

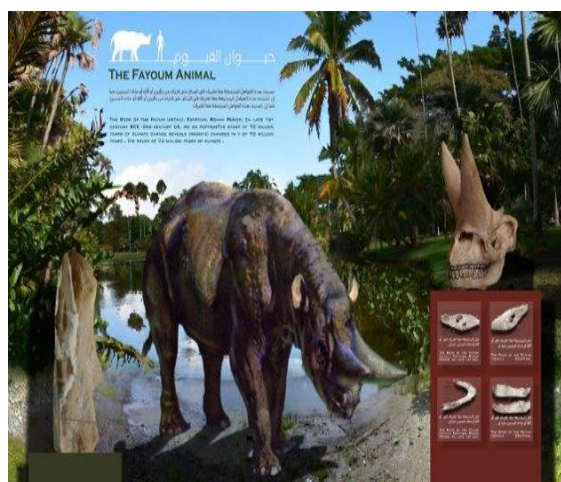
Mid-Term Review Report

for the

UNEP/GEF Project: Effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas” GEF ID 9671



Tourism infrastructure development - Solar panels for Qatrani



The Fayoum Protected Area

Evaluation Office of the United Nations Environment Programme

February 2024



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(Project Title: Effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas)

(Project number: 9671)

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This Mid-term Review report was prepared for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) by Julian K. Bagyendera, an independent consultant.

The consultant would like to express her gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this evaluation, as listed in Annex B.

The consultant would like to thank the project team, particularly Ms. Natalia Boulad, the Protected Areas and Biodiversity Programme Manager, International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), Mr. Hanna Haddad, the Programme Assistant, IUCN for their contribution and coordination of respondents as well as availing all necessary documents for review. More gratitude goes to Ms Jane Nimpamya Gubare, the UNEP Task Manager and Dr. Rastislav Vrbensky, the UNEP Evaluation Manager, for their technical oversight throughout the evaluation process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to the Project Steering Committee, led by the Chair, Dr. Ali Abo Sena, who is also the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who spared time to respond to the interview. The consultant would also like to thank other respondents who included EEAA staff, the Protected Area Managers, GEF Focal Point, Nature Conservation Sector staff, the Egyptian/Italian Environmental Cooperation, Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), the Birdlife International-Middle East Division and the Fayoum governorate staff.

The consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will inform the improvement of service delivery for the remaining half of the program.

BRIEF CONSULTANT BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Julian K. Bagyendera has over 28 years of work experience in conducting baseline, mid and end-term evaluations for programmes in Climate Change (CC), environment, agriculture, HIV/AIDS, population, reproductive health, malaria, socio-economic strengthening, social protection, education, gender mainstreaming and integration, human and child rights, governance, advocacy, private/public partnerships, capacity building and community development. She has a wealth of experience in managing complex programs with multiple implementers and funding agencies, with particular reference to the World Bank, GEF, UNEP, UNRCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UN Women, WHO, CDC, EU, USAID, DoD, US Embassy, Pearce Corps, Iris Group, DFID, DANIDA, SIDA, Italian Corporation and Irish Aid. She has international experience working in South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, P.R. China, Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, DR Congo, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Egypt, USA, Thailand, Netherlands and Canada. As a team leader, she has worked as an international and national consultant for over 70 related assignments. She holds a PhD in Project Management, a Master's in Business Administration (MBA), and a Bachelor's in Social Sciences. The consultant's full CV is attached as Annex F.

Reviewer

Julian K. Bagyendera – Principal Reviewer

ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No

Report Language(s): English

Evaluation Type: Mid-term Review

Brief Description: This is a Mid-term Review report of a UNEP/GEF project titled "Effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Area", Project ID: 9671, implemented starting 20th June 2019 with an estimated end date of 31st December 2024. The project mainly focuses on two Protected Areas (PAs), the Wadi El Rayan Protected Area (WRPA) and Lake Qarun Protect Area (LQPA), which are located within the Fayoum Governorate and aims at strengthening the overall management of the Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun protected areas to safeguard biodiversity by addressing a range of threats.

The purpose of the MTR is to assess project performance to date (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine the likelihood of the project achieving its intended outcomes, including its sustainability.

Key words: Protected Areas, management capacities, biodiversity, community involvement, capacity building, gender equality, management effectiveness, management frameworks, conservation, ecosystems and natural resources.

Primary data collection period: October-December 2023

Field mission dates: - N/A

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PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

UNEP PIMS ID:	GFL-11207-14AC0003-SB-008233		
Implementing Partners	The Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) is the host agency for the project and its primary body, The Nature Conservation Sector (NCS) is responsible for PA management and the conservation of biodiversity, and thus plays the lead governmental role in executing the project on the ground		
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation SDG 15: Life on Land		
Sub-programme:	Ecosystem management:	Expected Accomplishment(s):	Expected Accomplishment 1: Use of the ecosystem services and sustainable productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems is increased
UNEP approval date:	14 December 2018	Programme of Work Output(s):	Ecosystems Sub programme Expected Accomplishment 1: Use of the ecosystem services and sustainable productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems is increased
Expected start date:	20 June 2019	Actual start date:	20 June 2019
Planned completion date:	31, December, 2022	Actual operational completion date:	30 June 2025
Planned project budget at approval:	USD 1,319,864	Actual total expenditures reported as of 30 June 2023	USD 789,662
Planned Environment Fund allocation:	N/A	Actual Environment Fund expenditures reported as of [date]:	N/A
Planned Extra-Budgetary Financing/co-financing:	USD 8,800,000	Secured Extra-Budgetary Financing/co-financing:	USD 4,679,530
		Actual Extra-Budgetary Financing/co-financing expenditures reported as of 30 June 2023	USD 4,679,530
First disbursement:	USD 360,353	Planned date of financial closure:	30 June 2025
No. of formal project revisions:	One	Date of last approved project revision:	15 November 2022
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	2	Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:	Last: 13 June 2023 Next:
Mid-term Review (planned date):	June 2021	Mid-term Review (actual date):	October 2023
Terminal Review/Evaluation (planned date):	Jan - March 2025		
Coverage - Country(ies):	Egypt	Coverage - Region(s):	Africa
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resources Management
CBO	Community-based organisation
CEDARE	Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe
CEPA	Communications, Education and Public Awareness
COP	UN Conference of the Parties
EEAA	Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency
EECG	Environmental Education and Conservation Global
EIECP	Egyptian Italian Environmental Cooperation Programme
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoE	Government of Egypt
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IUCN ROWA	IUCN Regional Office for West Asia
LQPA	Lake Qarun Protected Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MALR	Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Egypt
MoT&A	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MTR	Mid-term Review
MWRI	Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation
NAP	National Action Program, under the UNCCD
NBS	National Biodiversity Strategy
NCPSLU	National Centre for Planning State Land Uses
NCS	Nature Conservation Sector
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NWRC	National Water Research Centre
PA	Protected Area
PAMU	Protected Area Management Unit
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
Prodoc	Project Document
RAMSAR	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
CBD	Convention for Biodiversity
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHS	World Heritage Site
WRPA	Wadi El-Rayan Protected Area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Background

1. This is the report of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) for the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)/Global Environment Facility (GEF) project **"Effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas."** The project started on 20th June 2019 and was expected to end on 31 December 2022, but was extended to 31st December 2024. The objective is to improve the management effectiveness of the Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun protected areas (PAs) through community involvement and capacity building. The project was designed along two main components: 1) Strengthen management capacities of targeted PAs for the conservation of threatened and important species and their habitats, and 2: Establish effective community participation in PA management and conservation/management of natural resources. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources Regional Office for West Asia (IUCN ROWA) is the Executing Agency (EA) for the project. At national level, the project is implemented by the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) while at site level, the project is managed by PA Managers.

2. The MTR was undertaken between October and December 2023. The target audience for the results of this MTR are UNEP staff related to GEF projects, IUCN ROWA staff and other implementing partners, members of the Project Steering Committee (PSC), regional offices, as well as other key stakeholders. The MTR will aim at encouraging reflection and learning, as well as accountability. The findings will further be utilized by relevant government officials such as the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA), Nature Conservation Sector (NCS), Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Tourism Department, Fayoum Governor and Governorate, Water and Environmental Police, Security Department. The MTR will further benefit the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Academic Institutions, Nature Conservation Egypt and Fayoum Environmental Center) The executing agency and other partners such as Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) and Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED) in the implementation will benefit from the results of this MTR in shaping the remaining part of the project. At the community level, the MTR will guide the Businesses such as Local communities, resource users and private businesses on sustainable resource use.

The purpose of the MTR was to analyse whether the project is on track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required. The MTR sought to assess project performance to date (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine the likelihood of the project achieving its intended outcomes, including its sustainability.

Key findings

3. *Strategic relevance* - The strategic relevance of the project was rated Highly Satisfactory. The project is well aligned with UNEP's programme of work: The Ecosystems sub-programme contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Vision 2030, particularly SDGs 6 and 15. It is consistent with UNDAF-Egypt and is aligned to NBSAP 2015-2030. The project works closely with other projects, such as the Egyptian-Italian Environmental Cooperation Programme (EIECP) III project, to ensure that the work is complementary and not duplicative. The project further complements UNDP/GEF

Strengthening Protected Area Financing and Management Systems (SPAFAM) to establish a sustainable protected area financing system.

4. *Quality of Project Design* - The project design was rated Highly Satisfactory. The project design was comprehensive, showing a strong alignment and relevance to UNEP/GEF, SDGs and national priorities. The design has a thorough stakeholder analysis and clarifies challenges in the context. The design is robust with elaborate governance and supervision arrangements, risk identification and social safeguards, detailing strategies for sustainability/replication and catalytic effects and identification of project design weaknesses gaps, which led to modifying some outputs.

5. *Nature of External Context* - The main issues that affected the project were delayed internal clearance by the government of Egypt, for one year, hence delayed project start, the COVID-19 lockdown, which resulted in a travel ban for one year and limited physical activities, and high inflation rate, making procurement more costly than budgeted for.

Effectiveness

6. *Overall, effectiveness was rated Satisfactory. Under effectiveness, the MTR assessed the project achievement in attaining the programme outputs and milestones. Availability of outputs was rated Satisfactory, and achievement of project outcomes was rated Satisfactory, while the Likelihood of impact was rated Likely. The main milestones to influence the sustainable attainment of outcomes were achieved.*

Effectiveness	Satisfactory
Availability of outputs	Satisfactory
Achievement of project outcomes	Satisfactory
Likelihood of impact	Likely

7. Availability of outputs

While assessing the availability of outputs, the achievement rates were based on the UNEP Criterion Rating Matrix as follows: Highly Satisfactory = 100% of the planned outputs delivered fully, Satisfactory = 81-99%, Moderately Satisfactory = 61-80%, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 41-60%, Unsatisfactory = 21-40%, Highly Unsatisfactory = 20% and below of the planned outputs delivered fully. This exercise, being an MTR, measured achievement against mid-term targets. *Availability of outputs was rated Satisfactory.* The project had 4 outputs, and 3 out of 4 were satisfactory.

8. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score was 62 out of 99 for Qaroun PA and 62 out of 99 for Wadi El-Rayan PA, a 40-point increase from the Baseline of 21 (see annexes H (a) and H(b) and H(c), and way above the midterm target of 5. Among key project outputs were developing/updating the Lake Qarun PA Management Plan, Lake Qarun Restoration Plan, Jabal Qatrani Site Management Plan, Wadi Al Hitan Management Plan, the Master Plan for Restoration of Fayoum and the Communications, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA). The project also established the Environmental Educational Centre, renovated key tourism infrastructure and repaired PA vehicles.

Achievement of project outcomes

9. The achievement of outcomes was rated Satisfactory based on the UNEP Rating Criterion Matrix. The project had 7 outcome indicators, of which 2 (28.6%) had fully achieved mid-term targets, 2 (28.6%) had achieved 61-80%, while 3 (42.9%) had not yet

been measured due to postponed national assessments, as shown below. Important to note is that some indicators had not yet been measured. These include I) *Increase in condition measured by the Ecosystem Health Index (EHI) of critical biodiversity habitat as a result of improved management focused on the conservation of targeted species;* II) *Stable or increase in populations or habitat size of threatened species in the PAs and* III) *Sustainable use of biological resources is increased.*

10. Likelihood of impact - The project's likelihood of impact is rated likely. Several drivers that support the transition from outputs to outcomes are fully and partially in place. For instance, drivers that are fully in place include leadership and ownership by EEAA, a government agency, PA management and monitoring plans in place, and related activities that are integrated into government workplans. The communities participated in developing the management and communication plans.

Partially, the community participation aspects were not yet at the planned level; although the local Community Advisory Committee was established, there was no evidence of functionality. The community environment education centre was still under construction, hence limiting community engagement. There was limited actualisation of the co-financing commitments and the staff changes at EEAA may negatively affect sustainability of interventions.

Financial Management

11. Project financing - The overall project budget was USD 10,119,864, comprising USD 1,319,864 (13%) from GEF and USD 8,800,000 (87%) from co-financing partners. The total expenditure for GEF funds as of 30th June 2023 is within budget (60%); 40% will be utilised in the remaining 18 months of implementation of the project ending 31st December 2024. The total committed co-financing was USD 8,800,000, of which USD 1,285,000 (15%) was a cash commitment, and USD 7,515,000 (85%) was in kind.

12. Financial management was rated *satisfactory*. The EA, to a great extent, adhered to UNEP's financial policies and procedures. The EA conducted regular analysis of actual expenditure against budget and work plan; and expenditure is within the approved annual budget. However, in the early years of the project, expenditure reports were not submitted on time to UNEP. Both GEF funds and co-financing were analysed by component, and the major sources and types of co-finance raised were clearly indicated. The EA provided relevant legal documents; the PCA and the respective amendment are available and were duly signed by respective authorities. The project annual audits were simultaneously conducted by an independent auditor, and received a clean opinion in each of the four years ending 31st December 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. There is good communication between the Task Manager, the Project Manager and the Fund Management Office. The responsiveness from the Project Manager (PM), Task Manager (TM) and the Fund Management Officer (FMO) to financial requests during the review process was good. However, in the early years of the project, expenditure reports were not submitted on time to UNEP. The EA provided the agreements signed with the subcontractors but the agreement amounts did not tally with the expenditure reported under subcontractors' budget. However, the EA did not provide any cash transfer forms to the subcontractors, the consultant was therefore unable to ascertain the amount transferred and utilised by the subcontractors. Only two co-financing partners (IUCN and Italian Development corporation) out of four submitted co-financing reports.

Efficiency

13. Efficiency was rated moderately satisfactory. The project leveraged the IUCN's global expertise and location since the IUCN already has ongoing work in Fayoum. The IUCN provided quality reports and accounted for all their money. During the period of January to November 2022, IUCN pre-financed the project as they waited for the money from UNEP to avoid lagging behind. The project has had one no-cost extension due to delays in project implementation caused by i) the COVID-19 lockdown and ii) the long process required for acquiring the Egyptian government permits /approvals. As a result of the no-extension, IUCN submitted a minor budget reallocation without affecting the overall budget of the project and USD 45,000 was reallocated from the sub-contractor's component to cater for the increase in personnel and consultants' costs. Whereas the overall project expenditure is at 60%, some project expenses like personal (80%) and travel on official business (77%) have already escalated, yet the project still has 18 months to completion, and the project personnel will continue to support the project to the end and need to be paid. Co-financing realised only 22% of the planned amount.

Sustainability

14. Sustainability was rated likely. Socio-political factors support the continuation and further development of project outcomes. There is a high level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forward. The actual implementation on the ground is carried out by the government – the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA). The Project Steering Committee (PSC) is chaired by the Government representative, and it is anticipated that after the project has ended, the Government Institution in charge of protected areas, the Environmental Education and Conservation Global (EECG) will continue with activities. The Government of Egypt currently has a big programme (Water Energy and Food Access) that was launched before and during the UN Conference of the Parties (COP 27) together with the National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS) that is likely to provide some of the resources for the sustainability of the project's outcomes.

15. The Ministry of Environment has established Governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks that are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. The management manuals, CEPA and surveillance plan will further enhance sustainability.

Monitoring and Reporting

16. Monitoring design and Reporting were rated highly satisfactory. All project narrative reports were submitted on time; however, not all the quarterly financial reports and annual co-finance reports were submitted. Monitoring of project implementation was highly satisfactory. The PSC meetings were held, with the last one on June 2023 and signed minutes were availed to the consultant.

Factors Affecting Performance

17. Factors that positively enabled project performance included *adequate technical and institutional capacity of IUCN ROWA, broad stakeholder engagement, functional PSC and focused project target*. Factors that negatively affected the project included delayed internal clearance, COVID-19 lockdown, and some staff turnover at partner organisations and PAs.

Conclusions

18. The project was very relevant and well aligned with donor strategic priorities global, regional, sub-regional and national priorities.

Overall, effectiveness was rated Satisfactory, and the key deliverables essential for transitioning outputs into outcomes were accomplished. Delayed government project clearance, COVID-19 lockdown, and staff turnover at partner organisation and PA levels were among the factors that negatively affected the project.

19. The EA, to a great extent, adhered to UNEP's financial policies and procedures; there was a great improvement in reporting effective January 2022, and the project is likely to be completed by 31 December 2024 without further extension.

20. Routine monitoring of project implementation was rated Satisfactory. Systems, resources and plans are adequate for effective project monitoring. The PSC meetings were held regularly to monitor and provide strategic guidance to project implementation. However, the MTR noted that some indicators could not be easily measured by the project but relied on national assessments, which have not yet been conducted by the government, and hence, the ratings may not be a true reflection of their status.

21. The higher leadership and involvement by EEAA show strong political will and the likelihood of sustainability. The developed management and communication manuals, CEPA, as well as the Enforcement and Patrolling Plan, which is already being enforced, will continue to be utilised long after the project closure.

Lessons Learned

22. Lesson Learned #1: It is essential to embed flexibility in project design since there is often a long time lag between design, approval and actual implementation of GEF projects. The flexibility also facilitates adaptive management to address emerging and unforeseeable circumstances such as the COVID-19 outbreak.

23. Lesson Learned #2: Using the government as an implementation arm enhances ownership and sustainability since the strengthened capacity will continue to be utilised.

24. Lesson Learned #3: Gender mainstreaming is often done as part of program design in general, but without precise tools for implementing and tracking it, it remains abstract. Gender equality should be reflected in project activities and governance structures.

25. Lesson Learned #4: Awarding conservation contracts to competent institutions such as IUCN leverages their experience and resources. However, the executing agency office should have an in-country office for faster communication and coordination and to reduce travel costs.

26. Lesson Learned #5: For greater continuity and minimal delays in implementation, institutions should ensure higher retention rates for key personnel engaged in the design and implementation. Regular refresher training bridges the capacity gap where high turnover is unavoidable.

27. Lesson Learned #6: Providing funds for more tangible outputs is perceived as more relevant, such as regular maintenance of the tourism infrastructure and tracks, more

infrastructure (sire museums, solar panels, cars and laboratory stations for scientific monitoring), road maintenance graders, a caterpillar for drainage cleaning, water tanks for the staff in remote areas, and museum in Jaba Qatrani.

Recommendations

28. Recommendation #1: Embed more flexibility in project design and management to facilitate adaptive management and address emerging circumstances such as the COVID-19 outbreak.

29. Recommendation #2: Expedite the implementation of Output 2.1.2 and reflect its progress in the subsequent reports, e.g. PIR and half-year progress reports.

30. Recommendation #3: Focus on communicating, engaging and enhancing community participation (Component 2) and fast-track the completion of an inclusive and accessible Community Environmental Educational Centre.

31. Recommendation #4: Conduct capacity building for local communities on socio-economic aspects, including income-generating activities (IGAs) and sustainable use and management of infrastructure.

32. Recommendation #5: Conduct fresh and refresher training for key project partners, such as EEAA, PAs, CEDARE and RAED, on the green list and other key project aspects to mitigate the high staff turnover.

33. Recommendation #6: Establish a project management unit in Egypt for more effective management and enhanced coordination and communication between the executing agency and key implementing partners. In the meantime, county-based project technical staff should be recruited to track activities faster and serve as the liaison between EEAA (government) and IUCN ROWA (executing agency), project area management staff and other partners CEDARE, Italian Corporation and local NGOs and communities.

34. Recommendation #7: Revise GEF financial reporting templates to capture analysis by component and provide hands-on training on the revised templates on data capture to the project management staff.

35. Recommendation #8: Develop a sustainability and exit strategy for the project to provide clear guidance to EEAA and PAs on sustaining the interventions and raising more complementary funding for the interventions. Support the implementation of selected activities in the developed management plans. Develop an exit strategy for the project that would provide clear guidance to EEAA and PAs on sustaining the interventions and raising more funding.

Recommendation #9: Develop methodologies and conduct assessments to provide the information required for measuring the indicators that were not rated during this MTR. These are indicators 4, 5 and 7. The assessments should be conducted as early as possible to provide a midterm point, and then another assessment should be conducted at the end of the project to be used for the terminal evaluation. If possible, IUCN and UNEP can have meetings to agree on the methodologies to be employed.

