

1- Identification

1.1 Project details

GEF ID

4634

SMA IPMR ID

20156

Project Short Title

Chernobyl Exclusion Zone

Grant ID

P1-33GFL-000627

Umoja WBS

SB-000687.37,SB-000687.37.01

Project Title

Conserving, Enhancing and Managing Carbon Stocks and Biodiversity in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone

Project Type



Full Sized Project (FSP)

Duration months

Planned

48

Parent Programme if child project

Age

120.0 months

GEF Focal Area(s)

Multi-Focal Area

Completion Date

Planned -original PCA

31-Dec-18

Project Scope



National

Revised - Current PCA

31-Dec-24

Region



Europe

Date of CEO Endorsement/Approval

12-Dec-14

Countries

Ukraine

UNEP Project Approval Date (on Decision Sheet)

16-Mar-15

GEF financing amount

USD 4,863,955

Start of Implementation (PCA entering into force)

Co-financing amount

USD 28,340,000

Date of First Disbursement

16-Mar-15

Date of Inception Workshop, if available

Total disbursement as of 30 June

USD 4,863,955

Midterm undertaken?

Yes

Total expenditure as of 30 June

USD 4,006,758

Actual Mid-term Date, if taken

1-Dec-19

Expected Mid-Term Date, if not taken

Expected Terminal Evaluation Date

30-Jun-24

Expected Financial Closure Date

31-Dec-24

1.2 EA: Project description

The project objective is enhanced conservation and management of carbon stocks and biodiversity in forest and non-forest lands in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone (ChEZ). Biodiversity focused

1.3 Project Contact

Division(s) Implementing the project

UNEP Ecosystems Division
GEF Biodiversity and Land
Degradation Unit
Biodiversity and Land Branch

Executing Agency(ies)

UNEP Regional Office for Europe

Name of co-implementing Agency

Names of Other Project Partners

Ministry of Ecology and Natural
Resources of Ukraine
State Agency on Chernobyl Exclusion
Zone

TM: UNEP Portfolio Manager(s)**TM:** UNEP Task Manager(s)**TM:** UNEP Budget/Finance Officer**TM:** UNEP Support/Assistant

Ersin Esen

George Saddimbah

Aska Ochiel

EA: Manager/Representative**EA:** Project Manager**EA:** Finance Manager**EA:** Communications lead, if relevant

Mahir Aliyev

Erika Mattsson

N/A

2- OVERVIEW OF PROJECT STATUS**TM:** UNEP Current Subprogramme(s)

POW 2022-2023
Thematic Subprogramme 2:
Nature Action
Outcomes 2B and 2C

TM: UNEP previous Subprogramme(s)

POW 2018-2019
Subprogramme 3: Healthy and
Productive Ecosystems, EA (a) the
health and productivity of marine,
freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems
are institutionalized in education,
monitoring and cross-sector and
transboundary collaboration frameworks
at the national international level

TM: PoW Indicator(s)**EA:** UNSDCF/UNDAF linkages

Partnership Framework Area: Environment and Climate Change / Outcome 1 – Government of Ukraine adopts policy frameworks and mechanisms to ensure reversal of environmental degradation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, prevention and response to

2.1 UNEP F

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

15.1 – By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.
15.1.1 – Forest area as a proportion of total land area. 15.1.2 – Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type.
15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management.

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	

Implementation Status

2023

8th PIR

mentation status & Risk

FY 2023

FY 2022

FY 2021

FY 2020

FY 2019

FY 2018

FY 2017

PIR #

8th PIR

7th PIR

6th PIR

5th PIR

4th PIR

3rd PIR

2nd PIR

Rating towards outcomes
(DO) (section 3.1)

MS

MS

S

MS

MS

S

MS

Rating towards outputs (IP)
(section 3.2)

S

MS

S

MS

MS

S

MS

Risk rating
(section 4.2)

H

H

L

L

L

L

M

2.3 Imple

FY 2016

1st PIR

MS

MS

M

FY 2015

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

The status of the project has not changed since the last year's PIR. Because of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the project was suspended and was resumed for implementation only in July 2023 upon the receipt of assurances from the government counterpart that the project site was safe and full capacity of the national counterpart was restored to continue the project implementation.

2.4 Co-finance

EA: Planned Co-finance

USD 28,340,000

EA: Actual to date:

USD 33,215,955 (117%)

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

Following the adoption of a Presidential Decree on the Establishment of the Biosphere Reserve in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone the government has given high priority to the implementation of the project and has allocated more resources from the state budget than was originally foreseen at the project design stage.

