



FAO-GEF Project Implementation Report

2023

Period covered: 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

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1. Basic Project Data

General Information

Region:	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
Country:	Azerbaijan
Project Title:	<i>Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity: Strengthening Azerbaijan's system of protected areas through improved governance and management</i>
FAO Project Symbol:	GCP/AZE/004/GFF
GEF ID:	10113
GEF Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity
Project Executing Partners:	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
Initial project duration (years):	5 years
Project coordinates:	Annex 2

Project Dates

GEF CEO Endorsement Date:	10 May 2021
Project Implementation Start Date/EOD :	1 July 2021
Project Implementation End Date/NTE¹:	30 June 2026
Revised project implementation End date (if approved) ²	N/A

Funding

GEF Grant Amount (USD):	USD 2,639,726
Total Co-financing amount (USD)³:	USD 8,500,000
Total GEF grant delivery (as of June 30, 2023 (USD):	USD 655,635
Total GEF grant actual expenditures (excluding commitments) as of June 30, 2023 (USD)⁴:	USD 383,158
Total estimated co-financing materialized as of June 30, 2023⁵	USD 3,000,000

M&E Milestones

Date of Last Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting:	16 February 2023
Expected Mid-term Review date⁶:	January 2024
Actual Mid-term review date (if already completed):	N/A
Expected Terminal Evaluation Date⁷:	January 2026

¹ As per FPMIS

² If NTE extension has been requested and approved by the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit.

³ This is the total amount of co-financing as included in the CEO Document/Project Document.

⁴ The amount should show the values included in the financial statements generated by IMIS.

⁵ Please refer to the Section 13 of this report where updated co-financing estimates are requested and indicate the total co-financing amount materialized.

⁶ The Mid-Term Review (MTR) should take place after the 2nd PIR, around half-point between EOD and NTE. The MTR report in English should be submitted to the GEF Secretariat within 4 years of the CEO Endorsement date.

⁷ The Terminal Evaluation date should be discussed with OED 6 months before the project's NTE date.

Tracking tools (TT)/Core indicators (CI) updated before MTR or TE stage (provide as Annex)	No
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Overall ratings

Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes (cumulative):	<i>Moderately Satisfactory</i>
Overall implementation progress rating:	<i>Moderately Satisfactory</i>
Overall risk rating:	<i>Moderate</i>

ESS risk classification

Current ESS Risk classification:	Moderate
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Status

Implementation Status (1 st PIR, 2 nd PIR, etc. Final PIR):	1 st PIR
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Project Contacts

Contact	Name, Title, Division/Institution	E-mail
Project Coordinator (PC)	Aytan Shirinova, Project Manager, FAO	Aytan.Shirinova@fao.org
Budget Holder (BH)	Viorel Gutu, Head of FAO Partnership and Liaison Office, Azerbaijan, FEAZE	Viorel.Gutu@fao.org
GEF Operational Focal Point (GEF OFP)	Mr. Emin Garabaghli, Head of Division of International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources	Emin.Garabaghli@eco.gov.az
Lead Technical Officer (LTO)	Peter Pechacek, Forestry Officer, FAOSEC	Peter.Pechacek@fao.org
GEF Technical Officer, GTO (ex-Technical FLO)	Kaan Basaran, REU, REU-GEF Support Specialist	Kaan.Basaran@fao.org

2. Progress towards Achieving Project Objective(s) (Development Objective)

(All inputs in this section should be cumulative from project start, not annual)

Project or Development Objective	Outcomes	Outcome indicators ⁸	Baseline	Mid-term Target ⁹	End-of-project Target	Cumulative progress ¹⁰ since project start Level (and %) at 30 June 2023	Progress rating ¹¹
<i>To strengthen the effectiveness of Azerbaijan's protected area system to deliver Global Environmental Benefits, using a landscape approach to governance and management</i>	Outcome 1: Policy, regulatory and decision-making frameworks strengthened to support application of a landscape approach to managing PAs, buffer (sanitary) zones and adjacent systems under sustainable production.	1.1. Legal and regulatory recommendations for integrated landscape management in and around PAs mainstreamed into key national policies in water, forestry, and agricultural sectors	No mandate to carry out integrated planning	Legal and regulatory analysis completed.	Legal and regulatory framework supports integrated planning in 3 relevant sectors (water, forestry and agricultural) ¹² .	A working group – with representation of all the key public and regional institutions are under process of the establishment by the project to oversee the drafting of any legal and regulatory recommendations that may be required to support the implementation of a national landscape-scale conservation plan. <i>It is still planned to conclude the legal and regulatory analysis by mid-term (50%).</i>	MS
		1.2 Number of government agencies and municipalities engaging in joint	MENR and MoA starting joint	2 agencies (either agriculture, fisheries, forestry, or	4 agencies (agriculture, environment, forestry and water) and 3 municipalities engaged	A working group – with representation of all the key national and regional public institutions are under the process of the establishment by the project to	MS

⁸ This is taken from the approved results framework of the project.

⁹ Some indicators may not identify mid-term targets at the design stage (refer to approved results framework) therefore this column should only be filled when relevant.

¹⁰ Please report on results obtained in terms of Global Environmental Benefits and Socio-economic co-benefits as well.

¹¹ Use GEF Secretariat required six-point scale system: **Highly Satisfactory** (HS), **Satisfactory** (S), **Moderately Satisfactory** (MS), **Moderately Unsatisfactory** (MU), **Unsatisfactory** (U), and **Highly Unsatisfactory** (HU). Refer to Annex 1.

¹² A monitoring and evaluation consultant was contracted by the PMU for the period 1 August 2022 – 30 December 2022 to consultatively review the project's monitoring and evaluation framework and to make explicit recommendations on any improvement's that may be required to the Outcome and Output indicators and targets. The final consultant report was delivered to the PMU on 12 December 2022 and the revisions to the monitoring and evaluation framework approved by the PSC on 16 February 2023. The report recommends that the end-of-project target for Outcome indicator 1.1 should be revised to *Recommendations for legal and regulatory reforms to support integrated planning submitted to the relevant ministries across three key sectors (water, forestry, and agriculture)* as the target is not within the scope of influence of the project. This recommendation will be formally considered during the mid-term review (MTR).