1. INTRODUCTION

36. This is the report of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) for the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)/Global Environment Facility (GEF) project **"Effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas."** The project started on 20 June 2019 and was expected to end on 31st December 2022. However, the date of completion was extended to 31st December 2024. The objective is to improve the management effectiveness of the Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun protected areas through community involvement and capacity building. The project was designed along two main components:

- 1) Component 1: Strengthen management capacities of targeted PAs for the conservation of threatened and important species and their habitats;
- 2) Component 2: Establish effective community participation in PA management and conservation/management of natural resources.

37. The Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) is the host agency for the project, and its primary body, the Nature Conservation Sector (NCS), is responsible for Protected Area (PA) management and the conservation of biodiversity and thus plays the lead governmental role in implementing the project. The Overall project supervision is the responsibility of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and has representation on the Project Steering Committee (PSC), which provides overall guidance, strategic direction and oversight to project management. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) is the executing agency for the project and, as such, works closely with the NCS to deliver the project. The Protected Area Management Unit (PAMU) for the two protected areas has the primary responsibility, as a governmental unit, to carry out day-to-day operations and management of the PAs.

The Mid-Term Review

38. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) was undertaken between October and December 2023. The target audience for the results of this MTR are UNEP staff related to GEF projects, regional offices, as well as other key stakeholders. For sustainability, these findings will be utilised by relevant government and NGO officials as well as environmental and fisheries, tourism, and PAs of the local governments in the project intervention sites within Egypt. The executing agency and other partners in the implementation will benefit from the results of this MTR in shaping their future-related initiatives.

Purpose of the Mid-Term Review

39. The purpose of MTR is to analyse whether the project is on track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required. The MTR sought to assess project performance to date (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine the likelihood of the project achieving its intended outcomes, including its sustainability.

2. REVIEW METHODS

40. The MTR employed a highly participatory approach, ensuring the involvement of key stakeholders. The consultant maintained close communication with the UNEP Task Manager (TM) and the Project Manager (PM) and shared information at all stages. The PM and the TM provided input into the MTR design/inception phase, data collection, analysis and report writing. The review utilised quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain information on key review criteria. The MTR was undertaken using mixed methods, entailing desk reviews, consultative meetings, and key informant interviews. The data collection methods are discussed below.

a) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

41. The KIIs were conducted among key project stakeholders that comprised the PSC Chair and other PSC members, EEAA staff, the PA Managers, GEF Focal Point, Nature Conservation Sector staff, the Egyptian-Italian Environmental Cooperation (EIEC), Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), the Birdlife International-Middle East Division and the Fayoum governorate staff. Additionally, KIIs were conducted among the IUCN Project Management team, the UNEP TM and the financial management teams from UNEP and IUCN. These individual and group interviews were virtually conducted via Zoom. The list of individuals interviewed is presented in Annex B.

42. The project M&E framework and the UNEP Evaluation Criteria informed the MTR questions presented in Annex C and were used with the standard UNEP guideline questions to assess the project, particularly the strategic relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and likelihood of achieving outcomes and impact.

b) Desk review of key documents

43. The MTR was informed by a review of relevant background documents, including the Project document (Prodoc), the CEO Endorsement Project Corporative Agreements, Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), Project Progress Report (PPR), financial reports, project deliverable documents and the MTR terms of reference. The complete list of key documents consulted is attached as Annex D.

c) Consultative meetings

44. Consultative meetings were conducted with the UNEP TM, the UNEP finance team the project management team, and key project stakeholders, individually or jointly. These meetings aimed to gain concurrency on approach and methodology, key stakeholders to engage during data collection, obtain key documents and contacts for respondents, and seek clarifications. Virtual modes of communication, mainly Zoom and email, were utilised for the consultations.

d) Analysing Findings and Key Terminal Review Principles

45. The review findings and judgments were based on empirical evidence and analysis documented in the review report. Information obtained from the implementing agency, Executing Agency and other key stakeholders were triangulated, and where this was not possible, the single source was acknowledged while protecting anonymity. To catalyse learning during the remaining half of project implementation, the consultant went beyond the assessment of "what" the project performance was to provide a deeper understanding of the reasons behind ("why") the performance. The consultant assessed progress against the mid-term targets. The UNEP Standard Scoring Tool was used to score the quality of the project design, and the UNEP Evaluation Criteria and the Weighted Rating Table were used to score the project performance (Table 13).

e) Ethical considerations

46. During data collection, the consultant-maintained confidentiality throughout the exercise. Consent was also obtained from the participants before any interview started. Discussions and interviews were stored in password-protected laptops, and the analysis of responses was not linked to respondents' names.

f) Limitations of the review

47. Due to the political situation in the region during the time of the MTR, the consultant was advised that it was not a good time to conduct fieldwork in Fayoum. The consultant, therefore, missed field observations but relied on achievements in reports and interviews.

48. The language barrier was a challenge among some PA managers and governate staff who could not freely express themselves in English. The consultant addressed this challenge by having a joint interview where one fluent in English translated the questions and responses into Arabic and back to English.

3. THE PROJECT

3.1 Context

49. Egypt's high biodiversity is partly due to its location at the juncture of four biogeographical regions, namely the Irano-Turanian, Mediterranean, Saharo-Sindian and Afrotropical regions, and to its diversity of landscapes and topographic features, ranging from the rugged mountains of South Sinai and the Eastern Desert (up to 2,641 m) to the Qattara Depression (134 m below mean sea level), to flat featureless gravel plains and complex hilly country. Wadi El Rayan Protected Area (WRPA) was declared in 1989. A number of laws in Egypt provide an environment that supports biodiversity management in the country. Law 102/1983 provides the legislative framework for establishing and managing protected areas in Egypt. The sole category referred to in this law is the natural protectorate, which is defined as "any area of land or coastal or inland water characterised by flora, fauna and natural features having cultural, scientific, tourist or aesthetic value."

50. Nationally, coverage of the protected area network has grown over the last three decades to include 30 protected areas covering 14,680 km² or approximately 14.6% of the country's terrestrial environment, as well as 1.7% of the country's marine environment. Despite the progress achieved to date, coverage does not yet meet the CBD 2020 Aichi Target 11 to protect at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10% of coastal and marine areas.

51. UNEP is implementing this project in Egypt, which is executed by the IUCN-ROWA in collaboration with EEAA. The project mainly focuses on two PAs, the Wadi El Rayan Protected Area (WRPA) and Lake Qaran Protect Area (LQPA), which are located within the Fayoum Governorate. The implementation area is located in the south-western part of the Fayoum depression; WRPA encompasses 175,901 ha, including 11,434 ha of lakes, 1,583 ha of wetlands, 160,949 ha of desert, and the Al-Oyoun oasis that covers 1,935 ha. The WRPA is classified as IUCN category II and VI and has been designated as a Ramsar site, an important bird area, and a key biodiversity area. The WRPA is an Important Bird Area and a designated Ramsar wetland of international importance; it includes globally significant biodiversity. The LQPA is an Important Bird Area and a designated Ramsar wetland of international importance; it includes globally significant biodiversity.

52. The project aims to strengthen the overall management of the Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qaran protected areas to safeguard biodiversity by addressing various threats. It seeks to enable community involvement, capacity building and gender equality as the principal means of improving effectiveness. The project objective is to improve the management effectiveness of the Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qaran protected areas through community involvement and capacity building. The project will enhance the management effectiveness of WRPA and LQPA through a number of interventions at the PA level and in its surrounding communities. The project comprises two key components: Component 1: Strengthen management capacities of targeted PAs for conserving threatened and important species and their habitats, and Component 2: Establish effective community participation in PA management and conservation/management of natural resources.

3.2 Results Framework

53. The Project Results Framework includes SMART indicators for each expected outcome and mid-term and end-of-project targets. These indicators, along with the key deliverables and benchmarks included, are the main tools for assessing project implementation progress and whether project results are being achieved. Table 1 below shows the originally stated objectives and how the intended results were rephrased and re-aligned during the MTR inception phase to allow the MTR to capture and measure the intended results and the

pathways of change. These reformulated statements were used for the reconstruction of the project's Theory of Change and the MTR matrix (Annex C).

Table 1: Original and revised Project objective and result statements

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Review Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
LONG TERM IMPACT		
Objective: To improve the management effectiveness of the Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun protected areas through community involvement and capacity building	N/A	
PROJECT OUTCOMES		
Outcome 1.1: Improved management effectiveness (strengthened PA management tools, processes and capacities) demonstrated at two targeted PAs (Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun).	Improved management effectiveness at Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs	Restated for more clarity Improved management effectiveness is SMARTLY stated and open, allowing innovation during implementation rather than restriction to only strengthened PA management tools, processes and capacities.
Outcome 2.1: Participatory approaches to PA management have strengthened PA management and reduced unsustainable resource uses in areas within and adjacent to two targeted PAs (Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun).	Unsustainable resource use in areas within and adjacent to Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs was significantly reduced through participatory approaches.	Restated for more clarity in the result language to emphasise the desired result, which is the significant reduction of unsustainable resource use.
OUTPUTS		
Output 1.1.1: PA management frameworks of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs developed, including participatory approaches.	PA management frameworks of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs were developed and implemented through participatory approaches.	Emphasising the importance of ensuring that these frameworks will be implemented beyond just developing them.
Output 1.1.2: Field monitoring programs within Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs to assess the conservation status of key ecosystems and threatened and important species developed and implemented.	Field monitoring programs for key ecosystems and species within Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs were developed and implemented.	Restated to make it SMART and to clarify that the developed field monitoring programs will be implemented beyond the project life cycle
Output 2.1.1: Programmes for community participatory planning and involvement in PA Management developed and implemented at targeted PA sites.	N/A	
Output 2.1.2: Controls and monitoring programmes to conserve ecosystem services and reduce overharvesting by local communities within Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs developed and implemented.	N/A	

3.3 Stakeholders

54. This section provides a description of key actors and their responsibilities relevant to the management of protected areas and the conservation of biodiversity in Egypt. During the project development phase, a thorough stakeholder analysis was carried out and included in the project document. Project Justification included 'Institutional Arrangements' of the project document and corresponding Implementing or Executing Partners, implementing partners; government officials and duty bearers (e.g. national focal points, coordinators); civil society leaders (e.g. associations and networks) and beneficiaries (e.g. business people, disadvantaged groups). The stakeholders were divided into government agencies, NGOs and academic institutions, communities and businesses. Table 2 provides a description of key stakeholder groups and an analysis of the levels of influence and interest each stakeholder group has over the project outcomes.

