse impacts associated with the utilisation of traditional knowledge and use of genetic resources, the project will ensure that benefits arising from utilization, and subsequent application and commercialization, are shared in a fair and equitable way in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity. The project has also been designed so as to ensure that project supported activities are aligned with access to benefit sharing as specified in FAO's 2019 guidance: ABS Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of Access and Benefit Sharing for Different Subsectors of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. In addition to these measures, further assessment and management measures covering ESMG Standard 2 requirements are outlined in Section 6.

164. **Standard 3: Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.** Standard 3 is applicable, as project supported activities prioritized within VLAPs may involve: (i) the introduction of crops and varieties not previously grown; (ii) providing seeds/planting material for cultivation; and (iii) establishment or management of planted forests.

165. To manage adverse risk associated with the handling and supply of seeds for cultivation, the project will: (i) Avoid undermining local seed & planting material production and supply systems; (ii) Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are from locally/regionally adapted crops and varieties that are accepted by farmers and consumers; (iii) Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are free from pests and diseases according to agreed

norms; and; (iv) Ensure, according to applicable national laws and/or regulations, that farmers' rights to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGFRA), and over associated traditional knowledge are respected, along with the sharing of the benefits accruing from their use.

166. To manage adverse risks associated with the potential support to/establishment of woodlots, the project will: (i) Adhere to existing national forest policies, forest programmes or equivalent strategies; and, (ii) Ensure that planners and managers incorporate conservation of biological diversity as fundamental in their planning, management, utilization and monitoring of planted forest resources. In order to reduce the environmental risk, incidence and impact of abiotic and biotic damaging agents and to maintain and improve planted forest health and productivity, FAO will work together with stakeholders to develop and derive appropriate and efficient response options in planted forest management. A suite of procedures for the assessment and management of Standard 3-related issues is outlined in Section 6.

167. **Standard 4: Animal - Livestock and Aquatic - Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.** Standard 4 is applicable as the project entails promoting integrated crop/small livestock, and possibly crop/aquatic production systems (if identified by local residents through ILM) as part of EbA techniques.

168. As a mitigation strategy, the project emphasizes the use of native species without extracting or modifying their genes, in line with EbA/agroecology principles. Additionally, the team has taken measures to explicitly prohibit the introduction of non-native and invasive species, adding it to the ESMF non-eligibility list.

169. **Standard 7: Decent Work.** Standard 7 applies, given that the project will operate in sectors or value chains that are dominated by subsistence producers and other vulnerable informal agricultural workers, and more generally characterized by high levels of "working poverty". The project will be operating in situations where youth work mostly as unpaid contributing family workers, and lack access to decent jobs. In addition, this project will operate in areas and value chains where producers and other agricultural workers are typically exposed to occupational and safety risks. Given the context of intervention of the project, children above the nationally-defined minimum employment age of 14, but under the age of 18 will be involved in project-supported activities. It should be noted that, if children are involved, this would be limited to family labour that would be likely to occur without project.

170. According to the procedures described Section 5 of this ESMF, the project will take action to anticipate the likely risk of perpetuating poverty and inequality in socially unsustainable agriculture and food systems. Decent work and productive employment have been included amongst the key priorities of the project. Specific measures and mechanisms will be introduced to empower in particular the most vulnerable /disadvantaged categories of rural workers such as small-scale producers, contributing family workers, subsistence farmers, and agricultural informal wage workers.

171. Complementary measures have been included in the design of project activities, which are aimed at training youth, engaging them and their associations in the value chain, facilitating their access to productive resources, credit and markets, and stimulating youth-friendly business development services.

172. Children under the age of 18 should not be engaged in work-related activities in connection with the project in a manner that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with their compulsory education or be harmful to their health, safety or morals. Where children under the age of 18 may be engaged in work-related activities in connection with the project, an appropriate risk assessment will be conducted, together with regular monitoring of health, working conditions and hours of work.

173. In addition, there will be zero tolerance of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH), and the project's consequent ESMPs will mainstream SEAH risk mitigation, in accordance with the FAO ESG. The project will support gender sensitization and training for project staff and beneficiaries on gender equality and social inclusion and SEAH, and will elaborate a code of conduct for the implementation of the project. Specific procedures to minimize SEAH risk will be developed for the project GRM, to ensure the mechanism is survivor-centred and gender-responsive (including confidential reporting), and to facilitate linkages to related services and redress for anyone affected by SEAH.

174. Requirements for the further assessment and management of Standard 7 related impacts are outlined in Section 6.

175. **Standard 8. Gender Equality.** ESS8, which focuses on gender equality, is triggered by the EbAM project due to the potential passive or active opposition to women's involvement and efforts to enhance women's empowerment within the communities. The project acknowledges the importance of addressing gender-related

challenges, has conducted a gender assessment and developed an action plan in accordance with GCF requirements.

176. Mitigation measures are in place to address these challenges. These include utilizing targeting mechanisms such as direct, community-based, and self-targeting methods to ensure the inclusivity of vulnerable groups, such as female-headed households, female youth, girls, and persons living with HIV/AIDS. The use of Dimitra Clubs promotes the involvement of all community members, and the Household Methodology facilitates open discussions on gender equality and social inclusion related issues, including gender-based violence (GBV) and Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH), among all family members.

177. Training programmes are provided for religious, traditional and community leaders, project team and facilitators to enhance their capacity to mobilize communities and promote gender equality. The project will promote Gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) and monitor the progress using the Gender Action Plan (GAP) to ensure alignment with project objectives. These mitigation measures aim to address gender-related risks and promote gender equality within the project's implementation.

178. **Standard 9: Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage.** As per the environmental and social screening exercise, Standard 9 is applicable due to the potential involvement of Indigenous and marginalized communities in project activities (including pastoralists in southern region and hunter-gatherers communities in northern region) and their reliance on traditional knowledge and cultural practices. To address potential adverse impacts, the project commits to ensuring that Indigenous Peoples are fully engaged and empowered in decision-making processes, in line with the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). The project recognizes the concerns and rights of local residents in the rural areas as expressed in UNDROP and applies FPIC to all potential beneficiary communities.

179. Mitigation measures outlined under Standard 9 include conducting comprehensive consultations with Indigenous communities to obtain FPIC, applying the Indigenous People Framework to identify and mitigate potential impacts and support empowerment of Indigenous communities by promoting participation, consultation, sustainable development, and capacity building. EbAM supports the local communities, which are not comprised of IPs, in a similar manner.

180. Furthermore, the project will prioritize capacity-building initiatives such as the FPIC training for facilitators and socio-economic development programmes tailored to the needs of remote agropastoral communities, aimed at enhancing their resilience to climate change and safeguarding their cultural heritage. By integrating the perspectives local communities/and priorities of Indigenous Peoples, the EbAM project seeks to ensure inclusive and sustainable development that respects and preserves the rich cultural diversity of Malawi's local/Indigenous communities.

6.3 Breakdown of impacts at the sub-component level

181. A breakdown of the expected positive and potential negative impacts, by component, is provided in Table 12.

Table 12 - Potential positive and negative impacts at the sub-component level

Sub-Component	Potential Positive Impact	Potential Negative Impact
Sub-Component 1.1 Support to Village Natural Resources Management Committees (VNRMCs) and Sub-Catchment Management Committees (SCMCs) on EbA Planning	The sub-component will support the development of integrated landscape management plans for watersheds with ecosystems-based adaptation principles: Village Level Action Plans (which are plans for micro-catchments contained in targeted sub-catchments) and Sub-Catchment Management Plans. VNRMCs, which are committees for micro-catchments and SCMCs will be established in areas where they do not yet exist and strengthened, if needed, where they are already in place.	
Sub-component 1.2: Implementation of VLAPs based on EbA	EbA interventions funded under this sub-component will be the result of the identified investment priorities in the VLAPs. An estimated total area of 83 240 hectares will be targeted within the micro-catchments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VLAPs implementation may result in activities that access genetic resources for their utilization.

	covered by the 111 VLAPs in the 30 WRU sub-catchments, in the main 8 WRUs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project supported activities designed within VLAPs may involve: (i) the introduction of crops and varieties not previously grown; (ii) providing seeds/planting material for cultivation; and (iii) establishment or management of planted forests.
Sub-Component 2.1: Promotion of EbA-based production systems.	The sub-component will build on the Farming Field Schools (FFS) approach, supported by the use of digital technology and targeted technical visits and exchanges. Combined with an enhanced access to varied and adapted genetic material, FFS will facilitate the full application of EbA – while increasing climate change adaptation, enhancing agrobiodiversity and the restoration of ecosystem services.	<p>FFS implementation may result in activities that access genetic resources for their utilization.</p> <p>Activities at farm level under this sub-component may result in: (i) the introduction of crops and varieties not previously grown; and (ii) providing seeds/planting material for cultivation.</p>
Sub-component 2.2: Market access and entrepreneurship development	The sub-component will consist of building business relationships between actors of the food system. It will establish financially sustainable and diverse local EbA-based agri-food business models, such as public private producer partnerships (4Ps) and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that drive food-system transformation through the development of an “EbA” brand that creates consumer value through awareness and desirability for sustainably produced and healthy local food and the “revival” of nutritious traditional diets	<p>The project may operate in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sectors or value chains that are dominated by subsistence producers and other vulnerable informal agricultural workers, and more generally characterized by high levels of “working poverty”; situations where youth work mostly as unpaid contributing family workers, lack access to decent jobs and are increasingly abandoning agriculture and rural areas; and, in situations where major gender inequality in the labour market prevails.
Sub-component 2.3. Access to finance for climate resilient investment solutions.	This sub-component aims to remove barriers identified for access to finance by the project beneficiaries to sustainably invest in the EbA climate resilient solutions promoted by the project. About 98 479 beneficiary households including 50 percent women and 25 percent youth will access adapted financial services.	
Sub-component 3.1. Leveraging public and private climate finance.	At national level, the project will assist the National Climate Change Fund (NCCF) and local national conservation trusts funds (Malawi Environment Endowment Trust - MEET and Shire BEST) to mobilize climate finance for scaling-up climate-change adaptation interventions, based on EbA. It will also leverage private sector experience on carbon credits in Malawi as part of the exit strategy. This sub-component will contribute to an improved enabling environment, more particularly on enhancing access to climate finance and instruments.	
Sub-component 3.2 Scaling-up in national policies.	This sub-component will improve the enabling environment by promoting EbA as a key instrument for climate change adaptation within national policies. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming EbA is to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, longevity of EbA principles by embedding its practices into	

	policies, sectoral planning and financing – including government budget – hence contributing to EbAM's paradigm shift and sustainability.	
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Source: Authors' own elaboration

6.4 Triggering of risks against FAO standards

182. Table 13 presents an overview of potentially negative impacts, focusing on the specific FAO triggered risks and proposed mitigation actions.

Table 13 - Overview of potential risks and associated mitigation measures

Triggered Project Activity	Potential triggering of social and environmental risks	Applicable FAO standards (See Appendix 1)	Potential Mitigation Actions	Responsibility
Component 1: Integrated Landscape Management.				
<p>Sub-component 1.2: Implementation of VLAPs based on EbA</p> <p>+ Activity 1.2.2. VLAP implementation</p> <p>- Sub-activity 1.2.2.1. Access to inputs and equipment</p> <p>- Sub-activity 1.2.2.2. Technical assistance and monitoring</p>	<p>ESS1 (Natural Resources Management) is triggered due to its emphasis on managing soil and land/ water resources, water resources. The proposed interventions involve developing and implementing VLAPs combining EbA and integrated landscape management measures.</p> <p>ESS2 (Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Natural Habitats) triggered as Village-level Action Plan (VLAP) implementation may result in activities that access genetic resources for their utilization.</p>	<p>ESS1</p> <p>ESS 2</p>	<p>Mitigation measures for Standard 1 in this project include integrating EbA and integrated landscape management into VLAPs. These plans aim to promote sustainable land use practices, prevent soil degradation, and manage water resources effectively across communal lands covering forests, grasslands, floodplains, and wetlands.</p> <p>The project does not invest in large-scale infrastructure and doesn't have activities that would result in any changes to existing tenure rights. Full transparency in land restoration planning is integral to the project's participatory process for VLAP preparation. This process includes establishing VNRM charters and engaging local stakeholders to ensure awareness and agreement with restoration actions on communal or customary land.</p> <p>For traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that is held by local communities, the project will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure, in accordance with applicable domestic law, that knowledge is accessed with the prior consent or approval and involvement of these local communities, and that mutually agreed terms have been established; and 2. Ensure that, in accordance with domestic law, benefits arising from the utilization of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources are shared, upon mutually agreed terms, in a fair and equitable way local communities holding such knowledge. <p>The project has also been designed in a way so as to ensure that project supported activities are aligned with access to benefit sharing as specified in FAO's 2019 guidance: <i>ABS Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of Access and</i></p>	<p>Responsibility for ensuring that mitigation actions are undertaken will lie with the Environmental and Social Safeguards ITA and national safeguards specialist employed as part of the CPIU. This person will involve closely with the other members of the CPIUs (NRM specialist, agroecology and EbA Specialist), as well as Environmental District Officers, and will have responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents are met.</p>

Triggered Project Activity	Potential triggering of social and environmental risks	Applicable FAO standards (See Appendix 1)	Potential Mitigation Actions	Responsibility
	ESS3 is triggered, as project supported activities designed within VLAPs will involve: (i) the introduction of crops and varieties not previously grown; (ii) providing seeds/planting material for cultivation; and (iii) establishment or management of planted forests.	ESS3	<p><i>Benefit Sharing for Different Subsectors of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.</i></p> <p>With regard to activities that could introduce crops not previously grown, the project will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow appropriate phytosanitary protocols in accordance with IPPC. 2. Take measures to ensure that displaced varieties and/or crops, if any, are included in the national or international ex situ conservation programmes. <p>With regard to the provision of seeds, the project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid undermining local seed & planting material production and supply systems • Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are from locally adapted crops and varieties that are accepted by farmers and consumers • Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are free from pests and diseases according to agreed norms, especially the IPPC • Clarify whether seed saving is permitted under the country's existing laws and/or regulations and advise the counterparts accordingly. • Ensure, according to applicable national laws and/or regulations, that farmers' rights associated with traditional knowledge are respected along with the sharing of the benefits accruing from their use. <p>With regard to the establishment or management of forests, the project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to existing national forest policies, forest programmes or equivalent strategies. • Ensure that beneficiaries will incorporate conservation of biological diversity as fundamental in their planning, management, utilization and monitoring of forest resources. 	

Triggered Project Activity	Potential triggering of social and environmental risks	Applicable FAO standards (See Appendix 1)	Potential Mitigation Actions	Responsibility
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to reduce the environmental risk, incidence and impact of abiotic and biotic damaging agents and to maintain and improve planted forest health and productivity, FAO will work together with stakeholders to develop and derive appropriate and efficient response options in planted forest management. <p>In addition to these general measures, environmental and social management plans will be developed for each of the 111 VLAPs. If necessary, these ESMPs will include formal consent of communities on the use of the communal land.</p>	
	ESS 9 is triggered due to the potential involvement of Indigenous and marginalized communities in project activities	ESS 9	<p>To address potential adverse impacts, the project commits to ensuring that local communities/Indigenous Peoples are fully engaged and empowered in decision-making processes. The project will conduct Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), for all potential beneficiary communities. The project establishes an Indigenous People Framework, on which Indigenous Peoples' Plan will be based. These measures aim to respect local communities'/Indigenous Peoples' rights, identify and protect cultural assets, and involve communities in decision-making, ensuring sustainable project outcomes while safeguarding Indigenous Peoples and cultural heritage.</p> <p>For effective implementation of the above the project will prioritize capacity-building, such as: trainings for FPIC facilitators and ILM facilitators; beneficiary trainings for effective formulation and implementation of VLAPs/ SCMPs; and FFS programmes tailored to the needs of Indigenous and marginalized communities.</p>	<p>The Environmental and Social Safeguards ITA and national safeguards specialist will prepare IPP.</p> <p>The Environmental and Social Safeguards ITA will provide a training course to FPIC facilitators (to be employed by FAO) who will implement FPIC under sub-activity 1.1.1.2.</p> <p>ILM facilitators and CPIU technical specialists will be implementing IPPs, as well as monitoring and reporting on their implementation status.</p>
	ESS8 is triggered due to potential passive or active resistance to women's participation and efforts to enhance women's empowerment within the	ESS8	<p>Under Component 1, EbAM will ensure inclusive participation in Integrated Landscape Management (ILM). Using Dimitra Clubs, it will engage women, men, and youth in catchment/landscape management. Capacity building activities will focus on climate change adaptation and integrating landscapes into action plans. The project aims to shift societal norms by enhancing vulnerable skills and promoting equitable decision-making at household and community levels. Through</p>	

Triggered Project Activity	Potential triggering of social and environmental risks	Applicable FAO standards (See Appendix 1)	Potential Mitigation Actions	Responsibility
	communities involved in the project.		Dimitra Clubs and Household Approach (HHA), dialogues will challenge gender and social norms, addressing issues like gender-based violence and social inclusion. Information sharing and knowledge dissemination will occur within communities. The project will establish 1,110 Dimitra Clubs clusters and train 30 ILM facilitators. Religious and traditional leaders will also be involved. Gender and social inclusion awareness will be integrated into the revision of management charters. EbA-based plans will be gender and youth sensitive. The project will ensure the effective participation and benefit of the vulnerable in plan implementation.	
Component 2: Resilient livelihoods and food systems. Sub-Component 2.1: Promotion of EbA-based production systems. + Activity 2.1.1: EbA agriculture extension support through FFS + Activity 2.1.3 Agrobiodiversity promotion	ESS2 (Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Natural Habitats) triggered as Village-level Action Plan (VLAP) implementation may result in activities that access genetic resources for their utilization	ESS2	For traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that is held by local communities, the project will: 1. Ensure, in accordance with applicable domestic law, that knowledge is accessed with the prior consent or approval and involvement of these local communities, and that mutually agreed terms have been established; and 2. Ensure that, in accordance with domestic law, benefits arising from the utilization of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources are shared, upon mutually agreed terms, in a fair and equitable way local communities holding such knowledge. The project has also been designed in a way so as to ensure that project supported activities are aligned with access to benefit sharing as specified in FAO's 2019 guidance: <i>ABS Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of Access and Benefit Sharing for Different Subsectors of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i> .	Responsibility for ensuring that mitigation actions are undertaken will lie with the Environmental and Social Safeguards ITA and national safeguards specialist employed as part of the CPIU. This person will closely involve the Environmental District Officers, and will have responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the project EMSP and implementation documents are met.
	ESS3 is triggered, as project supported activities designed within VLAPs will involve: (i) the introduction of crops and varieties not previously grown; (ii) providing seeds/planting material for cultivation; and (iii)	ESS3	With regard to activities that could introduce crops not previously grown, the project will: 1. Follow appropriate phytosanitary protocols in accordance with IPPC. 2. Take measures to ensure that displaced varieties and/or crops, if any, are included in the national or international ex situ conservation programmes.	

Triggered Project Activity	Potential triggering of social and environmental risks	Applicable FAO standards (See Appendix 1)	Potential Mitigation Actions	Responsibility
	establishment or management of planted forests.	ESS4	<p>With regard to the provision of seeds, the project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid undermining local seed & planting material production and supply systems • Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are from locally adapted crops and varieties that are accepted by farmers and consumers • Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are free from pests and diseases according to agreed norms, especially the IPPC • Clarify whether seed saving is permitted under the country's existing laws and/or regulations and advise the counterparts accordingly. • Ensure, according to applicable national laws and/or regulations, that farmers' rights associated with traditional knowledge are respected along with the sharing of the benefits accruing from their use. <p>With regard to the establishment or management of forests, the project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to existing national forest policies, forest programmes or equivalent strategies. • Ensure that beneficiaries will incorporate conservation of biological diversity as fundamental in their planning, management, utilization and monitoring of forest resources. • In order to reduce the environmental risk, incidence and impact of abiotic and biotic damaging agents and to maintain and improve planted forest health and productivity, FAO will work together with stakeholders to develop and derive appropriate and efficient response options in planted forest management. <p>In addition to these general measures, the environmental and social management plans developed for each VLAP may include more specific measures tailored to the corresponding geographic area. If necessary, these ESMPs will include formal consent of communities on the use of the communal land.</p>	

Triggered Project Activity	Potential triggering of social and environmental risks	Applicable FAO standards (See Appendix 1)	Potential Mitigation Actions	Responsibility
	ESS 4 is triggered as the project entails promoting integrated crop/ small livestock, and possibly crop/aquatic production systems (if identified by local residents through ILM) as part of EbA techniques.		As a mitigation measure, the project places a priority on utilizing native species in its activities without extracting or modifying their genes, consistent with the principles of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and agroecology. This approach helps to preserve genetic diversity, maintain ecosystem balance, and support the resilience of local ecosystems. Additionally, the project team has taken further steps to mitigate risks by explicitly prohibiting the introduction of non-native and invasive species. This measure is included in the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) non-eligibility list, ensuring that only species that are native and ecologically-appropriate for the project area are utilized.	

Triggered Project Activity	Potential triggering of social and environmental risks	Applicable FAO standards (See Appendix 1)	Potential Mitigation Actions	Responsibility
<p>Sub-component 2.2. Market access and entrepreneurship development.</p> <p>+ Activity 2.2.1: Public private producer partnerships (4Ps) establishment</p> <p>- Sub-Activity 2.2.1.4: Support to 4P implementation</p> <p>+ Activity 2.2.2 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) development</p> <p>- Sub-Activity 2.2.2.3. Sub-Activity 2.2.2.3 Support to the establishment and consolidation of business operations</p>	<p>ESS7 is triggered as the project may operate in: (i) sectors or value chains that are dominated by subsistence producers and other vulnerable informal agricultural workers, and more generally characterized by high levels “working poverty”; (ii) situations where youth work mostly as unpaid contributing family workers, lack access to decent jobs and are increasingly abandoning agriculture and rural areas; and, (iv) in situations where major gender inequality in the labour market prevails (e.g. where women tend to work predominantly as unpaid contributing family members or subsistence farmers, have lower skills and qualifications, lower productivity and wages, less representation and voice in producers’ and workers’ organizations, more precarious contracts and higher informality rates, etc.).</p>	ESS7	<p>Specific measures and mechanisms will be introduced to empower the most vulnerable/disadvantaged categories of rural workers such as small-scale producers, contributing family workers, subsistence farmers, and agricultural informal wage workers. Complementary measures have been included in the design of project activities, which are aimed at training youth, engaging them and their associations in the value chains, facilitating their access to productive resources, credit and markets, and stimulating youth-friendly business development services.</p> <p>As per FAO guidance on child labour, children under the age of 18 should not be engaged in work-related activities in connection with the project in a manner that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with their compulsory education or be harmful to their health, safety or morals. Where children under the age of 18 may be engaged in work-related activities in connection with the project, an appropriate risk assessment will be conducted, together with regular monitoring of health, working conditions and hours of work. It should be noted that, if children are involved, this would be limited to family labour that would be likely to occur without the project.</p> <p>In addition to these general measures, the environmental and social management plans developed for each VLAP may include more specific measures tailored to the corresponding geographic area. If necessary, these ESMPs will include formal consent of communities on the use of the communal land.</p>	<p>Responsibility for ensuring that mitigation actions are undertaken will lie with the Environmental and Social Safeguards ITA and national safeguards specialist employed as part of the CPIU. This person will closely involve the Environmental District Officers, and will have responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the project EMSP and implementation documents are met.</p> <p>In addition, the E&S Safeguards ITA and national safeguards specialist will work with the relevant Ministry to ensure that the requirements of the Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare Act are met with regard to labour conditions.</p>
	ESS 8 is triggered due to potential passive or active resistance to women's	ESS8	Under Component 2, EbAM will promote resilient livelihoods and food systems by ensuring gender/youth-sensitive approaches in EbA-based production systems, enhancing market access and entrepreneurship for trained farmers, and	

Triggered Project Activity	Potential triggering of social and environmental risks	Applicable FAO standards (See Appendix 1)	Potential Mitigation Actions	Responsibility
	participation and efforts to enhance women's empowerment within the communities involved in the project.		providing adapted financial services. The project will strive for gender balance among extension workers and may implement women-only/youth-only FFS to better involve vulnerable groups. Exchange visits will prioritize affinity links between group members, and Dimitra Clubs will facilitate information flow within communities, with solar-powered radios connecting to local community radios. EbAM will target women, men, and youth groups for market access and entrepreneurship development, prioritizing women and youth in business planning and commercial activities. Technical assistance and brand development will strengthen marketing skills and create high-value niche markets for women and youth, enhancing food system transformation initiatives.	

