

1- Identification

1.1 Project details

GEF ID	GEF ID.: 9759	SMA IPMR ID	N/A
Project Short Title	Land Degradation	Grant ID	PMS: 01564 S1-32GFL-000619, SB-009076.01-06, 11232
Project Title	Promoting Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Through Strengthening Legal and Institutional Framework, Capacity Building and Restoration of Most Vulnerable Mountain Landscapes		
Project Type	Full Sized Project (FSP)	Duration months	Planned 48
Parent Programme if child project	N/A		Age 36.4 months
GEF Focal Area(s)	LD2-Prog.3: Land Management and Restoration LD3-Prog.4: Scaling-up SLM through Landscape Approach	Completion Date	Planned -original PCA 30-Jun-2024 (technical completion date)
Project Scope			Revised - Current PCA 30-Jun-24
Region	Europe	Date of CEO Endorsement/Approval	12-May-20
Countries	Republic of North Macedonia	UNEP Project Approval Date (on Decision Sheet)	
GEF financing amount	3,662,545 \$	Start of Implementation (PCA entering into force)	18-Sep-20
Co-financing amount	25,521,440 \$	Date of First Disbursement	
Total disbursement as of 30 June	USD 368,589	Date of Inception Workshop, if available	30-Jun-21
Total expenditure as of 30 June	USD 632,992	Midterm undertaken?	No
		Actual Mid-term Date, if taken	
		Expected Mid-Term Date, if not taken	30-Sep-23
		Expected Terminal Evaluation Date	31-Dec-24
		Expected Financial Closure Date	30-Jun-25

1.2 EA: Project description

The objective of this project is to develop and strengthen national policy and institutional capacity for sustainable land management (SLM) and to contribute to achieving the national and degradation neutrality (LDN) target with integrated landscape management in north-western mountainous ecosystems of North Macedonia. The project is aiming to reduce the effects of land degradation and land use pressures on natural resources in the mountain landscapes. The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning is the governmental institution to provide political and institutional supervision and act as the National Executing Entity/Responsible Partner, while the support in execution is placed in UNEP Regional Office for Europe (Geneva and Vienna Programme Offices) as the Supporting Entity/Partner of the project and the Municipalities of Arachinovo, Gazi Baba, Jegunovce, Lipkovo, Saraj and Zhelino are local partners beneficiaries. The project is also working closely with other national partners such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, PE National Forests and PE for Pasture Management.

The project aims to achieve its objective through three main components.

Component 1: Strengthened legal and institutional framework and capacity building for SLM and SFM

This component aims at:

- analysing the current legal, institutional and capacity needs of land management sector including key opportunities and threats to achieving LDN at national scale,
- development of Soil Protection Strategy and Guidelines for Establishing Soil Quality Monitoring Programme,
- land utilization and ecosystems services valuation for forest and grasslands ecosystems in the pilot sites in the north-western part of North Macedonia.
- support in the development of Law on Soil Protection and revision and updates of the "Local Environmental Action Plans" of targeted municipalities to include sustainable land management considerations and ecological approaches for erosion control.

Component 2: Implementation of sustainable land and forest management practices for reducing the effects of land degradation in three pilot sites in the most vulnerable mountainous region (testing and demonstration in selected pilot sites in the most vulnerable mountainous regions, as basis for lessons learned, replication and up scaling)

This component aims at increasing practical experience and knowledge of the SLM and SFM methods and approaches and to facilitate uptake of SLM/SFM measures, which will eventually lead to reductions in land degradation and enhance ecosystem services. The project focuses on the issue of soil erosion, as one of the dominant types of land degradation mostly caused by torrent rains, flooding and human activities including poor agricultural practices, inappropriate forest management, illegal loggings and forest fires.

Component 3: Knowledge management and public awareness.

The component is aiming to enhance the understanding of benefits of SLM/SFM/LDN practices to scale up the SLM/SFM and LDN for future activities and sites. It will bring together the results of the project, more efficient approaches to rehabilitation of degraded land and sustainable land management and LDN approach by private sector land developers and users.

1.3 Project Contact

Division(s) Implementing the project	UNEP's Ecosystems Division	Executing Agency(ies)	UNEP's Regional Office for Europe (ROE) - Vienna Programme Office
Name of co-implementing Agency	UNEP's Regional Office for Europe (ROE)	Names of Other Project Partners	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the Republic of North Macedonia
TM: UNEP Portfolio Manager(s)	Ersin Esen, OIC of GEF BD LD Unit	EA: Manager/Representative	Harald Egerer
TM: UNEP Task Manager(s)	Ersin Esen	EA: Project Manager	Sonja Gebert
TM: UNEP Budget/Finance Officer	George Saddimbah	EA: Finance Manager	Obinna Okafor
TM: UNEP Support/Assistant	Aska Ochiel	EA: Communications lead, if relevant	Alejandro Laguna Lopez

2- OVERVIEW OF PROJECT STATUS

TM: UNEP Current Subprogramme(s)

Sub-programme: Nature action

TM: UNEP previous Subprogramme(s)

PoW 2019-2020-Subprogramme 3:
Healthy and productive Ecosystems

2.1 UNEP PoW & UN

TM: PoW Indicator(s)

2.iv: Increase in territory of land- and seascapes that is under improved ecosystem conservation and restoration

EA: UNSDCF/UNDAF linkages

Outcome 4 - Environment and Climate Change, Output 4.2 Natural Resources

EA: Link to relevant SDG Goals

Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

EA: Link to relevant SDG Targets

Target 15.2: By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally
 Target 15.3: By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world. Indicator
 Target 15.3.1: Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area

2.2. GEF Core or Sub Indicators

TM: GEF core or sub indicators targeted by the project as defined at CEO Endorsement/Approval, as well as results

Indicators	Targets - Expected value			Materialised to date
	Mid-term	End-of-project	Total Target	
3.1: Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration	0 ha	2,050 ha	2,050 ha	0 ha
3.2: Area of forest and forest land under restoration	0 ha	400 ha	400 ha	0 ha
4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas)	0 ha	12,550 ha	12,550 ha	0 ha