Project or Development Objective	Outcomes	Outcome indicators ⁸	Baseline	Mid-term Target ⁹	End-of-project Target	Cumulative progress ¹⁰ since project start Level (and %) at 30 June 2023	Progress rating ¹¹
		planning and decision-making (ministries of agriculture, environment, forestry and water and some municipalities at pilot sites involved in decision-making forums)	planning processes	water) and 2 municipalities engaged.		oversee the preparation and implementation of a national landscape-scale conservation plan. <i>The representatives of the relevant MOA and MENR agencies and of the Executive Authorities (EAs) and municipalities will, once the working group is constituted, be actively engaged in joint landscape-scale conservation planning and decision making (as per the mid-term target) (50%).</i>	
		1.3 Number of regions/districts that mainstream biodiversity protection into their planning processes	0	2 regions participate in landscape planning.	4 municipalities implement a landscape approach to biodiversity protection	<i>No progress to date (0%).</i>	MS
	Outcome 2: Improved institutional capacity and financial sustainability to manage and monitor the PAs system	2.1 Increase in score of elements of METT dealing with capacity (institutional and financial) to manage and monitor	Hirkan NP (HNP): 36% Shirvan NP (SNP): 35%	5% increase	10% increase	A site layout plan, detailed drawings, and cost estimates have been prepared by the project for the construction of an administrative office (note: the old park office has been demolished) and a new visitor control point in HNP. Twenty kilometers of new, unlined earthen channels have been excavated along the outer boundaries of SNP by the project. These new channels are an extension of the existing network of channels around the border of the national park and contribute to physically demarcating the location of the park boundaries, acting as a physical barrier to prevent uncontrolled, illegal intrusion into the park, and containing the movement of wild animals out of the park.	S

Project or Development Objective	Outcomes	Outcome indicators ⁸	Baseline	Mid-term Target ⁹	End-of-project Target	Cumulative progress ¹⁰ since project start Level (and %) at 30 June 2023	Progress rating ¹¹
						<p>Geo-referenced baseline maps for SNP and HNP have been prepared by the project to support the subsequent drafting of the new management plans for these parks. Four management modules (as part of the development of the SPNA-wide Information Management System – see below) are currently under development by the project for future testing and roll-out in the two parks. The statement of needs and subsequent procurement of the requisite hardware, software, and networking equipment to run and maintain these management modules is now in process. The statement of needs and subsequent procurement, installation, and operationalization of a radio communications system in HNP and SNP is under development by the project. <i>Collectively these activities are already contributing to significantly improving the management effectiveness of HNP and SNP (50%). The next METT scoring to evaluate this improvement will be undertaken at mid-term.</i></p>	
	<p>Outcome 3: Threats to biodiversity reduced, degraded lands restored and ecosystem functions and services enhanced in target landscapes.</p>	<p>3.1 Area (ha) of terrestrial PAs under improved management for conservation and sustainable use [GEF Core Indicator 1]</p>	0	N/A	94,733 ha (Shirvan = 54,375ha; Hirkan = 40,358 ha)	<p>A site layout plan, detailed drawings, and cost estimates have been prepared by the project for the construction of an administrative office (note: the old park office has been demolished) and a new visitor control point in HNP. Twenty kilometers of new, unlined earthen channels have been</p>	S

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Project or Development Objective	Outcomes	Outcome indicators ⁸	Baseline	Mid-term Target ⁹	End-of-project Target	Cumulative progress ¹⁰ since project start Level (and %) at 30 June 2023	Progress rating ¹¹
						<p>excavated along the outer boundaries of SNP by the project. These new channels are an extension of the existing network of channels around the border of the national park and contribute to physically demarcating the location of the park boundaries, acting as a physical barrier to prevent uncontrolled, illegal intrusion into the park, and containing the movement of wild animals out of the park.</p> <p>Geo-referenced baseline maps for SNP and HNP have been prepared by the project to support the subsequent drafting of the new management plans for these parks. Four management modules (as part of the development of the SPNA-wide Information Management System – see below) are currently under development by the project for future testing and roll-out in the two parks. The statement of needs and subsequent procurement of the requisite hardware, software, and networking equipment to run and maintain these management modules is now in process.</p> <p>The statement of needs and subsequent procurement, installation, and operationalization of a radio communications system in HNP and SNP is under development by the project.</p> <p><i>Collectively these activities are already contributing to significantly improving the management for</i></p>	

Project or Development Objective	Outcomes	Outcome indicators ⁸	Baseline	Mid-term Target ⁹	End-of-project Target	Cumulative progress ¹⁰ since project start Level (and %) at 30 June 2023	Progress rating ¹¹
						<i>conservation and sustainable use of HNP and SNP (50%).</i>	
		3.2 Area (ha) of landscapes under improved practices (excl. PAs) [GEF Core Indicator 4]	0	300ha under improved practices	700ha under improved practices	The project is in the process of finalizing the selection and contracting of a service provider to assist the PMU in identifying, prioritizing, and supporting the implementation of a suite of project-funded livelihood support activities which could collectively improve the sustainability of current land use practices being undertaken by the communities living in the buffer zones of SNP and HNP. <i>Currently there are no project-funded livelihood activities under implementation in the park buffer zones (0%).</i>	MU
		3.3. Area of landscape better suited against degradation [GEF Core Indicator 3]	0	100ha better suited against degradation	200ha better suited against degradation	The project is currently mapping the degraded areas in the target landscapes. Priority areas will then be identified for project-supported land restoration works. <i>Currently there are no restoration activities being undertaken in the target landscapes (0%).</i>	MU
		3.4 Shirvan NP: (i) Improved water management in Flamingo Lake	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined	<i>None¹³</i>	HU

¹³ A monitoring and evaluation consultant was contracted by the PMU for the period 1 August 2022 – 30 December 2022 to consultatively review the project's monitoring and evaluation framework and to make explicit recommendations on any improvements that may be required to the Outcome and Output indicators and targets. The final consultant report was delivered to the PMU on 12 December 2022 and the revisions to the monitoring and evaluation framework approved by the PSC on 16 February 2023. The report recommends that the end-of-project target for Outcome indicator 3.4 (i) should be removed. The project will not be undertaking any work along the artificial water channel leading to Flamingo Lake, as it is beyond the scope of influence of the project. The targets for this indicator will thus not be achieved. This recommendation will be formally considered during the mid-term review (MTR).