Table 2: Key stakeholder and their roles

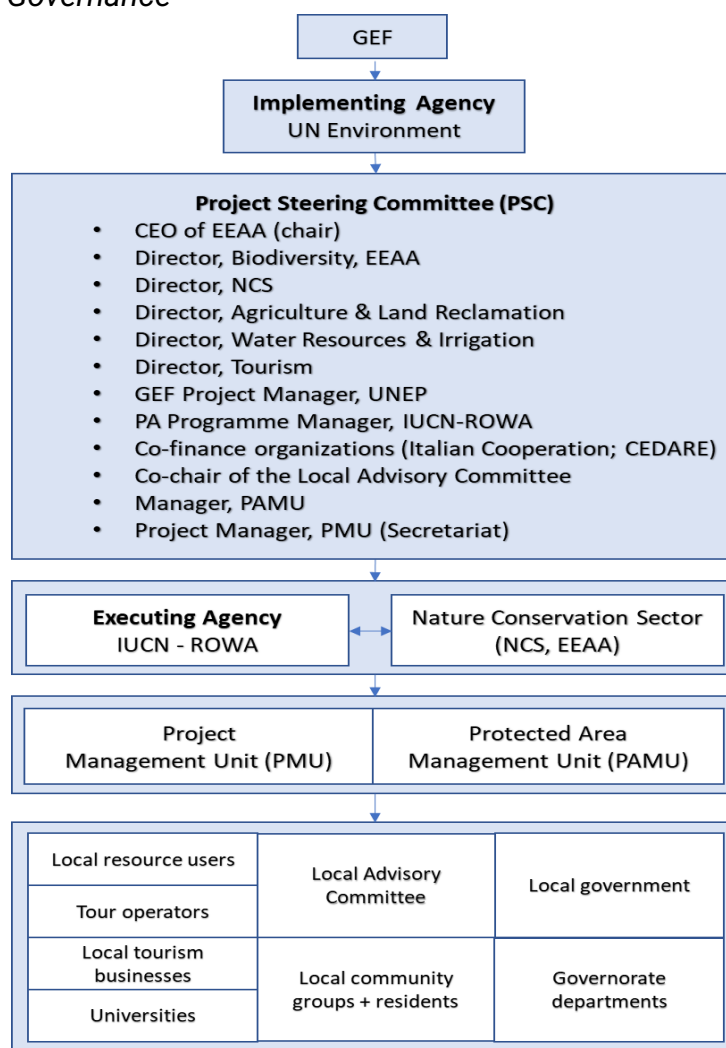
Stakeholder	Role in the project
Government	
Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA)	EEAA is responsible for coordination with the other line ministries, public administration bodies, agencies and authorities under them. EEAA is responsible for developing project activities related to policies and laws on biodiversity conservation and wildlife management.
Nature Conservation Sector (NCS)	NCS is responsible for designing project activities related to policy / regulatory changes to ensure compliance with habitat and species protection legislation and all issues related to biodiversity conservation within the broader landscape.
Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation	This ministry ensures activities are aligned with national priorities and investments. They will be called up to offer their expertise on best management practices focusing on conservation practices and pollution prevention.
Ministry of Water Resources & Irrigation	This ministry assists the project by ensuring activities align with national priorities and investments. They offer their expertise on best management practices for conservation and pollution prevention. The Water Research Institute engaged to set baselines and targets for indicators for Qarun and Rayan lakes.
Tourism Department	This ministry will assist the project by ensuring activities are aligned with national priorities and investments. They will be called up to offer their expertise.
Fayoum Governor and Governorate	The Governor and the Governorate authorities in Fayoum are crucial in light of their local relationships. The Governorate authorities associated with the ministries (above) bring their knowledge and experience to the design and implementation of projects.
Water and Environmental Police	The police bring technical information and experience pertaining to compliance monitoring and enforcement. They guide the development of protocols and regulations.
Security Department	The Security Department will bring technical information and experience pertaining to compliance monitoring and enforcement. They should guide the development of protocols and regulations.
NGOs + Academic Organizations	
Academic Institutions	Some universities will assist in project design and implementation by providing data through research and outreach activities.
IUCN ROWA	IUCN ROWA's role is to implement the activities and coordinate with the project partners. They oversee the implementation of the project and the PMU, including supervising the project manager. Their roles include cross-cutting issues such as gender mainstreaming and natural resource management.
UNEP	UNEP/ROWA's role is to link the project activities to the ongoing regional upscaling of the PAs network in the Arab Region. UNEP/ROWA ensures the

Stakeholder	Role in the project
	synergies among biodiversity-related Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEAs) and SDGs at national and PA levels. UNEP/ROWA works to improve the capacity building of the PA staff through specialised training programs.
Centre for Environment & Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)	CEDARE supports building the capacities of park management in Earth Observation (EO), modelling and data exploitation. CEDARE also raises local communities' awareness of environmental issues and supports rangeland management in areas adjacent to the PAs during the project period.
Nature Conservation Egypt	NCE provides advice on approaches to conservation. A member of NCE works locally in Fayoum as a volunteer (an informal group called the Egyptian Association for Bird Protection) to promote awareness of hunting rules and no-hunting areas.
Fayoum Environmental Center	This local Fayoum city-based NGO focuses on community development, women and youth training. They conduct skill development training and environmental awareness through online and in-situ activities in schools and communities.
Message (Resala)	This local youth NGO focuses on engaging youth and promoting the environmental message.
Communities, Businesses	
Local communities and resource users	Local community involvement of local governments, farmers, fish farmers and others will be part of the solutions for issues related to irrigation, runoff, pollution, and grazing.
Private businesses	Private companies are important users of natural resources. Local and national companies involved in serving the tourism industry are part of the solutions for issues related to protocols, limits, regulations, etc. pertaining to tourism visitors etc.
Secondary stakeholders	The media and donor agencies supporting activities are important secondary stakeholders involved in the project as opportunities arise.

3.4 Project Implementation Structure and Partners

55. The project implementation, execution, and governance are conducted by different stakeholders. The EEAA is the host agency for the project, and its primary body, the NCS, is responsible for PA management and biodiversity conservation and thus plays the lead governmental role in implementing the project.

Figure 1: Project Governance



56. The Overall project supervision is the responsibility of UNEP, with the UNEP's TM providing support and working closely with the IUCN ROWA. The Task Manager, located in Nairobi, Kenya, ensures consistency with GEF and UNEP policies and procedures. Operational oversight includes ensuring that the project practices due diligence with regard to Environmental, Social and Economic Review Note (ESERN). UNEP has representation on the PSC. UNEP also reports to the GEF Secretariat on progress against milestones outlined in the CEO ER, as well as informs the GEF Secretariat of any substantive changes in co-financing that could impact the project objectives, scope, conformity with GEF criteria, outcome of the project, or likelihood of project success.

57. The IUCN ROWA is the project's executing agency and works closely with the NCS and Project Management Unit (PMU) to deliver the project. IUCN ROWA's mandate is to oversee the execution of the project and to work supportively and collaboratively with project stakeholders and partners, who include NGOs and governments.

58. The MTR, however, noted that the planned Project Management Unit had not yet been established in Egypt, which was to include a National Project Manager (PM), the Technical Programme Assistant, and an Accountant/Administrator Officer, who were to work closely with IUCN ROWA, NCS the Protected Area Management Unit (PAMU) in Fayoum. The reasons given for the delayed PMU establishment were delayed internal project clearance and the COVID-19 lockdown, and documented in the PSC Meeting Minutes. Later on, it was agreed

with EEAA to implement the project through the IUCN ROWA project management team, which worked closely with EEAA to implement the field activities till the project got the security clearance. A combined PAMU for the two protected areas has the primary responsibility, as a governmental unit, to carry out day-to-day operations and management of the PAs. This project implementation arrangement has proven to be very effective, and therefore, there may be no need to establish a separate PMU.

3.5 Changes in Design During Implementation

59. Change of project implementation timeframe: The project has had one no-cost extension. The project started on 20th June 2019. Although the project was expected to end on 31st, December 2022, the date of completion was extended to 31st, December, 2024

3.6 Project Financing

60. The overall project budget was USD 10,119,864, comprising USD 1,319,864 (13%) from GEF and USD 8,800,000 (87%) from co-financing partners. The total expenditure for GEF funds as of 30th June 2023 is within budget (60%), and 40% will be utilised in the remaining 18 months of implementation of the project, ending 31st December 2024.

61. The expenditure report was not analysed by component; UNEP financial reporting templates do not have a provision for capturing data on expenditure by component. Therefore, the Executing Agency did not analyse the data by component, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Budget at design and expenditure by components

Component	Estimated cost at design		Actual Cost/ expenditure		Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)	
	GEF Funds	Co-financing	GEF Funds	Co-financing	GEF Funds	Co-financing
All figures as USD						
Component 1: Strengthen management capacities of targeted PAs for the conservation of threatened and important species and their habitats	559,940	1,967,200				
Component 2: Establish effective community participation in PA management and conservation/management of natural resources.	659,924	6,832,800				
Project Management Costs (PMC)	100,000	-				
Totals	1,319,864	8,800,000	789,662	4,679,530	60%	53%

62. Co-financing realized USD 4,679,530 (53%) of the planned amount, as presented in Table 4. All the four co-financing partners submitted co-financing reports although they did not adhere to annual reporting as stipulated in the PCA.

Table 4: Planned and actual sources of co-financing

Co-financing source		Cash - USD	Inkind - USD	Total - USD
EEAA	Planned	1,200,000	2,000,000	3,200,000
	Actual	2,091,161	355,970	2,447,131
IUCN-ROWA	Planned	85,000	215,000	300,000
	Actual	93,403	270,062	363,465

Co-financing source		Cash - USD	Inkind - USD	Total - USD
CEDARE	Planned		3,000,000	3,000,000
	Actual		328,934	328,934
Italian Development Cooperation	Planned		2,000,000	2,000,000
	Actual		1,540,000	1,540,000
UNEP -ROWA	Planned		300,000	300,000
	Actual		-	-
TOTAL	Planned	1,285,000	7,515,000	8,800,000
	Actual	2,184,564	2,494,966	4,679,530
% realised		170%	33%	53%

4 THEORY OF CHANGE

63. The Theory of Change model (figure 2) emphasises the project's overall aim to secure the PAs, species, habitats and ecosystem services. The two PAs are in close proximity and share similar barriers and challenges leading to decreasing quality of the environment and increasing unsustainable use of resources. This situation is negatively impacting local people's health and quality of life. Key drivers to harvesting food and avoiding poverty are adding to the stress on the environment through unsustainable levels of use and, as a result, negatively impacting the natural habitats and species of the PAs. Similarities in the two protected areas include:

- Natural values (wildlife, threatened species, habitats); important bird areas; fossil world heritage values.
- Threats (poaching, water quality and quantity, infrastructure development, increased access, unsustainable use of resources).
- Shared communities and resource users (fish farming, grazing, tourism, crop farmers).
- Low number of staff and consequent need for training and capacity building.
- A need for increased community involvement in protected areas and the management of the two sites is open for new innovative management arrangements and opportunities to realise the benefits of the PAs.