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Section 7: Principles and procedures for mitigating impacts of sub-activities during implementation

7.1 Introduction

183. One of the main purposes of this ESMF, and associated Gender Action Plan, is to help the Project Implementation Units in identifying and developing activities for greater environmental and social co-benefits. In order to ensure that the environmental and social issues are addressed properly in accordance and in compliance with the FAO and GCF Policies, all project sub-activities will undergo a screening, assessment, review, and clearance process before execution.

7.2 Screening of sub-activities and sites

184. Screening is a key environmental and social management process aimed at identifying potential environmental and social impacts as well as determining appropriate studies and follow up that might be required for sub-activities.

185. FAO's environmental and social screening determines if a sub-activity will require an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). As VLAPs are the entry point for project implementation, a project ESMP will be developed as a master document based on an assessment of environmental and social baseline and impacts during the first year of implementation and an implementation safeguards document which will be in aligned with the project ESMP will be prepared at VLAP level during the preparation of VLAPs (see section 7.4 below). The FAO screening template, included in Appendix 1, will be used to guide the screening.

186. The screening of VLAPs will involve checking that the activities are permissible as per the Malawian legal and regulatory requirements that apply to the project, along with a specific assessment of the level of risk associated with SEAH. For each VLAP, the proposal must include a set of mitigation measures with monitoring and institutional arrangements to be taken during the implementation phase to correctly manage any potential adverse environmental and social impacts that may have been identified.

187. For this project, the project ESMP will be elaborated once the project identified the target areas under sub-activity 1.1.1.1 and based on the assessment to be conducted under sub-activity 1.1.1.2 (see section 7.3 below). Implementation safeguards documents will be prepared as part of VLAP formulation. These processes will be conducted in close collaboration with the Environmental District Officers situated within District Offices.

7.3 Assessment of environmental and social baseline and impacts

188. Once the project identifies 111 micro-catchments contained in the targeted WRU sub-catchments for village-level intervention under sub-activity 1.1.1.1, the project will conduct the assessment as part of sub-activity 1.1.1.2. In addition to International safeguards specialist (ITA, part-time) and national safeguards specialist, FAO will hire additional national safeguards specialists to support the assessment under sub-activity 1.1.1.2. The assessment will provide the following information to inform the development of the project ESMP;

- Project description: geographic location, summary of project activities, implementation arrangements;
- Analysis of policy and legal framework: including a comprehensive chapter on institutional framework dealing with the gap analysis and proposed institutional capacity;
- Environmental and social baseline conditions: physical and biological environment, sociocultural environment with specific focus on gender and social inclusion related issues;
- Environmental and social impact analysis

7.4 Environmental and social risk management (monitoring and reporting)

189. Project activities classified as medium risk based on the environmental and social risks identified during the screening process and the assessment will then be further mitigated by the project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents to be developed at VLAP level, that will include information on the mitigation actions, the indicators and timeframe where the completion of such mitigation actions are expected.

190. Appendix III presents guidance for ESMP preparation and Appendix IV provides an ESMP outline. In summary, the project ESMP should include:

- Risk classification and description of potential environmental and social risks and impacts;
- Mitigation Measures: Based on the environmental and social impacts identified from the checklist, the ESMP should describe with technical details of each mitigation measure. It should also cover measures to mitigate and monitor SEAH.
- Monitoring: Environmental and social monitoring during the implementation of the VLAPs, in order to measure the success of the mitigation measures. Specifically, the monitoring section of the ESMP provides:
 - A specific description and technical details of monitoring measures that include the parameters to be measured, the methods to be used, sampling locations, frequency of measurements, detection limits (where appropriate), and definition of thresholds that will signal the need for corrective actions.
 - Monitoring and reporting procedures to ensure early detection of conditions that necessitate particular mitigation measures and to furnish information on the progress and results of mitigation, e.g. by annual audits and surveys to monitor overall effectiveness of this ESMF.
- Institutional Arrangements: The ESMP should also provide a specific description of institutional arrangements, i.e. who is responsible for carrying out the mitigating and monitoring measures (for operation, supervision, enforcement, monitoring of implementation, remedial action, financing, reporting and staff training). Additionally, the ESMP should include an estimate of the costs of the measures and activities recommended so that the necessary funds are included. The mitigation and monitoring measures recommended in the ESMP should be developed in consultation with all affected groups to incorporate their concerns and views in the design of the ESMP.

191. Once drafted, the project ESMP will be disclosed for at least 30 days prior to official endorsement both online and in locally accessible places convenient to affected persons in the VLAP area.

192. In addition, implementation safeguards documents will be prepared at VLAP level in alignment with the project ESMP prior to the implementation of activities as per VLAPs. The following information will be provided in each implementation safeguards document for the specific interventions;

- Description of activities to be carried out at VLAP level
- Description of each implementing site:
 - Geography and specificities in terms of activities
 - Beneficiaries and stakeholders
 - Map of the site
- Aggregated results of the environmental and social screening (including gender considerations) checklists per VLAP
- Description of potential environmental and social risks and impacts and triggered safeguard standards on various target groups
- Description of risk and impact mitigation measures and procedures for mitigating impacts during the implementation
- Description of the gender and youth sensitive stakeholder engagement process that was carried out in the inception phase and the stakeholder engagement plan to be carried out during implementation
- Breakdown of information by site about the grievance mechanism and disclosure
- Safeguards Implementation Management Plan

193. The PIU Safeguards ITA, national Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialist and Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist will closely involve Environmental District Officers, and will be responsible for monitoring the progress, as relevant, in the monitoring plan, as well as to identify any potential risks that may emerge through the

implementation phase. This information will be compiled in progress reports and templates will include a section on E&S risk management, where the above information will be reported upon.

194. Information from progress reports will be received by the Environmental and Social Safeguards ITA and national Environmental and Social Safeguards specialist in the CPIU who will compile the information received in the progress reports, as well as that related to grievances, to feed in a semi-annual report on Environmental and Social Safeguards Performance to be endorsed by the ESM unit in FAO.

Section 8: Stakeholder engagement

8.1 Introduction to the development of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan

195. A detailed Stakeholder Engagement Plan is included as part of Annex 7. It presents a full description of the extensive stakeholder consultations undertaken during the development of the concept note, and during the two project preparation missions, undertaken in June 2022 and September 2022, as well as in April 2023, after FP first submission. Annex 7 also presents the proposed Stakeholder Engagement Plan for application during project implementation, along with the proposed Grievance Redress Mechanism.

196. Stakeholders were initially identified through discussions between the National Designated Authority (NDA) (the Environmental Affairs Department, MoCCNR) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) during the design of the preliminary project concept. These discussions identified the ministries, departments, and partners that would likely be involved.

197. This project has also been the subject of a broad consultation process since inception, with involvement of various stakeholders ranging from governmental officials to members of local communities with a vested interest in the subject matter of the project. The outcome of the consultations is the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, which is presented in Section 3.5 of Annex 7, and shown here in Table 14. The table structures engagement methods according to: level of perceived stakeholder importance; area of influence; and, connection of the stakeholder to a given activity.

8.2 Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Table 14 - Stakeholder Engagement Plan outline

Stakeholder	Level	Area of influence	Relevant Activities	Engagement Methods	Frequency
FAO	Manage closely	Technical	All (with particular interest in activities for which FAO is the listed EE in the FP: 1.1.2, 1.2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, and all activities under outputs 3.1 and 3.2)	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings. Attendance/participation in public meeting targeted to consideration of FFS initiatives. Project oversight, management and coordination through PIU.	Twice per annum during the implementation of relevant activities. Once per annum (year 1, quarter 1 through year 6, quarter 2) for targeted FFS meetings.
Ministry of Agriculture	Manage closely	Technical, implementation through delegated/decentralized staff	All project activities, and most specifically activities and sub-activities for which MoA/DLRC is the listed EE in the FP: 1.1.1, 1.2.1.2, and 1.2.2.2, and sub-activity financed by MoA: 2.1.1.3	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings. Attendance/participation in public meeting targeted to consideration of FFS initiatives.	Twice per annum during the implementation of relevant activities. Once per annum during implementation of relevant activities (i.e., year 1, quarter 1 through year 6, quarter 2) for targeted FFS meetings.
Ministry of Finance Representatives of FARMSE Programme	Manage closely	Technical, implementation and support for enhancing financial inclusion of smallholder farmers	All activities under output 2.3	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings.	Twice per annum during the implementation of relevant activities (i.e., year 1, quarter 2 onwards).
National Local Governance Finance Committee (NLGFC)	Manage closely	Technical, procurement services	Sub-activity 1.2.2.1	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings.	Twice per annum during the implementation of relevant activity (i.e., year 2, quarter 4 through year 6, quarter 2).
Project Steering Committee (PSC) and Project Technical Committee (PTC)	Manage closely	Technical, provision of strategic guidance	All	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings. Attendance/participation in public meeting targeted to consideration of FFS initiatives.	Twice per annum throughout the lifecycle of the project (for institutional stakeholder meetings). Once per annum (year 1, quarter 1 through year 6, quarter 2) for targeted FFS meetings.
Project Implementation Unit (PIU)	Manage closely	Project Coordination & Management	All	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings.	Twice per annum throughout the lifecycle of the project.
EAD (as NDA)	Manage closely	Project Coordination & Management	All	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings. Project oversight, management and coordination through the PSC.	Twice per annum throughout the lifecycle of the project.

Stakeholder	Level	Area of influence	Relevant Activities	Engagement Methods	Frequency
<i>National Committee on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (NCCC&DRM)</i>	Keep satisfied	Technical, provision of strategic guidance and inter-ministerial coordination	3.2.2 and 3.2.3	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings.	Once per annum during implementation of relevant activities (i.e., year 2, quarter 1 through year 6, quarter 2).
<i>Village Natural Resources Management Committees (VNRMCS) and Sub-Catchment Management Committees (SCMCs)</i>	Keep informed	Delegated implementation	All activities under output 1.1	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings. Attendance at public community meetings.	Twice per annum during implementation of relevant activities (i.e., year 1, quarter 2 through year 5, quarter 2) (for both institutional stakeholder meetings and public community meetings).
<i>Area Development Committees (ADCs) and District Executive Committees (DECs)</i>	Keep informed	Delegated implementation	1.1.3	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings. Attendance at public community meetings.	Twice per annum during implementation of relevant activities (i.e., year 1, quarter 2 through year 5, quarter 2) (for both institutional stakeholder meetings and public community meetings).
<i>Financial/Investment Institutions and Business Development Consultants (including commercial banks, MFIs, SACCOs and insurance companies)</i>	Keep satisfied	Recipients of technical assistance for the development and delivery of climate adaptation financial services/instruments	All activities under output 2.3	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings.	Twice per annum during implementation of relevant activities (i.e., year 1, quarter 2 through year 6, quarter 4).
<i>National Climate Change Fund (NCCF)</i>	Keep informed	Recipient of technical support for the mobilization of climate finance	All activities under output 3.1	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings.	Twice per annum during implementation of relevant activities (i.e., year 1, quarter 3 through year 5, quarter 4).
<i>Malawi Environment Endowment Trust (MEET) and Shire BEST</i>	Keep informed	Recipient of technical support for the mobilization of climate finance	All activities under output 3.1	Attendance/participation in institutional stakeholder meetings.	Twice per annum during implementation of relevant activities (i.e., year 1, quarter 3 through year 5, quarter 4).
<i>Representatives of Farming Field Schools (FFS)</i>	Keep informed	Recipient of support for roll out of MTC, ToF and FFS implementation	2.1.1, 2.1.2	Attendance/participation in public meeting targeted to consideration of FFS initiatives. Attendance at focus groups (conducted through Dimitra clubs).	Once per annum during implementation of relevant activities (i.e., year 1, quarter 1 through year 6, quarter 2) (for both targeted FFS meetings and community focus groups).

Stakeholder	Level	Area of influence	Relevant Activities	Engagement Methods	Frequency
<i>Seed Bank Associations</i>	Keep informed	Recipients of support to facilitate roll out of 30 community seedbanks	2.1.3	Attendance/participation in public meeting targeted to consideration of FFS initiatives.	Once per annum during implementation of relevant activities (i.e., year 1, quarter 1 through year 6, quarter 2).
<i>VSLA Members</i>	Keep informed	Recipients of technical assistance	2.3.1	Attendance/participation in Institutional Stakeholder Meetings.	Once per annum during implementation of relevant activities (i.e., year 1, quarter 2 through year 6, quarter 4).
<i>Local Communities in Target Districts</i> <i>Women and Women's Groups (Dimitra)</i> <i>Youth and Youth Groups</i> <i>Low-income/impoverished individuals</i> <i>Farmers</i>	Keep informed	Potentially affected people, provision of perspectives/information to inform the design and implementation of project activities	All	FPIC Attendance/participation in public meetings. Focus groups (through Dimitra Clubs). Implementation of Household Approach (HHA). Targeted surveys.	Engagement of at least one of the proposed methods at minimum twice per annum in each target district throughout the lifecycle of the project. All engagements with these groups are to take account of the accommodations for marginalised people provided in sections 3.1.2 and 3.4.3 of the SEP as well as in the Annex 8 Gender Assessment and Action Plan.
<i>Indigenous Communities in Target Districts</i>	Manage closely	Provision of perspectives/information to inform the design and implementation of project activities	All	FPIC Attendance/participation in public meetings. Focus groups (through Dimitra Clubs). Implementation of Household Approach (HHA). Targeted surveys.	All engagement/activities to be in accordance with the IPPF and IPP. Engagement of at least one of the proposed methods at minimum four times per annum in each target district throughout the lifecycle of the project. All engagements with these groups are also to take account of the accommodations for marginalised people provided in sections 3.1.2 and 3.4.3 of the SEP as well as in the Annex 8 Gender Assessment and Action Plan.
<i>International and Local NGO Co-Facilitators (e.g. Climate Malawi Smart Agriculture Alliance (MCSAA), CRS, Restore Africa Program etc.),</i>	Manage closely	Technical	All activities under component 1, and activities, 2.1.2, 2.3.1, 3.1.3, 3.2.2	Attendance/participation in Institutional Stakeholder Meetings.	Once per annum during implementation of relevant activities (i.e., year 1, quarter 1 through year 6, quarter 4).

Source: Authors' own elaboration

8.3 Disclosure

198. According to GCF and FAO policies on information disclosure, all safeguard instruments under this project, including the ESMF and Gender Action Plan must be disclosed online and in locally accessible places convenient to affected peoples in the English and local languages at least 30 days prior to GCF board meeting and approval of the project. Access to the documents must be accessible for locals (i.e. it must be disclosed locally in an accessible place) in a form and language understandable to those key stakeholders. Such disclosure of relevant project information helps stakeholders effectively participate. FAO is committed to disclosing information in a timely manner and in a way that is accessible and culturally appropriate, placing due attention to the specific needs of community groups which may be affected by project implementation (e.g. gender, differences in language or accessibility of technical information or connectivity).

199. The 30-day period commences only when all relevant information requested from the project has been provided and is available to the public, allowing stakeholders sufficient time to review, request further information and provide inputs/feedback on the proposed project and related safeguard documents (e.g. ESMP).⁶¹ FAO undertakes disclosure for all moderate risk projects, using a disclosure portal to publicly disclose all of the project's documentation related to environmental and social safeguards. The website is: <http://www.fao.org/environmental-social-standards/disclosure-portal/en/>.

200. In addition, the E&S assessments conducted under the sub-activity 1.1.1.2 will be required for disclosure as part of the safeguard documents. A summary translation into Chichewa, national language, will be done. Given potential literacy challenges, the significant role that FPIC facilitators and ILM facilitators can play in effectively communicating project information to local stakeholders in their native languages will ensure that they are adequately informed and consulted throughout the project implementation process (sub-activities 1.1.1.2 and 1.1.3.1).

201. For the elaboration of the project ESMP, the documents will be disclosed online and in locations convenient to affected peoples within the project area in English and Chichewa. All documents will be disclosed at least 30 days prior to approval/endorsement.

202. In order to ensure the widest dissemination and disclosure of project information, including any details related to applicable environmental and social safeguards, local and accessible disclosure tools including audiovisual materials (e.g. flyers, brochures, community radio broadcasts) will be utilized in addition to the standard portal disclosure tool. Furthermore, particular attention will be paid to farmers, illiterate or technological illiterate people, people with hearing or visual disabilities, those with limited or no access to internet and other groups with special needs. The dissemination of information among these groups will be carried out with the project counterparts and relevant local actors.

Section 9: Grievance Redress Mechanism

9.1 Introduction

203. The project is required to establish a grievance redress mechanism (GRM) to address any complaints that may arise during implementation.

204. The GRM will be a system by which queries or clarifications about the programme will be responded to, problems with implementation will be resolved, and complaints and grievances will be addressed efficiently and effectively. The purpose of the grievance redress mechanism is to:

- be responsive to the needs of beneficiaries and to address and resolve their grievances;
- serve as a conduit for soliciting inquiries, inviting suggestions, and increasing community participation;
- collect information that can be used to improve operational performance;

⁶¹ Note: Information will be considered complete when it meets the requirements of the GCF Information Disclosure Policy and Section 7.1 of the Revised GCF Environmental and Social Policy (pertaining to information disclosure). For safeguards related information, the following information must be provided (at a minimum): a) the purpose, nature, and scale of the activities and the intended beneficiaries, b) the duration of the proposed activities, c) a summary of stakeholder consultations and the planned stakeholder engagement process, and d) the available grievance mechanisms are minimum information needed as for the summary of activities, which should be disclosed in addition to environmental and social safeguards documents required.

- enhance the programme's legitimacy among stakeholders;
- promote transparency and accountability; and
- deter fraud and corruption and mitigate programme risks.

205. The GRM will consist of four parallel systems. These systems are: (i) a community-based system; (ii) a formal system designed specifically for the project (project-level GRM); (iii) the FAO's approach to the GRM (FAO-level GRM), and (iv) GCF independent Redress Mechanism (IRM). When an aggrieved person declares a grievance, they may elect to take the community-based route or the more formal one.

9.2 Community-based system

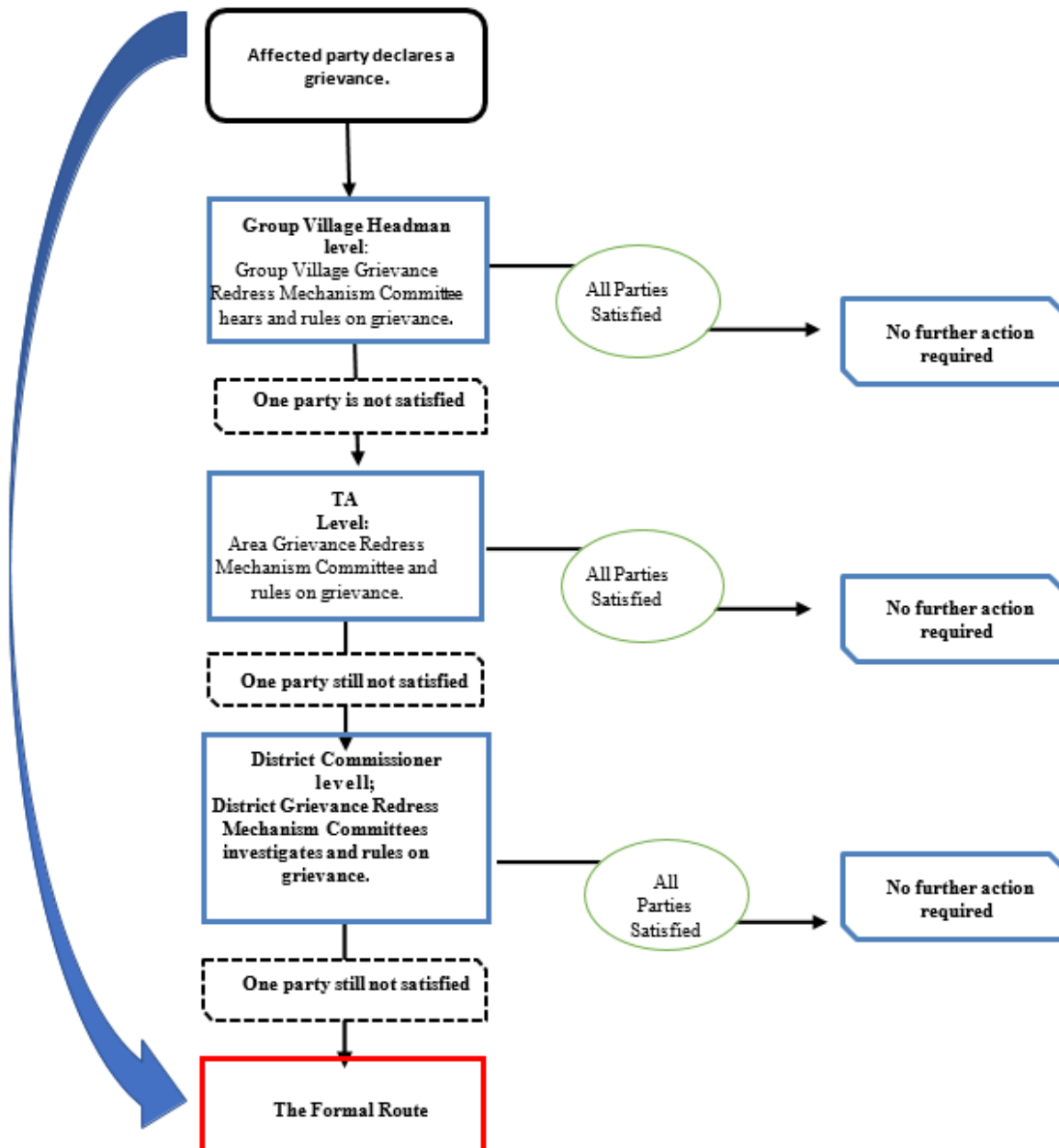
206. This will be a stand-alone GRM built on existing Malawian conflict resolution processes, and where the communication mechanism involves only community members and will tend to be site-specific. This will be used to facilitate agreements among community members but also to solve disagreements where these might occur. The Community-Based Grievance Redress Mechanism, aims to use the existing traditional structures and facilitate grievance resolution at higher levels (including the court of law, where necessary).

