


Simplified Operational Completion Report (OCR)

(To be used for GEF-funded Enabling Activity technically completed by 31/12/2023)

Signatures

UNEP Task Manager: _____ Nancy Soi _____ Date: ____20/11/2025____ 
Portfolio Manager: _____ Johan Robinson _____ Date: ____20/11/2025____

1. Project Identification

GEF ID: 3008
Project Title: Development of the National Clearing House Mechanism, capacity assessment for ABS and Taxonomy in Morocco
Executing Agency: Ministry of Land Planning, Water and Environment
UNEP Division: Ecosystems Division
Country/Region: Morocco
Actual Implementation Start Date (MM/YYYY): 12/2010
Actual Completion Date (MM/YYYY): 09/2012
GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity
GEF Grant Amount: USD 207,500
Co-financing (if applicable): USD 20,000

2. Project Implementation

1. Brief description of activities, and its link to Convention obligations.

The project “Development of the National Clearing House Mechanism, capacity assessment for ABS and Taxonomy in Morocco” was designed to strengthen Morocco’s biodiversity information systems and implementation capacity. Its objectives included conducting a comprehensive assessment of national capacity in taxonomy an essential component of biodiversity conservation and upgrading the Clearing House Mechanism (CHM), which had not kept pace with evolving strategies since its initial establishment in 1998.

To achieve these objectives, the project implemented three main activities: a taxonomy capacity assessment, national consultations on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) and biodiversity governance, and the modernization of the CHM as a centralized platform for data sharing. These efforts aimed to address critical gaps in taxonomy and ABS while improving the accessibility and reliability of biodiversity information for decision-makers and stakeholders.

Key achievements included completion of the taxonomy capacity assessment with actionable recommendations for future planning, and the upgrade of the CHM to enhance data transparency and support evidence-based decision-making. Stakeholder engagement was another notable outcome, fostering collaboration among ministries, scientific institutions, and NGOs, and ensuring that project outputs reflected national priorities and CBD obligations.

Challenges encountered included limited baseline data for certain taxonomic groups, institutional fragmentation that slowed data integration, and financial constraints affecting long-term CHM maintenance. These issues underscored the need for stronger resource commitments and improved coordination mechanisms.

Overall, the project contributed to strengthening Morocco's technical and institutional capacity for biodiversity management. By improving information systems and fostering stakeholder collaboration, it laid the foundation for better policy formulation, CBD reporting, and integration of biodiversity considerations into national planning processes.

Key Activities

1. Capacity Assessment for Taxonomy

- Reviewed existing and missing taxonomic and systematic information (national and overseas).
- Appointed a consultant to make recommendations for updating the NBSAP.
- Conducted a Taxonomic Needs Assessment (TNA) through surveys and stakeholder consultations.
- Finalized the TNA report with consensus on reference needs, capacity sharing, training, and data management.
- Organized expert workshops and a national workshop to validate findings.

2. Capacity Assessment for ABS (Access and Benefit Sharing)

- Set up an ad hoc ABS Committee under the National Committee on Biodiversity.
- Organized a national workshop to address legal, institutional, and socio-economic implications.
- Formed a task force to identify capacity-building needs (training and technology transfer).
- Undertook a survey on the economic potential and value of genetic resources.
- Compiled new information on ABS issues and produced a report for NBSAP revision.

3. Development of the National Clearing House Mechanism (CHM)

- Established a national technical committee and developed TORs for CHM update.
- Identified institutions holding biodiversity information (government, NGOs, private sector).
- Conducted a workshop to analyze information needs and produced a CHM action plan.
- Developed CHM databases and the website.
- Trained personnel in CHM development and maintenance.
- Created an inventory of organizations, linked existing biodiversity databases, and compiled a reference bibliography.
- Produced public awareness materials (newsletters, press releases).
- Planned for CHM sustainability using national resources.

Link to Convention Obligations

- The project fulfilled Morocco's commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), particularly Article 6 (General Measures for Conservation and

Sustainable Use), Article 17 (Exchange of Information), and Article 18 (Technical and Scientific Cooperation).