Implementation Status

2023

3rd PIR

FY 2023

PIR #	Rating towards outcomes (DO) (section 3.1)	Rating towards outputs (IP) (section 3.2)	Risk rating (section 4.2)
3rd PIR	MS	MS	M

2.3 Implementation status & Risk

FY 2022
 FY 2021
 FY 2020
 FY 2019
 FY 2018
 FY 2017
 FY 2016
 FY 2015

2nd PIR	S	MS	M
1st PIR	MS	MS	L

The goal of the Project is to reduce the effects of land degradation and land use pressures on natural resources in the mountain landscapes in North Macedonia. As part of the project’s overall goal, the following activities have been accomplished:

- Local consultants contracted to support the overall coordination of the project,
- Consultation meetings conducted on regular basis with MK UNEP team, GEF Operational and UNCCD Focal Point and other MOEPP representatives, as well as potential local partners for implementation of separate project activities,
- Road Map to a Law on soil protection is delivered to MoEPP with support from IPECC,
- TOR for the Development of Soil Protection Strategy and Guidelines for Establishing Soil Quality Monitoring Programme is under preparation, expert list was drafted. Pending approval by MoEPP and selection of a local partner.
- List of threats and pressures has been determined for Jegunovce, Zhelino, Saraj, Gazi Baba, Arachinovo, and Lipkovo, while the expert team (local NGO MES and experts) has identified each ecosystem type within each municipality. Scenario analysis and valuation study on the application of land utilization and ecosystem services is under preparation.
- Ongoing communication for starting the practical activities under Component 2 – Implementation of SLM/SFM practices for reducing the LD effects in 3 pilot sites – initiated communication with TEMA Turkiye and DMCSEE, Drought Management Centre for Southeastern Europe Slovenia.
- Coordination meetings held with the Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister as chairperson of the NCSĐ – to determine the capacities and needs for the upcoming training programme.
- 1st PSC to be organised by the end of September 2023. All supporting documents prepared.

In the frame of Component 1, the following activities has been accomplished:

- Output 1.1.1. “Analysis of the ongoing legal, institutional and capacity needs of land management sector including key opportunities and threats to achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) at national scale in North Macedonia, completed and approved by MOEPP and made available to the national and local government”
- Output 1.1.3. “Land utilization and ecosystem services valuation for forest and grasslands ecosystems in the pilot sites in the north-western part of North Macedonia”, ongoing -expected completion end of Sep-2023. Supporting documentation developed for Activity 1.1.4.1. Awaiting approval by MoEPP.
- Output 1.1.4. SSFA signed with the local partner Institute for Policies in Environment and Climate Change and initiated implementation.
- Output 1.1.5. “Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs) of targeted municipalities are revised and updated, to include sustainable land management consideration and ecological approaches for erosion control”, ongoing - expected completion end of Sep-2023.
- Output 1.2.1. Relevant national and municipal resource managers capacitated in SLM and SFM practices, ecosystem services and use of economic instruments. Started activities with the Faculty of Forestry, UNCCD and Directorate for drought from Turkiye. Following further communication.
- Output 1.2.2. Strengthened National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSĐ) to coordinate institutions, engage with local communities and manage information flows for better integration of SFM/SLM and LDN aspects. Started communication with representatives from NCSĐ.

The activities taken under Component 2, are as follows:

- Output 2.1.1. SFM and SLM guidelines are prepared and made available to national and local authorities and all interested stakeholders, providing an effective. Experts identified in close cooperation with MoEPP. ToRs developed. Awaiting approval by MoEPP.
- Output 2.1.2. SFM practices and priority actions for afforestation are implemented to accelerate optimized use of forest and non-forest land by communities and local. Experts identified in close cooperation with MoEPP. Pilot sites selected. Ongoing consultation with stakeholders.

EA: Summary of status
 (will be uploaded to GEF Portal)

EA: Planned Co-finance

30,063,295

EA: Actual to date:

7,887,591

nce

2.4 Co-financier

EA: Justify progress in terms of materialization of expected co-finance. State any relevant challenges.

2.5. Stakeholder

EA: Date of project steering committee meeting

1st PSC to be organized in Sep-2023

EA: Stakeholder engagement (will be uploaded to GEF Portal)

Regular meetings are being held with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (CBD, UNCCD/GEF Operational Focal Points)
 Regular meetings with local partners on the status of implementation of planned activities
 Frequent coordination meetings with Faculty of Forestry and Public Enterprise National Forests, especially for the implementation of C2 activities
 Supported organization of World Drought and Desertification Day (17 June 2023) in Skopje City Park with the National Federation of Farmers - women farmers sharing their life and business stories on development and selling of local farmers products
 Interregional workshop under the umbrella of UNCCD (Annex IV and V countries) (19-20 June 2023)

2.6. Gender

TM: Does the project have a gender action plan?

▼

No

EA: Gender mainstreaming (will be uploaded to GEF Portal)

Activities with reference to promotion of gender equality have been included in the selection of local partners, out of which 75% women are managing NGOs. Together with MoEPP and UNCCD, and in cooperation with the National Federation of Farmers, the project supported the celebration of the World Drought and Desertification Day in Skopje on June 17, 2023 under the theme #HerLand.HerRight, where women farmers only (100%) have presented their products and works. This was followed by an Interregional UNCCD workshop showcasing, among other aspects, the successful work of women in nature and in particular in agriculture, in some of the Annex IV and V UNCCD member countries.

2.7. ESSM

TM: Was the project classified as moderate/high risk at CEO Endorsement/Approval Stage?

▼

No

IM: If yes, what specific safeguard risks were identified in the SRIF/ESERN?

N/A

TM: Have any new social and/or environmental risks been identified during the reporting period?

▼

No

TM: If yes, please describe the new risks, or

N/A

TM & EA: Has the project received complaints related to social and/or environmental impacts (actual or potential) during the reporting period?