Project or Development Objective	Outcomes	Outcome indicators ⁸	Baseline	Mid-term Target ⁹	End-of-project Target	Cumulative progress ¹⁰ since project start Level (and %) at 30 June 2023	Progress rating ¹¹
		(ii) Stable Gazelle population number	6000	Same level as the baseline	Same level as the baseline (or higher)	<i>Recent transect count surveys in SNP indicate that the gazelle population remains stable (with a small annual increase) at 6,228 animals (50%). The MENR is however currently relocating some animals to repopulate other areas in the SPNA system, so this may impact on the base population numbers.</i>	S
		3.5 Hirkan NP: (i) Stable Leopard population number (ii) Decrease (%) in area of degraded lands within Hirkan NP	(i) 7 individuals ¹⁴ (ii) 1000ha of degraded lands	(i) 7 individuals (see footnote) (ii) Not defined	(i) 7 individual (see footnote) (ii) 5% decrease (relative to the baseline)	(ii) <i>Recent camera trap data indicates that the park currently still forms part of the home range of at least 4 leopards (50%).</i> (ii) <i>A spatial mapping consultant has been contracted to identify the exact extent, and underlying causes, of the 'degraded lands' in HNP. This will provide the baseline for assessing the decrease in extent of degraded land by EOP. The progress in achieving this indicator will then be monitored against this baseline (0%).</i>	S S

¹⁴ A monitoring and evaluation consultant was contracted by the PMU for the period 1 August 2022 – 30 December 2022 to consultatively review the project's monitoring and evaluation framework and to make explicit recommendations on any improvements that may be required to the Outcome and Output indicators and targets. The final consultant report was delivered to the PMU on 12 December 2022 and the revisions to the monitoring and evaluation framework approved by the PSC on 16 February 2023. This report clearly shows that the baseline data for the # of leopard is not correct. Recent camera trap data indicate that there are only 4 individuals whose home range overlap with the park.

Project or Development Objective	Outcomes	Outcome indicators ⁸	Baseline	Mid-term Target ⁹	End-of-project Target	Cumulative progress ¹⁰ since project start Level (and %) at 30 June 2023	Progress rating ¹¹
	Outcome 4: Capacity to effectively manage and monitor PAs system and adjacent/ enclosed buffers improved through training and knowledge of their ecological and management status	4.1 Percent of people (disaggregated by gender) trained by the project that are involved in the management and monitoring of PAs and their surroundings	N/A	30%	60%	The substantive contracts for all outsourced work (such as the Information Management System, Financial Planning, Conservation Planning, Tourism Development Planning, Ecosystem-Based Monitoring, etc.) includes the delivery of specialized training to all relevant park staff and local communities involved in the management and monitoring of SNP, HNP and their buffer zones. <i>To date no monitoring or management personnel have been trained by the project (0%).</i>	MU
		4.2 Lessons learned, best practice guidelines and training modules generated, accessible and disseminated.	None	0 records	5 records	The substantive contracts for all outsourced work (such as the Information Management System, Financial Planning, Conservation Planning, Tourism Development Planning, Ecosystem-Based Monitoring, etc.) includes the development of best practices guidelines and/or training modules. <i>No best practice guidelines or training modules have been developed to date as the contracts are either still under implementation or still to be awarded (0%).</i>	MU

Measures taken to address MS, MU, U and HU ratings on Section 2

Outcome	Action(s) to be taken	By whom?	By when?
Outcome 1, Indicator 1.1 and Indicator 1.2	(a) Expedite the constitution and regular meetings of the inter-agency working group for the development of a national landscape-scale conservation plan for Azerbaijan. (b) Develop TOR for, and procure the services of, an international consultant, and counterpart national consultants to consultatively develop the national landscape-scale conservation plan for Azerbaijan	(a) MENR (with the support of the Project Management Unit) (b) Project Management Unit and FAO procurement	(a) July 2023 (b) September 2023
Outcome 1, Indicator 1.3	(a) Identify all the sectoral or land use planning processes that will be undertaken in/by the regions or districts over the next 2-3 years. (b) Develop a project strategy/approach to mainstreaming biodiversity conservation issues into these plans.	(a) Project Management unit (b) Project Manager	(a) August 2023 (b) October 2023
Outcome 3, Indicator 3.2	(a) Expedite the appointment of the community liaison service provider. (b) Expedite the procurement of the goods, equipment, materials and/or services required to support sustainable livelihood activities in the park buffer areas. (c) Monitor the efficacy of the project investments in sustainable livelihood activities in the park buffer zones.	(a) FAO procurement (b) FAO procurement (c) Project Management Unit	(a) July 2023 (b) March 2024 (c) Ongoing
Outcome 3, Indicator 3.3	(a) Develop a work plan to guide the restoration works to be undertaken in the priority areas targeted for rehabilitation. (b) Initiate the restoration works in the priority areas	(a) SNP and HNP park management (with project funding) (b) SNP and HNP park management (with project funding)	(a) October 2023 (b) Ongoing
Outcome 3, Indicator 3.4 (i)	Motivate, through the FAO GEF Unit, to request GEFSEC permission to remove this outcome indicator from the project results framework	(a) Project Manager (b) FAO GEF Unit	MTR review (approximately February 2024)
Outcome 4, Indicator 4.1	(a) Compile a training needs assessment for park management staff and local communities living in the buffer zone of the two parks that are involved in park management and monitoring (b) Prepare a training framework/matrix for different park management staff and local community members (c) Procure training service providers to deliver the training modules for park management staff and local community members	(a) Project Management Unit (b) Project Management Unit (c) FAO procurement	(a) September 2023 (b) December 2023 (c) Ongoing
Outcome 4, Indicator 4.2	Work closely with the service providers contracted to design, develop and roll-out the PAMIMS to start the documentation of lessons learned, best practice guidelines and/or training modules.	Project Management Unit	September 2023

3. Implementation Progress (IP)

(Please indicate progress achieved during this FY as per the Implementation Plan/Annual Workplan)

Outcomes and Outputs ¹⁵	Indicators (as per the Logical Framework) ¹⁶	Annual Target (as per the annual Work Plan for 2023 ¹⁷)	Main achievements ¹⁸ (please DO NOT repeat results reported in previous year PIR)	Describe any variance ¹⁹ in delivering outputs
Outcome 1	Policy, regulatory and decision-making frameworks strengthened to support application of a landscape approach to managing PAs, buffer (sanitary) zones and adjacent systems under sustainable production			
Output 1.1	Planning status of policy, guidelines, and decision-making framework for landscape-scale conservation in Azerbaijan	Service provider/s contracted to draft policy, guidelines, and decision-making framework for landscape-scale conservation in Azerbaijan.	None	SPs are planned to be contracted as soon as possible
Output 1.2	Detailed socio-economic valuation assessments of Hirkan and Shirvan National Parks (NPs) incorporated into national ecosystem valuation assessments	None	N/A	N/A
Output 1.3	Improvement in knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of selected households in the villages located within or adjacent to Shirvan and Hirkan NP	Baseline KAP survey completed	Baseline KAP survey completed	None
Outcome 2	Improved institutional capacity and financial sustainability to manage and monitor the PAs system			
Output 2.1	Implementation status of the Financing Plan for the Specially Protected Natural Areas (SPNA) system	Consultants contracted to prepare the Financial Plan for the SPNA system.	None	The work is planned to be conducted in the second half of the year
Output 2.2	Implementation status of the Protected Area Monitoring and Information Management System (PAMIMS)	Conceptual design for the PAMIMS completed.	PAMIMS design, and recommendations for procurement of software, hardware, and equipment, under development.	The work is planned to be conducted in the second half of the year

¹⁵ Outputs as described in the project log frame or in any approved project revision.