64. The Theory of Change illustrates the principal change processes predicated upon an engaged citizenry. Through meaningful forms of engagement, such as a Community Advisory Committee made up of equal numbers of women and men and the Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) methods, the aim is to create an enabling environment for engagement and collaboration. In turn, this will support the design and delivery of the project activities and outputs. Three inter-locking change processes – participatory implementation, reliable technical information to support decision-making, and sound management direction – will be the foundational elements for delivering the project's primary outcomes (effective management, community participation, reduced unsustainable resource use), which in turn will lead to the mid-term impacts of the project, and ultimately to the long-term effects. Several assumptions are associated with the Theory of Change (next section), and performance indicators are identified in Figure 2.

65. The following assumptions are illustrated in the project's Theory of Change (Figure 2).

- **A1.** A key assumption is that community engagement will be welcomed by the community, that local communities have the capacity and interest to participate in protected area management activities, and that it will be effective in reducing threats on protected areas, ecosystems and species. Other countries have realised success with CBNRM approaches. It will require significant staff and community training to enable an effective process.
- **A2.** It is assumed the government will actively support local engagement in protected area management. This requires an enabling environment, not only by EEAA but also by other ministries with a stake in the work.
- **A3.** Government ministries are assumed to agree upon targets for sufficient water quantity and quality entering Lake Qarun and the Rayan Lakes (e.g., as part of management planning) to improve their overall health. A poor-quality environment is a significant threat to human well-being and a basic limiting factor in realising incremental improvements over time.
- **A4.** It is assumed that government will provide active leadership and encourage wide involvement in establishing long-term strategies (vision, goals, objectives, actions) for complex and potentially contentious issues. For example, developing strategies (for inclusion in the LQPA management plan) for the rehabilitation of Lake Qarun may require resolution of various issues pertaining to water quality, quantity and use, as well as

recognition of costs and benefits. It is assumed that developing such strategies will improve the likelihood of future implementation and enable future investments.

- **A5.** It is assumed that the anticipated restructuring of the NCS, pending passage of the current bill to establish a new General Authority for Protected Areas, will create a suitable, enabling environment for this project and ensure long-term sustainability.
- **A6.** It is assumed that related projects (EICEP III, UNDP-GEF financing project) will deliver their intended activities and that close cooperation with the proposed UNEP GEF6 project will occur and reinforce the results.
- **A7.** It is assumed that capacity-building activities will be effective and lasting and that staff turnover won't undermine the overall advancement of capacity.

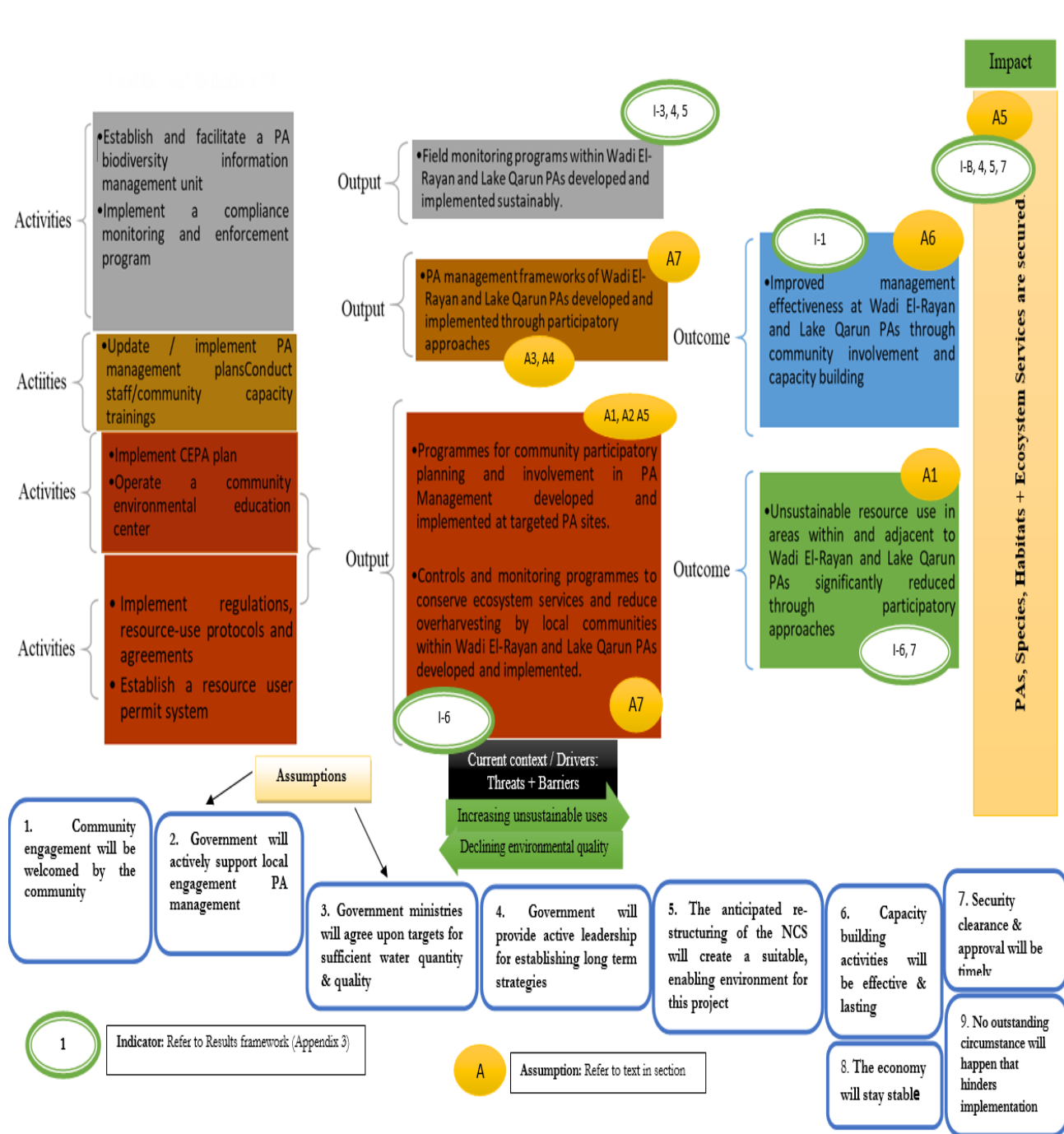
66. Comments on assumptions

- Whereas most of the assumptions held, it was, however, noted that the risks identified in the project document did not account for COVID-19, which significantly affected project implementation by delaying activities and limiting activities that entailed physical interaction.
- Additionally, the high staff turnover for key staff at the implementing partner and government level was also a risk that was not foreseen during project design, yet it had significant implications.
- The assumption that the restructuring of the NCS would be implemented within the lifetime of the project did not hold, and the restructuring has not yet taken place.

Justification for Reformulation of the theory of change

67. The theory of change has been reformulated based on the slight adjustments made to the impact outcome and output indicators. Outcome 1.1. and 2.1 have been slightly restated for more clarity. Output 1.1.1 has been restated to emphasise the importance of ensuring that these frameworks will be implemented beyond just developing them. Output 1.1.2 has been restated to make it SMART and to clarify that the developed field monitoring programs will be implemented beyond the project life cycle.

Figure 2: Theory of change (revised)



5. FINDINGS

5.1 Strategic Relevance

5.1.1 Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

68. The project is well aligned with UNEP's programme of work: Ecosystems sub-programme expected accomplishment 1: Use of the ecosystem services and sustainable productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems is increased.

69. The project contributes to the following goals of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA):

- 1.2 to integrate protected areas into broader land- and seascapes and sectors to maintain ecological structure and function.
- 1.4 to substantially improve site-based protected area planning and management.
- 1.5 to prevent and mitigate the negative impacts of key threats to protected areas.
- 2.2 to enhance and secure the involvement of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders.

5.1.2 Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

70. At the global level, the project contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals and Vision 2030, in particular to:

- SDG 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all. Several targets are pertinent as they relate to access to water quality, efficient use of water, integrated resource management, protection and restoration of ecosystems, capacity building, and participation of communities, including women and girls.
- SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss. Target 15.5 pertains to taking urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.

71. The project is consistent with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Egypt (UNDAF-Egypt). Specifically, UNDAF-Egypt outcomes respond to several challenges under Pillar III of the Situational Analysis (environment and sustainable natural resources).

72. The project is aligned with Egypt's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2015-2030, the principal policy document that drives biodiversity conservation in Egypt. The NBSAP calls for further development of "the management and infrastructure of the protected area network, including developing and implementing management plans.

"They helped in protecting natural resources and monitoring key biodiversity species, which is our mandate", remarked one government official.

73. The project is further aligned with the IUCN One Programme:

- Valuing and conserving nature enhances IUCN's heartland work on biodiversity conservation, emphasising both tangible and intangible values of nature.
- Promoting and supporting effective and equitable governance of natural resources consolidates IUCN's work on people-nature relations, rights and responsibilities, and the political economy of nature.
- Deploying nature-based solutions to societal challenges expands IUCN's work on nature's contribution to tackling problems of sustainable development, particularly in climate change, food security and social and economic development.

<https://www.iucn.org/about/programme-work-and-reporting/programme>

5.1.3 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

74. The project cooperates closely with the Egyptian-Italian Environmental Cooperation Programme (EIECP) III project to ensure that the work is complementary and not duplicative. For example, to further work on the Integrated Eco-Tourism and Development Plan developed through the EIECP III, the project considered the critical conservation needs, while this GEF project delved into species and habitat needs in significant detail to inform other planning and operational programmes. The Prodoc further maps work already done by other partners in the Fayoum to avoid duplication.