▼

No

TM & EA: If yes, please describe the complaint(s) or grievance(s) in detail including

N/A

EA: Environmental and social safeguards management (will be uploaded to GEF Portal)

In all project activities, a transparent process has been used, involving all stakeholders and respecting gender equality. Regarding social protection measures, all stakeholders are treated equally, regardless of different nationality, gender, or other categorization.

2.8. KM/Learning

EA: Knowledge activities and products
(will be uploaded to GEF Portal)

An analysis of the ongoing legal, institutional and capacity needs of land management sector including key opportunities and threats to achieving Land Degradation neutrality (LDN) at national scale in North Macedonia has been produced. Documents are available on GEF 6 North Macedonia / <https://unitednations.sharepoint.com/sites/GEF6NorthMacedonia/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?isAscending=true&sortField=LinkFilename&viewid=42970fb2%2D17c8%2D4d65%2D8186%2D63699ce02302>

Please attach a copy of any products

EA: Main learning during the period

2.9. Stories

EA: Stories to be shared
(section to be shared with communication division/
GEF communication)

https://twitter.com/UNEP_Europe/status/1671818876454150144

<https://www.facebook.com/unenvironmenteurope/posts/pfbid0Y9qRe2Eja9wUfdXauxoUvGxyUBcY56bvXuzT7BUwE8b2eLV46kr7kw99frATfJzgl>

3. RATING PROJECT PERFORMANCE

3.1 Rating of progress towards achieving the project outcomes (Development Objectives)

Project objective and Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline level	Mid-Term Target or Milestones	End of Project Target	Progress as of current period (numeric, percentage, or binary entry only)	EA: Summary by the EA of attainment of the indicator & target as of 30 June	TM: Progress rating
Objective							
To develop and strengthen national policy and institutional capacity for sustainable land management (SLM) and to contribute to achieving the national and degradation neutrality target with integrated landscape management in north-western mountainous ecosystems of North Macedonia		Weak political or institutional will to make necessary changes will prevent the application of SLM and SFM practices on the ground		Analysis of the ongoing legal, institutional and capacity needs of land management sector including key opportunities and threats to achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) at national scale in North Macedonia completed and made available to the national and local government	30%	Plan for stakeholders' involvement and communication developed; Report on current legal and institutional framework in North Macedonia developed, Road Map to a Law on soil protection developed and Functional analysis and Guidance on demonstrating and scaling up SLM and LDN best practices developed. All deliverables approved by MoEPP.	MS
Outcome 1.1.							
National authorities address gaps and weaknesses in the land use and land degradation policy, legal and regulatory framework to accelerate the achievement of land degradation neutrality	Number of Government Strategy, Legislation developed	No specific strategy for soil protection	Report on existing legal, institutional and capacity needs of land management sector	National Soil Protection Strategy approved	5%	Ongoing consultation with MoEPP (TOR and local partner)	MS
		No specific legislation on protection of soils	Updated Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs)	LEAPs updated	50%	Local partner selected. To be finalized by the end of September 2023.	S
			Drafted Soil Protection Strategy	Soil Protection Law drafted	10%	Road map to a Law on Soil Protection developed, as well as supporting documents for establishing a WG for Law on Soil protection. Pending approval by MoEPP.	MS
Outcome 1.2.							
Trained national and municipal resource managers to integrate SLM/ SFM in LDN, in coordination with the NCSD	# of trained and capacitated NCSD members	NCSD has limited capacity, limited participation of important stakeholders, limited coordination between the members of NCSD	5 NCSD members trained	100 experts trained	5%	Initiated communication with UNCCD NFPs from Annexes 4 & 5 and with the General Directorate of Combating desertification and erosion within the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs from the Republic of Turkey	MS
	# of participants in trainings from all relevant sectors						

Outcome 2.1.

Local governments in North Macedonia apply practical methods, approaches and practices for halting or reversing land degradation and deforestation beyond the pilots	Forest land under SFM (ha) under afforestation actions	~9,000 ha of forest and forest land have been lost annually	Guidelines for SFM reforestation for the targeted municipalities prepared	Practical application of field afforestation activities at selected bare land or severely degraded forest and additional 5 000 ha of forest and forest land is under SFM	0%	Ongoing consultation with MoEPP (TOR and local partner)	MS
		0 ha under SFM practices	SFM approaches (based on developed SFM guidelines) for additional 5 000 ha of forest and forest land determined				
	Area of land under sustainable land management (ha) under SFM	There are no specific guidelines for undertaking SFM in project sites	500 local farmers involved in the questionnaires by year 1	10 000 ha of land under SLM	0%	Ongoing consultation with MoEPP (TOR and local partner)	MS
	0 ha - Farmers do not apply sustainable land management and climate smart agricultural practices in pilot municipalities	At least 100 local farmers tested SLM practices					
	# of farmers testing SLM practices	Municipalities have no systematic plans with local land users to prevent or reverse erosion threats	2 LEAPs revised and updated	5 LEAPs revised and updated	0%		MS
# of municipal action plans updated (LEAP)	Limited local level knowledge or understanding of SLM methods or approaches	50%					

Outcome 3.1.

Private sector, land developers and users apply SLM/ SFM best practices for mitigating erosion	Community, stakeholder and societal knowledge and understanding of benefits of SLM/SFM improved	Few targeted knowledge management products based on best practice for SLM and application of LDN principle available	At least 300 people (out of which, at least 50% women) have taken notice of, or participate in, at least 3 targeted awareness raising activities and/or materials	At least 500 people (out of which, at least 50% women) have been given opportunity to take notice of, or participate in, a variety of targeted awareness raising activities and materials from SLM/SFM	10%	World Drought and Desertification Day (17 June 2023) and Interregional UNCCD (Annex IV and V countries workshop)	MS
		Few stakeholders have knowledge products on SLM/SFM and LD		At least 50% of the		Ongoing coordination with MOEPP for public awareness activities	MS

and degradation applicable for North Macedonia		No Web-based national knowledge management hub for SLM/SFM and LDN available to scientific institutions, public and private sector		communication and awareness raising products delivered by the project will be focused towards women	0%		
	Three new project proposals for application of SLM/SFM developed	No well-developed SLM/ SFM project proposals for submission to donors prepared	One bankable SLM/SFM project proposals prepared	Three bankable SLM/SFM project proposals prepared and being discussed with potential donors	0%		MS

For joint projects and where applicable ratings should also be discussed with the Task Manager of co-implementing agency.