¹⁶ Please see the note in Section 8 below about the amendments made to the output indicators and output indicator targets in the logical framework.

¹⁷ Please note that the Annual Work Plan runs from January – December 2023. The progress towards the annual work plan target thus represents only 6 months of progress (January – June 2023)

¹⁸ Please use the same unit of measurement of the project indicators as per the approved Implementation Plan or Annual Workplan. Please be concise (max one or two short sentence with main achievements)

¹⁹ Variance refers to the difference between the expected and actual progress at the time of reporting.

Output 2.3	Planning status of the Park Management Plans (PMPs) for Hirkan and Shirvan NPs	Baseline maps for the HNP and SNP PMPs prepared.	Baseline maps of HNP and SNP under preparation for incorporation into the PMPs	The work is planned to be completed in the second half of the year
Outcome 3	Threats to biodiversity reduced, degraded lands restored and ecosystem functions and services enhanced in target landscapes.			
Output 3.1	Number of villages participating in community-based integrated landscape management (including livestock farming, forestry, crop farming and conservation) activities	Consult with 8 villages in SNP and 40 villages in HNP to identify and prioritize opportunities for participation.	0 villages	The work is aimed to be expedited in the second half of the year.
Output 3.2	Number of alternative livelihood opportunities identified and being supported by the project in park-adjacent villages	Consult with communities living in 8 villages in SNP and 40 villages in HNP to identify and prioritize alternative livelihood opportunities for project support.	0	The work is aimed to be expedited in the second half of the year.
Outcome 4	Threats to biodiversity reduced, degraded lands restored and ecosystem functions and services enhanced in target landscapes.			
Output 4.1	Accessibility of PAMIMS to guide and support PA decision-making	Pilot testing of four PAMIMS modules in SNP and HNP	None	The work is aimed to be expedited in the second half of the year.
Output 4.2	Number of MENR staff trained with project support	At least 10	None	The work is aimed to be carried out in the second half of the year.
Output 4.3	Status of M&E Plan	Implement PSC-approved M&E plan and Gender Action Plan (GAP).	Gender-sensitive M&E plan prepared and under implementation	None

4. Summary on Progress and Ratings

Please provide a summary paragraph on progress, challenges and outcomes of project implementation consistent with the information reported in sections 2 and 3 of the PIR (max 400 words)

The scope, structure, and content of a *landscape-scale conservation plan* in Azerbaijan is currently under discussion with the MENR. The project is in the process of selecting and contracting consultants to develop a *system-level Financial Plan* for SPNAs in Azerbaijan. A service provider has been contracted to design, develop, and support the implementation of an *inventory, reporting and monitoring data management system* for SPNAs in Azerbaijan. A framework for an *ecosystem-based monitoring plan* for SPNAs has been prepared by the PMU for discussion with MENR. The PMU is assessing the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of adopting the *Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART)* for park guard patrols in HNP and SNP. The project has contracted a service provider to collect, collate, and map all the *baseline spatial information and attribute data* for HNP and SNP and their buffer zones. This information will provide the contextual baseline situational assessment in support of the preparation of the respective park management plans. The project is in the process of selecting and contracting consultants to prepare *Business Plans* for HNP and SNP, and to support the implementation of one income generating opportunity in each park. A service provider has completed the excavation of ~20km of *boundary channels* for SNP. Another service provider has been contracted to draft a site layout plan, complete detailed drawings, prepare reliable cost estimates and obtain the requisite authorizations, for the construction of the *new administrative office and visitor control point* to be developed in HNP. A contracted service provider has completed a *KAP survey* in a sub-set of villages in the buffer zone around SNP and in the enclave villages within, and villages in the buffer zone around, HNP. The results of the survey will then be used to inform the project's community communication strategy to be implemented in and around these parks. The project is in the process of selecting and contracting a service provider to develop and implement a *communication, awareness-raising, and information-sharing program* in the villages in and around HNP and SNP. This service provider will, once appointed, also assist in *identifying, prioritizing, and implementing a suite of project-funded livelihood support activities* for targeted beneficiaries living in these villages.

The project has contracted communications service providers to design, develop and implement a *national communication campaign* to help raise awareness of the importance of the country's national parks. The PMU are also maintaining an ongoing *media campaign*, using social media, to improve the awareness levels and knowledge of the country's national parks. The MENR were assisted in organizing a large, *national media event* for the 'International Day for Biodiversity' on 22 May 2023. The project has provided financial support to three MENR staff to attend one UNFCCC and two CBD COP meetings.

The main problems encountered to date include:

- (i) There is sometimes a lack of effective internal communications between senior management staff in the MENR, leading to the PMU occasionally receiving conflicting responses to requests for information or formal decisions from the Ministry.
- (ii) There is very limited in-country protected area planning and management skills and capacities available to support project implementation.
- (iii) Stakeholders' priority needs for project support have changed since the original formulation of the project documentation, requiring constant adjustments to project activities to address these shifting needs, without compromising on achieving the project outcomes and outputs.
- (iv) The proclamation of the expanded areas of SNP and HNP in recent years involved very limited consultations with communities who were most affected by loss of access to agricultural/grazing areas. There remain strong residual resentments in these communities about the loss of historical/traditional usufruct rights to these areas.

Development Objective (DO) Ratings, Implementation Progress (IP) Ratings and Overall Assessment

Please note that the overall DO and IP ratings should be substantiated by evidence and progress reported in the Section 2 and Section 3 of the PIR. For DO, the ratings and comments should reflect the overall progress of project results.