- Activities were aligned with COP decisions such as II/7, IV/1 D, V/9, VI/5, VI/8, VI/23, and VI/24, which addressed taxonomy, capacity building, and information exchange.
- The capacity assessment for taxonomy implemented SBSTTA recommendation II/2, which called for strengthening taxonomic capacity and making taxonomic information readily available to countries of origin.
- The ABS component applied the Bonn Guidelines adopted under COP VI and VII, ensuring fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.
- The development of the CHM supported Morocco's obligation to establish a national Clearing House Mechanism and link it to the global CBD CHM, as encouraged under Article 17 and 18.
- Overall, the project contributed to updating the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and improving Morocco's ability to meet its CBD reporting and implementation requirements.

2. Overview of implementation arrangements

The project was implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the GEF Implementing Agency, in collaboration with the Ministry of Land Planning, Water and Environment (MLPWE) as the National Executing Agency.

Implementing Agency (UNEP)

UNEP provided overall coordination, technical oversight, and financial management. It ensured adherence to GEF guidelines, facilitated disbursement of funds, and monitored progress through quarterly and semi-annual reports. UNEP also guided the application of CBD and GEF expedited procedures for biodiversity enabling activities and provided technical advice on international best practices for CHM development, ABS, and taxonomy capacity assessments.

National Executing Agency (MLPWE)

MLPWE managed day-to-day implementation through a dedicated Project Team comprising a National Project Director (NPD) and a National Project Coordinator (NPC), supported by local and international consultants. The team was based within the Department of Environment, ensuring integration with national biodiversity and sustainable development strategies. MLPWE was responsible for mobilizing inputs, organizing workshops, and ensuring outputs were aligned with Morocco's NBSAP and CBD obligations.

Project Steering Committee (PSC)

Chaired by the GEF Operational Focal Point, the PSC provided high-level oversight and policy guidance. It included representatives from government ministries, scientific institutions, NGOs, and other stakeholders, ensuring a mix of technical and managerial expertise. The PSC approved work plans, reviewed progress, and facilitated dissemination of project outputs.

3. Delivery of outputs

1. Main output delivered (e.g., link to national reports, strategies).

The project successfully delivered a suite of outputs designed to strengthen Morocco's capacity for biodiversity governance and compliance with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Through a structured, consultative approach, the initiative addressed critical gaps in taxonomy, Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), and biodiversity information management. Key activities included comprehensive capacity assessments, development of action plans, and the establishment of an upgraded national Clearing House Mechanism (CHM). These outputs not only informed the future revision of Morocco's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) but also enhanced institutional coordination, improved data accessibility, and laid the groundwork for sustainable biodiversity conservation at national and regional levels.

Key Outputs

- Taxonomic Needs Assessment (TNA) was completed, including a review of existing and missing taxonomic information and recommendations for updating the NBSAP.
- A national workshop and expert consultations were held to validate taxonomy findings and build consensus on capacity-building needs.
- A capacity assessment for ABS was finalized, including:
 - Establishment of an ad hoc ABS Committee.
 - A national workshop on ABS legal, institutional, and socio-economic implications.
 - A report on the economic potential and value of genetic resources.
 - A summary report on ABS capacity needs for Morocco.
- The Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) was strengthened through:
 - Development of the Information System on Biodiversity (biodiversite-maroc.com).
 - Creation of a database of organizations responsible for biodiversity management.
 - Linkages to other existing biodiversity databases in Morocco.
 - Compilation of a reference bibliography of biodiversity publications.
- Dissemination of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and related information was supported (partly through other projects).
- The project contributed to improved access to biodiversity information, including an Arabic version of the CHM.

Submission to Convention or integration into policy

Submission to the Convention

- The project supported Morocco's obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) by generating outputs that were used in national reporting and planning.
- Findings from the Taxonomic Needs Assessment (TNA) and ABS capacity assessment were incorporated into recommendations for updating the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), which was later submitted to the CBD Secretariat.
- The development and enhancement of the Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) ensured compliance with CBD Article 17 and 18 on information exchange and technical cooperation.