3.2 Rating of progress implementation towards delivery of outputs (Implementation Progress)

Output	Expected completion date	Implementation status as of 30 June 2022 (%) (Towards overall project targets)	Implementation status as of 30 June 2023 (%) (Towards overall project targets)	EA: Progress rating justification, description of challenges faced and explanations for any delay	TM: Progress rating
Under Comp 1					
Strengthened legal and institutional framework and capacity building for SLM and SFM					
Outcome 1.1. National authorities address gaps and weaknesses in the land use and land degradation policy, legal and regulatory framework to accelerate the achievement of land degradation neutrality					
Output 1.1. SLM approaches mainstreamed into revised legal framework and land management planning processes					
Activity 1.1.1.1. Analysis and identification of gaps in the relevant primary and secondary legislation in the land management sector in the country	30-Sep-22	40%	100%	Local partner Institute for Policies in Environment and Climate Change selected and SSFA signed on 10-Jun-2022. Functional analysis and Guidance on demonstrating and scaling up SLM and LDN best practices prepared and approved by MoEPP.	S
Activity 1.1.1.2. Analysis, identification of gaps and different responsibilities of relevant stakeholders in the land management sector	30-Sep-22	40%	100%	Functional analysis and Guidance on demonstrating and scaling up SLM and LDN best practices prepared and approved by MoEPP.	S
Activity 1.1.1.3. Conduct meetings and workshop with relevant stakeholders to discuss results from the performed analysis under 1.1.1.1 and 1.1.1.2 and present proposals for improvements, taking into consideration gender balance and inclusion of vulnerable groups and ethnic and religious minorities	30-Sep-22	0%	100%	On 03-Oct-2022 inception workshop https://ipecc.org.mk/en/an-inception-workshop-was-held-with-stakeholders-for-the-development-of-legislation-for-soil-management-in-the-republic-of-north-macedonia/ was held attended by 38 participants from various stakeholders (state administration bodies, local self-government units, the non-governmental sector and the scientific community), with the purpose to inform all stakeholders about the process and present the prepared Plan for stakeholders' involvement and communication. On 07-Dec-2022 second workshop https://ipecc.org.mk/en/rabotilnica-razvo-na-regulativa-za-upravuvva-e-so-pochvite-vo-republika-severna-makedonija-en/ attended by 31 participants, for the purpose of presenting Report on the Legal and Institutional Framework for Soil Protection in the Republic of North Macedonia, the Roadmap for Drafting the Law on Soil Protection, and the Draft Structure of the Law on Soil Protection.	S

Activity 1.1.1.4. Clarify and define individual and joint stakeholder responsibilities, especially in regards to SLM and SFM decision making mechanisms and responsibilities	31-Dec-22	0%	100%	Plan for stakeholders' involvement and communication developed and approved by MoEPP.	S
Activity 1.1.1.5. Prepare report with recommendations for improvements in the identified legal and institutional framework	31-Dec-22	0%	100%	Report on current legal and institutional framework in North Macedonia prepared together with Roadmap to Law on Soil protection and approved by MoEPP.	S
Output 1.1.2. Development of Soil Protection Strategy and Guidelines for Establishing Soil Quality Monitoring Programme completed and made available for adoption					
Activity 1.1.2.1. Analysis of the existing national and local policy documents to impact SLM and SFM, major related environmental problems, steps taken so far and reasons for strategy development	31-Dec-22	0%	10%	Ongoing consultation with MoEPP (TOR and selection of partner)	MU
Activity 1.1.2.2. Preliminary national stakeholders' consultations to discuss major problems and results under 1.1.2.1, taking into consideration gender balance and inclusion of vulnerable groups and ethnic and religious minorities	31-Dec-22	0%	0%		MU
Activity 1.1.2.3. Develop sections on LD in correlation with other sectors and impacts, mechanisms for measuring soil quality and effectiveness of remedial actions	31-Dec-22	0%	0%		MU
Activity 1.1.2.4. Consultation with national stakeholders to discuss proposed actions and best management practices	31-Mar-23	0%	0%		MS
Activity 1.1.2.5. Draft Soil Protection Strategy	30-Jun-23	0%	0%		MS
Activity 1.1.2.6. Develop guidelines for establishing soil quality monitoring programme	31-Dec-23	0%	0%		MS
Activity 1.1.2.7. National stakeholders' consultations to discuss 1.1.2.6 and development of final version of the Strategy, taking into account gender balance and inclusion of minorities	31-Mar-24	0%	0%		S
Output 1.1.3. Land utilization and ecosystem services valuation for forest and grasslands ecosystems in the pilot sites in the north-western part of North Macedonia, completed and disseminated					
Activity 1.1.3.1. Determine through stakeholder consultation which SLM options are to be assessed for land utilization and ecosystem services	30-Sep-22	30%	100%	Local partner selected and SSFA signed with Macedonian Ecological Society on 15-Jun-2022.	S
Activity 1.1.3.2. Preparation of studies on (a) Scenario characterization and biophysical & economic data and (b) Scenario analysis and valuation – within a scope of application of land utilization and ecosystem services	30-Sep-22	20%	70%	Identification and selection of ecosystem services was done for each municipality.	MS
Activity 1.1.3.3. Organizing of Stakeholder validation workshop on the application of land utilization and ecosystem services and preparation of final version on scenario analysis and valuation	30-Sep-22	0%	100%	Validation workshop was organized with the local stakeholders on 04-Oct-2022, whereas the experts' workshop was organized on 25-Nov-2022.	S
Activity 1.1.3.4. Publications (translation, design and printing) of scenario analysis and valuation study on the applications of land utilization and ecosystem services	31-Dec-22	0%	70%	Ongoing. Expected delivery on 30-Sep-2023	MS