2.5. Stakeholder

EA: Date of project steering committee
(will be uploaded to GEF Portal)

2/10/2022

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

The project Inception Meeting and regular stakeholder engagement meetings have ensured even involvement of stakeholders in the project implementation all the way through. The project provided excellent opportunity to involve government ministries and agencies

2.6. Gender

IM: Does the project have a gender action plan?

No

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

The potential of addressing gender gaps and more effectively engaging women was regularly addressed by the project management team. This included 4) inclusion of the skills, knowledge and experience of women in various phases of the Biosphere Reserve

2.7. ESSM

TM: Was the project classified as moderate/high risk at GEF?

No

TM: 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 implementation?
TM: If yes, please describe the new risks, or changes

No

N/A

TM & EA: Has the project received complaints related to social and/or environmental issues?
TM & EA: If yes, please describe the complaints and/or any response(s) to date (including

No

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

Conducting of periodical socio-economic surveys in the settlements neighbouring with the ChEZ was one of the MTR recommendations. In line with this recommendation, the project management team conducted regular stakeholder meetings and

2.8. KM/Learnir

EA: Knowledge activities and products
(will be included to GEF Report)

The Project launched a "Chernobyl – Open Air Lab" which is aiming to hold a number of scientific and practical workshops and
Please attach a copy of any products

EA: Main learning during the period

Since the project was suspended due to the war in Ukraine, there was no learning activity during the reporting period.

2.9. Stori

EA: Stories to be shared
(action to be shared with communication division)

A scientific and popular article on the thriving of biodiversity in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone was published and widely distributed in
multimedia discussing a lot of quotations and extracts

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 Enhanced Conservation, and Management of Carbon Stocks and Biodiversity in Forest and non-Forest Lands in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone (ChEZ), in Ukraine.	Number of hectares declared as Biosphere Reserve with formalized links to Polesky Nature Reserve.I	The current extent of protected area within the ChEZ is approximately 20% (46,000ha), with generally a low level of protection; Lack of formalized links with the Polesky nature reserve.	Legislative and regulatory mechanisms necessary to long-term management of the newly protected areas in place by the end of year 2; Extensive stakeholder consultations for establishment of the new PA initiated by end of year 1.	Presidential Decree upgrading the ChEZ to Biosphere Reserve (230,000 ha) status expected by mid-year 3; By beginning of year 4 sustainable use activities through development and implementation of a "Triad Approach" has begun; Results of the triad approach are apparent and are quantified by the end of year 4.	90%	Biosphere Reserve is established by the Presidential Decree. Institutional arrangements are accomplished, with the management and staff of the Biosphere Reserve fully in place. The Project has contributed significantly to the smooth start of the Biosphere Reserve. Extensive stakeholder consultations have been held by the Project to involve all interested stakeholder groups and institutions into the development of the management plan. Significant transboundary work was in place to link the Biosphere Reserve with the Polesky Radiological Reserve in Belarus. The continuation of the work included in the scope of this project was foreseen in the development of a full-fledged transboundary reserve between Ukraine and Belarus. These plans have all been destroyed now because of the military aggression of the Russian Federation where the political leadership in Belarus has acted as the ally of the aggressor, having provided its territory for the invasion of Ukraine from Belarus and occupation among others of the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone.	S

Outcome 1

Improved monitoring and research for large areas of forests, wetlands, and other habitat types and associated carbon benefits in the ChEZ	Environmental monitoring systems designed and operational and generating information on state of the ChEZ environment.	No conservation based research or field experiment program in place in ChEZ; Limited research program that does not meet the requirements of an expanded and upgraded protected area in the ChEZ.	By mid year 2 a stakeholder driven research plan developed; End of year 2 research plan forwarded to government for appropriate action. Linkages with at least four relevant national and/or international educational institutions established	Center based activities (e.g. publishing and making available monitoring data) Begin by the end of year 3. End of year 3, linkages created with relevant international agreements and platforms (e.g CBD, Ramsar, CCD).	95%	Stakeholder driven research plan developed; Environmental monitoring system is in place. Linkages with CBD, Ramsar and other relevant international agreements and structures have been developed.	S