	FY2023 Development Objective rating²⁰	FY2023 Implementation Progress rating²¹	Comments/reasons²² justifying the ratings for FY2023 and any changes (positive or negative) in the ratings since the previous reporting period
Project Manager / Coordinator	S	MS	All planned project activities are under implementation and remains fully on track.
Budget Holder	S	MS	In 2023 the project has achieved significant progress (when compared with 2022). The project has a dedicated team that maintains a fruitful collaboration with the Ministry. However, despite detailed annual plans being prepared, some actions are progressing slowly - mainly due to complicated and time-consuming FAO admin procedures, lack of qualified local service providers and not desired level of ownership by some of responsible counterpart representatives.
GEF Operational Focal Point²³	S	S	Current project implementation status stands in satisfactory level. The project is flexible and open for discussions on new emerging priorities that in-line with the major project outcome/outputs. All planned activities which were expected to be fulfilled until the end of this year are under execution. Colleagues from the Ministry relevant departments are assigned for successful implementation of the project planned activities.
Lead Technical Officer²⁴	S	MS	Project activities within the context of the revised log frame are on track
GEF Technical Officer, GTO (ex Technical FLO)	MS	MU	Project is encountering delays in implementation due to long processes related to selection and unrolling of the work to be delivered by the service providers. Greater attention must be paid to achieving the results and progressing towards general objectives.

²⁰ **Development Objectives Rating** – A rating of the extent to which a project is expected to achieve or exceed its major objectives. For more information on ratings and definitions, please refer to Annex 1.

²¹ **Implementation Progress Rating** – A rating of the extent to which the implementation of a project's components and activities is in compliance with the projects approved implementation plan. For more information on ratings and definitions, please refer to Annex 1.

²² Please ensure that the ratings are based on evidence.

²³ In case the GEF OFP didn't provide his/her comments, please explain the reason.

²⁴ The LTO will consult the HQ technical officer and all other supporting technical Units.

5. Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)

This section is under the responsibility of the LTO (PMU to draft)

Please describe the progress made to comply with the approved ESM plan. Note that only projects with **moderate** or **high** Environmental and Social Risk, approved from June 2015 should have submitted an ESM plan/table at CEO endorsement. This does not apply to **low**-risk projects. Please indicate if new risks have emerged during this FY.

Social & Environmental Risk Impacts identified at CEO Endorsement	Expected mitigation measures	Actions taken during this FY	Remaining measures to be taken	Responsibility
ESS 2: Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Natural Habitats				
2.1 – Implementation within a legally designated protected area or its buffer zone	Ensure that none of the activities will include violating national law by contradicting the purposes or limits established in the PAs, harming communities, even seasonally, whose livelihoods depend or are linked to the PA, carrying out activities that could, directly or indirectly damage the functions of the PA, ignoring/excluding management bodies, PA authorities, developing legislation that could lead to limiting/excluding people from access to natural resources. Instead, recommendations will be made to improve management of the target sites in the context of wider landscape.	The project activities to be undertaken in Shirvan and Hirkan NP continue to be measured against the regulatory requirements of the national protected area legislation and are considered in full conformance with these requirements.	(i) Apply a <i>Basic Assessment</i> (i.e., a concise analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the activity, assessment of possible mitigation measures, and an assessment of whether there are any significant issues or impacts that might require further investigation) prior to: (a) improvements to tourist infrastructure in Shirvan NP; and (b) the construction of the park office/park entrance complex in Hirkan NP. (ii) Ensure that the proposed co-management agreements with the enclave communities in Hirkan NP do not lead to limiting/ excluding people from reasonable access to the sustainable use of natural resources.	(i) Park management and MENR, in collaboration with the Project Manager. (ii) Project Manager, through the project-contracted service provider/s working with the enclave communities in Hirkan NP.
ESS 7: Decent Work				

Social & Environmental Risk Impacts identified at CEO Endorsement	Expected mitigation measures	Actions taken during this FY	Remaining measures to be taken	Responsibility
7.4 Operation in situations where major gender inequality in the labour market prevails	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. Social value chain analysis or livelihoods/employment assessment will be undertaken based on the results of the annexed survey on Gender Analysis and Women's Empowerment. Facilitation will 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, will 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.	The project's Gender Action Plan (GAP) has been finalized and includes time-bound, gender-specific indicators to measure progress in the implementation of the GAP.	Monitor the implementation of the GAP and report on the project performance in meeting the targets for the gender-specific indicators	Project Manager
7.7 Involvement of sub-contracting	Take action to anticipate likely risk of perpetuating inequality and labour rights violations by introducing complementary measures. Promoting of subcontracting to local entrepreneurs - particularly to rural women and youth - to maximize employment creation under decent working conditions. Monitoring and	Standard contract conditions that will require contractors to sub-contract local rural businesses - with an equitable representation of women and youth – wherever practicable have been developed and are being monitored.	None	Project Manager

Social & Environmental Risk Impacts identified at CEO Endorsement	Expected mitigation measures	Actions taken during this FY	Remaining measures to be taken	Responsibility
	eventually supporting contractors to fulfil the standards of performance and quality, taking into account national and international social and labour standards			
New ESS risks that have emerged during this FY				
None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

In case the project did not include an ESM Plan at CEO endorsement stage, please indicate:

Initial ESS Risk classification (At project submission)	Current ESS risk classification Please indicate if the Environmental and Social Risk classification is still valid ²⁵ . If not, what is the new classification and explain.
Moderate	Moderate

<i>Please report if any grievance was received as per FAO and GEF ESS policies. If yes, please indicate how it is being/has been addressed.</i>
No grievances received.

²⁵ **Important:** please note that if the Environmental and Social Risk classification has changed, the ESM Unit (Esm-unit@fao.org) should be contacted. The project shall prepare or amend an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) or other ESS instruments and management tools based on the new risk classification (please refer to page 13 <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9870en/cb9870en.pdf>)

6. Risks

The following table summarizes risks identified in the Project Document and reflects also any new risks identified during the project implementation (including COVID-19 related risks). The last column should be used to provide additional details concerning manifestation of the risk in the project, as relevant.

	Type of risk	Risk rating ²⁶	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
1	Lack of close and collaborative cooperation and coordination between key institutional stakeholders	Moderate	Y	Close and collaborative cooperation between multiple institutional stakeholders will be essential for the project to achieve its stated goal and objectives. This will be achieved through early involvement of all stakeholders; establishment of project implementation working group, and the project steering committee. A communication and outreach strategy will be evolved to reach out to the stakeholders, and regular meetings and presentation of the project results in different phases of the project implementation will be organized to ensure collaborative cooperation between key institutional stakeholders. All new measures developed by the project will be followed-up by training and awareness-raising activities that will involve all relevant stakeholders directly affected to ensure that good practices are disseminated and later applied by them in Azerbaijan.	The PSC meets regularly. A small project implementation working group – with representation of different departments of MENR - meets regularly. Ministerial project focal points for the MENR, MOA and MCT have been designated. Executive Authority (EA) project focal points have been designated for Neftchala, Salyan, Lankaran and Astara districts. Small inter-institutional working groups are being constituted to oversee inter-agency project activities (e.g., landscape-scale conservation planning, park system financial planning, information management system development, and parks planning).	The level of collaboration and ownership by some of the stakeholders are not at desired level yet. It needs more close work with all stakeholders in next periods of the project.
2	Lack of institutional clarity, roles and responsibilities among governmental agencies at different levels	Moderate	Y	Clear division of functions and responsibilities between the different institutions involved, including active engagement of institutions or bodies responsible for PAs in Azerbaijan, is considered as a high priority for the project.	Small inter-institutional working groups are being constituted to guide the division of the roles and responsibilities for the implementation of different project	There is a clear division of functions and responsibilities among the

²⁶ Risk ratings means a rating of the overall risk of factors internal or external to the project which may affect implementation or prospects for achieving project objectives. Risk of projects should be rated on the following scale: Low, Moderate, Substantial or High. For more information on ratings and definitions please refer to Annex 1.