Activity 1.1.3.5. Dissemination of Scenario analysis and valuation study on the application of land utilization and ecosystem services	30-Jun-24	0%	50%	Capacity matrix methodology was applied for the assessment of ecosystem services. As a result, capacity matrix for 14 selected ecosystem services for five ecosystem types (coniferous, deciduous and riparian forests, lowland and mountain pastures) within the six Municipalities was created.	S
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Output 1.1.4. Support in the Development of the Law on Soil Protection

Activity 1.1.4.1. Conform an inter-institutional steering group to guide and supervise the development of the Law, taking into consideration the existing international and national policies, regulations and treaties	31-Dec-22	10%	30%	Supporting documentation developed. Awaiting approval by MoEPP	MS
Activity 1.1.4.2. Establishment of an expert team to work on the development of the Draft Law, taking into account gender balance	31-Dec-22	0%	100%	Local partner Institute for Policies in Environment and Climate Change selected and SSFA signed on 31-Mar-2023 lead by a woman.	S
Activity 1.1.4.3. Develop Draft Law on Soil Protection	31-Mar-24	0%	20%	Ongoing	S
Activity 1.1.4.4. Carry out necessary workshops, meetings, national consultations to present and discuss the Draft Law on Soil Protection, taking into account gender balance and inclusion of minorities	31-Mar-24	0%	20%	Ongoing	S
Activity 1.1.4.5. Preparation of all necessary documentation and submission of the Draft Law to relevant legislation authorities for official processing and adoption of the Law	31-Mar-24	0%	10%	Started activities	S

Output 1.1.5. "Local Environmental Action Plans" of targeted municipalities are revised and updated, to include sustainable land management considerations and ecological approaches for erosion control

Activity 1.1.5.1. Selection of expert team to work on the development of the "Local Environmental Action Plans"	30-Sep-22	100%	100%	Local partner Milieukontakt MK selected and SSFA signed on 19-May-2022	S
Activity 1.1.5.2. Draft "Local Environmental Action Plans", taking into account gender balance, local capacities and institutional budgets	31-Dec-22	20%	80%	Developed Dynamic Plan for preparation of the "Local Environmental Action Plans" (LEAPs) for targeted municipalities (Arachinovo, Saraj, Zhelino, Jegunovce), including sustainable land management and ecological approaches for erosion control and torrent waters for Municipality of Lipkovo. Draft-LEAPs under final phase of preparation.	S
Activity 1.1.5.3. Stakeholders workshop to discuss developed draft "Local Environmental Action Plans"	31-Dec-22	0%	80%	Stakeholder workshop was organized on 04-Oct-2022	S
Activity 1.1.5.4. Final "Local Environmental Action Plans" updated and lessons learned	31-Dec-22	0%	80%	Expected delivery by 30-Sep-2023	S

Outcome 1.2. Trained national and municipal resource managers to integrate SLM/SFM in LDN, in coordination with the NCSD

Output 1.2.1. Relevant national and municipal resource managers capacitated in SLM and SFM practices, ecosystem services and use of economic instruments

Activity 1.2.1.1. Assessment of capacities at national and local level to identify the needs and challenges of relevant stakeholders in adopting SLM/SFM approaches	31-Mar-23	0%	20%	Started activities with the Faculty of Forestry	MS
Activity 1.2.1.2. Based on the results of 1.2.1.1, develop Training Program, to fit the capacity needs assessment	30-Jun-23	0%	0%		MU
Activity 1.2.1.3. Selection of training teams depending on the model of training and stakeholders	30-Sep-23	0%	15%	Training teams identified. Following further communication.	MS

Activity 1.2.1.4.Implementation of the Training Program, taking into consideration gender balance	31-Mar-24	0%	10%	Communication started with UNCCD and Directorate for drought fromTurkey	S
Activity 1.2.1.5. Identification and addressing of information gaps and flows for carrying out SLM and Identification and addressing of information gaps and flows for carrying out SLM and SFM approaches	31-Mar-24	0%	10%	Ongoing coordination over organization of field visit	S

Output 1.2.2. Strengthened National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSd) to coordinate institutions, engage with local communities and manage information flows for better integration of SFM/SLM and LDN aspects

Activity 1.2.2.1. Strengthen NCSd capacities on SLM and SFM approaches, through thematic meetings and workshops	31-Mar-24	0%	10%	Started communication with representatives from NCSd	S
Activity 1.2.2.2. Field visits for NCSd members to facilitate engagement with local communities	31-Dec-23	0%	0%		MS
Activity 1.2.2.3.Develop mechanism for gathering and sharing information between NCSd members	31-Dec-23	0%	0%		MS
Activity 1.2.2.4. Develop recommendations for revising national policies relevant to the land management sector	31-Dec-23	0%	0%		MS

Under Comp 2

Implementation of sustainable land and forest management practices for reducing the effects of land degradation in three pilot sites in the most vulnerable mountainous region (testing and demonstration in selected pilot sites in the most vulnerable mountainous regions, as basis

Outcome 2.1. Local governments in North Macedonia apply practical methods, approaches and practices for halting or reversing land degradation and deforestation beyond the pilots

Output 2.1.1. SFM and SLM guidelines are prepared and made available to national and local authorities and all interested stakeholders, providing an effective framework for reforestation, afforestation, restoration and conservation activities

Activity 2.1.1.1. Establish technical advisory working group with representatives from concerned stakeholders	30-Sep-22	0%	80%	Experts identified in close cooperation with MoEPP.	MS
Activity 2.1.1.2. Select expert team to work on the development of the guidelines based on data gathered through questionnaires and analysis of other relevant documentation	31-Mar-23	0%	80%	ToRs developed. Awaiting approval by MoEPP.	MS
Activity 2.1.1.3. Develop draft guidelines and effective framework of reforestation/ afforestation activities	31-Dec-23	0%	50%	Provided database for preparation of the guidelines.	S
Activity 2.1.1.4. Workshop and meetings to discuss the developed guidelines with relevant stakeholders taking into consideration gender balance and inclusion of vulnerable groups and ethnic and religious minorities	31-Dec-23	0%	0%		MS
Activity 2.1.1.5. Final guidelines and effective framework developed	31-Dec-23	0%	0%		MS