75. The project further complemented UNDP/GEF Strengthening Protected Area Financing and Management Systems (SPAFAM), whose objective was to establish a sustainable protected area financing system by:

- Enhancing the legal framework and oversight mechanisms for PA spatial planning.
- Strengthening the management of PAs on the ground, safeguarding key landscape and biodiversity assets
- Enhancing the recognition and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

5.2 Quality of Project Design

76. The project design was assessed along 12 critical areas to determine its soundness. The total weighted score shows that the overall quality of the project's design is rated as Highly Satisfactory. The project design was comprehensive, showing a strong alignment and relevance to UNEP/GEF, SDGs and national priorities. The design is thorough in stakeholder analysis and is vital in clarifying challenges in the operating context. The design was robust in having elaborate governance and supervision arrangements, risk identification and social safeguards, detailing strategies for sustainability/replication and catalytic effects, and identifying project design weaknesses and gaps, which led to the modification of some outputs. The summary of the project design quality assessment is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary table for project design quality assessment

SN	SECTION	RATING (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (RATING X WEIGHTING/10)
A	Operating Context	5	0.4	0.2
B	Project Preparation	5	1.2	0.6
C	Strategic Relevance	6	0.8	0.48
D	Intended Results and Causality	4	1.6	0.64
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	5	0.8	0.4
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	6	0.4	0.24
G	Partnerships	5	0.8	0.4
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	5	0.4	0.2
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	5	0.4	0.2
J	Efficiency	5	0.8	0.4
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	6	0.8	0.48
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	6	1.2	0.72

M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	6	0.4	0.24
TOTAL SCORE (Sum Totals)				5.2

Key

1 (Highly Unsatisfactory)	< 1.83
2 (Unsatisfactory)	>= 1.83 < 2.66
3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)	>=2.66 <3.5
4 (Moderately Satisfactory)	>=3.5 <=4.33
5 (Satisfactory)	>4.33 <= 5.16
6 (Highly Satisfactory)	> 5.16

Rating for Project Design: Highly Satisfactory**5.3 Nature of the External Context**

77. The main contextual issues that affected project implementation were COVID-19 and economic factors. The COVID-19 lockdown resulted in a travel ban for one year and limited physical workshops and other in-person meetings, which was one of the reasons that necessitated the project extension. The project focused on outputs that did not require much physical interaction, such as the management and communication plans.

78. The decrease in value of the Egyptian pound against the dollar, and thus, items for procurement became much more expensive than the original budget. At the beginning of the project, the exchange rate was 1 USD to 15 pounds, but in 2023, it is about 1 USD to 30 pounds. The environment for implementation was moderately favourable; it took more than one year for the project to obtain internal project clearance since IUCN was a non-Egyptian organisation and was new in the country. The rest of the external factors, such as the climatic events, infrastructure and political context, were largely favourable and had no severe effects on the project.

Rating for Nature of the external context: Moderately Favourable**5.4 Effectiveness**

79. Under effectiveness, the MTR assessed the level of success of the project in attaining the programme outputs and achieving milestones as per the Project Design Document based on the information from the Project Implementation Reports (PIR) and interviews with partners and project staff. Overall, effectiveness was rated Satisfactory because the main milestones that influence the sustainable attainment of outcomes were achieved. Availability of outputs was rated *Satisfactory*, achievement of project outcomes was rated Satisfactory, while the Likelihood of impact was rated Likely.

Effectiveness	Satisfactory
<i>Availability of outputs</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>
<i>Achievement of project outcomes</i>	Satisfactory
<i>Likelihood of impact</i>	Likely

5.4.1 Availability of Outputs

80. In assessing the achievement of outputs, the consultant categorised the achievement rates based on the UNEP Criterion Rating Matrix as follows: Highly Satisfactory = 100% of the planned outputs delivered fully, Satisfactory = 81-99%, Moderately Satisfactory = 61-80%, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 41-60%, Unsatisfactory = 21-40%, Highly Unsatisfactory = 20%

and below of the planned outputs delivered fully. This exercise, being an MTR, measured achievement against mid-term targets.

81. Availability of outputs was rated Satisfactory. The project had 4 outputs, and 3 out of 4 were satisfactory, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Output rating table

No	Outputs	Assessment	% Achievement	Rating
Output 1.1.1:	PA management frameworks of Wadi El-Rayan and Qarun PAs developed, including participatory approaches.	2 management plans for the 2 PAs developed.	100%	Highly Satisfactory
Output 1.1.2:	Field monitoring programs within Wadi El-Rayan and Qarun PAs to assess the conservation status of key ecosystems and threatened and important species developed and implemented.	4 field monitoring programs developed.	100%	Highly Satisfactory
Output 2.1.1:	Programmes for community participatory planning and involvement in PA Management developed and implemented at targeted PA sites.	- A Community Advisory Committee is established (50% women) and operating with at least two meetings per year. (The ToRs and membership had been established, but meetings had been held). - A Communications, Education and Public Awareness Plan (CEPA) is being implemented. - Resource users have been actively involved in developing new protocols, regulations and operational programmes	80%	Moderately Satisfactory
Output 2.1.2:	Controls and monitoring programmes to conserve ecosystem services and reduce overharvesting by local communities within Wadi El-Rayan and Qarun PAs developed and implemented.	This output was rated 0% because IUCN mixed it up with the indicator on permitting. To the understanding of the MTR reviewer, EEAA cancelled issuing permits to the resource users but did not cancel the implementation of the output. The project	0%	Highly Unsatisfactory

		should work to deliver this output.		
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Component 1: Strengthen management capacities of targeted PAs for the conservation of threatened and important species and their habitats.

Output 1.1.1: PA management frameworks of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs developed, including participatory approaches.

82. Output 1.1.1 was rated Satisfactory. Three management plans were all developed and delivered within the reporting period. These include the Lake Qarun management plan, the Jabal Qatrani management plan and the Wadi Al Hitan management plan. The management plans were approved by the EEAA, and the implementation will be ongoing till the end of the project. The project was supposed to develop Key Biodiversity Area classifications for WRPA and LQPA; as of June 2022, IUCN and Birdlife signed an agreement to establish a KBA assessment for Wadi El Rayan and Lake Qarun. However, the assessment was postponed because the EEAA requested to delay this activity till after getting the security clearance.

83. The development and implementation of the habitat and species conservation plans was postponed till 2023 based on the guidance from EEAA. An ecosystem restoration plan for Lake Qarun was developed and approved by the EEAA. This formed a basis for developing SAP Global Climate Facility (GCF) concept note aiming to restore Lake Qarun. A desk review and discussion of the needed best practice guidelines and manuals was conducted in 2022 to identify priority areas for their development. Several trainings were conducted towards biodiversity conservation. As of June 2022, the project had already trained about 72 staff from the PAs and EEAA staff on needs assessment, IUCN's Green List, Protected Areas Management effectiveness, CEPA plan and computer and soft skills. The project prepared the documents and maps needed for the Green List application in 2022. Establishing and operating a Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee is part of the KBA exercise, which is being conducted in coordination with BirdLife International.

Output 1.1.2: Field monitoring programs within Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs to assess the conservation status of key ecosystems and threatened and important species will be developed and implemented.

84. This output was rated Satisfactory. Desk review and discussions were initiated to assess the needs related to designing and implementing monitoring and reporting systems for threats and the status of ecosystems and species. The Monitoring and evaluation plan was developed to track implementation, reporting, and alignment with SGDs and UNEP. The M&E plan includes activities, their timeframes and responsibility for implementation. The project was also integrated into the IUCN M&E system, enabling good activity and reporting tracking. An Enforcement and Surveillance Plan was developed for the Wadi El Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs with patrolling routes identified. A comprehensive development needs assessment for the information management unit was conducted, including hardware, software and training needs. Additionally, the organisational structure for the unit was established. The project procured all needed software and hardware identified, and the staff were trained in comprehensive GIS. Hardware like high-tech computers/ workstations, servers and internet infrastructure was procured. Advanced ESRI GIS and remote sensing software licenses were also procured for the unit.

Component 2: Establish effective community participation in PA management and conservation/management of natural resources.

Output 2.1.1: Programmes for community participatory planning and involvement in PA management developed and implemented at the targeted PA sites.

85. Output 2.1.1 was rated moderately satisfactory. A Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) plan was developed by the project in coordination with CEDARE and with a wide public participation of local communities in the Fayoum area. The community environmental education centre has not yet been established; hence, the communities were engaged but not to the desired level. However, the CEPA plan provided recommendations that contribute to achieving an operational community environmental education centre, which is under construction. IUCN and EEAA identified the scope and development needs for establishing and operating the community educational centre, and the work will be subcontracted to a national NGO to implement the plans. Although the Community Advisory Committees haven't been established yet, IUCN and EEAA have developed their term of reference (ToRs) to identify their scope and roles. However, the community actively engaged in the development of the CEPA plan, training (Green List), and management plans.

86. In line with supporting community-based eco-tourism infrastructure developments, services, product development and product sales, the project has identified the scope of activities to be undertaken in Wadi El Rayan and Lake Qarun. A sub-contract was awarded to a national NGO to implement these plans. The project has already installed a solar power system to serve the Jabal Qatrani site, which is part of Lake Qarun. Also, Maintenance of solar-powered car repairs was awarded to local service providers. The above was done in collaboration with EEAA staff and local communities.

Output 2.1.2: Controls and monitoring programmes to conserve ecosystem services and reduce overharvesting by local communities within Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs developed and implemented.

87. Output 2.1.2 was rated unsatisfactory. The resource-use protocols and agreements have not been developed yet. However, a desk review and discussion were carried out to identify the needs in relation to resource use and protocols. The resource user permit system and the conflict resolution process with resource users have also not yet been undertaken. However, the project has developed a management plan for the Qatrani site within Lake Qarun, which was developed and approved by EEAA. Also, IUCN and EEAA agreed in the inception workshop to develop a report on potential nature-based solutions to be applied in Wadi El Rayan and Lake Qarun. This report was developed and submitted to EEAA.