				Moreover, the project intends to support strengthening of policy, regulatory and decision-making frameworks at different levels to ensure the long-term sustainability of project results and outcomes beyond the project life.	activities (e.g., working groups for landscape-scale conservation planning, park system financial planning, information management system development, and parks planning).	different institutions. However, the risk level remains as moderate.
3	Limited support and implementation capacity at the national level	Low	Y	The weaknesses and gaps in capacity will be addressed through (i) encouraging working in partnerships with diverse stakeholders; and (ii) identifying the capacity gaps and taking corrective actions; and (iii) development of a capacity building programs and training during the project, by considering specific needs of stakeholders; as well as (iiii) establishment of the National Information-Sharing Forum. Progress of capacity development initiatives will be regularly reviewed by PSC. Moreover, project progress will be regularly monitored, and necessary corrective actions will be taken as necessary.	Implementation of project activities that do not fall within the technical capacity of MENR are being outsourced to independent consultants and service providers. The TOR for each of these service providers however include the need to further build the capacity of responsible MENR staff, through mentorship, training, skills development, exchange programs, etc.	The limited support is mainly due to limited number of qualified staff. This risk can be mitigated by more involvement of the respective governmental colleagues to the capacity building actions.
4	Natural disasters	Moderate	Y	Natural disasters such as droughts, floods, landslip, snowslip, and erosion will be considered by Project experts as factors leading to environmental degradation due to direct or indirect impact on biodiversity, therefore, regular disaster risk assessments and monitoring indicators will be proposed in the management plans of PAs to decrease the impacts of natural disasters.	None	Inclusion of indicators for monitoring disaster risk into PA management plans will be pursued.
5	Climate change modifies habitat conditions in PAs	High	Y	Monitoring and research activities will be included in the project to explore potential climate change impacts and suggest ecosystem-based adaptation/restoration measures to enhance ecosystem's resilience to climate change. The ecosystem-based adaptation/restoration measures to be undertaken through the project will serve in part to reverse the habitat degradation which may be exacerbated by climate change: the restoration strategies themselves will be designed to consider a range of climate change scenarios, rather than solely the current conditions in the areas. Similarly, providing support to local communities through sustainable/alternative livelihoods will	A service provider is in the process of being selected and appointed to develop and implement a communication, awareness-raising, and information-sharing program in the selected villages in and around Shirvan and Hirkan National Parks. This work will include identifying opportunities for the project to support the development of more sustainable and climate-friendly production and land use practices.	N/A

				enable them to better cope with climate-induced impacts and risks. Additionally, the following measures will be in place to minimize, ameliorate the effects of climate-induced changes on ecosystems, such as (i) development of proposals on the protection of biotopes (analysing/identifying ecological state of particularly sensitive and indicator species), (ii) development of adaptation programs/proposals for a number of species (in at least pilot areas), (iii) protection of Geno Fund and creating a Seed Bank, and (iiii) establishment of databases related to climate-induced changes (to be updated based on systematic monitoring of data). The proposed project will also forge linkages and synergies with ongoing projects and efforts to mainstream adaptation, and to contribute to the knowledge base through its information dissemination and public awareness activities. Awareness will be raised among public about long-term benefits of conservation		
6	Inadequate adherence to the PA management plan	Moderate	Y	Key stakeholders will be actively engaged in formulating and planning of the PA management plan. Proposed measures to increase management effectiveness will be consulted widely through organizing regular meetings, round tables, and briefings with high level of local participation and NGOs/Civil Society. Awareness will be raised among the general public about the interventions and its benefits.	The project is in the process of selecting and appointing service providers to: (i) develop a Financial Plan for the PA system and (ii) develop Business Plans for SNP and HNP. These plans will, in turn, guide the future roll-out of income-generating opportunities in and across the park which will then improve the revenue streams that are required to finance the implementation of park management plans.	N/A
7	Resistance to new regulations in PAs	High	Y	The project is designed to engage fully with local stakeholders. Key stakeholders will be involved in evolving new regulations. Awareness will be raised among local communities on long-term benefits of controlled use and new regulations/other changes employed. Complementary support will be provided by improved management practices to those directly affected, particularly	No new regulations are proposed.	Proposals for the development of new regulations needs to be pursued and multi-stakeholder engagement will be advocated for

				sustainable/alternate livelihood and new employment opportunities, and thereby motivate local stakeholders to participate in, or support the project's activities. Additionally, support will be provided to farmers to adopt biodiversity-friendly practices in around PAs		in their development process.
8	Long, time consuming of inter-governmental procedures leading to delays	Moderate	Y	Regular PSC meetings will help to mitigate this problem. Consideration of required time, better planning and involvement and/or informing of relevant governmental counterparts will help to avoid or minimize delays	The PSC meets regularly. A small project implementation working group – with representation of different departments of MENR - meets regularly. Ministerial project focal points for the MENR, MOA and MCT have been designated. Executive Authority (EA) project focal points have been designated for Neftchala, Salyan, Lankaran and Astara districts. Small inter-institutional working groups are being constituted to oversee inter-agency project activities (e.g., landscape-scale conservation planning, park system financial planning, information management system development, and parks planning).	This risk remains as moderate as some delays in the approvals of the documents planned to be prepared by the project are expected.
9	Poor monitoring of the network of protected areas	High	Y	This will be mitigated through preparation of a new monitoring strategy, to determine proposals on optimal networks of PAs with active involvement of national scientific bodies, to establish eco-corridors, and develop appropriate plan-programs to promote sustainable activity in the buffer zones of PAs of Azerbaijan.	A working group – with representation of all the key national and regional public institutions – has been established by the project to oversee the preparation and implementation of a national landscape-scale conservation plan. The framework for an ecosystem-based monitoring plan for SPNAs has been prepared for discussion with MENR.	N/A
10	Female household heads and married women may not benefit from the project in equal measures with male counterparts	High	Y	Support needs to be provided to women playing the dual roles as mother, household heads, and active participation in the project. Arrangements may be made to ensure that project-related training and planning and decision-making	The PMU is monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the project GAP.	N/A

	because they are unable to balance their ongoing responsibilities with the project-related role			meetings are scheduled at times when women would be available to participate. Gender sensitization will be directed at national and local government authorities to ensure they recognize the importance of women’s participation. GFPS will have a role in promoting women’s participation in each project area.		
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Project overall risk rating (Low, Moderate, Substantial or High):