207. Communities tend to rely substantially on their own internal social regulatory systems including mechanisms to deal with grievances that work in parallel with the formal systems. These internal social regulatory systems will be used to the extent possible at community level. Recourse where necessary will be facilitated by the project.

208. In solving problems, negotiation and agreement by consensus will provide the first avenue to resolve any grievances expressed by project-affected individuals. The grievance redress channels will have to be in line with the norms of the communities, as well as laws of the country. The process will involve informal courts handled by traditional leaders (village headmen, Chiefs, Senior Chiefs, etc.), as outlined in Figure 15.

209. The first entry point is the Group Village Grievance Redress Committee (GVGRC) which operates at Group Village Headman level. When one party is not satisfied with the decision at Group Village Headman level, the complaint can be taken up to the Area Grievance Redress Committee (AGRC). The AGRC operates at Traditional Authority Level. In most cases such complaints get sorted out at the Senior Chief level. However, those who are not satisfied will be allowed to appeal to the District Commissioner (DC). At this level the District Grievance Redress Committee will preside over the case. However, if the aggrieved party is still not satisfied, then they can ultimately take the formal, project-specific route

Figure 15 - The Community-based Grievance Mechanism



Source: Authors' own elaboration

9.3 Formal project-level GRM

210. The EbAM project will establish a formal, project-specific GRM in parallel with the Community-based system.

211. The mandate of the project-level GRM will be to:

- (i) receive and address any concerns, complaints, notices of emerging conflicts, or grievances alleging actual or potential harm to affected person(s) (the "Claimant[s]") arising from Project.

(ii) assist in resolution of grievances between and among project stakeholders as well as the various government ministries, agencies, and commissions, CSOs and NGOs, and others (collectively, the “Stakeholders”) in the context of the Project.

(iii) Conduct itself at all times in a flexible, collaborative, and transparent manner aimed at problem solving and consensus building.

212. **The functions** of the GRM will be to:

(i) Receive, log and track all grievances received.

(ii) Provide regular status updates on grievances to claimants, Project Steering Committee members and other relevant stakeholders, as applicable.

(iii) Engage the PSC members, Government institutions and other relevant stakeholders in grievance resolution.

(iv) Process and propose solutions and ways forward related to specific grievances within a period not to exceed sixty (60) days from receipt of the grievance.

(v) Identify growing trends in grievances and recommend possible measures to avoid the same.

(vi) Receive any service requests for, and suggest the use of, mediation or facilitation.

(vii) Elaborate bi-annual reports, make said reports available to the public, and more generally work to maximize the disclosure of its work (including its reports, findings, and outcomes).

(viii) Ensure increased awareness, accessibility, predictability, transparency, legitimacy, and credibility of the GRM process.

(ix) Collaborate with partner institutions and other NGOs, CSOs and other entities to conduct outreach initiatives to increase awareness among stakeholders as to the existence of the GRM and how its services can be accessed.

(x) Ensure continuing education of PSC members and their respective institutions about the relevant laws and policies that they will need to be aware of to participate in the development of effective resolutions to grievances likely to come before the GRM.

(xi) Monitor follow up to grievance resolutions, as appropriate.

213. The **process** for dealing with complaints through the project-level GRM will be as follows:

(i) After the complainant files a complaint, this complaint will be registered by the Safeguards Specialists or Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist in the PIU and sent to the PIU Project Coordinator to confirm that the complaint is eligible. The confidentiality of the complaint must be preserved during the process.

(ii) Eligible complaints will be addressed by the PIU. The PIU Project Coordinator will be responsible for recording the grievance and how it has been addressed, if a resolution was agreed.

(iii) If the situation is too complex, or the complainant does not accept the resolution, the complaint must be sent to a higher level, until a solution or acceptance is reached.

(iv) For every complaint received, a written proof will be sent within ten (10) working days; afterwards, a resolution proposal will be made within thirty (30) working days.

(v) In compliance with the resolution, the person in charge of dealing with the complaint, may interact with the complainant, or may call for interviews and meetings, to better understand the reasons.

(vi) All complaints received, its response and resolutions, must be duly registered.

214. **Responsible roles** within the project-level GRM are as follows:

(i) *Safeguards Specialists and Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist.* The complaint could come in writing or orally (including over the phone) to the Safeguards Specialists and/or Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist within the PIU. At this level, received complaints will be registered and screened by one of these officers for eligibility. Screened complaints will then be sent to the Project Coordinator in the PIU.

(ii) *Project Implementation Units.* The complaint should come in writing from the Safeguards Specialist or Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist within the central or regional PIUs to the Project Coordinator in the Central PIU directly. The Project Coordinator will provide final confirmation of eligibility and proceed to investigate and resolve the complaint.

(iii) *Project Steering Committee (PSC).* If the complaint has not been solved and could not be solved with the PIU, then the chair of the PSC must address the complaint. If this still cannot be resolved, then the complaint is sent to the next level (FAO Representative).

(iv) *FAO Representative.* The assistance of the FAO Representative is requested if a resolution was not agreed in the first two levels (PIU and PSC).

(v) *FAO Regional Office for Africa.* The FAO Representative will request, if necessary, the advice of the Regional Office to resolve a grievance or will transfer the resolution of the grievance entirely to the regional office, if the problem is highly complex.

(vi) *The FAO Regional Representative* will request – only on very specific situations or complex problems – the assistance on the FAO Inspector General, who would then pursue procedures of the Office of the Inspector General (OiG) to solve the problem.

215. In addition, there will be zero tolerance of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH), and the project's ESMF, the project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents will mainstream SEAH risk mitigation, in accordance with the FAO ESMG. The project will support gender sensitization and trainings for project staff and beneficiaries on gender equality and social inclusion and SEAH as part of the trainings on the Household Methodology involving vulnerable groups such as female-headed households, women, children and person living with HIV/AIDS. Specific procedures to minimize SEAH risk will be developed for the project GRM, to ensure the mechanism is survivor-centred and gender-responsive (including confidential reporting), and to facilitate linkages to related services and redress for anyone affected by SEAH.

216. Furthermore, SEAH topics will be integrated into gender sensitization and training activities for both project staff and beneficiaries, ensuring all stakeholders are equipped to recognize and address SEAH issues effectively. A specific code of conduct will be elaborated for project implementation, outlining clear guidelines and expectations regarding behaviour and interactions to prevent and address SEAH.

217. Tailored procedures will be developed within the GRM to minimize SEAH risks and ensure a survivor-centred approach. This may include establishing protocols for confidential reporting, prioritizing survivors' needs, and facilitating linkages to related services for redress.

218. By aligning with FAO guidelines and integrating these measures, the project aims to strengthen our approach to addressing SEAH within the project and ensure the safety and well-being of all project stakeholders.

9.4 FAO's approach to the GRM (FAO-level GRM)

219. In addition to the above-mentioned approaches, aggrieved people can also employ additional channels to air their complaints. These include the FAO Complaints procedure, as outlined in the 2015 *FAO Guidelines for Compliance Reviews Following Complaints Related to the Organization's Environmental and Social Standards*. The objective of the FAO Complaints Procedure is to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to allow individuals and communities to contact FAO directly and file a complaint if they believe they are or might be adversely affected by an FAO-funded project not complying with FAO's ESMG.

220. FAO is committed to ensuring that its programmes are implemented in accordance with the Organization's environmental and social obligations, and therefore supports the establishment and implementation of **Grievance Redress Mechanism** as a crucial process to ensure that parties involved in and affected by the activities of FAO programmes and projects have access to fair, transparent, inclusive and cost-free process and mechanisms to redress grievances and resolve conflict. FAO programmes have access to an effective and timely mechanism to address their concerns about non-compliance with E&S obligations (including SEAH and GBV). The Organization, in order to supplement measures for receiving, reviewing and acting as appropriate on these concerns at the programme management level, has entrusted the Office of the Inspector-General with the mandate to independently review the complaints that cannot be resolved at that level. FAO grievance, feedback and complaint mechanisms should be:

- **Legitimate:** They should be trusted by the intended stakeholder groups for whose use they are intended and be accountable for the fair conduct of grievance processes.
- **Accessible:** They should be known to all stakeholder groups for whose use they are intended and provide adequate assistance for those who may face barriers to access (such as language and mobility). They should be age- and gender-inclusive; address access barriers for different groups, including marginalized, vulnerable and disadvantaged persons and persons with disabilities; and deal with concerns promptly and effectively in a transparent manner that is culturally appropriate at no cost and without retribution.
- **Predictable:** Provide entry points for communicating concerns and clarity on the mechanism's procedures and keep the parties with grievances informed about progress by providing sufficient information about the mechanism's performance. A grievance mechanism requires that the involved and affected stakeholders know about it, trust it and are able to use it. It is important to maintain a record of responses to all grievances received and make this available where appropriate; inform the involved and affected parties on how to access the mechanism during stakeholder engagement activities; and indicate the appeals process to which complainants may be referred to, when resolution has not been achieved.
- **Rights-compatible:** They should ensure that outcomes and remedies are in line with internationally recognized human rights. The mechanism should not prevent access to judicial or administrative remedies. Where feasible and suitable, utilize other existing formal or informal mechanisms as a supplement to the grievance mechanism, if needed, to ensure conformity with internationally recognized human rights.
- **Open to continuous learning:** They should incorporate measures to identify lessons learned that can improve the mechanism and prevent future grievances and harm.
- **Confidential:** The safety of the complainant should always be a primary consideration during reporting, investigation, and thereafter. Complaint mechanisms must consider potential dangers and risks to all parties, including survivors of GBV and abuse and incorporate ways to prevent additional harm. This should include the availability of confidential complaint mechanism systems.

In this regard, FAO-level GRM is designed and established to voice concerns and grievances from people who believe that they have been harmed/affected by the projects or programmes implemented or financed by the Organization; and to identify agreeable solutions within a reasonable timeframe. Special efforts will be made to ensure the grievance redress mechanism is available for all people, and that women, Indigenous, marginalized, and other vulnerable and or socially excluded groups have equal access and bear no negative repercussions for filing any complaints or grievances. Any cost that may be associated with the preparation or issuance of a legitimate complaint or grievance (e.g. engaging a qualified person to assist the complainant) will be covered by the grievance mechanism.

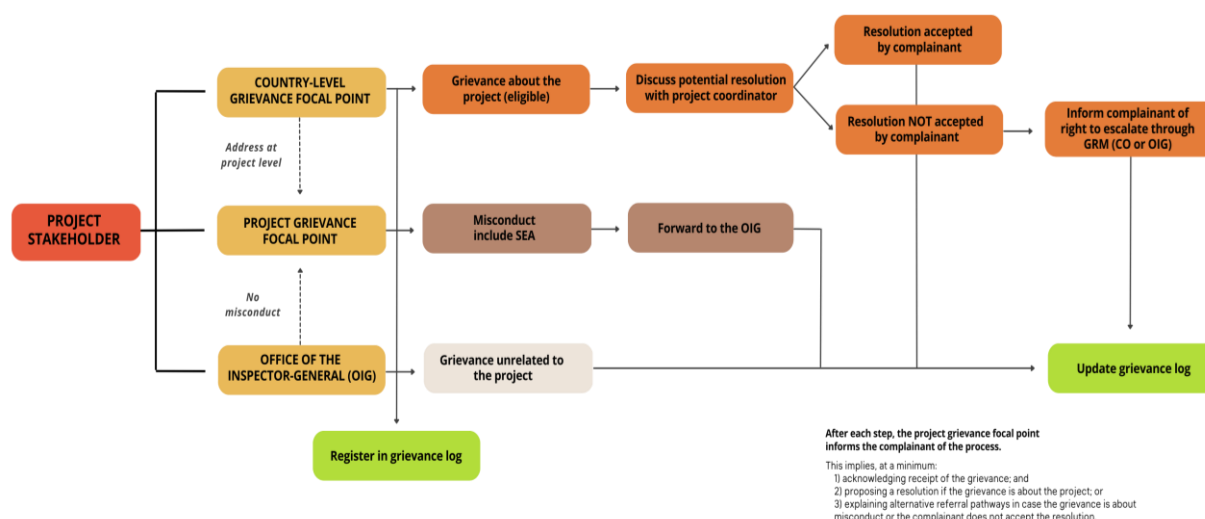
FAO will facilitate the resolution of concerns of beneficiaries of FAO programmes regarding alleged or potential violations of FAO's social and environmental commitments which includes SEAH and GBV. All concerns and/or incidents related to sexual exploitation and abuse must be addressed to the PSEA Focal Point in the country and to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) as appropriate.

The FAO will facilitate the resolution of concerns of beneficiaries of FAO programmes regarding alleged or potential violations of FAO's social and environmental commitments. For this purpose, concerns may be communicated in accordance with the eligibility criteria of the Guidelines for Compliance Reviews Following Complaints Related to the Organization's Environmental and Social Standards, which applies to all FAO programmes and projects (Guidelines for Compliance Reviews Following Complaints Related to the Organization's Environmental and Social Standards). The principles to be followed during the complaint resolution process include impartiality, respect for human rights, including those pertaining to Indigenous Peoples, compliance of national norms, and coherence with such general norms as equality, transparency, honesty, and mutual respect.

Concerns must be addressed at the closest appropriate level, i.e., at the project management/technical level, and if necessary, at the Regional Office level. If a concern or grievance cannot be resolved through consultations and measures at the project management level, a complaint requesting a Compliance Review may be filed with the OIG in accordance with the Guidelines. Programme and project managers will have the responsibility to address concerns brought to the attention of the focal point.

221. Any project stakeholder can file a grievance through at least 3 channels (17): the project GRM, the Country Office GRM (which may be the same as the project GRM), and Office of Inspector General (OIG). GRM shall receive and address complaints related to the implementation of activities in a timely and culturally appropriate manner.

Figure 16 FAO GRM Referral Pathway



17

Source: Authors' own elaboration

222. FAO prohibits and prevents retaliation against workers and other stakeholders who seek to be informed about and participate in activities that are supported or implemented by the Organization; express their concerns about them; or gain access to the processes and mechanisms of FAO programmes and projects for redressing grievances. The Organization neither tolerates nor contributes to threats, intimidation, retaliation or physical and legal attacks against human rights defenders and stakeholders who are involved in and affected by FAO programmes and projects. Respect should always be given to requests for confidentiality regarding the identities of complainants and disclosure of information provided to these mechanisms.

9.5 GCF Grievance Mechanism

GCF established an [Independent Redress Mechanism \(IRM\)](#) that reports directly to the Board⁶². The IRM's mission is to address complaints from affected people and provide recourse in a way that is fair, effective and transparent, and enhance the performance of GCF's climate funding. The IRM also accepts requests from developing countries seeking reconsideration of funding proposals that were denied by the GCF Board. To deliver its mandate, the IRM is guided by a number of GCF policies pertinent to GCF's general operations and its projects and programmes: Revised E&S Policy, Interim E&S Safeguards, Indigenous People Policy, Updated Gender Policy and Information Disclosure Policy of the GCF. In relation to Indigenous Peoples project-related concerns, the GCF Independent Redress Mechanism and the Secretariat's Indigenous Peoples focal point were available for assistance at any stage, including before a claim has been made.

As per the Procedures and Guidelines of the IRM, the main functions of the IRM include among others: address grievances or complaints by a person, group of persons or community who/which have been or may be adversely impacted by a GCF funded project or programme through problem solving and/or compliance review, as appropriate; initiate proceedings on its own to investigate grievances of a person, group of persons or community who/which have been or may be adversely impacted by a GCF funded project or programme; monitor whether decisions taken by the Board based on recommendations made by the IRM, or agreements reached in connection with grievances or complaints through problem solving, have been implemented, and report on that monitoring to the Board.

Regardless of the different E&S mitigation measures and procedures in place, climate adaptation and mitigation projects can inadvertently have adverse impact on communities. Taking this into consideration, GCF provides a platform where communities, Indigenous People and civil society can present complaints regarding a specific GCF financed project and seek remedy (redress harm) and improve project performance in the long run. There are no formal requirements for filing a complaint. A complaint should generally include: i) the complainant's name, address and contact information; ii) If the complaint is being filed by a representative of the complainant, the name and contact information of the representative, as well as evidence that the representative is authorized to act on behalf of the complainant; iii) A description of the project or programme that has caused or may cause adverse impacts to the complainant; iv) A description of how the complainants have been or may be adversely impacted by the project or programme; v) Whether confidentiality is being requested and the reasons for it.

223. Some exclusions apply, as indicate in the IRM guidelines. The complaint can raise issues related to any of GCF's policies and procedures, including those relating to social and environmental issues, Indigenous Peoples, gender, information disclosure, among others. However, the IRM cannot accept a complaint if it is: i) About a project or programme where the GCF is not directly and/or indirectly involved; ii) About GCF's non-operational housekeeping, such as human resources and finance; iii) Allegations of corruption or procurement issues (these complaints are handled by the Independent Integrity Unit (IIU) and other Units at the GCF); iv) Only about whether the GCF's policies and procedures are adequate; v) About a matter already dealt with by the IRM, unless there is new relevant information that was not available before; or vi) Malicious, frivolous and/or fraudulent or filed to gain a competitive advantage.

Section 10: Implementation arrangements

10.1 Overall project implementation arrangements

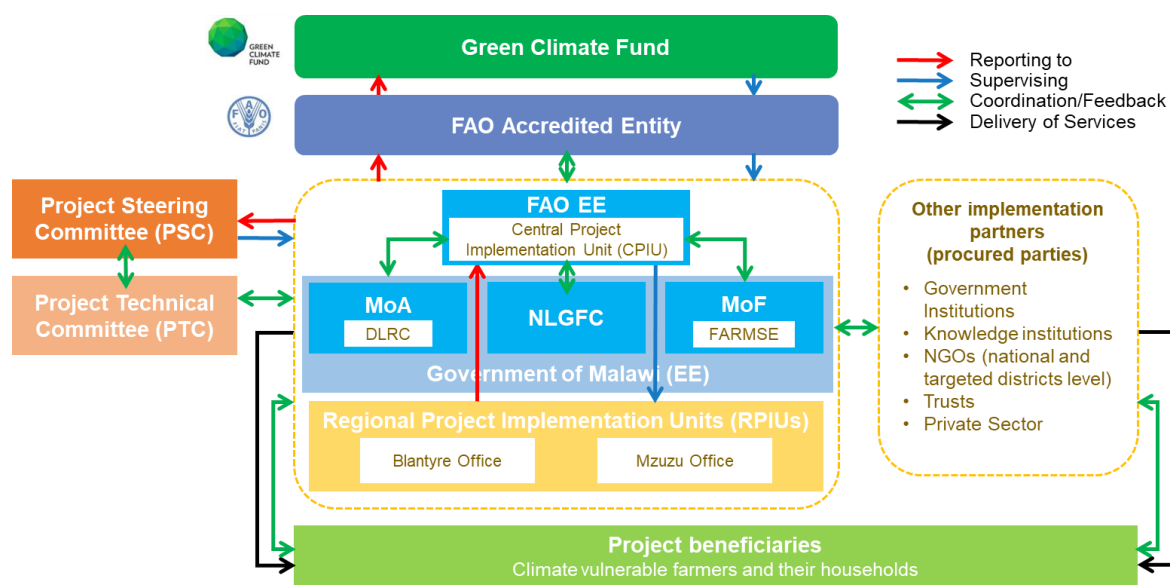
224. The implementation of the environmental and social safeguards is based on the overall project implementation arrangement.

225. At the request of the Government of Malawi, FAO will serve as the Accredited Entity to the GCF for this project. In this capacity, FAO will be responsible for the overall supervision of the project

⁶² <https://irm.greenclimate.fund/about>

including: (i) ensuring funds are effectively managed to deliver results and achieve objectives; (ii) ensuring the quality of project monitoring; and, (iii) ensuring liaison with the GCF. FAO will assume its responsibilities in accordance with the detailed provisions outlined in the Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA) between FAO and GCF. The proposed institutional structure for management of the project is outline in 19.

Figure 18 - Proposed implementation arrangements for EbAM



19Source: Authors' own elaboration

226. The project will be executed by FAO and the Government of Malawi acting through (i) the Ministry of Agriculture – MoA (specifically the Department of Land Resources Conservation - DLRC), (ii) the National Local Government Finance Committee (NLGFC); and, (iii) the Ministry of Finance (specifically the FARMSE Programme), in a co-execution modality to deliver the project activities funded by GCF proceeds.

The project will be implemented under the overall guidance of a Project Steering Committee (PSC) chaired by the NDA (Environmental Affairs Department), and co-chaired by the Secretary of the MoA and the Secretary of Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources (MoFNR). The PSC will include representatives of other key government departments and agencies, private sector and civil society organizations.

The role of the PSC will be to: (i) provide overall guidance and direction to the project; (ii) address project issues as raised by the CPIU (Central Project Implementation Unit - see below); (iii) review the project progress, and provide directions and recommendations to ensure that the agreed deliverables are produced satisfactorily and within the approved project framework; (iv) review and approve annual work plan and budget (AWPB) and provide necessary strategic guidance for its implementation; (v) appraise the annual project implementation report, including the quality assessment rating report; (vi) make recommendations for subsequent work plans to build on achievements and address any shortcomings; and (vi) provide ad hoc directions and advice for exceptional situations or when requested by the CPIU and or PSC members.

227. The project will establish a Central Project Implementation Unit (CPIU) that will be functional for the entire duration and be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the project. The PIU will be led and managed by a project-recruited National Project Coordinator (NPC). The NPC will be appointed by FAO and will be responsible for overall project management and coordination with project stakeholders. The CPIU will also include (part time) a finance officer, operation officer, Human resources & admin officer and procurement & contracting officer. In addition, the CPIU will include the following technical specialists: (i) total 6 technical advisors for components 1 and 2, with a team of 2

specialists (EbA & Agroecology specialist, NRM specialist) in each project office (1 central and 2 regional offices), (ii) Agribusiness & Finance specialist, (iii) Gender and Social Inclusion specialist, (iv) Environmental and social safeguards international technical assistance (E&S) – part time 50%, (v) a national safeguards specialist, (vi) M&E/GIS; and (vi) part time Knowledge Management specialist. All staff will be hired under the project through a competitive process, in close consultation with the Government of Malawi.

228. The CPIU will coordinate closely with the two Regional Project Implementation Units (RPIUs), which will be established in Blantyre (Southern Region) and Mzuzu (Northern Region). RPIUs will supervise the day-to-day project operations in each district, liaising with the Focal Points (appointed by the respective EE) in each district. The regional PIU will be composed of the two technical specialists (EbA/ Agroecology specialist, NRM specialist) mentioned above, together with an M&E associate, and an Administrative & Finance associate.