5.4.2 Achievement of Project Outcomes

88. The achievement of outcomes was rated Satisfactory based on the UNEP Criterion Rating Matrix. The project had 7 outcome indicators, of which 2 (28.6%) had fully achieved mid-term targets, 2 (28.6%) had achieved 61-80%, while 3 (42.9%) had not yet been measured due to postponed national assessments, as shown in Table 7. Important to note is that some indicators had not yet been measured by the project. These include I) *Increase in condition measured by the Ecosystem Health Index (EHI) of critical biodiversity habitat as a result of improved management focused on the conservation of targeted species; II) Stable or increase in populations or habitat size of threatened species in the PAs and III) Sustainable use of biological resources is increased.*

Table 7: Summary outcome rating table

No.	Objective/ Outcomes	Indicator	Midterm Target	% Achievement	Rating Criteria
1.	Objective: To improve the management effectiveness of the Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun protected areas through community involvement and capacity building.	1. Increase in % of management effectiveness scores (as measured in the GEF BD1 METT) for Wadi El-Rayan and Qarun protected areas, covering a total of 314,400 hectares ¹ .	52 points (150%) increase in score over baseline.	100%	Highly Satisfactory
2.	Outcome 1.1: Improved management effectiveness	2. PA management capacities to conserve biodiversity are strengthened	Sound management direction is in place and being implemented, as measured by: •2 management plans for the 2 PAs developed. •4 field monitoring developed.	100%	Highly Satisfactory
		3. Decision support systems to conserve biodiversity with the targeted PAs are enhanced	•Biodiversity monitoring systems are in place and being implemented on a regular schedule.	70%	Moderately Satisfactory
		4. Stable or increase in populations of threatened species and stable or increase in habitat size of IBA trigger species in the PAs: • WRPA: Population of Dorcas gazelle (Gazella dorcas), IUCN Red List Category Vulnerable • LQPA: Slender-billed Gull: • Area of breeding habitat for Slender-billed Gull (Larus genei) in Qarun PA • Number of breeding pairs of Slender-billed Gull in Qarun PA	Targets were to be established during year 1 of project implementation.	This indicator was not rated because IUCN had not conducted this survey. These surveys should be done now at MTR and at the end of the project to enable tracking progress since the baseline exists.	N/A
		5. Increase in condition of Qarun and Rayan lakes As measured by: • Water quality parameters such as BOD, COD and other parameters. • Fish production on Lake Qarun.	Fish production is stable.	This indicator was not rated because the project had not carried out an assessment to measure this indicator. The project should conduct this assessment.	N/A

¹ Total area of the two targeted protected areas

No.	Objective/ Outcomes	Indicator	Midterm Target	% Achievement	Rating Criteria
3.	Outcome 2.1: Participatory approaches to PA management have strengthened PA management and reduced unsustainable resource uses in areas within and adjacent to two targeted PAs (Wadi El-Rayan and Qarun)	6. Local community participation is entrenched and effective As measured by: - the number of individuals from local communities that participate in developing PAs management tools and protocols; and - The number of women participating in the operation of the targeted PAs or directly benefiting from the existence of PAs.	A Community Advisory Committee is established (50% women) and operating with at least two meetings per year. A Communications, Education and Public Awareness Plan (CEPA) is being implemented. Resource users have been actively involved in developing new protocols, regulations and operational programmes.	70%	Moderately Satisfactory
		7. Sustainable use of biological resources is increased. As measured by the number of permits delivered according to the newly developed permit system annually.	50% of known resource users are registered through a new permit system.	This indicator was expected to be measured using the issuance of permits by EEAA. However, EEAA did not allow that new permits should be issued to resource users. The project should develop a new methodology to measure this indicator.	N/A

89. **Objective: To improve the management effectiveness of the Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun protected areas through community involvement and capacity building.** The project objective was measured against Indicator 1: Increase in % of management effectiveness scores (as measured in the GEF BD1 METT). The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score was 62 out of 99 for Qarun PA and 62 out of 99 for Wadi El-Rayan PA, a 40-point increase from the Baseline of 21(see annexes H (a) and H(b) and H(c) and way above the midterm target of 52%.

90. **Outcome 1.1 Improved management effectiveness at Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs.** Outcome 1.1 was rated Satisfactory.

The project developed a number of management tools that included two management plans for Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun, a Communications, Education and Public Awareness Plan (CEPA), the restoration plan, and the enforcement and surveillance plan. The project trained 72 staff from the PAs and EEAA on IUCN's Green List, Protected Areas Management, and CEPA plan. Additionally, the EEAA field staff computer was trained on the use of ArcGIS. As part of the Biodiversity monitoring systems, the hardware, GIS and remote sensing software were procured for the information management unit. GIS training in high-accuracy Satellite imagery was purchased for the PAs.

91. However, the indicator, Stable or increase in populations or habitat size of threatened species in the PAs, was not measured by the project, saying they were waiting for national assessments; the project needs to measure this indicator urgently.

92. **Outcome 2.1 Unsustainable resource use in areas within and adjacent to Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs significantly reduced through participatory approaches.** According to the outcome indicators, this outcome was rated Unsatisfactory. Community participation was

strengthened through the involvement of local communities in the development of the management plans, training and workshops, for example, the Lake Qarun management plan, Jabal Qatrani management plan, Wadi, Al Hitan management plan, Green List training, and CEPA, the outcome indicators were tagged to the Local Advisory Committee for the PAs, which had not yet been established, although the ToRs for the committee have been developed.

5.4.3 Likelihood of Impact

93. **The likelihood of impact was rated as likely. Several drivers that support the transition from outputs to outcomes are fully and partially in place, such as protected area management plans, Lake Qarun ecosystem restoration master plan, PA staff and community training to conserve biodiversity, compliance monitoring and enforcement system, PA biodiversity information management unit, CEPA plan, among others. Outcome 1 has mainly been achieved, although the project needs to focus more on Outcome 2.**

94. The developed management plans, improved staff capacity, and renovated infrastructure have great potential for sustaining the project result, contributing to the likely impact. The Community Environmental Education Centre, under construction, will be used for continued community sensitisation and training on conservation matters.

5.5 Financial Management

5.5.1 Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

95. The EA, to a great extent, adhered to UNEP's financial policies and procedures. The EA conducted regular analyses of actual expenditures against the budget and work plan, and expenditures are within the approved annual budget. However, in the early years of the project, expenditure reports were not submitted on time to UNEP. For example, in the first two years of the project, expenditure reports were analysed against the budget on a quarterly basis, but the reports were submitted annually. With effect from January 2022, it was noted that reports are analysed and submitted quarterly, an improvement from the previous period.

96. At the beginning of the project, there was a two-month delay in the approval and disbursement of cash advances to the EA. The EA has to date made two cash advance requests; the 1st one was made on 6th/7/2019, and funds were disbursed on 24th/9/2019 (12 weeks) after the request. The 2nd request was made on 15th/11/2022 and disbursed on 2nd/12/2022, which was within 2 weeks as stipulated in the PCA.

5.5.2 Completeness of Financial Information

97. The design document had a detailed section on project financing and budget. Both GEF funds and co-financing were analysed by component, and the major sources and types of co-finance raised were clearly indicated. Both GEF funds and co-financing were further broken down by component and activity/UNEP budget line.

98. The project received a no-cost extension on 15th November 2022 from 31st December 2022 to 30th June 2025, 6 months after the revised technical completion date of 31st December 2024. The delay in completion was caused by the COVID-19 lockdown and the delayed internal clearance for the project.

99. The EA provided some relevant legal documents; the PCA, the subcontractor agreements, and the amendments are available and duly signed by the respective authorities. The EA worked with two subcontractors (CEDARE and RAED) to contribute to the project's

delivery of outputs. The signed contracts indicate the amount to be transferred to the subcontractors supported by proof of funds transfer from the EA to subcontractors.

100. At the project design level, four co-financing partners had committed to funding the project. All four co-financing partners submitted co-financing reports, although they did not adhere to annual reporting guidelines as stipulated in the PCA.

101. The project was audited annually by an independent auditor, 'Experience Provider M.E.', a member of the Global. The project received a clean opinion in each of the four years ending 31st December 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. The audits for the years ended 31st December 2019, 2020, and 2021 were all carried out between April and November 2022 at the same time as submitting the request for additional funds. The auditors assessed the internal control strengths and weaknesses of the project; there were no major internal control weaknesses identified.

5.5.3 Communication between Finance and Project Management Staff

102. Both the PM and TM are aware of the project's financial status and the financial management issues affecting the project. The Fund Management Officer (FMO) is aware of the project progress/status, disbursements, budget revisions, reasons for the extension and project closure date, as evidenced during the interview session with him.

103. The TM and FMO hold meetings every two weeks to review the portfolio, including this project. Meetings are conducted via Teams; however, there is no record of minutes taken. The TM and FMO have used such meetings to address and resolve the project's financial management issues. The project began in June 2019, and the current FMO took over in June 2020 and noticed there was a gap in reporting. The FMO worked together with the PM to streamline the reporting; thereafter, reporting has been more consistent. Finance reports are now submitted quarterly as stipulated in the PCA (effective January 2022).

104. The PM, TM, and FMO's responsiveness to financial requests during the review process was good. Both the TM and FMO provided all the necessary information that was available. The detailed ratings of various financial management aspects are in the Financial Tables (Annex E).

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory

5.6 Efficiency

105. The project has had one no-cost extension approved on 15th November 2022. The request for a no-cost extension was due to delays in project implementation caused by i) COVID-19 and ii) the long process required for acquiring the Egyptian government permits/approvals.

106. The initial PCA was signed on 20th June 2019 for a fifty-two-month period ending 31 December 2022. The no-cost extension was made on the 15th of November 2022, covering a two-year technical completion period from 1st January 2023 to 31 December 2024. However, the agreement will remain in force until 30 June 2025, 6 months after the technical completion period.

Analysis of expenditure by component

107. The expenditure report was not analysed by component, and GEF reporting templates do not have such a provision. Therefore, the project did not analyse the expenditure data by

component. However, at the design stage, component 2, 'Establishment of effective community participation in PA management and conservation/management of natural resources', was allocated the highest share (74%) of the budget. Component 1 had 25%, and management cost 1%, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Budget allocation by component

Components	Estimated cost at design - USD	Estimated cost at design - USD
Component 1: Strengthen management capacities of targeted PAs for the conservation of threatened and important species and their habitats	2,527,140	25%
Component 2: Establish effective community participation in PA management and conservation/management of natural resources.	7,492,724	74%
Project management costs (PMC)	100,000	1%
Totals	10,119,864	100%

108. The total expenditure for GEF funds as of 30th June 2023 is within budget (60%); the 40% will be utilised in the remaining 18 months of project implementation ending 31st December 2024. Whereas the overall project expenditure is at 60%, some project expenses like personal (80%) and travel on official business (77%) have already escalated, yet the project still has 18 months to completion, and the project personnel will continue to support the project to completion and may have to be paid. The analysis of expenditure by activity/UNEP budget line is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Analysis of expenditure by activity/UNEP budget line

Activity/UNEP Budget Line	Budget	Revised Budget	Expenditure as of 30 June 2023	% expenditure
	Total	Total	Total	Total
Project personnel component	61,200	74,000	59,096	80%
Consultants	118,000	145,000	74,872	52%
Travel on official business	6,800	9,000	6,612	73%
Sub-contract component	624,987	585,000	319,468	55%
Training component	235,000	120,000	95,473	80%
Meetings and conferences	-	109,864	18,655	17%
Expendable equipment costs	1,000	1,000	767	77%
Non-expendable equipment costs	209,877	213,000	204,762	96%
Miscellaneous component	63,000	63,000	9,957	16%
	1,319,864	1,319,864	789,662	60%

Source: approved budget and expenditure reports

Co-financing

109. The total committed co-financing at the design stage was USD 8,800,000, of which USD 1,285,000 (15%) was a cash commitment, and USD 7,515,000 (85%) was in kind, as presented in Table 10. Co-financing realised 22% of the planned amount.