Integration into Policy

- The project's outputs informed national biodiversity policy by:
 - Providing updated taxonomic data and capacity needs for inclusion in the revised NBSAP.
 - Establishing an ABS framework aligned with the Bonn Guidelines, influencing Morocco's legal and institutional arrangements for genetic resource access and benefit-sharing.
 - Creating the national biodiversity information system (biodiversite-maroc.com), which became a key tool for policy makers and stakeholders.

Recommendations from the project were used to guide interventions and projects on taxonomy and ABS at the national level.

4. Project Outcome

Where applicable any project outcomes, as achieved short- or medium-term effects of outputs (including unintended positive and negative outcomes)

The project aimed to strengthen Morocco's ability to meet its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Through targeted activities on taxonomy, access and benefit-sharing (ABS), and the Clearing House Mechanism (CHM), the project delivered key outputs that contributed to improved biodiversity governance and information exchange. These outputs generated short- and medium-term outcomes, influencing national policy, enhancing institutional capacity, and fostering stakeholder engagement. In addition to the intended results, the project also produced some unintended positive and negative effects, which provide valuable lessons for future biodiversity initiatives.

Key Outcomes

- Interventions and projects on taxonomy were based on the action plan developed by this project.
- Morocco enhanced its ability to revise and implement the NBSAP, aligning with CBD obligations.
- Increased stakeholder awareness and engagement through workshops and consultations.
- Strengthened institutional capacity for information exchange and technical cooperation, supporting CBD Articles 17 and 18.
- Improved preparedness for biodiversity conservation through updated taxonomic data and capacity assessments.
- All taxonomy institutions in Morocco were engaged in planning, creating a stronger collaborative network.
- ABS capacity assessment led to better understanding of legal and institutional frameworks for implementing the Bonn Guidelines.
- The CHM website (biodiversite-maroc.com) was launched, improving access to biodiversity information for stakeholders.

Unintended Outcomes

Positive

- The CHM platform facilitated regional collaboration beyond initial expectations, linking Moroccan biodiversity data to other databases.

- The project indirectly promoted digital literacy and IT capacity within environmental agencies through CHM development.

Negative

- Some CHM-related activities were delayed or shifted to other projects, creating dependency on external initiatives for full implementation.
- Limited internet access for some stakeholders reduced the immediate reach of the CHM, requiring alternative communication methods (e.g., printed materials).

5. Stakeholders' involvement

Extent of stakeholder engagement and capacity developed

Stakeholder Engagement

The project adopted a consultative and inclusive approach, engaging a wide range of stakeholders through national workshops, task forces, and technical committees.

Stakeholders included:

- Government ministries (Environment, Agriculture, Fisheries, Interior, Culture, Tourism, Foreign Affairs, etc.)
- Research and academic institutions (Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II, Institut National de Recherches Agronomiques, Institut Scientifique de Rabat, universities)
- Specialized agencies (Haut-Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts, Centre National de Recherches Forestières)
- Civil society and NGOs

Engagement was structured through:

- A Project Steering Committee headed by the GEF focal point.
- National workshops on taxonomy and ABS.
- Consultations for CHM development and sustainability planning.
- Formation of an ad hoc ABS committee under the National Committee on Biodiversity.

Capacity Developed

The project focused on strengthening Morocco's technical and institutional capacity to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and improve biodiversity governance. Through targeted interventions in taxonomy, Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), and the Clearing House Mechanism (CHM), the initiative addressed critical gaps identified in previous assessments. These efforts combined technical training, institutional strengthening, and stakeholder engagement to ensure sustainable biodiversity management. The following highlights summarize the key areas of capacity development achieved under the project.