FY2022 rating	FY2023 rating	Comments/reason for the rating for FY2023 and any changes (positive or negative) in the rating since the previous reporting period
Moderate	Moderate	<p>The risks listed can be readily mitigated within the framework of the project.</p> <p>The risks rated as <u>high</u> (risks 5, 7, 9 and 10); (a) have a low probability of occurrence within the short time frame of the project (risk 5), (b) will be directly addressed through the implementation of the project outputs and activities (risk 7 and 9) and/or (c) represent real opportunities for meaningful project intervention and thus likely to be implemented (Risk 10).</p> <p>The risks rated as <u>moderate</u>; (a) are unlikely occur within the short time frame of project implementation and if they do are beyond the capacity of the project to mitigate (risk 4), (b) represent an ongoing challenge to the PMU that needs to be addressed through relationship building and adoption of an adaptive management approach (risks 1, 2 and 8) and/or (c) will be addressed, in part, through the implementation of the enabling project activities.</p> <p>The risks rated as <u>low</u> risks will be addressed, in part, through the implementation of enabling project activities, relationship building, and adoption of an adaptive management approach (risk 3).</p>

7. Follow-up on Mid-term review or supervision mission (only for projects that have conducted an MTR)

If the project had an MTR or a supervision mission, please report on how the recommendations were implemented during this fiscal year as indicated in the Management Response or in the supervision mission report.

MTR or supervision mission recommendations	Measures implemented <u>during this Fiscal Year</u>
Recommendation 1:	N/A
Recommendation 2:	N/A
Recommendation 3:	N/A
Has the project developed an Exit Strategy? If yes, please summarize	N/A

8. Minor project 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 GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy Guidelines²⁷. Please describe any minor changes that the project has made under the relevant category or categories and provide supporting documents as an annex to this report if available.

Category of change	Provide a description of the change	Indicate the timing of the change	Approved by
Results framework	The output level indicators were consultatively reviewed and as required, rationalised or reframed to make them simpler and clearer to understand. The baselines for the output level indicators were validated. The targets for the output level indicators were consultatively reviewed and as required, revised to better align with the project activities.	A monitoring and evaluation consultant was contracted by the PMU for the period 1 August 2022 – 30 December 2022 to consultatively review the project’s monitoring and evaluation framework and to make explicit recommendations for any improvements that may be required. The final consultant report was delivered to the PMU on 12 December 2022 and a presentation of the consultant’s recommendations was made to the PSC on 16 February 2023.	Project Steering Committee (PSC) on 16 February 2023
Components and cost	-	-	-
Institutional and implementation arrangements	-	-	-
Financial management	-	-	-
Implementation schedule	-	-	-
Executing Entity	-	-	-
Executing Entity Category	-	-	-
Minor project objective change	-	-	-
Safeguards	-	-	-
Risk analysis	-	-	-
Increase of GEF project financing up to 5%	-	-	-
Co-financing	-	-	-
Location of project activity	-	-	-
Other minor project amendment (define)	-	-	-

²⁷ Source: <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/guidelines-project-and-program-cycle-policy-2020-update>

9. Stakeholders' Engagement

Please report on progress and results and challenges on stakeholder engagement (based on the description of the Stakeholder engagement plan) included at CEO Endorsement/Approval during this reporting period.

Stakeholder name	Type of partnership	Progress and results on Stakeholders' Engagement	Challenges on stakeholder engagement
<i>Government institutions</i>			
Ministry of Ecology	Direct beneficiary Steering Committee member	As a main beneficiary of the project MENR fully supported project team during the reporting period and provided all available support including, assigning staff, time and data during the implementation process.	N/A
Ministry of Agriculture	Partner Steering Committee member	Active participation at the meetings	N/A
Tourism Agency	Partner Steering Committee member	Active participation at the meetings Support in the implementation of several project activities such as wayfinding studies, design of touristic road signs for Hirkan and Shirvan NP and external design of the administrative office in Hirkan NP	N/A

10. Gender Mainstreaming

Information on Progress on Gender-responsive measures as documented at CEO Endorsement/Approval in the gender action plan or equivalent (when applicable) <u>during this reporting period.</u>		
Category	Yes/No	Briefly describe progress and results achieved during this reporting period.
Gender analysis or an equivalent socio-economic assessment made at formulation or during execution stages.	Yes	Under output 4.1.3 gender action plan is developed for each targeted area.
Any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?	Yes	Gender Action Plan (GAP) forms the basis for the practical application of the results and recommendations of the analysis. It contains specific gender elements that needs to be considered in the designing of measures and activities for improvement of gender participation.
Indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality (as identified at project design stage):		
a) closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources	Yes	Currently, national park management do not seem to know much about how gender and biodiversity is interrelated, role women play in the economy in general and preserving habitat and sustainable use In particular, do not relate women as workforce to jobs such as rangers, deputy directors or other positions that require more mobility, decision making or authority. They still consider these positions and jobs more relevant to men. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct gender sensitive workshops for park teams with the participation of women as well
b) improving women's participation and decision making	Yes	Women from communities in the PAs and buffer zones can be actively involved into consultation, planning and decision-making sessions and meetings to ensure that their views, needs and priorities are taken into account on conservation, sustainable management of natural resources.
c) generating socio-economic benefits or services for women	Yes	Increase women's access to market and sales channels. Examples of these platforms are agrobazar.com, azexport.az, and kobmarket.az that support the sales of entrepreneurs' products, promote online sales of products and services of entrepreneurs, especially micro and small businesses, as well as promotion of products among the general population.
M&E system with gender-disaggregated data?	Yes	Indicator 2 and 20
Staff with gender expertise	Yes	National Team Leader and Project assistant are females. In addition, project receives support from Gender Focal Point from FAO Baku office and Gender Support team from the regional office.
Any other good practices on gender	No	