10.2 Implementation arrangements for safeguards

229. Overall compliance with the project's ESMF and ESMP will be assured by the project's Environmental and Social Safeguards International Technical Assistance (part-time) and National Safeguards Specialist (full time), hired within the CPIU, who will work closely together with a Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist (who will oversee the GAP). These specialists will closely collaborate with the Regional PIUs. Regular updates and reporting on safeguards will be provided at PSC meetings by the ESS ITA/National Safeguards Specialist, and regional counterparts. The following paragraphs provide more detailed information on these institutional arrangements for environmental and social safeguards.

230. The additional national safeguards specialist to be recruited by FAO will conduct the assessment of environmental and social baseline and impacts after the target location is identified. Within the CPIU, the above-mentioned experts will be responsible for ensuring that screenings of VLAPs is undertaken prior to implementation, and then mitigate for any medium-risk activities using the project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents developed during project implementation, based on the screening. The approach allows for specificity under each project area and for the nature of associated activities, rather than blanketing all sites with the same training/mitigation measures (some measures will only be applicable in a few areas, and this will only be discernible once specific villages/communities have been selected during implementation). Guidance for screenings and for the project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents as well as an outline is provided as part of this ESMF (see Appendices II and III). The Safeguards ITA, national safeguards specialist and Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist will also manage the monitoring and evaluation (M&E)/reporting for the environmental and social safeguards aspects of the project, working closely with the project's M&E team.

231. FPIC facilitators will implement FPIC under sub-activity 1.1.1.2. ILM facilitators and CPIU technical specialists will be, as well as monitoring and reporting on their implementation status.

232. In order to ensure long term sustainability of the project activities, most of the implementation at the field level will ensure involvement of government staff, especially Environmental District Officers, with support from the FAO team as required. Any government staffers involved with safeguards will receive training as well as technical support from FAO.

233. The above mentioned international environmental and social safeguards specialist and national safeguards specialist will be appointed to work part-time (50%) and full time respectively over the six years of the project, and will directly support the formulation of the assessment, the project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents associated with each VLAP. Budget has been allocated for monitoring and evaluation of the project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents.

234. Table 15 provides a summary of the budget allocated for safeguards work.

Table 15 - Summary of safeguards budget

Indicative Projection of Budget	Items	Budget (USD)
M&E of the project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents	1 contract	55 000

Environmental and social safeguards International Technical Assistance	6 years (part time 50%)	284 400
National Environmental and social safeguards specialist	6 years (full time)	255 384
National Environmental and social safeguards specialist #2	60 days (for the assessment of baseline and impacts)	15 060
National Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist	6 years (full time)	255 384
FPIC implementation (sub-activity 1.1.1.2)	15 FPIC facilitators	194 805
Trainings on FPIC and ESS (sub-activity 1.1.1.2)	3 trainings	73 865
GRM related costs	Phone, hotline connection, suggestion-box, communication material for dissemination of GRM information	60 000

Section 11: Appendices

Appendix I: FAO screening checklist

Environmental and Social Risk Identification – Screening Checklist

Trigger questions

	Question	YES	NO
1	Would this project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> result in the degradation (biological or physical) of soils or undermine sustainable land management practices; or include the development of a large irrigation scheme, dam construction, use of wastewater or affect the quality of water; or reduce the adaptive capacity to climate change or increase GHG emissions significantly; or result in any changes to existing tenure rights⁶³ (formal and informal⁶⁴) of individuals, communities or others to land, fishery and forest resources? 	x	x x x
2	Would this project be executed in or around protected areas or natural habitats, decrease the biodiversity or alter the ecosystem functionality, use alien species, or use genetic resources?	x	
3	Would this project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce crops and varieties previously not grown, and/or; Provide seeds/planting material for cultivation, and/or; Involve the importing or transfer of seeds and or planting material for cultivation or research and development; Supply or use modern biotechnologies or their products in crop production, and/or Establish or manage planted forests? 	x x x x	x
4	Would this project introduce non-native or non-locally adapted species, breeds, genotypes or other genetic material to an area or production system, or modify in any way the surrounding habitat or production system used by existing genetic resources?	x	
5	Would this project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> result in the direct or indirect procurement, supply or use of pesticides⁶⁵: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on crops, livestock, aquaculture, forestry, household; or as seed/crop treatment in field or storage; or through input supply programmes including voucher schemes; or for small demonstration and research purposes; or 		x x x x x

⁶³ Tenure rights are rights to own, use or benefit from natural resources such as land, water bodies or forests

⁶⁴ Socially or traditionally recognized tenure rights that are not defined in law may still be considered to be 'legitimate tenure rights'.

⁶⁵ Pesticide means any substance, or mixture of substances of chemical or biological ingredients intended for repelling, destroying or controlling any pest, or regulating plant growth.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for strategic stocks (locust) and emergencies; or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ causing adverse effects to health and/or environment; or • result in an increased use of pesticides in the project area as a result of production intensification; or • result in the management or disposal of pesticide waste and pesticide contaminated materials; or • result in violations of the Code of Conduct? 		X X X X
6	Would this project permanently or temporarily remove people from their homes or means of production/livelihood or restrict their access to their means of livelihood?		X
7	Would this project affect the current or future employment situation of the rural poor, and in particular the labour productivity, employability, labour conditions and rights at work of self-employed rural producers and other rural workers?	x	
8	Could this project risk overlooking existing gender inequalities in access to productive resources, goods, services, markets, decent employment and decision-making? For example, by not addressing existing discrimination against women and girls, or by not taking into account the different needs of men and women.	x	
9	<p>Would this project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have Indigenous Peoples* living outside the project area¹ where activities will take place; or • have Indigenous Peoples living in the project area where activities will take place; or • adversely or seriously affect on Indigenous Peoples' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (physical² and non-physical or intangible³) inside and/or outside the project area; or • be located in an area where cultural resources exist? <p>* FAO considers the following criteria to identify Indigenous Peoples: priority in time with respect to occupation and use of a specific territory; the voluntary perpetuation of cultural distinctiveness (e.g. languages, laws and institutions); self-identification; an experience of subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination (whether or not these conditions persist).</p> <p>¹The phrase "Outside the project area" should be read taking into consideration the likelihood of project activities to influence the livelihoods, land access and/or rights of Indigenous Peoples' irrespective of physical distance. For example: If an Indigenous community is living 100 km away from a project area where fishing activities will affect the river yield which is also accessed by this community, then the user should answer "YES" to the question.</p> <p>²Physical defined as movable or immovable objects, sites, structures, group of structures, natural features and landscapes that have archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, religious, aesthetic or other cultural significance located in urban or rural settings, ground, underground or underwater.</p> <p>³Non-physical or intangible defined as "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith that communities, groups, and in some cases individuals, recognize as part of their spiritual and/or cultural heritage"</p>	x	X X X

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Second Level Questions

SAFEGUARD 1: NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Question	Management of soil and land resources	No	Yes	Comments
1.1	Would this project result in the degradation (biological or physical) of soils	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Demonstrate how the project applies and adheres to the principles of the World Soil Charter	The project focuses on promoting sustainable land, soil, and water management practices to mitigate or reduce land degradation, including erosion control, integrated nutrient management, and the management and restoration of soil, water, and biological resources. These efforts are conducted in close collaboration with local land users to ensure their participation and input.
1.2	Would this project undermine sustainable land management practices?	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No: The project adopts EbA approach, the activities and practices/technologies promoted by the project have demonstrated to have positive impact on the protection and conservation of biodiversity and the ecosystem, and on the restoration of ecosystem services; and on improving efficiency in the use of natural resources (water, land, soil, energy) through

				inclusive and participatory approach.
	Management of water resources and small dams	No	Yes	Comments
1.3	Would this project develop an irrigation scheme that is more than 20 hectares or withdraws more than 1000 m3/day of water?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Specify the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) implementation of appropriate efficiency principles and options to enhance productivity. b) technically feasible water conservation measures. c) alternative water supplies. d) resource contamination mitigation or/and avoidance. e) potential impact on water users downstream. f) water use offsets and demand management options to maintain total demand for water resources within the available supply. g) The ICID-checklist will be included, as well as appropriate action within the project to mitigate identified potential negative impacts. h) Projects aiming at improving water efficiency will carry out thorough water accounting in order to avoid possible negative impacts such as waterlogging, salinity or reduction of water availability downstream. 	No: The project doesn't invest in an irrigation scheme that is more than 20 hectares or withdraws more than 1000 m3/day of water.
1.4	Would this project develop an irrigation scheme that is more than 100 hectares or withdraws more than 5000 m3/day of water?	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No: this project will not develop an irrigation scheme that is more than 100 hectares or withdraws more than 5000 m3/day of water

1.5	Would this project aim at improving an irrigation scheme (without expansion)?	LOW RISK	<p>MODERATE RISK</p> <p>The ICID-checklist will be included, as well as appropriate action within the project to mitigate identified potential negative impacts.</p> <p>Projects aiming at improving water efficiency will carry out thorough water accounting in order to avoid possible negative impacts such as waterlogging, salinity or reduction of water availability downstream.</p>	No: The project doesn't have activities which aim at improving an irrigation scheme, although the project may support water harvesting at household/community level.
1.6	Would this project affect the quality of water either by the release of pollutants or by its use, thus affecting its characteristics (such as temperature, pH, DO, TSS or any other)?	LOW RISK	<p>HIGH RISK</p> <p>A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.</p>	No: The project which aims at promoting EbA and agroecological approach will not affect the quality of water by release of pollutants or its use
1.7	Would this project include the usage of wastewater?	LOW RISK	<p>MODERATE RISK</p> <p>Demonstrate how the project applies and adheres to applicable national guidelines or, if not available, the WHO/FAO/UNEP Guidelines on Safe Usage of Waste Water in Agriculture</p>	No. No wastewater use in the sense that no industrial wastewater will be collected for agricultural use. The project will only encourage better water resources management.
1.8	Would this project involve the construction or financing of a dam that is more than 15 m. in height?	LOW RISK	CANNOT PROCEED	No: not applicable

1.9	Would this project involve the construction or financing of a dam that is more than 5 m. in height?		LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No: not applicable
	Tenure		No	Yes	Comments
1.10	<p>Would this project permanently or temporarily deny or restrict access to natural resources to which they have rights of access or use?/Could this project result in any changes to existing <i>tenure rights</i>¹ (<i>formal and informal</i>) of individuals, communities or others to land, fishery and forest resources?</p> <p>¹Tenure rights are rights to own, use or benefit from natural resources such as land, water bodies or forests</p> <p>²Socially or traditionally recognized tenure rights that are not defined in law may still be considered to be 'legitimate tenure rights'.</p>		LOW RISK	PROCEED TO NEXT QUESTION	No
	1.10.1	Could this project result in a negative change to existing legitimate tenure rights?	MODERATE RISK Demonstrate how the project applies and adheres to the principles/framework of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT)	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No
	Climate		No	Yes	Comments
1.11	Could this project result in a reduction of the adaptive capacity to climate change for any stakeholders in the project area?		LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No: The project aims at increasing the resilience of farmers and their communities under

				current and future climate risks.	
1.12	Could this project result in a reduction of resilience against extreme weather events?		LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No: The project aims at increasing the resilience of farmers and their communities under current and future climate risks.
1.13	Could this project result in a net increase of GHG emissions beyond those expected from increased production?		LOW RISK	PROCEED TO NEXT QUESTION	No: As per analysis conducted with Ex-Act Tool (Annex 22), the project activities will reduce GHG emissions.
	1.13.1	Is the expected increase below the level specified by FAO guidance or national policy/law (whichever is more stringent)?	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	LOW RISK	N/A
	1.13.2	Is the expected increase above the level specified by FAO guidance or national policy/law (whichever is more stringent)?	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	N/A

SAFEGUARD 2: BIODIVERSITY, ECOSYSTEMS AND NATURAL HABITATS

	Protected areas, buffer zones or natural habitats	No	Yes	Comments
2.1	Would this project be implemented within a legally designated protected area or its buffer zone?	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No, Low risk . There are restrictions regarding the type of activities that can be financed/promoted by the project to avoid any potential significant adverse impact on biodiversity or habitats (refer to appendix IV non-eligibility list).
	Biodiversity Conservation	No	Yes	Comments
2.2	Would this project change a natural ecosystem to an agricultural/aquacultural/forestry production unit with a reduced diversity of flora and fauna?	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No, Low risk . No land conversion of natural habitat to agriculture or grazeland/farmland will take place.
2.3	Would this project increase the current impact on the surrounding environment for example by using more water, chemicals or machinery than previously?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Demonstrate in the project document what measures will be taken to minimize adverse impacts on the environment and ensure that implementation of these measures is reported in the risk log during progress reports.	No, Low risk . The Project poses a low risk of increasing the current impact on the surrounding environment. It employs sustainable practices to mitigate environmental impact, including careful water usage and minimized chemical application.
	Use of alien species	No	Yes	Comments
2.4	Would this project use an alien species which has exhibited an invasive* behaviour in the country or in other parts of the world or a species with unknown behaviour? *An invasive alien species is defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity as “an alien species whose introduction and/or spread threaten biological diversity” (see https://www.cbd.int/invasive/terms.shtml).	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No, Low risk . The project will work mainly with local/native breeds and species. The use of alien, invasive or non-native species is prohibited (refer to Appendix IV non-eligibility list).

	Access and benefit sharing for genetic resources	No	Yes	Comments
2.5	Would this project involve access to genetic resources for their utilization and/or access to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that is held by Indigenous, local communities and/or farmers?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK	Yes. Moderate risk. The Project will use mainly native and local species/breeds that are widely used and known throughout the country. The FPIC document was elaborated to ensure that Indigenous and local communities are involved, and their rights are respected regarding access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. This includes obtaining prior informed consent or approval from these communities, as required by domestic law, before accessing genetic resources or traditional knowledge.

SAFEGUARD 3: PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

	Introduce new crops and varieties		No	Yes	Comments
3.1	Would this project Introduce crops and varieties previously not grown?		LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK	Yes. Moderate risk. Landraces, varieties adapted to local conditions, are recommended for use, including those of exotic origin. These varieties, evolved without disrupting local ecosystems, often exhibit resilience to environmental stresses. Highly valued by local farmers, landraces play a significant role in their livelihoods. While EbAM prioritizes native species for ecological integrity and climate resilience, it includes landraces to promote agrobiodiversity. Additionally, certain foreign cash crops may be supported by EbAM for livelihoods during the transition to ecosystem-based adaptation.
	Provision of seeds and planting materials		No	Yes	Comments
3.2	Would this project provide seeds/planting material for cultivation?		LOW RISK	PROCEED TO NEXT QUESTION	Yes
	3.2.1	Would this project involve the importing or transfer of seeds and/or planting materials for cultivation?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid undermining local seed & planting material production and supply systems through the use of seed voucher schemes, for instance Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are from locally adapted crops and varieties that are accepted by farmers and consumers Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are free from pests and diseases according to agreed norms, especially the IPPC 	Yes

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal clearance from AGPMG is required for all procurement of seeds and planting materials. Clearance from AGPMC is required for chemical treatment of seeds and planting materials Clarify that the seed or planting material can be legally used in the country to which it is being imported Clarify whether seed saving is permitted under the country's existing laws and/or regulations and advise the counterparts accordingly. Ensure, according to applicable national laws and/or regulations, that farmers' rights to PGRFA and over associated traditional knowledge are respected in the access to PGRFA and the sharing of the benefits accruing from their use. Refer to ESS9: Indigenous Peoples and cultural heritage. 	
	3.2.2	Would this project involve the importing or transfer of seeds and/or planting materials for research and development?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Ensure compliance with Access and Benefit Sharing norms as stipulated in the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Nagoya Protocol of the Convention on Biodiversity as may be applicable. Refer also to ESS2: Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Natural Habitats.	No. Low risk. The project presents a low risk as it does not involve the importing or transfer of seeds and/or planting materials for research and development. The project focuses on utilizing locally available resources and promoting sustainable agricultural practices within the project area.
	Modern biotechnologies and the deployment of their products in crop production		No	Yes	Comments
3.3		Would this project supply or use modern plant biotechnologies and their products?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety of the Convention on Biological Diversity to ensure the safe handling, transport and use of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health. Adhere to biosafety requirements in the handling of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) or Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) according to national legislation or⁶⁶ Take measures to prevent gene flow from the introduced varieties to existing ones and/or wild relatives 	No. Low risk. The project will not use modern plant biotechnologies, nor genetically or living modified organisms (Refer to Appendix V – non eligibility activities list). The Project will mainly use local/native varieties.
	Planted forests		No	Yes	Comments

⁶⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2011. Biosafety Resource Book. Rome, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i1905e/i1905e00.htm>

3.4	Would this project establish or manage planted forests?	LOW RISK	<p>MODERATE RISK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to existing national forest policies, forest programmes or equivalent strategies. • The observance of principles 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the Voluntary Guidelines on Planted Forests suffice for indigenous forests but must be read in full compliance with ESS 9- Indigenous People and Cultural Heritage. • Planners and managers must incorporate conservation of biological diversity as fundamental in their planning, management, utilization and monitoring of planted forest resources. • In order to reduce the environmental risk, incidence and impact of abiotic and biotic damaging agents and to maintain and improve planted forest health and productivity, FAO will work together with stakeholders to develop and derive appropriate and efficient response options in planted forest management. 	<p>Yes. Moderate risk. The project will support the rehabilitation and reforestation activities with a focus on planting native/local species as well as small-scale sustainable agroforestry (e.g, restoration of water catchments and watershed management)</p>
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SAFEGUARD 4: ANIMAL (LIVESTOCK AND AQUATIC) GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

	Introduce new species/breeds and change in the production system of locally adapted breeds		No	Yes	Comments
4.1	Would this project introduce non-native or non-locally adapted species, breeds, genotypes or other genetic material to an area or production system?		LOW RISK	PROCEED TO NEXT Q	No. Low risk The project will not introduce genetically altered organisms, nor will it introduce or use experimental genetic technologies.
	4.1.1	Would this project foresee an increase in production by at least 30% (due to the introduction) relative to currently available locally adapted breeds and can monitor production performance?	CANNOT PROCEED	LOW RISK	N/A
	4.1.2	Would this project introduce genetically altered organisms, e.g. through selective breeding, chromosome set manipulation, hybridization, genome editing or gene transfer and/or introduce or use experimental	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	N/A

		genetic technologies, e.g. genetic engineering and gene transfer, or the products of those technologies?			
4.2	Would this project introduce a non-native or non-locally adapted species or breed for the first time into a country or production system?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK A genetic impact assessment should be conducted prior to granting permission to import (cover the animal identification, performance recording and capacity development that allow monitoring of the introduced species/ breeds' productivity, health and economic sustainability over several production cycles) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0970e/i0970e00.htm • ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/012/i0970e/i0970e03.pdf 		No. The project will not invest in livestock breeding activities, and it will not introduce/procure non-native or non-locally adapted species or breeds.
4.3	Would this project introduce a non-native or non-locally adapted species or breed, independent whether it already exists in the country?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the project imports or promotes species/breeds with higher performance than locally adapted ones, ensure: feed resources, health management, farm management capacity, input supply and farmer organization to allow the new species/breeds to express their genetic potential • Follow the OIE terrestrial or aquatic code to ensure the introduced species/breed does not carry different diseases than the local ones • Include a health risk assessment and farmer/veterinary capacity development in the project to ensure the introduced species/breed do not have different susceptibility to local diseases including ecto-and endo-parasites than the locally adapted/native species/breeds. 		Yes, moderate risk. Through the FFS, the project will promote the use of small livestock (i.e. present on farm/ community) to promote more mixed (crop/ small livestock) farming. The FFS master trainer and facilitators will sensitize farmers on the use of local and native livestock species (mainly Indigenous breeds/ species).
4.4	Would this project ensure there is no spread of the introduced genetic material into other production systems (i.e. indiscriminate crossbreeding with locally adapted species/breeds)?	MODERATE RISK Introduce a) animal identification and recording mechanism in the project and b) develop new or amend existing livestock policy	LOW RISK		Yes, moderate risk. The FFS master trainer and facilitators will sensitize farmers on the use of locally adapted species/ breeds.

		and National Strategy and Action Plan for AnGR		
	Collection of wild genetic resources for farming systems	No	Yes	Comments
4.5	Would this project collect living material from the wild, e.g. for breeding, or juveniles and eggs for ongrowing?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Guidance to be provided.	No. Low Risk. The project will not collect or use living material from the wild, e.g. for breeding, or juveniles and eggs for on growing.
	Modification of habitats	No	Yes	Comments
4.6	Would this project modify the surrounding habitat or production system used by existing genetic resources?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Guidance to be provided.	No. Low risk The project seeks to implement watershed management and improved land management actions in degraded landscapes. Through the practices and technologies promoted by the project positive changes are expected in the selected landscapes.
4.7	Would this project be located in or near an internationally recognized conservation area e.g. Ramsar or World Heritage Site, or other nationally important habitat, e.g. national park or high nature value farmland?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Guidance to be provided.	Yes. Moderate risk. There is a moderate risk that this project could be located near a nationally important habitats like national parks. Although the project's sub-catchment plans will not interfere/ overlap with the existing management of the Parks as established by law (see non-eligibility activity list), there remains a moderate risk due to the possible proximity of the project area to such conservation areas.

4.8	AQGR	Would this project block or create migration routes for aquatic species?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Guidance to be provided.	No N/A
4.9		Would this project change the water quality and quantity in the project area, or areas connected to it?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Guidance to be provided.	No. The project incorporates integrated water management approach, including water conservation measures, restoration of water catchment areas and watershed management; conservation and restoration of riparian zones.
4.10		Would this project cause major habitat / production system changes that promote new or unknown chances for gene flow, e.g. connecting geographically distinct ecosystems or water bodies; or would it disrupt habitats or migration routes and the genetic structure of valuable or locally adapted species/stocks/breeds?	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No. Low risk The project will not disrupt habitats or migration routes, the project will not support activities that imply the fencing in protected or animal migration routes.
4.11		Would this project involve the intensification of production systems that leads to land- use changes (e.g. deforestation), higher nutrient inputs leading to soil or water pollution, changes of water regimes (drainage, irrigation)?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Guidance to be provided	No. This project will promote practices that increase production and productivity without further land expansion, while restoring or rehabilitating ecosystem services in the current agricultural land.