Outcome 2

Improved management of natural resources and carbon stocks within and around the ChEZ.	Number of hectares declared as Biosphere Reserve with formalized links to Polesky Nature Reserve; Stakeholders contributing to maintain and protect nature reserve; Approved management plan.	Current amount of PA in ChEZ approximately 20% (46,000ha), but low level of protection; Legislation to expand PA in ChEZ not in place; Assessment of carbon stocks and other natural capital in ChEZ incomplete in some cases and not undertaken in others.	Legislation focused on expanded ChEZ PA in place by mid-year 2; Draft of ew/expanded protected area plan by mid- year 2; Established cooperative arrangements with Polesky Nature Reserve end of year 2. Public consultations have occurred by end of year 2.	At end of year 2 a sustainable management plan has been developed for a 230,000 ha Biosphere Reserve, with formalized links to Polesky Nature Reserve, and submitted to government for approval. PA management structure in place end year 3; Records or public involvement contain gender segregated data.	100%	Management Plan of the Biosphere Reserve has been developed and approved by the government. Cooperation arrangements with the Polesky Natural Reserve were established, however due to the ally position of official Belarus with the Russian aggressor's position, future cooperation if not feasible in the near future. Records of public involvement meetings contain gender segregated data.	S

Outcome 3

Increased availability and access to critical information needed for decision-making for effective sustainable management of the ChEZ.	System for tracking number of requests for data and other information.	Substantial knowledge gaps exist; What knowledge does exist is scattered which makes access and availability difficult.	By end of year 2 establishment of a comprehensive data base that would drive efforts to physically or electronically repatriate critical knowledge in the REPC initiated.	By end of year 4 comprehensive data base completed and located in the REPC; Repositories in place and access protocols and data sharing agreements finalized by end of year 4.	95%	Development of a comprehensive database capturing critical knowledge on ecosystems and development of landscapes is completed. Data access protocols and data sharing agreements are finalized.	S
Outcome 4							

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					
1.1: The REPC established and fully functional	6/30/2024	95%	95%	No progress due to the war in Ukraine.	S
1.2: Comprehensive assessment of the current state and trends of natural ecosystems in ChEZ	12/31/2020	100%	100%	All activities completed.	S
1.3: Assessment of the status of ecosystem services and their values, enhancement of carbon benefits in terms of meeting LLUCF targets in the ChEZI	6/30/2024	95%	95%	No progress due to the war in Ukraine.	S
Under Comp 2					
2.1: The ChEZ is upgraded to the status of Protected Area network to enhance the conservation and management of carbon stocks and secure the long-term basis for appropriate management, monitoring and research for large areas of forests, wetlands, and other habitat types	7/30/2020	100%	100%	The Biosphere Reserve is fully functional and expanding its network.	S
2.2: Measures developed to ensure financial and institutional sustainability of multi-sector conservation programs	7/30/2020	100%	100%	The Biosphere Reserve has a wide network of partner institutions and starts receiving diversified support to further develop its capacity.	S

Under Comp 3					
3.1: A set of lessons learned and practical recs. developed and published on habitat rehabilitation, carbon stocks management and biodiversity conservation emerged from prior and ongoing work in the ChEZ, and applicable to similar situations	6/30/2024	95%	95%	Big international conference was planned to be organised in April 2022 but got postponed because of the war.	S
3.2: The results are widely disseminated nationally and internationally	6/30/2024	95%	95%	Implementation delayed because of the war.	S
Under Comp 4					
4: Monitoring and Evaluation	6/30/2024	95%	95%	Activity contunud till the project completion.	S
Under Comp 5					
5: Project Management	6/30/2024	95%	95%	Work continuously in progress.	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	Low : well developed, stable management Structure and Roles/responsibilities are clearly
2 Governance structure - Oversight	Sufficiently covering all the main areas and understood, but need not of	Sufficiently covering all the main areas and understood, but need not of
3 Implementation schedule	governance clearly or limited membership and participation in decision-making ways	governance clearly or limited membership and participation in decision-making ways
4 Budget	Both "Activities are progressing well" and planned budget are balanced	Both "Activities are progressing well" and planned budget are balanced
5 Financial Management	Both "Units are effectively managed" and transparency is achieved	Both "Units are effectively managed" and transparency is achieved
6 Reporting	forwarded reports are complete and accurate with a good analysis of project	forwarded reports are complete and accurate with a good analysis of project
7 Capacity to deliver	Moderate: Sound technical and managerial capacity of institutions and	Moderate: Sound technical and managerial capacity of institutions and

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)