11. Knowledge Management Activities

Knowledge activities / products (when applicable), as outlined in Knowledge Management Approach approved at CEO Endorsement / Approval, during this reporting period.	
Does the project have a knowledge management strategy? If not, how does the project collect and document good practices? Please list relevant good practices that can be learned and shared from the project thus far.	Section 8 of the PRODOC provides the framework for knowledge management activities undertaken by the project. The TOR of all contracted service providers includes an explicit requirement to collate and document good practices and lessons learnt in the implementation of the contracted work. The Project Manager will, with the technical support of the International Technical Advisor, also collect, collate, and document lessons learnt at the project level. As relevant and appropriate, the good practices documented by the project will guide the development of guidelines, standards and SOPs prepared by the MENR for protected areas and uploaded onto the PAMIMS
Does the project have a communication strategy? Please provide a brief overview of the communications successes and challenges this year .	No, not yet. The now-completed baseline KAP will guide the formulation of a project communication strategy for implementation in SNP, HNP and their buffer zones.
Please share a human-interest story from your project, focusing on how the project has helped to improve people's livelihoods while contributing to achieving the expected Global Environmental Benefits. Please indicate any Socio-economic Co-benefits that were generated by the project. Include at least one beneficiary quote and perspective, and please also include related photos and photo credits.	N/A
Please provide links to related website, social media account	https://progro.az/yazi/bu-gun-biomuxtelifliyin-muhafizesi-ve-davamli-istifadesi-idereetmenin-tekmillesdirilmesi-yolu-ile-azerbaycanin-xususi-muhafize-olunan-eraziler-sisteminin-guclendirilmesi-layihesinin-ilkin-seminari-bas-tutub--/1704 https://sherg.az/cemiyet/183430 https://astarainfo.az/2022/09/30/bmt-nin-%C9%99rzaq-v%C9%99-k%C9%99nd-t%C9%99s%C9%99rufatinin-fao-numay%C9%99nd%C9%99ri-astara-rayonunda-olmuslar/ https://www.azerbaijan-news.az/az/posts/detail/fao-ile-birge-layihe-heyata-kecirilir-1664575269 https://hafta.az/azerbaycanda-893-min-hektar-erazi-xususi-muhafize-olunur-312917-xeber.html https://sherg.az/cemiyet/183430 https://cenublu.az/aktual/bmt-nin-arzaq-va-kand-tasarufati-mutaxassisi-astaraya-safar-edib/ https://aqreqator.az/az/iqtisadiyyat/1720956 https://www.facebook.com/faorinazerbaijan/posts/2175181176023194 https://www.facebook.com/faorinazerbaijan/posts/1364994183708568 https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=search&v=3011352275824160 https://www.facebook.com/faorinazerbaijan/posts/1881190688755579 https://www.facebook.com/faorinazerbaijan/posts/2004037829804197
Please provide a list of publications, leaflets, video materials, newsletters, or other communications assets published on the web.	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1905679459780472 https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=741287147574919
Please indicate the Communication and/or knowledge management focal point's name and contact details	Aytan Shirinova E-mail: Aytan.shirinova@fao.org

12. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Involvement

Are Indigenous Peoples and local communities involved in the project (as per the approved Project Document)? If yes, please briefly explain.

N/A

13. Co-Financing Table

Sources of Co-financing ²⁸	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing ²⁹	Amount Confirmed at CEO endorsement / approval	Actual Amount Materialized at 30 June 2023	Actual Amount Materialized at Midterm or closure (confirmed by the review/evaluation team)	Expected total disbursement by the end of the project
Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan	In-kind	5,500.000	3,000.000		5,500,000
		Grant	3,000,000			3,000,000
GEF Agency	FAO	Grant	1,000,000			1,000,000
		TOTAL	8,500.000	3,000.000		8,500,000

Please explain any significant changes in project co-financing since Project Document signature, or differences between the anticipated and actual rates of disbursement.

N/A

²⁸Sources of Co-financing may include: GEF Agency, Donor Agency, Recipient Country Government, Private Sector, Civil Society Organization, Beneficiaries, Other.

²⁹Grant, Loan, Equity Investment, Guarantee, In-Kind, Public Investment, Other (please refer to the *Guidelines on co-financing* for definitions https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_FI_GN_01_Cofinancing_Guidelines_2018.pdf)

Annex 1. – GEF Performance Ratings Definitions

Development Objectives Rating. A rating of the extent to which a project is expected to achieve or exceed its major objectives.	
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Project is expected to achieve or exceed all its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”
Satisfactory (S)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Project is expected to achieve its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only some of its major global environmental objectives
Unsatisfactory (U)	Project is expected not to achieve most of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, any of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits

Implementation Progress Rating. A rating of the extent to which the implementation of a project’s components and activities is in compliance with the project’s approved implementation plan.	
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised implementation plan for the project. The project can be resented as “good practice”
Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan except for only a few that are subject to remedial action
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with some components requiring remedial action
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with most components requiring remedial action.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.

Risk rating will assess the overall risk of factors internal or external to the project which may affect implementation or prospects for achieving project objectives. Risk of projects should be rated on the following scale:	
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.
Substantial Risk (S)	There is a probability of between 51% and 75% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, 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 moderate risk
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 low risks

Annex 2.

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](#) or [GeoNames](#) 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](#)

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	Geo Name ID	Location & Activity Description
Shirvan National Park	39.5711368	Central part is 49° 13' Longitude East 49.216667	8512167	Shirvan National Park (SNP) is situated about 100 km south of Baku, the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on the coast of the Caspian Sea. The area covers 54,373.5 ha. Main landscapes of SNP are semi-deserts, a steppe lake, seacoast, and mud volcanoes. The main flagship species of SNP is the Goitered Gazelle. It is also the key attraction of SNP. Other attractions for visitors include the clean and natural landscape, long natural beaches,

				three active mud volcanoes, some historical, archaeological, and spiritual sites, as well as a rich variety of many other species of mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects. SNP is a popular destination for nature tourism and recreation.
Hirkan National Park	38°35' Latitude North <u>38.583333</u>	Central part is 48° 41 ' Longitude East <u>48.683333</u>	<u>8474258</u>	It is in the south-eastern part of the Caucasus Isthmus, close to the Caspian Sea coast (the nearest point - 6 km) and constitutes the core section of the Talysh Mountains, southern part of which is located in Iran and creates north-western end of Alborz Mountain Chain. The HNP covers 40,358 hectares of unique Hirkan forest ecosystems. These areas have served as a refuge to the large spectrum of flora and fauna,

				<p>representative of the Talysh-Alborz Mountains (Hirkan bio-geographical province). It has provided protection to many rare and endangered species, relic species and species endemic to the Hirkan refugium (Talysh- Alborz Mountains) and the Caucasus.</p>
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Please provide any further geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions is taking place as appropriate.