SAFEGUARD 5: PEST AND PESTICIDES MANAGEMENT

	Supply of pesticides by FAO	No	Yes	Comments
5.1	Would this project procure, supply and/or result in the use of pesticides on crops, livestock, aquaculture or forestry?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preference must always be given to sustainable pest management approaches such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), the use of ecological pest management approaches and the use of mechanical/cultural/physical or biological pest control tools in favour of synthetic chemicals; and preventive measures and monitoring, When no viable alternative to the use of chemical pesticides exists, the selection and procurement of pesticides is subject to an internal clearance procedure http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/agphome/documents/Pests_Pesticides/Code/E_SS5_pesticide_checklist.pdf The criteria specified in FAO's ESM Guidelines under ESS5 must be adhered to and should be included or referenced in the project document. If large volumes (above 1,000 litres of kg) of pesticides will be supplied or used throughout the duration of the project, a Pest Management Plan must be prepared to demonstrate how IPM will be promoted to reduce reliance on pesticides, and what measures will be taken to minimize risks of pesticide use. It must be clarified, which person(s) within (executing) involved institution/s, will be responsible and liable for the proper storage, transport, distribution and use of the products concerned in compliance with the requirements. 	No. the project is based on an agroecological base which promotes Integrated Pest Management and aims at reducing the dependence on the use of pesticides and agrochemicals.
5.2	Would this project provide seeds or other materials treated with pesticides (in the field and/or in storage)?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK <p>The use of chemical pesticides for seed treatment or storage of harvested produce is subject to an internal clearance procedure [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/agphome/documents/Pests_Pesticides/Code/E_SS5_pesticide_checklist.pdf]. The criteria specified in FAO's ESM Guidelines under ESS5 for both pesticide supply and seed treatment must be adhered to and should be included or referenced in the project document.</p>	No. Project will ensure that appropriate capacity buildings are carried out on the proper use, management, storage and disposal of pesticides following FAO guidelines for pesticides (e.g. International Code of Conduct on Pesticides).
5.3	Would this project provide inputs to farmers directly or through voucher schemes?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO projects must not be responsible for exposing people or the environment to risks from pesticides. The types and quantities of pesticides and the associated application and protective equipment that users of a voucher scheme are provided with must always comply with the conditions laid out in ESS5 and be subject to the internal clearance procedure These must be included or referenced in the project document. Preference must always be given to sustainable pest management approaches such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), the use of ecological pest management approaches and the use of mechanical or biological pest control tools in favour of synthetic chemicals 	No. Low risk. The project will not provide pesticides to farmers directly or through voucher schemes.

5.4	Would this project lead to increased use of pesticides through intensification or expansion of production?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Encourage stakeholders to develop a Pest Management Plan to demonstrate how IPM will be promoted to reduce reliance on pesticides, and what measures will be taken to minimize risks of pesticide use. This should be part of the sustainability plan for the project to prevent or mitigate other adverse environmental and social impacts resulting from production intensification.	No. The project promotes IPM, and several agroecological practices and technologies aiming at reducing the dependence and use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
5.5	Would this project manage or dispose of waste pesticides, obsolete pesticides or pesticide contaminated waste materials?	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No, the project does not promote the purchase or use of pesticides.

SAFEGUARD 6: INVOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT AND DISPLACEMENT

		No	Yes	Comments
6.1	<p>Would this removal* be voluntary?</p> <p>*temporary or permanent removal of people from their homes or means of production/livelihood or restrict their access to their means of livelihoods</p>	CANNOT PROCEED	<p>HIGH RISK</p> <p>A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.</p>	<p>N/A. The project activities will not lead to involuntary resettlement or displacement of people or communities; resources from the project will not be used for land acquisition. Furthermore, the IPPF has been prepared and FPIC process will be implemented throughout the project.</p>

SAFEGUARD 7: DECENT WORK

		No	Yes	Comments
7.1	Would this project displace jobs? (e.g. because of sectoral restructuring or occupational shifts.)	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No. Low risk. The project will promote opportunities to increase human capital and skills development through technical training (e.g. Farmers Field Schools).
7.2	Would this project operate in sectors or value chains that are dominated by subsistence producers and other vulnerable informal agricultural workers, and more generally characterized by high levels of “working poverty”?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Take action to anticipate the likely risk of perpetuating poverty and inequality in socially unsustainable agriculture and food systems. Decent work and productive employment should appear among the priorities of the project or, alternatively, the project should establish synergies with specific employment and social protection programmes e.g. favouring access to some social protection scheme or form of social insurance. Specific measures and mechanisms should be introduced to empower in particular the most vulnerable/disadvantaged categories of rural workers such as small-scale producers, contributing family workers, subsistence farmers, agricultural informal wage workers, with a special attention to women and youth who are predominantly found in these employment conditions. An age- and gender-sensitive social value chain analysis or livelihoods/employment assessment is needed for large-scale projects.	Yes. Moderate risk. The project promotes decent working conditions ensuring awareness on health, safety and occupational risk related with main value chains. The project will ensure training and capacity building activities to enhance the farmers skills and to empower women, PLWD, youth and vulnerable people.
7.3	Would this project operate in situations where youth work mostly as unpaid contributing family workers, lack access to decent jobs and are increasingly abandoning agriculture and rural areas?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Take action to anticipate likely risk of unsustainably ageing agriculture and food systems by integrating specific measures to support youth empowerment and employment in agriculture. A youth livelihoods/employment assessment is needed. Complementary measures should be included aiming at training youth, engaging them and their associations in the value chain, facilitating their access to productive resources, credit and markets, and stimulating youth-friendly business development services.	Yes. Moderate risk. It is common in Malawi for youth to assist their families with farming tasks, raising concerns about age-appropriate work boundaries without close supervision. To address this, the project will enhance Extension Services, Farmer Field Schools (FFS), alongside regular capacity-building initiatives.
7.4	Would this project operate in situations where major gender inequality in the labour market prevails? (e.g. where women tend to work	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Take action to anticipate likely risk of socially unsustainable agriculture and food systems by integrating specific measures to reduce gender inequalities and promote rural women's social and economic empowerment. A specific	Yes. Moderate risk. Various knowledge and resource disparities exist between men and women, compounded by socio-

	predominantly as unpaid contributing family members or subsistence farmers, have lower skills and qualifications, lower productivity and wages, less representation and voice in producers' and workers' organizations, more precarious contracts and higher informality rates, etc.)		social value chain analysis or livelihoods/employment assessment is needed for large-scale projects. Facilitation should be provided for women of all ages to access productive resources (including land), credit, markets and marketing channels, education and TVET, technology, collective action or mentorship. Provisions for maternity protection, including childcare facilities, should be foreseen to favour women participation and anticipate potential negative effects on child labour, increased workloads for women, and health related risks for pregnant and breastfeeding women.	cultural norms attributing gender-specific roles within agricultural activities and value chains. A Gender Action Plan has been developed.
7.5	Would this project operate in areas or value chains with presence of labour migrants or that could potentially attract labour migrants?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Take action to anticipate potential discrimination against migrant workers, and to ensure their rights are adequately protected, with specific attention to different groups like youth, women and men.	No
7.6	Would this project directly employ workers?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK FAO projects will supposedly guarantee employees' rights as per UN/FAO standards as regards information on workers' rights, regularity of payments, etc. Decisions relating to the recruitment of project workers are supposed to follow standard UN practices and therefore not be made on the basis of personal characteristics unrelated to inherent job requirements. The employment of project workers will be based on the principle of equal opportunity and fair treatment, and there will be no discrimination with respect to any aspects of the employment relationship, such as recruitment and hiring, compensation (including wages and benefits), working conditions and terms of employment, access to training, job assignment, promotion, termination of employment or retirement, etc.	No
7.7	Would this project involve sub-contracting?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Take action to anticipate likely risk of perpetuating inequality and labour rights violations by introducing complementary measures. FAO projects involving sub-contracting should promote, to the extent possible, subcontracting to local entrepreneurs – particularly to rural women and youth – to maximize employment creation under decent working conditions. Also, FAO should monitor and eventually support contractors to fulfil the standards of performance and quality, taking into account national and international social and labour standards.	No

7.8	Would this project operate in a sector, area or value chain where producers and other agricultural workers are typically exposed to significant occupational and safety risks ⁶⁷ ?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Take action to anticipate likely OSH risks by introducing complementary provisions on OSH within the project. Project should ensure all workers' safety and health by adopting minimum OSH measures and contributing to improve capacities and mechanisms in place for OSH in informal agriculture and related occupations. For example, by undertaking a simple health and safety risk assessment, and supporting implementation of the identified risk control measures. Awareness raising and capacity development activities on the needed gender-responsive OSH measures should be included in project design to ensure workers' safety and health, including for informal workers. Complementary measures can include measures to reduce risks and protect workers, as well as children working or playing on the farm, such as alternatives to pesticides, improved handling and storage of pesticides, etc. Specific provisions for OSH for pregnant and breastfeeding women should be introduced. FAO will undertake periodic inspections and a multistakeholder mechanism for monitoring should be put in place.	Yes
7.9	Would this project provide or promote technologies or practices that pose occupational safety and health (OSH) risks for farmers, other rural workers or rural populations in general?	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No
7.10	Would this project foresee that children <u>below</u> the nationally-defined minimum employment age (usually 14 or 15 years of age) will be involved in project-supported activities?	LOW RISK	CANNOT PROCEED	No. Low risk. The Project will ensure that Children under 18 will not engage in work activities that endanger their health, safety, or moral development, ensuring compliance with compulsory education requirements.
7.11	Would this project foresee that children <u>above</u> the	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Take action to anticipate likely risk of engaging young people aged 14-17 in child labour ⁶⁸ by changing design or introducing complementary measures.	Yes. Moderate risk. It is common in Malawi for youth to assist their families with

⁶⁷ Major OSH risks in agriculture include: dangerous machinery and tools; hazardous chemicals; toxic or allergenic agents; carcinogenic substances or agents; parasitic diseases; transmissible animal diseases; confined spaces; ergonomic hazards; extreme temperatures; and contact with dangerous and poisonous animals, reptiles and insects.

⁶⁸ Child labour is defined as work that is inappropriate for a child's age, affects children's education, or is likely to harm their health, safety or morals. Child labour refers to working children below the nationally-defined minimum employment age, or children of any age engaging in hazardous work. Hazardous work is work that is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of a child. This work is

	nationally-defined minimum employment age (usually 14 or 15 years of age), but under the age of 18 will be involved in project-supported activities?		For children of 14 to 17 years of age, the possibility to complement education with skills-training and work is certainly important for facilitating their integration in the rural labour market. Yet, children under the age of 18 should not be engaged in work-related activities in connection with the project in a manner that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with their compulsory child's education or be harmful to the child's health, safety or morals. Where children under the age of 18 may be engaged in work-related activities in connection with the project, an appropriate risk assessment will be conducted, together with regular monitoring of health, working conditions and hours of work, in addition to the other requirement of this ESS. Specific protection measures should be undertaken to prevent any form of sexual harassment or exploitation at workplace (including on the way to and from), particularly those more vulnerable, i.e. girls.	farming tasks, raising concerns about age-appropriate work boundaries without close supervision. To address this, the project will enhance Extension Services, Farmer Field Schools (FFS), alongside regular capacity-building initiatives.
7.12	Would this project operate in a value chain where there have been reports of child labour?	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No
7.13	Would this project operate in a value chain or sector where there have been reports of forced labour ⁶⁹ ?	LOW RISK	HIGH RISK A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.	No

dangerous or occurs under unhealthy conditions that could result in a child being killed, or injured and/or made ill as a consequence of poor health and safety standards and working arrangements. Some injuries or ill health may result in permanent disability. Countries that have ratified ILO Convention No.182 are obligated to develop National lists of hazardous child labour under Article 4.

⁶⁹ Forced labour consists of any work or service not voluntarily performed that is exacted from an individual under threat of force or penalty. It includes men, women and children in situations of debt bondage, suffering slavery-like conditions or who have been trafficked. "In many countries, agricultural work is largely informal, and legal protection of workers is weak. In South Asia, there is still evidence of bonded labour in agriculture, resulting in labour arrangements where landless workers are trapped into exploitative and coercive working conditions in exchange for a loan. The low wages associated with high interest rates make it quite difficult for whole families to escape this vicious circle. In Africa, the traditional forms of "vestiges of slavery" are still prevalent in some countries, leading to situations where whole families (adults and children, men and women) are forced to work the fields of landowners in exchange for food and housing. In Latin America, the case of workers recruited in poor areas and sent to work on plantations or in logging camps has been widely documented by national inspection services and other actors." (ILO, Profits and poverty: the economics of forced labour / International Labour Office. - Geneva: ILO, 2014)

SAFEGUARD 8: GENDER EQUALITY

		No	Yes	Comments
8.1	Could this project risk reinforcing existing gender-based discrimination, by not taking into account the specific needs and priorities of women and girls?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK Take action to anticipate likely risk of perpetuating or reinforcing inequality by conducting a gender analysis to identify specific measures to avoid doing harm, provide equal opportunities to men and women, and promote the empowerment of women and girls.	Moderate risk A Gender Assessment and Action Plan has been prepared to ensure that the project does not exacerbate existing gender-based discriminations. Through the gender assessment conducted at project design, women and girls have been identified as priority target groups. The project targeting mechanisms include self-targeting approach which includes the provision of goods and services that are aligned with the priorities, needs, assets, capacities and livelihood strategies of women and girls, among other vulnerable target groups. The project will also rely on the Dimitra Clubs and the Household methodology, two approaches that have been proven very effective in the promotion of Gender

				Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE).
8.2	Could this project not target the different needs and priorities of women and men in terms of access to services, assets, resources, markets, and decent employment and decision-making?	LOW RISK	<p>MODERATE RISK</p> <p>Take action to anticipate likely risk of socially unsustainable agriculture practices and food systems by conducting a gender analysis to identify the specific needs and priorities of men and women, and the constraints they may face to fully participate in or benefit from project activities, and design specific measures to ensure women and men have equitable access to productive resources and inputs.</p>	<p>No, the project has properly considered the different needs and priorities of women and men. The gender assessment conducted at project design have highlighted human capital, social, technical, market and financial as well as institutional barriers women, men, youth and other vulnerable groups are facing. The assessment also analysed their priorities, constraints and needs in terms of access to services, assets, resources, decent employment and decision-making. Project activities in its various areas of interventions have been tailored based on the gender assessment and are gender-sensitive and socially inclusive. Measures are in place to ensure gender equality and equity and allow women, men and youth fully participate</p>

				and benefit from project interventions.
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SAFEGUARD 9: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

		No	Yes	Comments
9.1	Are there <i>Indigenous Peoples</i> * living <i>outside the project area</i> ** where activities will take place? ^{70?}	LOW RISK	GO TO NEXT QUESTION	No
	9.1.1 Do the project activities influence the Indigenous Peoples living outside the project area?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK A Free, Prior and Informed Consent Process is required Project activities should outline actions to address and mitigate any potential impact. Please contact the ESM/OPCA unit for further guidance.	Yes. Moderate risk. FPIC will precede any project activity, involving active participation of Indigenous Peoples within and adjacent to the project area. Involvement of Indigenous groups in project committees mitigates potential impacts on their livelihoods. The project commits to avoiding involuntary resettlement or displacement and prohibits the use of project resources for land acquisition (refer to Appendix V – Non-eligibility list of activities). All activities undergo E&S Screening to prevent displacement or resettlement.
9.2	Are there Indigenous Peoples living in the project area where activities will take place?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK A Free Prior and Informed Consent process is required. If the project is for Indigenous Peoples , an Indigenous Peoples' Plan is required in addition to the Free Prior and Informed Consent process.	Yes. Moderate risk. FPIC will precede any project activity, involving active participation of Indigenous Peoples

* FAO considers the following criteria to identify Indigenous Peoples: priority in time with respect to occupation and use of a specific territory; the voluntary perpetuation of cultural distinctiveness (e.g. languages, laws and institutions); self-identification; an experience of subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination (whether or not these conditions persist).

** The phrase "Outside the project area" should be read taking into consideration the likelihood of project activities to influence the livelihoods, land access and/or rights of Indigenous Peoples' irrespective of *physical distance*. In example: If an Indigenous community is living 100 km away from a project area where fishing activities will affect the river yield which is also accessed by this community, then the user should answer "YES" to the question

			<p>Please contact the ESM/OPCA unit for further guidance.</p> <p>In cases where the project is for both, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, an Indigenous Peoples' Plan will be required only if a substantial number of beneficiaries are Indigenous Peoples. Project activities should outline actions to address and mitigate any potential impact.</p> <p>Please contact ESM/OPCA unit for further guidance.</p>	<p>within and adjacent to the project area. Involvement of Indigenous groups in project committees mitigates potential impacts on their livelihoods.</p> <p>The project commits to avoiding involuntary resettlement or displacement and prohibits the use of project resources for land acquisition (refer to Appendix V – Non-eligibility list of activities). All activities undergo E&S Screening to prevent displacement or resettlement.</p>
9.3	<p>Would this project adversely or seriously affect on Indigenous Peoples' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (<i>physical*</i> and <i>non-physical or intangible**</i>) inside and/or outside the project area?</p> <p><i>*Physical defined as movable or immovable objects, sites, structures, group of structures, natural features and landscapes that have archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, religious, aesthetic or other cultural significance located in urban or rural settings, ground, underground or underwater.</i></p>	LOW RISK	<p>HIGH RISK</p> <p>A full environmental and social impact assessment is required. Please contact the ESM unit for further guidance.</p>	<p>No, this project will not adversely affect Indigenous Peoples' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (both physical and non-physical or intangible) inside and/or outside the project area (Appendix V – Non-eligibility list of activities).</p>

	<i>**Non-physical or intangible defined as "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith that communities, groups, and in some cases individuals, recognize as part of their spiritual and/or cultural heritage"</i>			
9.4	Would this project be located in an area where cultural resources exist?	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK To preserve cultural resources (when existing in the project area) and to avoid their destruction or damage, due diligence must be undertaken to: a) <input type="checkbox"/> verify that provisions of the normative framework, which is usually under the oversight of a national institution responsible for protection of historical and archaeological sites/intangible cultural heritage; and b) through collaboration and communication with Indigenous Peoples' own governance institutions/leadership, verifying the probability of the existence of sites/ intangible cultural heritage that are significant to Indigenous Peoples. In cases where there is a high chance of encountering physical cultural resources, the bidding documents and contract for any civil works must refer to the need to include recovery of "chance findings" in line with national procedures and rules.	No

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	YES	NO
Is there any other potential environmental and/or social risk of this project that has not been captured in the screening checklist?		No
Is the proposed project considered potentially controversial?		No

Appendix II: E&S baseline and impact assessment (outline)

The GCF-FAO Project “*Ecosystems-based Adaptation for resilient Watersheds and Communities in Malawi (EbAM)*” necessitates the development of E&S baseline and impact assessment that will be conducted during implementation at sub-catchment level, under sub-activity 1.1.1.2. These assessments will include information related to:

- (i) The Project description
 - Geographic location, including description of sub-catchment
 - Summary of possible project activities (across all project components),
 - Implementation arrangements;
- (ii) Analysis of policy, institutional and legal framework:
 - Policy and institutional framework;
 - Institutional capacity;
- (iii) The environmental and social baseline conditions
 - Physical and biological environment,
 - Sociocultural environment;
 - Gender and social inclusion (youth and vulnerable groups) related issues;
- (iv) Conflict and sensitivity assessments; and
- (v) The environmental and social impact analysis (including gender).

Appendix III: ESMP guidance note

The outcome of the VLAP screening exercise associated with the screening outlined in Section 6.2 will determine the extent of required information in an ESMP. In some cases, only a series of tables may be required. Whatever the structure, however, the content should address the following:

(1) Baseline and impacts (see Appendix II above): this step will build on E&S baseline and impact assessment. This step of the ESMP development will provide information related to (i) the Project description (geographic location, summary of project activities, implementation arrangements); (ii) the analysis of policy, institutional and legal framework; (iii) the environmental and social baseline conditions: physical and biological environment, sociocultural environment; (iv) conflict and sensitivity assessments; and (v) the environmental and social impact analysis.

(2) Mitigation: Identifies measures and actions in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy that avoid, or if avoidance not possible, reduce potentially significant adverse social and environmental impacts to acceptable levels. Specifically, the ESMP: (a) identifies and summarizes all anticipated significant adverse social and environmental impacts; (b) describes – with technical details – each mitigation measure, including the type of impact to which it relates and the conditions under which it is required (e.g., continuously or in the event of contingencies), together with designs, equipment descriptions, and operating procedures, as appropriate; and, (c) estimates any potential social and environmental impacts of these measures and any residual impacts following mitigation.

(3) Monitoring: Identifies monitoring objectives and specifies the type of monitoring, with linkages to the impacts and the mitigation measures described in the ESMP. Specifically, the monitoring section of the ESMP provides (a) a specific description, and technical details, of monitoring measures, including the parameters to be measured, methods to be used, sampling locations, frequency of measurements, detection limits (where appropriate), and definition of thresholds that will signal the need for corrective actions; and (b) monitoring and reporting procedures to (i) ensure early detection of conditions that necessitate particular mitigation measures, and (ii) furnish information on the progress and results of mitigation.

(4) Capacity development and training: To support timely and effective implementation of social and environmental project components and mitigation measures, the ESMP draws on the roles, and capability of responsible parties on site. Specifically, the ESMP provides a description of institutional arrangements, identifying which party is responsible for carrying out the mitigation and monitoring measures (e.g. for operation, supervision, enforcement, monitoring of implementation, remedial action, financing, reporting, and staff training). Where support for strengthening social and environmental management capability is identified, the ESMP recommends the establishment or expansion of the parties responsible, the training of staff and any additional measures that may be necessary to support implementation of mitigation measures and any other recommendations of the environmental and social assessment.

(5) Stakeholder Engagement: Summarizes and links to the project Stakeholder Engagement Plan or outlines a plan to engage in meaningful, effective and informed consultations with affected stakeholders. Includes information on: (a) means used to inform and involve affected people; and (b) summary of stakeholder engagement plan for meaningful, effective consultations during project implementation, including identification of milestones for consultations, information disclosure, and periodic reporting on progress on project implementation. Require documentation of consultations (summaries including presentations, key points raised and responses provided, participation lists). Include information on project grievance mechanism.

(6) Grievance redress mechanism: Outlines the processes for receiving and addressing stakeholder concerns and grievances regarding the project's social and environmental performance. Describes mechanisms to provide stakeholders and potential affected communities avenues to provide feedback or grievances, and receive responses, with regard to the implementation of specific activities, policies, or regulations.

(7) Implementation action plan (schedule and cost estimates): For all four above aspects (mitigation, monitoring, capacity development, and stakeholder engagement), the ESMP provides (a) an implementation schedule for measures that must be carried out as part of the project, showing phasing and coordination with overall project implementation plans; and (b) the capital and recurrent cost estimates and sources of funds for implementing the ESMP. These figures are also integrated into the total project cost tables. Each of the measures and actions to be implemented will be clearly

specified and the costs of so doing will be integrated into the project's overall planning, design, budget, and implementation.