8th 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:		Risk Rating						Variation respect to last rating	
	Outcome / outputs	CEO ED	PIR 1	PIR 2	PIR 3	PIR 4	PIR 5	PIR 6	Δ	Justification
<p>Risk 1 Climate Change Over the past several years severe forest fires have increased in intensity and seasonal duration in the vicinity of the ChEZ, and climate change is suspected as being a major contributor to this change.</p>	Outcome 1-3	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	=	The project has helped with putting together a comprehensive fire management plan and a decision support system for prevention, early response and radiologically safe extinguishing of forest fires.
<p>Risk 2 Fire hazards In forests contaminated by radiation fire poses a continual risk (in addition to carbon emissions): forest fires could send clouds of smoke carrying radioactive material into the atmosphere, contaminating fire fighters and posing a risk to food production. Forest fires in the ChEZ contain radioactive cesium, strontium and often plutonium. In the products of combustion (ash and partially burnt fuels), the concentration of radionuclides sharply increases. A part of the radioactive ash remains at site, while the remainder in released in smoke aerosols and transported over various distances. The observed and anticipated pattern of climate change, with modified rainfall patterns and extended periods of drought, are expected to increase the risk of forest fires, as well as the risk of attack by insect pests.</p>	Outcomes 1-3	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	=	Same as above

Total disburse- ment as of 30 June	Risk 3 Reduced commitment to the conservation-based nature of project objectives and outcomes due to changes in government.	Outcomes 1-3	M	M	M	L	L	L	L	=	The government counterpart has demonstrated throughout the project a strong national ownership of the project and commitment to its objectives and outcomes.
	Risk 4 Weak institutional capacity.	4,863,955	H	L	L	L	L	L	L	=	Weak institutional capacity at the beginning of the project was mitigated by strengthening the management of the Biosphere Reserve which effectively provided management to the project as well.
	Risk 5 Inability of the Government to meet its financial and co-financial commitment.	Outcomes 1-5	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	=	Government co-financing has been consistent throughout the project.
	Risk 6 Continuing civil and international conflict may jeopardize the ability of the Government to properly focus on the project.	Outcomes 1-5	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	=	The political situation has significantly improved in Ukraine over the last several years and poses no longer immediate risk.
	Risk 7 The military aggression by the Russian Federation which started on 24 Feb 2022 continues to be an overwhelming destructive and threatening factor for the sovereignty of the entire country, which inevitably affects the project. Many project achievements have been lost or seriously undermined.	Outcomes 1-5					#####		H	=	The Chernobyl Exclusion Zone which was occupied from February'22 to March'22 is now back under the control of Ukrainian authorities but the Exclusion Zone itself and the adjacent territories are still heavily contaminated with land mines. The situation is constantly monitored by the management of the Biosphere Reserve and the security of personnel is under strict control.
####											
Consolidated project risk				L	L	L	L	L	H		The overall risk has been revised as H due to ongoing military aggression and significant losses of project achievements.

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	Actions effectively undertaken this reporting period	Additional mitigation measures for the next periods		
			What	When	By whom
The military aggression by the Russian Federation which started on 24 Feb 2022 continues to be an overwhelming destructive and threatening factor for the sovereignty of the entire country, which inevitably affects the project. Many project achievements have been lost or seriously undermined.		Since the beginning of the war in February'22 the project activities were frozen and all project personnel was evacuated by the Biosphere Reserve to safe locations within the country. Accurate inventory of all lost equipment and other damages observed on the project site were documented with before and after photo evidence enclosed to this report.	The situation will continue to be monitored. Project activities will be modified to help the national project authorities cope with the damages to the project site and help promote the project outputs through adequate outreach activities. This by and large is the remaining component for the project that could not be finished before the war started.	July'23 – Jun'24	PMU
Risk 5 Inability of the Government to meet its financial and co-financial commitment.		Not any action taken at this period since the projec was dormant.	Other sources of co-finance options will be searched	July'23 – Jun'24	PMU

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	Minor amendments
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	Yes	
Increase of GEF project financing up to 5%	No	
Co-financing	No	
Location of project activity	No	
Other	Yes	

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

Version	Type	Signed/Approved by UNEP	Entry Into Force (last signature Date)	Agreement Expiry Date	Main changes introduced in this revision
Original Legal Instrument					
Amendment 1	Revision	4,863,955			
Extension 1	Extension				

30-Jun-24

31-Dec-24

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 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
Chornobyl Radiation and Ecological Biosphere Reserve		51.36197	30.21587			

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

[Annex any linked geospatial file]