Output 2.1.2. SFM practices and priority actions for afforestation are implemented to accelerate optimized use of forest and non-forest land by communities and local government on 5 000 hectares at pilot sites

Activity 2.1.2.1. Select expert team to work on the identification and implementation of priority actions	30-Sep-22	0%	70%	Experts identified in close cooperation with MoEPP.	MS
Activity 2.1.2.2. Discuss and select possible pilot sites with national and local stakeholders, including types of species for reforestation/ afforestation	31-Mar-23	0%	70%	Pilot sites selected. Ongoing consultation with stakeholders.	MS
Activity 2.1.2.3. Establishment of work plan for implementation of SFM practices	30-Jun-23	0%	10%	Started activities.	MS
Activity 2.1.2.4. Implement SFM practices and priority actions on selected sites, involving local communities, taking into account gender balance and inclusion of minorities	31-Mar-24	0%	0%		S

Activity 2.1.2.5. Implement SFM practices and priority actions on selected sites, involving local communities, taking into account gender balance and inclusion of minorities	31-Mar-24	0%	0%		S
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Output 2.1.3. SLM practices to address priority LD and deforestation issues tested, demonstrated and locally validated on 10 000 hectares to achieve local LDN targets

Activity 2.1.3.1. Selection of expert team to work on the implementation of SLM practices	31-Dec-22	0%	20%	Ongoing	MS
Activity 2.1.3.2. Establishment of inter-organization advisory working group	31-Dec-22	0%	0%		MS
Activity 2.1.3.3. In consultation with concerned stakeholders, determine the pilot sites to test and validate SLM practices	31-Dec-22	0%	50%	Pilot sites proposed/determined.	MS
Activity 2.1.3.4. Develop Land Management Study and Action Plan	30-Jun-23	0%	0%		MU
Activity 2.1.3.5. Workshops with national and local authorities and representative of targeted municipalities to present and discuss the study under 2.1.3.4	30-Jun-23	0%	0%		MU
Activity 2.1.3.6. Practical testing and validation of applicable SLM practices on identified pilot sites, with involvement of local communities and taking into consideration gender balance	31-Mar-24	0%	0%		MS
Activity 2.1.3.7. Presentation of results during national stakeholder workshop	31-Mar-24	0%	0%		MS

Under Comp 3

Knowledge management and public awareness

Outcome 3.1. Private sector land developers and users apply SLM/ SFM best practices for mitigating erosion and degradation applicable for North Macedonia

Output 3.1.1. Production of knowledge management products made available to national and local stakeholders, based on training and exchanges under Outcome 1.2 and best practice arising from Outcome 2.1 to ensure SLM/SFM and LDN

Activity 3.1.1.1. Development of user-friendly handbook on land and forest management practices, applicable in the country and taking gender balance into consideration	31-Mar-24	0%	0%		S
Activity 3.1.1.2. Stakeholders workshop to discuss the developed handbook	31-Mar-24	0%	0%		S
Activity 3.1.1.3. Design, translation, printing and dissemination of the developed handbook	31-Mar-24	0%	0%		S

Output 3.1.2. Communication strategy and outreach campaign designed and made available to targeted national and local stakeholders, with an emphasis on ecological and economic benefits of sustainable management of land and forests of North Macedonia, including establish

Activity 3.1.2.1. Develop Communication Strategy taking into consideration gender balance	30-Sep-22	90%	95%	Communication Strategy developed. Approved by MoEPP. To be adopted on the 1st PSC.	S
Activity 3.1.2.2. Organization of outreach campaigns (direct and indirect dissemination mechanisms) with involvement of local communities and taking into consideration gender balance	30-Jun-24	0%	40%		S
Activity 3.1.2.3. Connecting with related national networks and regional initiatives, for possible experience sharing and organization of experience exchange study visits	30-Jun-24	0%	30%	Cooperation with UNCCD has been initiated. Together with UNCCD and MoEPP, the project supported the celebration of the World Drought and Desertification Day (June 17, 2023) under the motto #HerLand.HerRight: https://kanal5.com.mk/nashiot-maratonec-pop-acev-ne-uspea-da-go-prepliva-la-mansh-no-ne-se-predava/a592250 . It was followed by an Interregional Thematic Workshop https://www.vesti.mk/article/64905e36a29ccd38ce6cccf dedicated to the Desertification and Drought Day, which was co-hosted by UNEP, UNCCD Secretariat and MoEPP.	S

Activity 3.1.2.4. Develop web based communication and information dissemination hub/site	30-Jun-24	0%	0%		S
Output 3.1.3. Development of three bankable project proposals made available to national authorities, for replication of sustainable land and forest management practices in other regions identified as vulnerable					
Activity 3.1.3.1. Develop three bankable project proposals, taking into consideration gender balance and inclusion of vulnerable groups and ethnic and religious minorities	30-Jun-24	0%	0%		S
Activity 3.1.3.2. Analysis of the results and capture lessons learned for replication in other regions	30-Jun-24	0%	0%		S

The Task Manager will decide on the relevant level of disaggregation (i.e. either at the output or activity level).