Appendix IV: Comprehensive Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) indicative outline

1. Introduction and Project Description *(Describe the project and the activities for this particular ESMP, with specification of geographical characteristics of local sites. Please note that every project activity in each geographical location will have its own ESMP).*

2. Policy, legal and regulatory framework *(Describe national legislation requirements/laws/rules/procedures related to environmental and social safeguard management of the project)*

3. Indicate the risk categorization as per the screening checklist *(screening checklist to be added as an annex of the ESMP)*

4. Describe the potential risks and impacts as per the description in the Environmental and Social Assessment *(anticipate negative impacts, or opportunities to enhance positive impacts)*

5. Describe Mitigation Measures *(Briefly describe in this section what are the mitigation measures as per the identified risks. Please mention whether any specific plan has been prepared such as Biodiversity management Plan, Gender Action Plan, LMP, etc. and provide the reference – link/document etc)*

6. Implementation Arrangements *(Briefly describe the implementation arrangement in this section (who is responsible for what and when. Details should be described in the ESMP Matrix below)*

Monitoring Arrangements *(Briefly describe the monitoring arrangements in this section (who is responsible for what and when. Details should be described in the ESMP Matrix below)*

7. Stakeholder Engagement *(Briefly describe stakeholder engagement for this particular activities)*

8. Training and capacity building *(Briefly describe specific training and capacity building activities as needed)*

9. Grievance Redress Mechanism *(Briefly describe the project GRM, and how this will be communicated to stakeholders that are affected by the activities described in this ESMP)*

10. Environment and Social Management Plan *(in a tabulated/matrix format)*

Project components/ activities	Potential Risk (Please briefly describe the risks identified in line with ESS)	Mitigation Measures (Briefly describe the mitigation measures for the identified risk. Please mention whether any specific plan has been prepared such as Biodiversity management Plan, Gender Action Plan, LMP, etc. and provide the reference – link/document etc.)	Implementation Arrangements (Responsible parties for implementation of those mitigation measures and timeline for activities)	Monitoring Arrangements (Responsible parties for monitoring activities and timeline/frequency of the activities)	Timeline	Costs as per the ESA

10. Information Disclosure *(Please provide information how disclosure related to this ESMP will be disclosed and disseminated publicly. Include when, where, etc)*

11. Annex

11.1 E&S Screening Checklist

FAO Safeguard Category	Triggered	Safeguard Instruments & Mitigation Measures
ESS 1 – Natural Resources Management	YES/NO	
ESS2 – Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Natural Habitats	YES/NO	
ESS3 – Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	YES/NO	
ESS 4 - Animal - Livestock and Aquatic - Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	YES/NO	
ESS5 – Pest and Pesticide Management	YES/NO	
ESS6 – Involuntary Resettlement and Displacement	YES/NO	
ESS7 – Decent Work	YES/NO	
ESS8 – Gender Equality	YES/NO	
ESS9 – Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage	YES/NO	N/A

Appendix V: Non-Eligibility list

The following activities are prohibited under the Project (ineligible or the “Non-Eligibility list”) in order to avoid adverse irreversible impacts on the environment and people, the following activities are explicitly excluded from funding:

- (i) Use of the project as an incentive and/or a tool to support and/or implement involuntary resettlement of local people and village consolidation.
- (ii) Land acquisition.
- (iii) Activities that would likely create adverse impacts on Indigenous Peoples (IP) and/or ethnic groups within villages and/or in neighbouring villages, or activities unacceptable to IP groups.
- (iv) Imposing ideas and changing priorities identified by the community and endorsed at the VLAP and SCMP level meetings without community consultation, prior review and clearance from the CPIU.
- (v) Damage or loss to cultural property, including sites having archaeological (prehistoric), paleontological, historical, religious, cultural and unique natural values.
- (vi) Resources access restriction (e.g. restricted access to farming land) that could not be mitigated and will result in adverse impacts on the livelihoods of IP, ethnic groups, and disadvantaged peoples.
- (vii) Activities of any kind within natural habitats of near-threatened and endangered species⁷¹ and existing or proposed protected areas.
- (viii) Purchase of seeds or seedlings treated with synthetic agrochemicals that would be toxic to other organisms that directly or indirectly useful for the crops, and reduce soil biodiversity, therefore soil fertility.
- (ix) Investment detrimental to the environment and farming gear that alters the soils.
- (x) Inputs whose safe use and disposal cannot be guaranteed in targeted areas.
- (xi) Unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. Coal production.
- (xii) Interventions in special areas under strict protection.
- (xiii) Introduction of invasive species.
- (xiv) Significant conversion or degradation of natural habitat or where the conservation and/or environmental gains do not clearly outweigh any potential losses.
- (xv) Production or trade in any product or activity deemed illegal under (i) the Government of Malawi's laws or regulations; (ii) international conventions and agreements; or (iii) subject to international bans.
- (xvi) Labour and working conditions involving harmful, exploitative, involuntary or compulsory forms of labour, forced labour⁷², child labour⁷³ or significant occupational health and safety issues.
- (xvii) Trade in any products with businesses engaged in exploitative environmental or social behaviour.

Preference list

- (i) Promote Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and climate resilient agriculture practices.
- (ii) Promote native species, including “lost” ones.
- (iii) Promote participatory and collective decision-making as well as knowledge co-creation.
- (iv) Promote sustainable and climate-resilient management of water resources.
- (v) Promote utilization of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), as well as the use of natural/organic pesticides, rather than chemical pesticides, in instances where pesticides must be used.
- (vi) Promote skills development to increase climate resiliency of women, men and youth farmers.
- (vii) Promote improvement of the enabling environment (financial opportunities, governing institutions, agricultural extension, policies and/or acts) to facilitate increased and sustained uptake of EbA practices and climate-informed water management.

⁷¹ According to e.g. the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

⁷² Forced labour means all work or service, not voluntarily performed, that is extracted from an individual under threat of force or penalty.

⁷³ Harmful child labour means the employment of children that is economically exploitive, or is likely to be hazardous to, or to interfere with, the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health, or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development.

- (viii) Integration of traditional/local knowledge and skills on sustainable natural resources management, including those that are little applied or exists only in oral history.
- (ix) Activities which benefit Indigenous Peoples and/or any such peoples at highest-risk of negative climate change impacts.

Appendix VI: Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

I. Background and guiding principles

Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) stands as a universally recognized principle grounded in international law, as affirmed by UNDRIP, ILO Convention 169, and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), among others. These legal instruments establish the framework for FPIC, ensuring that Indigenous communities and local populations have the right to participate in decisions affecting their lands, territories, and resources. Malawi, in alignment with this global norm, upholds FPIC through its adherence to international agreements and its commitment to Indigenous rights.

The FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal People (2010) underscores the importance of consultation and FPIC in FAO projects that impact Indigenous communities. This policy prioritizes self-determination, respect for Indigenous knowledge and cultures, and the principle of FPIC. These principles guide FAO's operational practices, as reflected in its Environmental and Social Guidelines and the Guide to the Project Cycle.

FPIC is usually applied only to IPs - it is a specific right recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) - but EbAM recognizes the rights of peasants and other people working in the rural areas (as in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, or UNDROP) and its concerns which are similar to those of UNDRIP; EbAM applies FPIC to all local residents who are potential beneficiaries.

FPIC serves as an international human rights standard rooted in the collective rights of local communities/Indigenous Peoples to self-determination and control over their lands, territories, and properties. It emphasizes the effective participation of local communities/Indigenous Peoples in decision-making processes to ensure outcomes that align with their needs and aspirations, while respecting their cultural contexts.

In practical terms, FPIC requires that local communities'/Indigenous Peoples' rights to representation, customary law, land ownership, self-identification, cultural expression, and self-determination are respected. This includes recognition of their distinct collective identities, historical ties to specific territories, preservation of cultural heritage, and experiences of marginalization or discrimination.

The consultation process leading to FPIC should be conducted in good faith, ensuring transparency, inclusivity, and intercultural dialogue. Indigenous Peoples and local communities should shape the process according to their specific contexts, with stakeholders adhering to principles such as good faith, prior implementation, flexibility, and transparency. The goal is to establish mutual respect, trust, and reciprocity among all parties involved.

FAO's policies also recognize the importance of FPIC in development initiatives, making it a mandatory principle within its safeguards. In the context of Malawi, FPIC entails a collaborative process where communities and stakeholders engage in consultations to reach mutual agreements on proposed projects. This process involves understanding community decision-making structures, ensuring inclusivity, and transparent communication to facilitate informed consent.

The application of FPIC varies depending on the project phase and community engagement levels. It may occur during project design or implementation, with a focus on early engagement, effective communication, and responsiveness to community needs and concerns. Ultimately, FPIC ensures that development initiatives respect the rights, interests, and autonomy of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in Malawi.

The description of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) outlines essential principles governing community engagement and decision-making processes in development projects. FPIC ensures that community members have the autonomy to provide consent voluntarily, with adequate information provided in advance to facilitate informed decision-making:

Free: Consent is freely given without coercion, ensuring that decision-making is led by rights-holders themselves. Meetings are arranged at their discretion, fostering an environment of inclusivity where all community members, regardless of gender, age, or social status, are encouraged to participate actively.

Prior: Consent is sought well in advance, allowing ample time for rights-holders to understand and analyse all relevant project information. This approach respects the decision-making timelines established by the community, ensuring that their customs and traditions are honored throughout the process.

Informed: Information provided is accessible, objective, and culturally appropriate, covering all aspects of the project's impact comprehensively. It is delivered continuously throughout the consultation process, using various formats such as radio, video, and oral presentations to cater to diverse community needs.

Consent: Decision-making occurs in an atmosphere of mutual respect and full participation, with consultations undertaken in good faith. Indigenous views are accommodated, and efforts are made to ensure equitable participation, considering the representation of women, youth, and the elderly. Options for collective decision-making are provided, allowing for the expression of consent or conditions for consent based on the community's customs and traditions.

II. Legal Framework of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) - Malawi Context

A. International Legal Framework:

The legal framework governing Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in Malawi is deeply rooted in various international agreements and conventions that emphasize the rights of Indigenous communities and their participation in decision-making processes concerning their lands, resources, and overall well-being. Key elements of the international legal framework include:

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP):

Malawi has ratified UNDRIP, which recognizes the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination, lands, territories, and resources. UNDRIP underscores the importance of FPIC in ensuring the meaningful participation of Indigenous communities in decisions affecting them. The principles outlined in UNDRIP serve as a guiding framework for FPIC implementation in Malawi.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):

As a party to the UNFCCC, Malawi is committed to addressing climate change and its impacts. The principles of FPIC are integral to climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, particularly those involving Indigenous communities. Through the UNFCCC, Malawi recognizes the importance of Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices in developing effective climate change strategies.

UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): The CBD recognizes the critical role of Indigenous knowledge in biodiversity conservation. It emphasizes Indigenous Peoples' rights to be involved in decisions regarding genetic resources and traditional knowledge, aligning closely with FPIC principles.

B. National Legal Framework in Malawi:

Malawi is home to diverse Indigenous communities, each with its own languages, cultures, and customary laws. The Chewa people are one of the largest ethnic groups in Malawi. The Tumbuka people primarily inhabit the northern region of Malawi. The Yao and Lomwe community reside mainly in the southern region of Malawi. The Ngoni people migrated to Malawi from South Africa and settled in the eastern and southern parts of the country.

While the legal landscape may not explicitly focus on Indigenous Peoples, various laws and policies play a significant role in safeguarding their rights, particularly concerning land tenure and ownership.

Constitution of Malawi (1994): The Constitution guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms to all citizens, including Indigenous Peoples. It ensures equality before the law and prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity or cultural background. Additionally, it recognizes the significance of customary land tenure and the rights of Indigenous communities to their ancestral lands.

Land Act (2016): This act provides a legal framework for land governance and administration in Malawi. It recognizes customary land tenure systems and outlines procedures for registering and managing customary land rights. Indigenous communities are integral to the land administration processes, ensuring their participation in decision-making regarding land use and management.

Education Act (2013): While not specific to Indigenous Peoples, this act promotes inclusive and quality education for all Malawian children, regardless of their cultural background. It acknowledges the importance of preserving Indigenous languages and cultures within the education system.

Customary Land Act (2002): This legislation recognizes and protects customary land rights, including those of Indigenous communities. It establishes mechanisms for resolving disputes related to customary land ownership and emphasizes the need for community involvement in land management decisions.

Wildlife and National Parks Act (2017): Governing wildlife conservation and protected areas management, this act ensures Indigenous communities' participation in wildlife management and benefits-sharing. It recognizes their traditional knowledge and practices in sustainable resource management.

Forestry Act (1997): Addressing forestry management and conservation, this act involves Indigenous communities in forest management activities and benefits-sharing. It acknowledges their rights to forest resources and emphasizes the importance of sustainable forestry practices.

Cultural Heritage Act (2018): This legislation protects and promotes Malawi's cultural heritage, including that of Indigenous Peoples. It safeguards Indigenous cultural expressions, traditional knowledge, and heritage sites from unauthorized use or exploitation.

Gender Equality Act (2013): While not specific to Indigenous Peoples, this act promotes gender equality and prohibits discrimination based on gender. It ensures the inclusion of Indigenous women in decision-making processes and protects their rights within their communities.

Overall, Malawi's legal framework reflects a commitment to recognizing and protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples. By incorporating Indigenous perspectives and customary practices into relevant laws and policies, the country aims to ensure the equitable participation and benefit-sharing of Indigenous communities in all aspects of development, including the EbAM project.

III. Implementing FPIC Plan

In the context of the EbAM project in Malawi, further consultation will occur on specific project sites in early implementation phase. While the presence of Indigenous Peoples may vary, FPIC will be utilized for all potential beneficiary communities ensuring engagement in their language, equitable sharing of benefits, and confirmation of preferred Grievance Redress Mechanisms. The process for FPIC will include the following steps:

Identifying rights-holders: This step involves engaging with local communities in a participatory manner to identify individuals and groups who hold formal or customary rights to the land and its resources. It requires understanding the dynamics of land use, including traditional practices and tenure systems. Through this process, the project team can determine who has the authority to provide consent for project activities and ensure that all relevant stakeholders are included in the consultation process.

Ascertaining legal status of lands: Clarifying the legal status of the lands involves examining existing laws and regulations related to land tenure and local/Indigenous rights. This step aims to understand the legal framework within which the project will operate and identify any potential conflicts or discrepancies between statutory laws and customary practices. By recognizing local communities'/Indigenous Peoples' rights under both formal and customary law, the project can ensure that these rights are respected and upheld throughout the implementation process.

Mapping claims to land: Participatory mapping and documentation of land usage and natural resources are essential for understanding the spatial distribution of rights and interests within the project area. This process involves working closely with local communities to create maps that reflect their knowledge and experiences. The maps should identify areas of significance, such as sacred sites or areas used for subsistence farming and highlight any overlapping or conflicting claims to land and resources. By involving communities in the mapping process, the project can build trust and ensure that their perspectives are incorporated into project planning and decision-making.

Identifying decision-making institutions: Ensuring that rights-holders are represented through accountable and legitimate individuals and institutions is crucial for building trust and legitimacy in the consultation process. This step involves identifying traditional leaders, community organizations, and other institutions that have the authority to speak on behalf of the community. By involving trusted representatives in consultation, negotiation, and decision-making processes, the project can ensure that agreements are reached in a transparent and inclusive manner.

Carrying out consultations: Consultations should be conducted in an iterative and participatory manner, with a focus on active and meaningful involvement from all stakeholders. This includes providing relevant information in accessible formats, facilitating discussions in local languages, and creating opportunities for open dialogue and debate. Consultations should occur at times and locations that are convenient for community members, ensuring that everyone can participate fully in the decision-making process.

Providing access to independent information: Communities have the right to access independent sources of information to make informed decisions about project activities. This may include information on the potential social, environmental, and economic impacts of the project, as well as alternatives to the proposed development. By providing communities with access to diverse perspectives and expertise, the project can empower them to make decisions that align with their priorities and values.

Reaching agreement: The consent-seeking process should be free from manipulation and coercion, with agreements reached through mutual understanding and respect. This involves documenting the causes of withheld consent and establishing conditions for renegotiation if necessary. Agreements should be recognized by all parties and documented in forms and languages accessible to the community. By ensuring that agreements are reached in a transparent and inclusive manner, the project can build trust and foster long-term partnerships with local communities.

Monitoring agreements: Monitoring and verification procedures should be jointly defined to ensure that agreements made during the consultation process are respected in practice. This may involve regular meetings between project stakeholders, independent monitoring by third-party organizations, and mechanisms for resolving disputes or grievances that may arise. By actively involving communities in monitoring activities, the project can ensure that their voices are heard, and their concerns addressed throughout the implementation process.

Establishing a grievance process: Developing an independent mechanism for raising concerns is essential for addressing grievances that may arise during the project's lifetime. This involves establishing clear procedures for receiving, reviewing, and resolving grievances in a timely and transparent manner. The grievance mechanism should be accessible to all stakeholders and included in project agreements to ensure accountability and compliance with project commitments. By providing communities with a platform to voice their concerns, the project can prevent conflicts from escalating and promote peaceful resolution of disputes.

Providing access to remedy: Ensuring access to remedy is essential for fulfilling the right to remedy for actors who feel their rights have been violated. This involves establishing conflict resolution mechanisms that are accessible, impartial, and culturally appropriate. The project should discuss forms of remedy during the consent-seeking stages and incorporate these into project agreements. By addressing grievances and providing avenues for redress, the project can build trust and strengthen relationships with local communities.

Documenting lessons learned: Documenting lessons learned throughout the FPIC process is important for improving future actions and promoting continuous learning and adaptation. This involves capturing both strengths and weaknesses of the consultation process, as well as identifying areas for improvement. By reflecting on past experiences and incorporating feedback from stakeholders, the project can enhance its approach to community engagement and ensure that future initiatives are more effective and sustainable.

The communities and staff in charge of the FPIC process will perform the following tasks:

- i) Keep records of all consultations, including how participants were chosen. This includes information about the participants' demographics (men, women, youth).
- ii) Document the discussed topics and the resulting agreements. These records will be maintained as meeting minutes in each community where agreements are made.

They will also document participation details, such as when and how many representatives from local communities/Indigenous Peoples and local communities took part. This documentation will cover their roles, responsibilities, and obligations to the communities they represent, as well as the commitments and agreements made.

Instances where FPIC is given will be recorded. Consent will usually be formalized through agreements involving the borrower (or designated agency), local communities, and territories. These agreements will clearly outline the agreed-upon aspects, like priority issues, commitments, timelines, budgets, roles, and responsibilities. The people involved, along with their positions, will be clearly

mentioned. Mechanisms established to sustain dialogue and address disagreements will also be outlined.

IV – Engagement process with Local Communities/Indigenous People

In order to ensure meaningful consultation and engagement with local/Indigenous communities within the EbAM project in Malawi, the following approach will be adopted:

a. Identification of Project Sites and Activities: Project sites and activities will be identified under activity 1.1.1, as detailed in the project funding proposal. During the inception phase in Year 1, sub-activities will be delineated to assess potential risks and impacts at a granular level. This process will include identifying implementing sites.

b. Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) Consultations: FPIC consultations will be initiated in areas where potential beneficiary local/Indigenous communities are located, following the guidelines outlined in the FAO's FPIC Manual for Project Practitioners. This process will involve obtaining consent from local/Indigenous communities prior to the commencement of project activities, ensuring that consent is freely given without coercion, and providing information in culturally appropriate formats and languages. Consent will be sought through the community's customary decision-making processes, with representation from all relevant demographic groups.

c. Information Conveyance Prior to Consultations: Information conveyed before consultation events will include identifying potential beneficiary local communities/Indigenous Peoples in the project area, explaining the nature and potential impacts of the project, providing relevant technical studies and reports in accessible formats, and outlining stakeholders' rights and responsibilities. The format and content of information dissemination will be tailored to the preferences of different stakeholder groups.

d. Tailored Consultation Methods: Consultation methods will be adapted to suit the nature of the project and the needs of stakeholders. This may involve conducting public hearings, workshops, focus groups, or discussions using various formats such as role play or electronic media. Consultation events will be held at different locations and times to accommodate diverse stakeholder groups, including those who are geographically dispersed or have specific temporal considerations.

e. Identification of Indigenous Peoples: The IPs under EbAM will be identified during the FPIC process according to the pre-defined criteria.

f. Safeguards Screening: Safeguards screenings, conducted as outlined in the main Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), will utilize the FAO's "Environmental and Social Screening Form" to assess potential environmental and social risks associated with project activities.

g. Development of Indigenous People Plans (IPPs): Indigenous People Plans will be developed for areas with ethnic minorities, incorporating inputs obtained through the FPIC process and baseline socio-economic information about the Indigenous groups (Appendix VI of the ESMF provides the table of content). These plans will assess potential impacts on communities, identify barriers to participation, propose mitigation measures, and outline monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of the project while safeguarding the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples.

V - Implementation modalities:

The Central Project Implementation Unit (CPIU) will ensure effective collaboration between the Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialist (International Technical Assistance – ITA) and the national safeguards expert, along with other specialized staff. This collaborative approach aims to empower project-recruited staff to implement and monitor Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and Indigenous People Plans (IPPs) under the guidance of the Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialist. Initial training and annual refresher courses on environmental and social safeguards, including engagement with local/Indigenous communities, will be provided to project staff and facilitators, led by the international Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialist. All safeguards-related documentation will be reviewed and approved by the international Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialist.

The logical framework and project implementation manual include specific indicators to measure FPIC. The staff responsible for the FPIC process will be the coordination of the PMU with the technical support of the social inclusion personnel. These actions will be articulated and described in FAO's Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), key institutional documents for giving follow-up and as part of FAO's instruments to evaluate the implementation of this plan. During the mid-term mission and supervision missions, the FPIC process will be evaluated by an expert (targeting and social inclusion).

To ensure continuous consultations, monitoring, and reporting for safeguards, including engagement with local/Indigenous Peoples, the project has allocated resources for hiring international and national Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists, conducting annual refresher trainings, holding consultations with participants, and monitoring and reporting on the project Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMP) every six months. The international and national Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists will oversee consultations related to the FPIC process and provide ongoing support for monitoring and reporting concerning ethnic minority communities. The project has also allocated resources for hiring FPIC facilitators who will implement FPIC process under sub-activity 1.1.1.2. Budget allocations for FPIC development and monitoring/reporting are already included in the project budget, with the international and national Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists responsible for ensuring that FPIC/IPP include measures to mitigate negative impacts on local/Indigenous communities while maximizing their project benefits as well as FPIC facilitators responsible for implementing FPIC in the fields.

Example of Terms of Reference for Facilitators

The consultation process leading to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) is led by the local Governments in collaboration with national institutions. Selecting suitable facilitators is crucial for a positive FPIC process outcome. The selection process must duly consider the cultural context in which the facilitator will work, linguistic competencies, ethnicity, gender, experience in consultation and participatory processes, age (e.g., elder individuals may prefer communicating with older facilitators), technical knowledge about the proposed project.

The facilitator's role is not to moderate or negotiate with communities but to engage in consultations about the proposed project with the respective communities and effectively facilitate decision-making while considering the governance and decision-making systems of the involved community. Throughout this process, the facilitator must support community empowerment and capacity-building, ensuring that the community can adequately assess the proposed project and its implications, leading to a freely and informedly made community decision.

Minimum requirements for the facilitator include understanding the cultural context they'll work in, a special sensitivity towards rights-related issues, and technical knowledge about the subjects under

review. They must be neutral, trustworthy, and equally accountable to FAO, the Government, and the community.

In collaboration with FAO (when seeking consent in the project design phase), the Government, and relevant stakeholders, the facilitator will implement a series of measures related to the consent acquisition process, ensuring that:

- i) Information communicated to communities is comprehensive, accurate, and in understandable language, including visual materials, to convey the scope of the proposed project and the respective consultation.
- ii) A relationship of trust is established with communities, fostering a trustful environment conducive to decision-making.
- iii) The community determines the decision-making process without interference, coercion, or any form of pressure.
- iv) The community decides the timeline for the decision-making process, and meetings and workshops are scheduled based on their availability.
- v) Agreement is reached on the language the community wishes to use, especially for written materials.
- vi) Cultural norms and customary practices of the community are respected.
- vii) Transparent and accurate information about the proposed project is provided, clearly communicating the negative and positive effects, particularly short- and long-term repercussions, risks, and benefits.
- viii) Information is provided to all community members and is compatible with their governance system and decision-making bodies.
- ix) Agreement is reached on community representatives responsible for giving consent, and/or consent is collectively granted by the entire community.
- x) Agreement is reached on how consent will be given (e.g., raising hands, voting, signatures, delegation of leaders, etc.).