6. Financial Summary

Source		USD			
GEF Grant		S1-32GFL-000351			
Final Date of Disbursement		13.02.2013			
Cumulative Disbursement		186,883.84			
Name of Co-financier		Actual Grant at TE	Actual In-kind at TE	Total Co-financing	
		(USD)	(USD)	(USD)	
Moroccan Government Ministry of Energy, Mines, Water and Environment / Department of Environment		-	18,750.00	18,750.00	
Totals		-	18,750.00	18,750.00	
Budget lines		Estimated Cost at Design	Actual Expenditure	Expenditure ratio (Actual/planned)	Available balance
1101	Project Coordinator	15,000.00			15,000
1102	Project Assistant	5,000.00	-		5,000.00
1201	Institutional Development Consultant	30,000.00	79,271.00	2.64	- 49,271.00
1202	Tech. Intl. Consultant	28,539.00	71,862.00	2.52	- 43,323.00
1601	National Travel (Executing Agency)	8,000.00	-		8,000.00
1602	International Travel TM	13,961.00	-		13,961.00
2201	CHM(AOS)	8,000.00	-		8,000.00
3201	Seminar on CHM	18,000.00	-		18,000.00
3301	National Review Workshop (ABS, taxonomy),	8,000.00	12,538.00	1.57	- 4,538.00

3302	Regional Workshop for CHM	15,000.00	-		15,000.00
3303	Participation in Workshops TM	4,000.00	3,997.00	1.00	3.00
4101	Office supplies (printing paper, toner etc)	1,000.00	-		1,000.00
4103	Computer Software	1,000.00	-		1,000.00
4201	Computers and other equipment	4,000.00	3,604.00	0.90	396.00
5101	Operation and maintenance of equipment	2,000.00	-		2,000.00
5201	Translation/Editing for CHM	16,000.00	3,839.00	0.24	12,161.00
5202	Publication/Printing Taxonomy/ ABS Reports	15,000.00	10,220.00	0.68	4,780.00
5301	Communication	3,000.00	870.00	0.29	2,130.00
5582	Terminal Evaluation Consultant	12,000.00	-		12,000.00
	GRAND TOTAL	207,500.00	186,201.00	0.90	21,299.00

6. Lessons Learned

Summarize key insights or recommendations for future Enabling Activities.

One of the key lessons from the project is the importance of conducting a thorough capacity assessment early on. By systematically identifying gaps in taxonomy, access and benefit-sharing (ABS), and information management, the project created a clear roadmap for targeted interventions. In other contexts, this approach can help avoid misallocation of resources and ensure that enabling activities are directly aligned with national priorities and global commitments.

A second lesson is the value of revamping and maintaining information systems such as the Clearing House Mechanism (CHM). The Moroccan experience showed that a well-functioning CHM is not only a technical database but also a tool for policymaking, stakeholder coordination, and public awareness. For replication elsewhere, it is critical to plan for sustainability from the outset, including financial commitments by national governments and capacity-building measures to ensure ongoing updates and use of the system.

Another important lesson is the role of inclusive stakeholder engagement. By integrating the voices of ministries, NGOs, academia, and especially women and community-based organizations, the project ensured that biodiversity strategies reflected a diversity of perspectives and needs. In other contexts, applying gender-responsive and rights-based participation processes enhanced both equity and effectiveness, while strengthening local ownership and long-term sustainability of project outcomes.

Finally, the project demonstrated that regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing amplify impact. Morocco's support to Niger in establishing a CHM illustrates how national-level innovations can be adapted and scaled in other countries. Similar projects should intentionally design replication by documenting methodologies, building peer-to-peer exchange networks, and fostering south-south collaboration. This not only increases efficiency but also accelerates the spread of good practices across regions facing similar biodiversity challenges.

Conclusion

The project successfully strengthened Morocco's capacity to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity by addressing critical gaps in taxonomy, Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), and biodiversity information management. Through inclusive stakeholder engagement and targeted technical interventions, the initiative delivered practical tools and institutional mechanisms that enhanced national preparedness for biodiversity conservation. The development of an upgraded Clearing House Mechanism (CHM), combined with capacity assessments and training, improved information flow and coordination among ministries, research institutions, and civil society. These achievements provide a solid foundation for revising Morocco's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and for meeting international commitments under the CBD. Moving forward, the collaborative networks and technical capacities established under this project will enable Morocco to integrate biodiversity considerations more effectively into national planning and ensure sustainable management of its rich natural heritage.