4 Risk Rating

4.1 Table A. Project management Risk

Please refer to the Risk Help Sheet for more details on rating

Risk Factor	EA's Rating	TM's Rating
1 Management structure - Roles and responsibilities	Low : Well developed, stable Management Structure and Roles/responsibilities are clearly defined/understood. Low likelihood	Low : Well developed, stable Management Structure and Roles/responsibilities are clearly defined/understood. Low likelihood of potential negative impact on the project delivery.
2 Governance structure - Oversight	Substantial: Steering Committee and/or other project bodies do not convene regularly or Limited membership and participation in decision-making	Substantial: Steering Committee and/or other project bodies do not convene regularly or Limited membership and participation in decision-making processes or SC guidance/input
3 Implementation schedule	Substantial: Some changes in project work plan but without major effect on overall timetable	Substantial: Some changes in project work plan but without major effect on overall timetable
4 Budget	Moderate: Measures taken are not always adequate	Moderate: Measures taken are not always adequate and weak adaptive management. Significant
5 Financial Management	Moderate: Activities are progressing within planned budget and Balanced budget utilisation including PMC. Moderate likelihood of	Moderate: Activities are progressing within planned budget and Balanced budget utilisation including PMC. Moderate likelihood of potential negative impact on the project delivery.
6 Reporting	Low : Funds are correctly managed and transparently accounted for and Audit reports provided regularly and confirm correct use of	Low : Funds are correctly managed and transparently accounted for and Audit reports provided regularly and confirm correct use of funds. Low likelihood of potential negative impact on the
7 Capacity to deliver	Low : Substantive reports are presented in a timely manner and Reports are complete and accurate with a good analysis of project	Low : Substantive reports are presented in a timely manner and Reports are complete and accurate with a good analysis of project progress and implementation issues. Low likelihood of
	Moderate: Sound technical and managerial capacity of institutions and other project partners and Capacity gaps were addressed before	Moderate: Sound technical and managerial capacity of institutions and other project partners and Capacity gaps were addressed before implementation or during early stages. Moderate

If any of the risk factors is rated a Moderate or higher, please include it in Table B below

4.2 Table B. Risk-log

Implementation Status (Current PIR)

3rd PIR

Insert ALL the risks identified either at CEO endorsement (inc. safeguards screening), previous/current PIRs, and MTRs. Use the last line to propose a suggested consolidated rating.

Risk	Risk affecting:								Variation respect to last rating	
	Outcome / outputs	CEO ED	PIR 1	PIR 2	PIR 3	PIR 4	PIR 5	PIR 6	Δ	Justification
Risk 1: Insecurity and political unrest may result in considerable delays and postponement of project implementation	All Project outcomes and outputs	M	M	M	M				=	Remains the same
Risk 2: Lack of attention by National Government institutions because of other priorities (in particular possible start of negotiation with EU for integration)	Outcome 1.1. and 1.2.	M	M	M	M				↑	Remains the same
Risk 3: Administrative challenges emerging during setting up policy platform for SLM coordination between the sectors	Outcome 1.2. and Outcome 3.1	M	M	M	M				↓	Remains the same
Risk 4: Rehabilitation of disused and abandoned land surfaces may encounter resistance from landowners (public and private) and political figures	Outcome 2.1	L	L	L	L				↑	Remains the same
Risk 5: Insufficient knowledge about modern technologies and technical approaches, such as GIS, remote sensing, computer modelling, environmental valuation, cost-benefit analysis, and social impact assessment	Outcome 2.1	M	M	M	M					Remains the same
Risk 6: Unclear roles of stakeholders in the execution of the project may result in lack of commitment/buy-in from local communities and therefore may result in failure of demonstration projects	Outcomes 1.1, 1.2. and 2.1.	L	L	L	L					Remains the same
Risk 7: Climate change impacts (e.g. increased flooding; more severe droughts; forest fires) may negatively affect project activities for ecosystem restoration and effective SLM practices	Overall	M	M	M	M					Remains the same

Risk 8: Poor monitoring of environmental, social and economic impacts after the project implementation	Overall	M	M	M	M					Remains the same
Workflow Risk: Major delay in activities so expenditures as well.	Overall	Not Applicable	H	M	M					Once the local staff was contracted, there is progress in implementation of activities, especially communication with local stakeholders and contracting of local implementing partners
Consolidated project risk	Overall	Not Applicable	M	M	M					This section focuses on the variation. The overall rating is discussed in section 2.3.

4.3 Table C. Outstanding Moderate, Significant, and High risks

List here only risks from Table A and B above that have a risk rating of M or higher in the current PIR

Risk	Actions decided during the previous reporting instance (PIR-1, MTR, etc.)	Actions effectively undertaken this reporting period	Additional mitigation measures for the next periods		
			What	When	By whom
Risk 1: Insecurity and political unrest may result in considerable delays and postponement of project implementation	The current political situation in North Macedonia is stable, but the potential for a spontaneous upsurge in violence is real. The project team will provide continuous monitoring of the security and political situation in the country and update the Steering Committee on a regular basis, so there is sufficient lead time for adequate response actions and adjustment in project strategy.	During the reporting period, stable political environment in the country. 1st PSC to be organised by the end of September 2023. All supporting documents prepared.	The PMU will continue to monitor the security and political situation on a regular basis and in close cooperation with the local partner. The PMU will continue to foster and maintain communication, especially with the key local partners.	Until the end of project	UNEP, Local partner
Risk 2: Lack of attention by National Government institutions because of other priorities (in particular possible start of negotiation with EU for integration)	The project will emphasize the advantages of its intervention not only toward meeting global goals, but also the EU acquis	Developed analysis of the ongoing legal, institutional and capacity needs of land management sector including key opportunities and threats to achieving Land Degradation neutrality (LDN) at national scale in North Macedonia completed and made available to national and local governments in Dec-22 Local partner selected to support the development of the Draft Law on Soil Protection. Developed stakeholder's engagement and communication plan to cover the process for the development of the Law on soil protection. Started activities in supporting MoEPP in establishing a Working group for development of the draft Law on soil protection.	Capacity building events and trainings for the Institutions that have role in the management of SLM/SFM to expand sustainable land management capacity and practices, and so contribute to the goal of achieving the national land degradation neutrality target in harmonization with EU legislation	Until the end of project	UNEP, Local partner
Risk 3: Administrative challenges emerging during setting up policy platform for SLM coordination between the sectors	The project will focus on previously identified goals regarding land management, which are necessary to be implemented according to national strategic documents.	Close and fruitful cooperation with the concerned local partners is fostered	Organization of thematic trainings for national and municipal resource managers to integrate SLM/ SFM in LDN	Until the end of project	UNEP, Local partner