Appendix VII: Indigenous Peoples Plan (table of content)

The GCF-FAO Project “*Ecosystems-based Adaptation for resilient Watersheds and Communities in Malawi (EbAM)*” necessitates the development of an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) if it is anticipated to impact Indigenous communities, as a result of the FPIC process. This plan must align with the FAO Environmental and Social Safeguards concerning Indigenous Peoples and be commensurate with the project's complexity and potential effects on Indigenous rights, lands, livelihoods, and cultural heritage. In situations where project activities or locations are not fully specified, an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) must be prepared.

With the active participation of affected communities, the IPP should encompass various key elements:

- A. Executive Summary: Briefly outlines essential facts, findings, and recommended actions.
- B. Project Description: Provides a general overview of the project, its area, and components likely to affect Indigenous communities in Malawi.
- C. Indigenous Peoples Description: Details affected Indigenous groups, their locations, resources, and vulnerable subgroups within them.
- D. Rights and Legal Framework: Covers Indigenous rights and relevant legal frameworks, including analyses of land and resource ownership issues.
- E. Social and Environmental Assessment: Summarizes findings and mitigation measures from impact studies, with a focus on Indigenous Peoples' involvement.
- F. Participation and Consent Processes: Highlights consultation and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes, ensuring Indigenous support.
- G. Equitable Benefits: Identifies measures for culturally appropriate benefit-sharing, determined through consultation and consent.
- H. Gender Assessment and Action Plan.
- I. Capacity Support: Describes measures to enhance Indigenous organizations' capabilities.
- J. Grievance Redress: Outlines procedures for addressing grievances, considering Indigenous customary laws.
- K. Monitoring and Evaluation: Details mechanisms for transparent monitoring, evaluation, and periodic IPP revision in consultation with Indigenous Peoples.
- L. Institutional Arrangements: Defines responsibilities and oversight mechanisms, including roles for impartial entities.
- M. Budget and Financing: Presents a cost plan sufficient for IPP implementation.

It is crucial that project activities potentially affecting Indigenous Peoples are not carried out until corresponding IPP measures are implemented. If project components are fully defined later, an IPPF will guide the screening, assessment, and development of specific IPP (s), focusing on potential adverse social and environmental impacts.

Appendix VIII: Example of Terms of References for environmental and social safeguards specialist

I. General Objectives of the Assignment

The following are terms of reference for the preparation and monitoring of safeguards instruments (risk mitigation plans) for the GCF-FAO Project “*Ecosystems-based Adaptation for resilient Watersheds and Communities in Malawi (EbAM)*”. As per the Project risk category and guidance received by the ESM Unit, the instruments to be prepared are: the project Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMP), implementation safeguards documents, an Indigenous Peoples Plan, etc. These will inform FAO's approach to environmental and social management issues to be adopted under the Project (which is described above).

The main objective of this assignment is to develop, implement and monitor the above-mentioned risk mitigation plans. The assignment includes the collection and analysis of primary and secondary data, information and materials. This shall provide clear, comprehensive and practical guidance to the FAO on integrating an environmental/social due diligence process into the project implementation.

After the completion of the assignment, FAO should be knowledgeable on the key due diligence issues to be expected for the project and have the analytical capabilities and capacity to manage them in line with international good practice.

II. Specific Tasks

The consultant is encouraged to use [FAO's templates](#) for the risk management plans. In any case, the instruments should cover the scope of the FAO template. The consultant should contact ESM-unit@fao.org for further guidance on how to apply FAO's Environmental and Social Management Guideline.

The objective of the preparation of a comprehensive project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents is to ensure sufficient guidance is provided to FAO in the selection, preparation and implementation of project's activities in order to avoid or minimize environmental and social risks and negative impacts and enhance the environmental and social performance. This will be accomplished through the development and application of proper selection criteria for activities, planning that takes into account environmental and social criteria, sound implementation and monitoring, and disclosure, consultation and feedback. To achieve this objective and with the support of FAO the consultant/s will carry out the following tasks through research, interviews, field visits and teleworking:

- Based on a detailed description of the project, develop and provide guidance on environmental and social criteria to be used during the identification and selection of priority activities. Also develop a list of activities and potential activities not recommendable for support, due to their poor environmental or social performance.
- Compile a summary of key domestic legislative, regulatory and administrative regimes in each of the project countries, within which the project will operate, with a focus on requirements that will apply to the planning, approval and implementation of activities; research and summarize regional agreements and treaties that are relevant to project planning and implementation, as well as environmental management and due diligence.
- Establish a clear understanding of the institutional requirements, roles and responsibilities for adopting and implementing the ESMP and implementation safeguards documents. Importantly, this should include a thorough review of the authority and capability of institutions at different levels (e.g. local, district, governorate and national) and their capacity to manage and monitor ESMP implementation.

- Identify all relevant potential environmental risks and social concerns that may arise as a result of the project;
- Propose realistic and effective arrangements for FAO to develop the capacity to manage environmental and social due diligence processes and activities in the project; propose reporting lines, review and approval functions; identify the required resources and technical assistance measures to establish and maintain capacity for the project duration and beyond; develop a process (incl. timeline, budget, organizational requirements, required trainer profiles and expertise) for building and enhancing the capacity of the institutions responsible for implementing the ESMP.
- Define the requirements for technical assistance to FAO, civil society organizations (CSO), service providers and public sector institutions to implement, manage, supervise, observe or support the implementation of the ESMP.

Appendix IX: Biodiversity Management Planning Framework

1. Introduction

In line with the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing, the EbAM project acknowledges the potential risks to biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural habitats, particularly concerning the access to genetic resources and traditional knowledge held by local communities and farmers. The project aims to mitigate these risks by ensuring that the utilization of traditional knowledge and genetic resources is conducted in a fair and equitable manner, aligning with the principles outlined in the Convention on Biological Diversity.

This Biodiversity Management Framework aims to describe the planned approach taken by the EbAM project to safeguard biodiversity resources, and to manage and mitigate potential impacts that could arise during project implementation. It provides an overview of the potential risks and impacts, and outlines strategies to avoid and mitigate them. The project Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) will include a section on biodiversity to ensure the biodiversity management planning frameworks measures are effectively integrated and implemented.

2. Biodiversity characterization

Malawi boasts a remarkable wealth of biodiversity, encompassing diverse flora, fauna, and ecosystems shaped by its varied climate, soils, and topography. However, despite its significance, Malawi's biodiversity faces severe threats stemming from habitat loss, fragmentation, and isolation of remaining communities. A primary driver of biodiversity degradation is the country's high population density, which leads to increased land clearance for agriculture and settlement purposes. This trend exacerbates the loss of critical habitats for numerous species across Malawi.

About 11% of Malawi's total dry land area is allocated as national parks and wildlife reserves, highlighting the country's commitment to conserving its natural heritage. These protected areas serve as crucial habitats for diverse plant and animal species, contributing significantly to biodiversity conservation efforts.

Table 1. Protected Area in Malawi

Region	District	Protected Area	Area (Hectares)
Northern Region	Mzimba	Nyika National Park	3,134 km ²
	Nkhata Bay	Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve	986 km ²
Central Region	Kasungu	Kasungu National Park	2,316 km ²
	Nkhotakota	Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve	1,800 km ²
Southern Region	Machinga	Liwonde National Park	548 km ²
	Chikwawa	Lengwe National Park	877 km ²
	Chikwawa	Majete Wildlife Reserve	700 km ²
	Nsanje	Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve	135 km ²
	Mangochi	Lake Malawi National Park	94 km ²

Source: Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Malawi

The **Northern Region of Malawi**, encompassing districts such as Rumphi, Nkhata Bay, Karonga, and Chitipa, is renowned for its rich biodiversity. This region boasts a diverse array of ecosystems, including highland plateaus, mountain ranges, and lush forests, which provide habitats for a wide variety of plant and animal species. Approximately 35% of Malawi's plant species and 40% of its mammal species are found in the Northern Region, making it a crucial area for biodiversity conservation.

Protected areas play a vital role in preserving the Northern Region's natural heritage. Nyika National Park, situated on the Nyika Plateau, is one of Malawi's largest parks and is renowned for its unique montane grasslands and rich wildlife, including herds of roan antelope and eland. Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve, located in the northwestern part of the region, encompasses wetlands, woodlands, and savannah, providing critical habitat for hippos, crocodiles, and various bird species.

In total, the protected areas in the Northern Region cover over 500,000 hectares, accounting for approximately 20% of Malawi's total protected area. These conservation areas not only safeguard biodiversity but also support ecotourism activities, providing economic opportunities for local communities. However, the region faces challenges such as poaching, habitat degradation, and encroachment, highlighting the need for sustainable management practices and community involvement in conservation efforts.

The **Central Region of Malawi**, comprising districts like Kasungu, Nkhotakota, and Dedza, is characterized by a mosaic of landscapes, including miombo woodlands, wetlands, and agricultural fields. Despite significant deforestation and habitat loss due to agricultural expansion and urbanization, the region still harbors important biodiversity hotspots, particularly within its protected areas.

Kasungu National Park, located in the northern part of the region, is one of Malawi's largest parks and is home to diverse wildlife, including elephants, antelopes, and predators like lions and leopards. Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve, situated along the shores of Lake Malawi, protects critical habitats for hippos, crocodiles, and numerous bird species.

In total, the protected areas in the Central Region cover approximately 250,000 hectares, representing around 10% of Malawi's total protected area. These conservation areas serve as refuges for wildlife and contribute to the region's ecological resilience. However, they also face threats such as poaching, illegal logging, and habitat fragmentation, underscoring the importance of effective conservation management and community engagement.

The **Southern Region of Malawi**, encompassing districts like Thyolo, Mulanje, Mwanza, and Nsanje, is characterized by its diverse topography, ranging from highland mountains to lowland plains. This region supports a wide variety of ecosystems, including montane forests, wetlands, and riverine habitats, which are home to numerous plant and animal species.

Protected areas in the Southern Region, such as Liwonde National Park and Majete Wildlife Reserve, play a crucial role in conserving biodiversity and providing habitat for species like elephants, rhinos, and big cats. These conservation areas also support important ecosystem services, such as water regulation and soil conservation, which are vital for local communities' livelihoods and agricultural productivity.

In total, the protected areas in the Southern Region cover approximately 150,000 hectares, constituting approximately 6% of Malawi's total protected area. Despite facing pressures from habitat loss, illegal logging, and human-wildlife conflict, these conservation areas remain essential for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the region. Collaboration between government agencies, local communities, and conservation organizations is essential to ensure the long-term viability of these protected areas and the biodiversity they support.

3. Water resource challenges and impacts of land and forest degradation in Malawi

Water resource challenges:

Severe land degradation and deforestation pose significant risks to Malawi's water resources, leading to a cascade of adverse effects. Critical watersheds are deteriorating, resulting in diminished water availability, declining water quality, heightened vulnerability to extreme weather events like droughts and floods, compromised energy security, and reduced agricultural productivity. Although Malawi boasts a considerable network of surface water bodies, covering around 21% of the country's total area, including Lake Malawi, the availability of water resources per capita is rapidly diminishing. This alarming trend places Malawi on the brink of water scarcity. Additionally, water availability fluctuates markedly between wet and dry seasons, further compounded by inadequate water storage infrastructure, which is among the lowest in the region.

Impact of land degradation on fertility and soil microbiome:

Land degradation has reached alarming levels in Malawi's crucial watersheds, profoundly affecting soil chemical and physical fertility, soil organic matter and soil microorganisms (microbiome⁷⁴) loss, water security, agricultural productivity, and hydropower generation. Recent studies indicate that approximately 41% of the country's land area is enveloped by land degradation hotspots. Soil erosion and nutrient depletion are rampant, afflicting over 60% of the entire land area. Notably, the Shire River Basin stands out as a major hotspot for land degradation, with sediment accumulation in riverbeds, reservoirs, and floodplain wetlands severely affecting irrigation canals, fisheries, and hydropower generation.

The escalating pressure on land resources and land degradation stands out as a critical environmental concern in Malawi. This issue, affecting up to 60% of the land area, manifests in soil erosion and declining soil fertility, with soil loss recorded at rates ranging from 0.90 to 19.8 ton/ha/year in 2014. The

⁷⁴ Soil microbiota, is defined as the living bacteria, archaea, fungi, algae, and protozoa that inhabit the soil. For more information on soil microbiome, see the FAO publication from: Kendzior, J., Warren Raffa, D. and Bogdanski, A. 2022. The soil microbiome: a game changer for food and agriculture – Executive summary for policymakers and researchers. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0717en>

northern districts, particularly Chitipa, Karonga, east Rumphi, Nkhata Bay, Ntchisi, east Dowa, Dedza, Ntcheu, Thyolo, Mulanje, and west Zomba, have experienced significant soil loss, as indicated by the historical Average Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) of 2021.

Land degradation, by affecting soil microbial ecosystems, impacts some of the most genetically diverse communities on the planet. These communities of organisms (living bacteria, archaea, fungi, algae, and protozoa) provide a wide range of ecosystem services, including provisioning of clean water and air, food production, and biodiversity. Furthermore, the soil microbiome is significantly involved in the planet's climate system, because it is a direct driver of terrestrial greenhouse gas fluxes and soil carbon dynamics.

Climate change exacerbates these issues of land degradation and decreased soil fertility, with heavy rains contributing to soil loss, a trend expected to intensify in the future. Unsustainable farming practices, driven by the escalating demand for agricultural land and wood fuels due to population growth, are primary drivers of land degradation, resulting in substantial economic losses. The southern region is particularly susceptible to land degradation, which has profound implications for vital services like water, fisheries, transportation, electricity generation, agriculture, and irrigation.

Additionally, the decline in terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity in Malawi is attributed to increasing human pressure and inadequate governance of natural resources. Malawi's unique ecosystems, including woodlands, swamps, wetlands, lakes, and rivers, face significant threats from habitat destruction, primarily driven by forest clearing for wood, charcoal, and subsistence agriculture, posing a severe risk to wildlife biodiversity.

Forest degradation's toll:

Forest degradation significantly contributes to the degradation of land and water resources in Malawi. Over the past four decades, more than half of Malawi's forests and woodlands have vanished, with the remaining forests undergoing depletion through excessive extraction and frequent forest fires. Yet, forests play a crucial role in sustaining livelihoods, the economy, and vital ecosystem services. Forest degradation threatens the ecological balance and further exacerbates water resource vulnerabilities.

Furthermore, Malawi's natural forests, including the once extensive Miombo forests, face depletion, with overharvesting for firewood and charcoal being a leading cause. Forest and woodlands, accounting for 5 percent of the country's total wealth and 12 percent of natural capital, are declining steadily due to unsustainable harvesting practices. Overreliance on biomass for cooking exacerbates deforestation, with more than 97 percent of households relying on forests for energy. This dependence on biomass fuels contributes to high levels of deforestation and forest degradation, negatively impacting water availability, hydropower generation, and exacerbating vulnerability to climate change. The charcoal industry, predominantly serving urban markets, drives deforestation, despite around 80 percent of charcoal producers operating on a small scale in rural areas.

4. Addressing land degradation challenges in Malawi: root causes and government initiatives

The multifaceted drivers of land degradation in Malawi underscore the complexity of the issue, which requires a holistic approach to effectively address.

- **Escalating demands for agricultural land and wood fuels:**

Population growth in Malawi has led to increased pressure on land resources for agricultural activities and the extraction of wood fuels. As the population expands, more land is cleared for farming, often through unsustainable practices like slash-and-burn agriculture. Additionally, the high demand for wood fuels, such as firewood and charcoal, further accelerates deforestation, leading to soil erosion and habitat degradation.

- **Insufficient knowledge of sustainable farming practices:**

Limited awareness and education about sustainable farming techniques among rural communities contribute to land degradation. Many farmers lack access to information on soil conservation, crop rotation, agroforestry, and other practices that promote soil health and productivity. Consequently, they continue to rely on traditional farming methods that degrade soil quality and exacerbate erosion.

- **Insecure land tenure:**

Insecure land tenure systems and land disputes discourage long-term investments in land conservation and sustainable management practices. Farmers may hesitate to implement soil conservation

measures or invest in land improvement activities if they fear losing access to their land or facing eviction. Inadequate land tenure security undermines efforts to promote sustainable land use and exacerbates land degradation.

- **Limited access to markets and rural finance:**

The lack of access to markets and financial services in rural areas hinders agricultural productivity and exacerbates land degradation. Farmers often struggle to access credit, inputs, and modern farming technologies, making it difficult to adopt sustainable land management practices. Moreover, poor infrastructure and transportation networks limit farmers' ability to market their produce, reducing their income and perpetuating poverty in rural communities.

- **Biophysical factors and poor land management practices:**

Malawi's diverse biophysical characteristics, including steep slopes, fragile soils, and variable climate patterns, exacerbate land degradation. Unsuitable land management practices such as overgrazing, improper irrigation, and deforestation further degrade soil quality and contribute to erosion. These factors, combined with natural hazards like floods and droughts, intensify the vulnerability of land resources to degradation.

Government response and initiatives:

Reversing the alarming trend of land degradation remains a top priority for the Malawian Government. Acknowledging the intricate linkages between natural resource management, agricultural production, water security, and energy, government ministries have implemented robust policies and institutional frameworks. The enactment of the Environmental Management Act of 2017 and the Water Resources Act of 2013 underscores the Government's commitment to bolster environmental protection and water resource management.

The establishment of the National Water Resources Authority aims to enhance coordinated planning and management of water resources, facilitating sustainable watershed management at the community level. Land reforms introduced in 2016 aim to enhance land tenure security and incentivize small-holder farmers and businesses to invest in sustainable land and water management practices. Additionally, the approval of a new National Charcoal Strategy provides an opportunity to legalize the charcoal value chain, reducing pressure on forests and community woodlands. However, implementation challenges persist due to weak institutional capacity, limited funding, and ineffective monitoring and compliance mechanisms.

To mitigate landscape degradation and safeguard watersheds, Malawi must make substantial investments in protecting and restoring renewable natural resources. These efforts necessitate sustainable forest management practices, the development of water management infrastructure, the promotion of climate-smart agriculture, and the fostering of resilient livelihoods. Concurrently, the Government must strengthen institutional capacities and improve the monitoring, management, and utilization of hydro-meteorological information. The National Forest and Landscape Restoration Strategy envisions elevating land restoration to a national priority, supported by substantial financial investments.

Overview of Potential Risks and Associated Mitigation Measures

The implementation of development projects often comes with inherent risks, particularly in sensitive areas such as biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural habitats. Understanding these risks and implementing appropriate mitigation measures is crucial to ensure sustainable and responsible project execution.

In the context of the EbAM project, which focuses on integrated landscape management, ecosystems-based adaptation (agroecology) and resilient livelihoods, potential risks related to biodiversity and ecosystems will be carefully addressed. This involves identifying trigger activities that could lead to social and environmental risks, referencing relevant checklists and standards, and implementing targeted mitigation actions (see table below). By proactively addressing these challenges, the project can maximize its positive impact while minimizing negative repercussions on the environment and local communities.

Component 1 of the project, which centres on integrated landscape management, includes activities aimed at preparing (sub-activity 1.1.3) and implementing (activity 1.2.2) Village-level Action Plans (VLAPs) built on Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) principles. These activities have the potential to trigger risks related to biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural habitats. For instance, the implementation

of VLAPs may involve accessing genetic resources for utilization, introducing new crops or varieties (invasive or not well adapted to Malawi's ecosystems), providing seeds for cultivation, and managing planted forests (see table below with more details). The project has several measures for mitigating negative risks. These include: (i) the ESMF, which contains safeguard measures and so will ESMP and implementation safeguards documents (see below); (ii) the ILM approach integrates impact screening, detailed analysis and selection of measures to be implemented as beneficiaries' activities; the approach includes boundary definition, resources inventorying, their analysis and management planning, accompanied by capacity training and the help of experts. (iii) The project will work on reintroducing lost varieties, and native/ well-adapted crops that were lost due to monoculture. The Feasibility Study (Annex 2) has a list of trees shrubs and crops varieties and species to reduce risk of invasive species.

Similarly, under Component 2, which focuses on resilient livelihoods and food systems, activities such as EbA agriculture extension support may trigger risks related to biodiversity and ecosystems. These activities could involve accessing genetic resources, introducing new crops, or establishing partnerships that impact vulnerable rural workers. To mitigate these risks, the project has incorporated measures to reintroduce, through e.g. FFS, lost varieties and native crops that were lost due to monoculture, and has a dedicated set of sub-activities related to agrobiodiversity promotion (activity 1.2.3).

A comprehensive assessment of potential adverse impacts will be conducted as part of the development of the project ESMP and implementation safeguards documents. This analysis is crucial given that specific implementation sites will be determined during project execution. Therefore, careful attention will be given to ensure that site selection aligns with biodiversity considerations and complies with the project's planning framework and overall ESMF. Screening will be performed using FAO's environmental and social screening checklist to identify sub-activities requiring mitigation measures, as outlined in Sections 6 and 7 of the project documentation. For project activities requiring mitigation, an ESMP will be developed and monitored throughout the implementation phase.

Responsibilities for implementing these measures lie with the Environmental and Social Safeguards (ITA) and national safeguards specialist, both working within the Central Project Coordination Unit - CPIU) based in FAO. The safeguards experts who will work closely with CPIUs Natural Resources Management Specialists, and Agroecology & EbA Specialists, as well as Environmental District Officers to ensure compliance with the project ESMP.

Biodiversity Impact Assessment and Mitigation Table

Component	Sub-Component	Triggered Project Activity	Potential Triggers of Social and Environmental Risks	Potential Mitigation Actions for Biodiversity	Responsibility
1. Integrated Landscape Management	Implementation of VLAPs based on EbA	Activity 1.1.3 (VLAP preparation) and Activity 1.2.2 (VLAP implementation)	Access to inputs and equipment. Examples of risks include: (i) seeds procurement of invasive species or seeds contaminated with invasive species, (ii) use and disposal of plastic bags and other petrol-based or non biodegradable/ reusable/ repairable items (that could degrade into micro-plastics and impact the soil microbiome and living organisms), (iii) inappropriate tillage that reduces soil biodiversity, (iv) VLAP inclusion of forest or modification of the environment, hence decreasing biodiversity, (v) limited	For (i) the project will consult experts (botanists) on all seeds to be procured and avoid species with potential to be invasive. The project will select reliable seed suppliers by checking their seed procurement process, esp. packaging, storage and transportation. For (ii) the Project will minimize use of nonbiodegradable/reusable/ repairable goods, and avoid use of petrol-based goods. For (iii) the Project will abide by the minimum tillage principle. For (iv) the project will screen VLAPs, with close oversight of safeguards experts from the CPIU. For (v) traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources held by local communities: 1. Ensure access with prior consent and involvement, and fair benefit sharing. 2. resident stakeholders will be involved in assessing risks and deciding on their mitigation	Environmental and Social Safeguards ITA, national safeguards specialist Natural Resources Management Specialist.