<p>Risk 5: Insufficient knowledge about modern technologies and technical approaches, such as GIS, remote sensing, computer modelling, environmental valuation, cost-benefit analysis, and social impact assessment</p>	<p>The project will support training and coordination with the central government to support the introduction and use of new technology, as well as the transfer of knowledge and skills from the extension</p>	<p>The process of collecting data and information on the state of use of new technology on LDM-ongoing</p>	<p>Capacity building events and trainings for the Institutions that have role in the management of SLM/SFM</p>	<p>Until the end of project</p>	<p>UNEP, Local prtner</p>
<p>Risk 7: Climate change impacts (e.g. increased flooding; more severe droughts; forest fires) may negatively affect project activities for ecosystem restoration and effective SLM practices</p>	<p>Integrated land use plans will include hazard mitigation measures to minimize the impacts of droughts (e.g. through better water management and adoption of drought tolerant crops), to reduce the risk of forest fires (through education and improved enforcement regarding the intentional setting of fires), and to reduce the threat of flooding (through improved land management and retention / restoration of vegetative cover).</p>	<p>The project has selected 3 pilot mountain areas near the Arachinovo- Strachintsi villages (Arachinovo and Gazi Baba municipalities), Lipkovo municipality and Zheden Massive (Saraj, Jegunovce, and Zhelino municipalities) as pilot sites for undertaking on-ground activities that will demonstrate viable methods and approaches for addressing land degradation (LD), improving sustainable land management (SLM), and reversing deforestation trends (sustainable forest management-SFM) to ensure reducing the adverse effect of climate change</p>	<p>Involvement of local communities in developing Management plans (including guidebook) and validation of the pilot sites measures for implementation of effective SLM practices Organization of thematic workshops for overarching lack of community support for performing local – level interventions with special focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment and the differences, needs, roles and priorities of all, men and women</p>	<p>Until the end of project</p>	<p>UNEP, Local prtner</p>
<p>Risk 8: Poor monitoring of environmental, social and economic impacts after the project implementation</p>	<p>The Project will strengthen capacities of major stakeholders for environmentally sound practices in sectors competing for land area and natural resources.</p>	<p>Gender oriented communication strategy is developed to guide the process of communication with special focus on increasing understanding of land degradation issues and impacts, the benefits of SLM/SFM approaches in increasing production and income, the low cost of SLM and SFM practices, SLM/SFM best practices to be implemented on the ground and sharing the results of activities undertaken within the project targeted at both local and national stakeholders.</p>	<p>Organization and delivery of materials to target stakeholders, i.e., copies of SLM/SFM guidelines will be delivered directly to local authorities etc. Policy documents, new legislation (with explanations of their implications and practical application) will be delivered to national and local institutions and local landowners/users, support groups and education facilities.</p>	<p>Until the end of project</p>	<p>UNEP, Local prtner</p>

High Risk (H): There is a probability of greater than 75% that **assumptions** may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face high risks
Significant Risk (S): There is a probability of between 51% and 75% that **assumptions** may fail to hold and/or the project may face substantial risks
Moderate Risk (M): There is a probability of between 26% and 50% that **assumptions** may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face only modest risks
Low Risk (L): There is a probability of up to 25% that **assumptions** may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face only modest risks.

Project Minor Amendments

Minor amendments are changes to the project design or implementation that do not have significant impact on the project objectives or scope, or an increase of the GEF project financing up to 5% as described in Annex 9 of the Project and Program Cycle Policy Guidelines. Please tick each category for which a change occurred in the fiscal year of reporting and provide a description of the change that occurred in the textbox. You may attach supporting document as appropriate.

5.1 Table A: Listing of all Minor Amendment (TM)

Minor amendments	Changes
Results framework	No
Components and cost	No
Institutional and implementation arrangements	No
Financial management	No
Implementation schedule	Explain in table B
Executing Entity	No
Executing Entity Category	No
Minor project objective change	No
Safeguards	No
Risk analysis	No
Increase of GEF project financing up to 5%	No
Co-financing	No
Location of project activity	No
Other	No

Minor amendments

5.2 Table B: History of project revisions and/or extensions (TM)

Version	Type	Signed/Approved by UNEP
Original Legal Instrument		
Amendment 1	Revision	
Extension 1	Extension	

Entry into Force (last signature Date)	Agreement Expiry Date	Main changes introduced in this revision

GEO Location Information:

The Location Name, Latitude and Longitude are required fields insofar as an Agency chooses to enter a project location under the set format. The Geo Name ID is required in instances where the location is not exact, such as in the case of a city, as opposed to the exact site of a physical infrastructure. The Location & Activity Description fields are optional. Project longitude and latitude must follow the Decimal Degrees WGS84 format and Agencies are encouraged to use at least four decimal points for greater accuracy. Users may add as many locations as appropriate. Web mapping applications such as [OpenStreetMap \(https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=4/21.84/82.79\)](https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=4/21.84/82.79) or [GeoNames\(http://www.geonames.org/\)](http://www.geonames.org/) use this format. Consider using a conversion tool as needed, such as: <https://coordinates-converter.com> Please see the Geocoding User Guide by clicking [here\(https://gefportal.worldbank.org/App/assets/general/Geocoding%20User%20Guide.docx\)](https://gefportal.worldbank.org/App/assets/general/Geocoding%20User%20Guide.docx)

Location Name Required field		Latitude Required field	Longitude Required field	Geo Name ID Required field if the location is not an exact site	Location Description Optional text field	Activity Description Optional text field
Aracinovo	RNM	42.023853	21.561557	N/A	Land degradation	
Gazi Baba	RNM	42.046616	21.531706	N/A	Land degradation	
Lipkovo	RNM	42.157009	21.585986	N/A	Land degradation	
Jegunovce	RNM	42.07287	21.120275	N/A	Land degradation	
Saraj	RNM	41.999581	21.327996	N/A	Land degradation	
Zelino	RNM	41.985419	21.065021	N/A	Land degradation	

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

EUROPE / Western Balkan / Republic of North Macedonia / <https://www.geonames.org/718075/north-macedonia.html>

[Annex any linked geospatial file]