Component	Sub-Component	Triggered Project Activity	Potential Triggers of Social and Environmental Risks	Potential Mitigation Actions for Biodiversity	Responsibility
			<p>use of traditional knowledge.</p> <p>Standard 2 (Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Natural Habitats) triggered as VLAP implementation may access genetic resources for utilization</p>	measures as a part of VLAP formulation process.	
2. Resilient Livelihoods and Food Systems	Promotion of EbA-based production systems	Activity 2.1.1 (EbA agriculture extension support) and 2.1.2 (knowledge and innovation)	<p>Access to inputs and equipment. Examples of risks include: (i) seeds procurement of invasive species or seeds for FFS contaminated with invasive species, (ii) use and disposal of plastic bags and other petrol-based or non biodegradable/ reuseable/ repairable items (that could degrade into micro-plastics and impact the soil microbiome and living organisms), (iii) inappropriate tillage that reduces soil biodiversity, (iv) limited use of traditional knowledge during the FFS by FFS Master Trainers and facilitators.</p>	<p>For (i)-(iii), same as above. For traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources held by local communities: 1. Ensure access with prior consent and involvement, and fair benefit sharing. 2. Align activities with access and benefit sharing guidelines. Train FFS Master trainers and facilitators on EbA approach and practices, including agrobiodiversity and local knowledge promotion.</p>	Environmental and Social Safeguards ITA; , national safeguards specialist; agroecology & EbA specialists

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Appendix X: EbAM approach to conflict risk

EbAM approach to conflict risk⁷⁵

FAO's commitment to integrating conflict resolution and peace-building

Agriculture, natural resources and ecosystems, food security and nutrition can be sources of peace or conflict, crisis or recovery. Particularly in fragile, conflict-and violence affected (FCV) contexts, FAO is dedicated to making sure that our work avoids contributing to divisions, disputes and violent conflict, and does no harm. Where possible, positive contributions to local peace related to the Organization's mandate are identified and supported, as first formalized in 2018 in the [Corporate Framework to Support Sustainable Peace in the Context of Agenda 2030](#).

Conflicts and fragility in Malawi

Malawi is a country with a Fragile State score of 83.2, ranking 43rd (according to the Fragile States Index⁷⁶), with and ND-GAIN vulnerability index of 0.54⁷⁷. In comparison to some other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Malawi does not list as a "Fragile and Conflict-affected country" (FCV) in 2024 by the World Bank⁷⁸. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) database reports that Malawi has not experienced major conflicts, such as battles, violences against civilians, remote violence in 2023/2024 (to date). Some riots (between 6 and 12 per months across the country) were reported and are mainly explained by the ongoing economic crisis⁷⁹.

Nonetheless, as mentioned in the Funding Proposal (FP section B.1) the project takes into consideration the fact that climate change is a driver of social conflict in Malawi. Challenges, including widespread poverty, unemployment, access to resources and social inequalities are exacerbated by climate change, and the later threatens the overall peace, and can fuel cases of conflicts, such as political violence, community and chieftaincy disputes, ethnic intolerance, and many others.

Handling of conflict risks during the project implementation

The EbAM project is designed to be a catalyst for a broad shift and new sustainable equilibrium for ecosystem, livelihoods and agriculture across Malawi, from their baseline state of very high climate vulnerability to an alternative paradigm in which watershed ecosystems are conserved, restored and well-functioning, and more sustainably managed, thus granting their adaptation to climate change, and their supply of services to climate-resilient farming systems, people and communities.

The potential conflict risks are associated with Component 1, Integrated Landscape Management (see details in FP). Dispute and conflict risks around (i) the selection of catchments and micro-catchments, (ii) the selection of participants to prepare village-level action plans (VLAPs) and, (iii) implementation of VLAPs (including access to inputs and equipment for land restoration) can trigger cases of conflicts.

As detailed in the FP and the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), the project will invest in preventing conflicts among and within communities in the targeted micro-catchments. Conflict assessment, prevention and management are an important element of the project design. Through community-based and participatory approach (Integrated Landscape management) for land planning and land restoration across communities, the project will ensure strong community engagement (including women and youth) and consensus-building at the level of activities 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 1.1.4. It will also implement Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) under a stand-alone sub-activity, prior to planning and restoration activities, thus mitigating potential social conflicts arising from land restoration activities. Women's groups, traditional leaders, local governments and other community structures who have some mediation capacities will be actively engaged during the identification of sub-catchments and micro-catchments, and in the preparation of VLAPs and SCMPs.

⁷⁵ See [ACLED Dashboard - ACLED \(acleddata.com\)](#) ACLED collects real-time data on the locations, dates, actors, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and protest events around the world

⁷⁶ Fund for Peace, 2023. See Malawi database: <https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/>

⁷⁷ <https://gain-new.crc.nd.edu/country/malawi>

⁷⁸ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/608a53dd83f21ef6712b5dfef050b00b-0090082023/original/FCSListFY24-final.pdf>. For the methodology used by the World Bank, see <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/fb0f93e8e3375803bce211ab1218ef2a-0090082023/original/Classification-of-Fragility-and-Conflict-Situations-FY24.pdf>

⁷⁹ Economist Intelligence Unit, March 2024. [One-click report : Malawi | EIU \(oclc.org\)](#)

Conclusions

In recent years, FAO has developed corporate tools, guidance and training on context analysis, conflict sensitivity and sustaining peace. These guides and tools have been jointly developed with Interpeace, a global peace-building organisation, after extensive field-testing and feedback. FAO plays a leading role in UN-wide initiatives combining climate change and peace-building efforts, see e.g. the 2023 thematic review on climate security and peace building at https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/climate_security_tr_web_final_april10.pdf

This provides FAO with the capacities and tools to ensure business continuity and adaptability in the face of external political or social conflict risks arising during project implementation.

Appendix XI: Labour Management Plan (indicative outline)

1. Introduction

1.1 This Labour Management Procedure (LMP) has been prepared to ensure project compliance with FAO's commitment to support decent work for sustainable food and agriculture, as described via FAO's Environmental and Social Standard on Decent Work (ESS7) of the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (ESMG).

In addition to the requirements established by ESS7 of FESM, it should reflect the principles expressed by way of the national legislation and regulations of Malawi, as well as applicable international guidelines. The purpose of this LMP is **to facilitate the planning and implementation of the labour related safeguards requirements for the EbAM Project, and to mitigate adverse impacts related to decent work and labour practices.**

This section should present a brief description (approximately half a page) of the project, and include: project objectives, expected outcomes, expected key results by geographical area, timeline, implementation arrangements, and the key risks and potential impacts that triggered ESS7 (FAO's Environmental and Social Standard).

The key risks associated to agricultural projects are, usually, related to poor working conditions, forced labour, child labour, occupational health and safety (OHS), and influx of project workers. During the completion of the risk screening checklist, other potential impacts could be identified. The LMP should be developed based on such risks and potential impacts.

2. Labour Use Overview

2.1 This section will provide an overview of the labour use of the project. It considers the different types of labour that will be required during project implementation.

Types of labour are: direct workers (employed or engaged directly by FAO or implementing partners), contracted workers (employed or engaged by third parties), and primary supply workers (employed or engaged by primary suppliers). Full-time, part-time, temporary, seasonal, and migrant workers are types of employment considered under these different types.

When describing the workers' profile (type), indicate:

- Number of workers by type (as described above)
- Timing (when workers will be engaged in the project. This could also be indicated linking to the activities planned and/or project phases)
- Contract type (type of employment)

[This information may be presented in table format].

2.2 In case of presence of workers accommodations, this section will include a description of accommodation arrangements and indicate its location in relation to the project implementation area and local communities, number of workers living in the accommodation, duration, etc.

3. Description of Key Potential Risks and Mitigation Measures

This section describes the **potential risks** that triggered the application of ESS7 of FESM, and **respective mitigation measures**. These could be risks related to security, forced labour, child labour, gender-based violence and sexual harassment, OHS (occupational health and safety) related to spread of communicable disease (such as COVID-19 or other alike situation), natural disaster related risk etc.

The required information may be presented in table format (example below), organized by project activity, type of risk/impact, parties affected, and mitigation measures. For mitigation measures, indicate estimate budget (if available), responsible implementing party, and implementation timeline. If available, additional information such as technical expertise/support required could also be presented.

Project activity	Key risks/ impacts	Type of worker affected ⁸⁰	Mitigation measures	Implementation of mitigation measures			Monitoring		
				Budget	Responsible party	Timeline	Budget (if not allocated under implementation)	Responsible party	Timeline/frequency

3.1 For primary supply workers, indicate how the project will ensure the application of ESS4 and/or ESS5 of FESM requirements and which instruments will be in place to ensure suppliers' application of such requirements (this may include contractual clauses, for example). Also describe how the application will be monitored.

4. Legal Framework

4.1 This section briefly presents the key aspects of national and international labour regulations targeted to the risks identified in section 3. The legal framework should be relevant to the project description and types of employment **applicable to the project.**

The requirements or restrictions applicable under the relevant labour laws and regulations are often related to women's employment and gender discrimination (including GBV), minors and child labour (provide a description of what is considered working age by the host Government), migrant workforce, type of employment (including, for example working hours and overtime, wages and deductions, dismissal, and freedom of organization), occupational health and safety (OHS), etc.

The legal framework may be presented in table format, organized by type of legal requirement (law) and/or FAO ESS4 and/or ESS5 of FESM requirements.

5. Workplace Grievance Management

The grievance mechanism for labour related risks may utilize existing grievance mechanisms of the project (recommended), provided that they are properly designed and implemented, address concerns promptly, and are readily accessible to and understandable by project related workforce. Existing grievance mechanisms may be supplemented as needed with project-specific arrangements. Please refer to the project GRM guidance and template for structure, functioning and access in the [Stakeholder Engagement Guidance Note](#).

Note that confidentiality in the grievance redress mechanism is required to be allowed for, especially for cases of gender-based violence and more generally to reduce the risk of reprisal.

Please describe the functioning, accessibility of the project's GRM; and in particular how confidentiality and freedom from fear of reprisals will be assured for complainants.

6. Monitoring and Implementation

6.1 This section describes the responsibilities related to implementation of labour management good practice (as characterized by the ESS4 and ESS5 of FESM and corresponding GNs) in the context of this project, specify the implementation partners and their respective roles; as well as the monitoring and enforcement of LMP requirements. Be sure to also take into account any budgetary implications (in case this is not indicated in the section 3).

[This information may be presented in table format. It can be added to the table provided in section 3, or presented separately here.]

⁸⁰ Optional; could also be included in the description of risks/impacts

6.2 Engagement and management of project workers, contractors/sub-contractors (including on labour management requirements from FAO), OHS etc. as relevant for the specific project.

6.3 Training of workers: This section will include information related to the training of workers.

[Other useful references]

www.ifc.org/ehsguidelines

https://www.ilo.org/safework/info/standards-and-instruments/codes/WCMS_161135/lang--en/index.htm

Appendix XII: Chance finds procedure

Definition of cultural heritage:

The purpose of this section should be to define and describe the potential types of cultural heritage that would be covered by the procedures. In some cases (and given national regulation) this may be refined to cover only archaeological finds; however, it should generally include all Physical Cultural Resources (PCR). In circumstances where there is a nationally defined definition of cultural heritage resources by the local cultural authorities, this should be used.

Ownership:

This section should outline the identity of the owner of the cultural heritage item that is found. This can be, for example, the Government, local authority, landowner, or Indigenous group. In some circumstances, ownership can be determined later by experts and the relevant authorities.

Recognition:

Outlining how cultural heritage items/ chance finds will be recognized is a particularly difficult task. In some cases, where the risk level to cultural heritage has been identified as high, the project team could include a technical expert to get technical feedback.

Procedures upon discovery:

Suspension of work: If PCR is discovered during the execution of project works/activities, then the contractor/executing entity should put a halt to the works. However, this section should also define if all works should be suspended, or just those within a specified distance of the discovery. After the work has been suspended, the lines of communication with the relevant project supervisors and authorities should be made in a timely manner.

Demarcation of the Discovery Area: If a chance find is uncovered, after the suspension of work (as outlined above), the executing entity should then be required to temporarily demarcate and limit access to the site of the find.

Chance Find Report: The executing entity is then required to develop a Chance Find Report in a timely manner, recording the; date, time and location of discovery, description of the discovery (including estimated weight and dimensions), and the temporary protection for the PCR that has been implemented. The Chance Find report should be submitted to the relevant local/national authority.

Actions of the Cultural Authority: The relevant cultural authority should determine the appropriate action to be taken. Actions can include: removal of the cultural heritage item; allowance of further work within a specified distance of the find and demarcated area; or a change (extension or reduction) in the size of the demarcated area.

Further Suspension of Work: Once the relevant cultural authority has determined the course of action for the executing entity, it may be entitled to reduce or halt the work in/near the discovery site for a further period of time.

Annex 6

Appendix 1 – Supplementary Document for Disclosure of Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)

For the GCF-FAO Project “Ecosystems-based Adaptation for resilient Watersheds and Communities in Malawi (EbAM)”

1. This document intends to aid in raising the effectiveness of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) by ensuring the best possible comprehension of the Framework by the potential beneficiaries. Access to formal information is limited by the low literacy rates in the country, which were 65.9% for women and 71.6% for men in 2018. The situation is more preoccupying in the rural areas, where roughly 80% or more of the population lives;⁸¹ the literacy rates are much lower, reaching only 30% in some Districts.⁸² The overwhelming majority of the beneficiaries of the proposed project are smallholders in rural areas, and hence, their understanding of the project and its ESMF will be greatly augmented by providing explanations of indispensable concepts and the ESMF Table of Contents in a non-technical language to precede the disclosure of the ESMF.. For that purpose, this document provides the following information with minimum safeguard terminology and other technical terms:

- What kind of changes related to climate have been observed in Malawi;
- What is climate change;
- What is the role of the proposed project (Ecosystem-based Adaptation for Resilient Watersheds and Communities in Malawi, EbAM) with respect to climate change in Malawi;
- What is the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and its role in EbAM;
- What is an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF); and
- What the ESMF document for EbAM contains.

2. Malawi has been experiencing higher temperatures and irregular rainfalls, including cyclones which are more frequent and destructive than before. Droughts and floods are not new to Malawi, but the latest incidents have been quite severe. The crops and livestock accustomed to certain ranges of temperature and patterns of rainfall are unlikely to keep serving us well if we rely solely on the practices that worked before these changes. In fact, low harvests – either due to droughts or floods – have struck the country with an increasing rate of recurrence in the past 40 years. We can no longer expect the weather that used to be characteristic of each season. The scientists who study changes in typical weather think that the current trend will continue; our future will be warmer and alternately either too wet or too dry. As some of us have well noticed, pests proliferate when rainfall varies dramatically in a short time. Weeds, aphids and fall armyworms have been noted to increase after floods. Higher temperature and humidity favor diseases among crops and livestock as well as emergence of new pests, diseases and weeds. In addition to the immediate impacts on agriculture and livelihoods, the changing climate in Malawi also threatens its water resources, with implications for drinking water supply, sanitation, and hydropower generation. Therefore climate change is not just affecting farming, but also water sources and people's lives. We need to find ways to deal with these changes to protect everyone in Malawi.

3. Compared to when the weather was much more predictable, the rainy season arrives too early or too late, the dry season is less cool, rainfall can be much more intense, and cyclones bring stronger winds and rain. Such changes are called climate change. How does climate change happen? When sunlight reaches the Earth, it brings light and heat. Some heat is absorbed by rocks, soil, water, etc. and the rest is bounced back into the air. The air consists of different types of gases, and some gases let the heat leave the Earth, while others try to keep the heat. The gases that trap the heat are called greenhouse gases, because they turn the Earth into a greenhouse, or a warm place. Without the greenhouse gases, the Earth will be too cold for us to live on, but in the past centuries, the greenhouse gases in the air have been increasing and making the Earth warmer than we would like. This is due to human activities, such as: use of petrol, coal and natural gas; clearing of forests; and use of synthetic fertilizers. These activities may not seem to have any relation to greenhouse gases, but the materials involved (e.g., petrol, forest trees and soil, synthetic fertilizer) contain what can turn into greenhouse gases when produced or used. Increases in greenhouse gases in the air make it warmer, leading to heatwaves more frequently. Warmer air also means that the air contains more water, which in turn means that more water becomes available for rainstorms. When the air temperature is high, any drying process (including droughts) also becomes much more powerful. In sum, strong rainfalls and highly

⁸¹ Malawi Education Fund, undated. "About Malawi.." <http://www.mef-malawi.org/malawi.html> (accessed May 2024).

⁸² BuildOn, 2022. "Breaking the Cycle of Illiteracy in Malawi."

<https://www.buildon.org/get-involved/get-updates/breaking-the-cycle-of-illiteracy-in-malawi> (accessed May 2024).

dried out soil are much more likely under the climate change that we are experiencing. Negative effects on our food and cash income could well worsen in the coming years. To summarize, climate change is causing a lot of problems in Malawi. The weather isn't like it used to be. Sometimes it rains too much, sometimes it doesn't rain enough. This is because the Earth is getting warmer due to things like burning petrol and cutting down trees. Droughts and heavy rains happen more often, which make our farming practices and livelihood ill-matched with the climate that we experience.

4. **Ecosystem based Adaptation for Resilient Watersheds and Communities in Malawi (EbAM)** is a project to manage living and non-living resources in ways so that climate change has much less negative impact. The project helps strengthen the capacity of smallholders in rural areas to manage local resources, including waterflow, so that floods and droughts as well as high temperatures would have considerably smaller negative impacts. It will involve technical trainings for finding out how water and other resources are affected by climate change and *vice versa*. The participating farmers will be asked to share their observations, knowledge and skills which allow them to better cope with various problems related to food production for peer-to-peer learning, while bearing in mind that each household and farm is subtly different even in the same area. A training will be conducted also on gender and social inclusion, which is necessary for putting in place a kind of management that is effective community wide and can be used as a base when circumstances evolve. Good understanding of environmental and social issues to be obtained through trainings will contribute to bringing various village members together for conversations and discussions characterized by substance and goodwill. It will also assist in establishing Village Natural Resources Management Committees and elaborating Village Level Action Plans which each village can cherish and collaborate under; Committees and Plans are what the Government of Malawi promotes around the country for better management of forests and other natural resources. Farmers will be given the opportunity to participate in learning farming techniques that are not only suited to the changing climate but also restore the degraded land for better harvests. The project will support small businesses, producers' organizations and farmer groups involved in local food trading for their easier access to markets and finance; collaboration of the local food system is essential for the new type of agriculture introduced by the project to make economic sense to the beneficiaries. The project will work with the Government of Malawi to render country strategies more in line with the resources management and agriculture that are adapted to climate change and at the same time alleviate the harmful changes in climate. The Government and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will be implementing the project. The United Nations is an association of countries around the world that agree to work together for the good of all peoples.⁸³ FAO is an agency that belongs to the UN. It coordinates and assists countries around the world on food, agriculture and related issues. FAO has a Malawi office in Lilongwe.

5. **A donor called the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is currently examining the EbAM project proposal.** If approved, the project will be financed by GCF with co-financing from the Government of Malawi and FAO. The GCF is an organization that assists developing countries (such as Malawi) to adapt their activities (such as agriculture) to climate change and to mitigate climate change (which could be done through forestry, agriculture, etc.). GCF's financial sources are contributions from developed countries: the European Union, USA, Japan, UK and so on. GCF is part of the United Nations and the world's largest fund on ⁸⁴ ~~the~~ ⁸⁵ ~~the~~ ⁸⁶ ~~the~~ It has more than 250 projects in implementation worldwide⁸⁵⁸⁶

6. **Large donors and reputable agencies involved in development projects require that project implementation causes minimum negative effects on the environment and society.** A document called Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) is prepared for each project to guide the institutions and persons in their efforts to manage the impacts from project implementation. The Framework identifies and analyses risks which the project may pose to the environment and society. Based on the analyses, the Framework proposes measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts and encourage beneficial impacts; the measures are integrated in the project. It also ensures that the

⁸³ Encyclopædia Britannica, 2024. "United Nations – Students." <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/United-Nations/277510> (accessed May 2024).

⁸⁴ GCF, undated. "About GCF." <https://www.greenclimate.fund/> (accessed May 2024).

⁸⁶ GCF, undated. "About GCF." <https://www.greenclimate.fund/> (accessed May 2024).

project complies with the relevant national and international laws. What to pay attention to as project risks is determined by the experts who work for GCF and FAO:

- Whether natural resources, including the variety of plants and animals, are managed in a sustainable manner;
- Whether women and men are treated as beings of equal importance;
- Whether work generated by the project does not interfere with workers' freedom, equity, security and human dignity;⁸⁷
- Whether pests are controlled in ways not to cause harm to the environment and people;
- Whether inhabitants need to relocate for the project for good and where;
- Whether parts of living things related to heredity (e.g., seeds and roots) and local knowledge of such parts are involved in project activities; and
- Whether peoples – whose headcount is small and ways of life are distinct from those of the majority in society – are affected.

7. The Framework also emphasizes meaningful engagement of people who are involved in and affected by the project. The project insists on gender sensitivity in terms of not only project activities, but also what could happen as consequences of its implementation. Meaningful engagement includes proposing various ways to solve dissatisfaction and grievances of the people involved in and affected by the project. There are four ways. The first is the problem resolution mechanism already in place, involving Group Village Grievance Redress Committees, Area Grievance Redress Committees, District Grievance Redress Committees and District Commissioners. If the person/group who put forward the grievance is not satisfied with the final resolution from this system, the second option for resolution, which is a formal one for this project, can be used. The second option can be accessed through a project grievance focal point who will be appointed by the project and can be contacted through [insert email address and phone number of the relevant institution]. When a person/group contacts the focal point with a grievance: (i) the focal point acknowledges receipt of the grievance; (ii) proposes resolution if the grievance is about the project; and (iii) explains other ways to solve the issue if the grievance is about misconduct (e.g., wrong behavior, bad conduct) or the resolution proposed is unsatisfactory to the complainant. If any communities are judged to be marginalized by the Malawian community at large for their ethnicity, ways of life and so on, the project will tailor its grievance resolution mechanism to the communities upon consultation with them. The third option is to speak with the main executing agency, FAO. The focal point for FAO related grievances can be contacted through MW-Feedback@fao.org. The fourth option is to speak with the donor, the GCF. The relevant office of the organization can be contacted by [insert method and number/address]. The project provides training and gatherings for being informed and understanding what gender is about, including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and gender-based violence. In the event any of these incidents takes place in direct or indirect relation to the project, the project grievance focal point must be informed.

8. The ESMF document has the following content and the entire document in English is available at [insert physical location of the office and its phone number]. The Table of Contents is copied below followed by a short explanation in italics for each entry. The number at the end of an entry is the number of page where the topic indicated can be found.

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1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE ESMF	9	<i>Brief presentation of the document – which section explains what topic.</i>

⁸⁷ European Commission, undated. "Employment and decent work." https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/sustainable-growth-and-jobs/employment-and-decent-work_en (accessed May 2024).

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⁸⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica, 2024. “Constitution – Kids.” <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/constitution/352996> (accessed May 2024).

⁸⁹ Oxford University Press, 2024. “Physical environment.” Oxford Reference. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110810105616693> (accessed May 2024).

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