Table 10: Planned and actual sources of co-financing

Co-financing source		Cash - USD	Inkind - USD	Total - USD
EEAA	Planned	1,200,000	2,000,000	3,200,000
	Actual	2,091,161	355,970	2,447,131
IUCN-ROWA	Planned	85,000	215,000	300,000
	Actual	93,403	270,062	363,465
CEDARE	Planned		3,000,000	3,000,000
	Actual		328,934	328,934
Italian Development Cooperation	Planned		2,000,000	2,000,000

Co-financing source		Cash - USD	Inkind - USD	Total - USD
	Actual		1,540,000	1,540,000
UNEP -ROWA	Planned		300,000	300,000
	Actual		-	-
TOTAL	Planned	1,285,000	7,515,000	8,800,000
	Actual	2,184,564	2,494,966	4,679,530
% realised		170%	33%	53%

Award to sub-contractors

110. The expenditure report included USD 319,468 of the total expenditure (

111. Table 9) as an expense on the sub-contractors to support the implementation of the project activities. However, the amount reflected in the sub-contractor agreements signed with the executing agency did not tally with the funds reported under the subcontractor budget line. The amount, as per subcontractor agreements, is USD 185,000 against the expenditure of USD 319,468. The summary of subcontractor agreements is shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Award to sub-contractors

Subcontractor	Agreement period	Agreement Amount - USD	Amount paid as of 30 th June 2023 - USD
CEDARE	30.12.2020 to 01.07.2021	75,000	75,000
RAED	11.12.2022 to 30.06.2024	110,000	30,000
Total		185,000	105,000

Cost saving strategies

112. The project leveraged IUCN's global expertise and location. IUCN has provided quality reports and accounted for all their money. During the period from January to November 2022, IUCN pre-financed the project as they waited for the money from UNEP to avoid lagging behind. However, this was because IUCN had not yet submitted audited reports as required by UNEP.

113. IUCN has ongoing work in Fayoum, Egypt, and the project used the same staff to implement this project. Salaries for the IUCN staff working on other existing projects but who spent time on this project were not charged for this project. However, the PM could not quantify such costs. Further, IUCN worked with CEDARE, an NGO whose overhead costs are low, which contributed to cost-effectiveness.

Cost-effectiveness

114. IUCN submitted a minor budget re-allocation without affecting the project's overall budget. A budget of USD 45,000 was reallocated from the sub-contractors component to cater for the increase in personnel and consultants' costs due to the extension.

115. Expenditure on some budget lines, such as personnel and travel, had escalated to 80%, yet the project is only mid-way. This may result in the reallocation of project activity resources towards personnel costs that directly may affect achieving the project's intended results.

Rating for Efficiency: **Satisfactory**

5.7 Monitoring and Reporting

5.7.1 Monitoring Design and Budgeting

116. The monitoring design and budgeting were part of the Prodoc. The results framework includes SMART output and outcome-level results. The results framework includes targets, and where available, baseline values are stated.

117. However, the indicators are not SMART; they are stated as results, and the project team pointed out some that are not easily measurable since they require national-level ecosystem assessment by the country, yet it does not exist, and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) assessment were postponed by EEAA, hence no data. These indicators include:

- Increase in condition measured by the Ecosystem Health Index (EHI) of critical biodiversity habitat as a result of improved management focused on the conservation of targeted species.
- Stable or increase in populations or habitat size of threatened species in the PAs:

118. The Prodoc includes an adequate budget for M&E, including resources for the MTR and plans for a collection of data disaggregated by sex and other socio-demographic variables.

5.7.2 Monitoring of Project Implementation

119. The work plan includes clear, adequate and realistic required activities for monitoring project implementation, such as PSC meetings, semi-annual reporting, and field visits. Responsibilities for monitoring activities are specified, mainly to be done by the PIU under the guidance of the PSC and in conjunction with other members of the PAMUK, NCS, EEAA, and IUCN ROWA. The costed M&E plan is available.

120. IUCN has a robust M&E system and recently recruited an M&E Manager who is not paid by the project but supports project M&E work. The Project Manager and Regional Director oversee the M&E function.

“The project was integrated into the IUCN M&E system, which enables good tracking of activities and reporting”, remarked one respondent.

121. The PSC meetings were held regularly to monitor and provide strategic guidance to project implementation. The last one was on June 2023, and signed minutes were availed to the consultants.

122. However, the work plan excludes feedback and dissemination sessions to foster data use, although adaptive management was used based on project data and feedback from key stakeholders to:

- Continually track the workplan and indicators, adapting the project continuously, especially the steering committee
- Use system data to check expenditure and achievement of activities,
- Utilise IUCN financial monitoring reports and tools to track finances and expenditures.

5.7.3 Project Reporting

123. All the required narrative reports were submitted as per agreed timelines, and the project receives feedback from UNEP, and at times, they have to modify the reports. These include:

- a) Six monthly reports (progress reports)
- b) Annual project implementation review reports (PIR)
- c) Annual Equipment inventory reports
- d) Annual financial audit reports

- e) However, not all the quarterly financial reports and annual co-financing reports were submitted on time. Co-financing reports were not submitted annually as stipulated in the per the PCA, but each partner submitted one combined co-financing report for 2019-2023.

124. The project informed the reviewer that they are now using the Excel Sheet for PIR reports but pointed out that it is not user-friendly and not easy to add text. The project further pointed out that it is not easy for them to get co-finance reports from the government due to bureaucracies; the EEAA reports will be submitted at the end of 2023. It was reported that it took a long for the government officials to master the co-finance report templates, and this was exacerbated by having a new Focal Point in place.

125. It was, however, pointed out that compiling the quarterly financial report is a bit too much; the project suggested that it would have been better if it was six months so that it was aligned with the program reports.

126. The review further explored whether reports comply with gender and vulnerable and marginalised groups' visibility requirements. It was confirmed that the reports comply with gender and vulnerable and marginalised groups' visibility requirements; gender reporting is part of the PIR reporting template.

127. The project reported receiving adequate guidance from UNEP for reporting, and when more explanation was needed, and where necessary, the project asked for meetings for more clarity.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Satisfactory
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5.8 Sustainability

128. Sustainability is assessed against three sub-criteria: a) socio-political sustainability, b) financial sustainability and c) institutional sustainability. The review focused on the identification and assessment of the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the continuity of achieved project outcomes.

5.8.1 Socio-political Sustainability

129. Under Socio-political Sustainability, the review assessed the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of project outcomes, considering the level of ownership, interest, and commitment of government and other stakeholders to take the project's achievements forward.

130. The higher attention given to the project by the Ministry of Environment shows the political will to develop the area by the Ministry and Government. Ownership and Interest are very high, and actual implementation on the ground is carried out by the Government. Further, the PSC is chaired by the Government, and it is anticipated that after the project has ended, the Government Institution in charge of protected areas, the Environmental Education and Conservation Global (EECG), will continue with activities, and they are already aware of this.

131. At the national level, the project is aligned with the national plans of relevant ministries. The project raised awareness in government and other decision-makers on the importance of conserving the two protected areas and their wildlife, thereby increasing their support for additional funding for conservation and mainstreaming conservation objectives across all branches of government, including Finance, Tourism, and Planning and Natural Resource Management.

132. There was social acceptance of the project, and working very well with the governorate; both PAs appointed local communities to protect their resources, which shows the project's relevance/need in the community.

Socio-political sustainability is rated *Highly likely*.

5.8.2 Financial Sustainability

133. Effective management of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun protected areas, such as the maintenance of GIS units, solar panels, and educational centers, requires financial resources, but these are inadequate to sustain these interventions. However, the Government of Egypt currently has a big programme (Water Energy and Food Access) that was launched before and during COP 27 together with the NBS. that is likely to provide some of the resources for the sustainability of the outcomes.

134. The government budget will cover the implementation of management plans, and was taken into consideration while developing the workplans. They are working on a new GEF grant for Qarun based on the community and educational centre.

Financial sustainability is *Likely*.

5.8.3 Institutional Sustainability

135. The Ministry of Environment has established Governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, and legal and accountability frameworks that are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. Further, Egypt's Vision 2030 is all about the environment and policies and legal agreements are all embedded. Their political and presidential interest in COP 27 and the support provided to the environment are evidence of sustainability.

136. The capacity of relevant individuals has been enhanced during the project implementation period, most trainings were conducted to build the capacity of administrators and government staff. The training has not yet been extended to the local communities but planned for the next phase. Stakeholder participation and cooperation have also been established. The project selected some rangers from the community in the PAs to ensure that they were fully trained. *However, the key stakeholders from the PAs reported that they only actively participated in the project till June 2022.*

137. Capturing and sharing knowledge and lessons learned will constitute an important element of the project and an essential way to ensure the sustainability and replicability of project achievements. The following reports and knowledge products were developed during the project implementation period:

- A report on Nature-based solutions (NbS) for WRPA and LQPA.
- A Communications, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan to coordinate the CEPA objectives, target audiences, methods of delivery, costs, and means for assessing the effectiveness of CEPA activities.
- Lake Qarun PA management plan
- Jabal Qatrani site management plan
- Wadi Al Hitan management plan.
- Lake Qarun restoration plan
- The development of Protected area patrolling plan for both Lake Qarun and Wadi El-Rayan protected areas.
- Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT): Assessment Report for Wadi El Rayan & Qaroun Protected Areas Egypt (see annexes H (a) and H(b) and H(c).

Rating for Institutional Sustainability *Likely***Overall Rating for Sustainability: *Likely*****5.9 Factors Affecting Performance**

138. Factors that positively enabled project performance included adequate *technical and institutional capacity of IUCN ROWA* of the executing agency, *broad stakeholder engagement, functional PSC and focused project target* as discussed below.

139. *Adequate technical and institutional capacity of IUCN ROWA.* IUCN ROWA has adequate capability to perform its role as the Executing Partner and coordinate other project partners. IUCN ROWA had competent technical staff, the ability to engage meaningfully and financial capacity; for instance, the organisation pre-financed activities when there was a delayed transfer of funds.

140. *Government commitment and involvement.* The project was spearheaded mainly by relevant government technical ministries such as EEAA, NCS, and the PAs. This ensures ownership and sustainability of the project interventions.

141. *Broad stakeholder engagement.* The project engaged all relevant key stakeholders, including NGOs, implementers of complementary projects, community members and government officials at different levels.

142. *The functional PSC.* The PSC meets regularly and provides overall guidance, strategic direction and oversight to project management; this helps maintain the original mandate and goals of the project in addition to leveraging on synergies, knowledge and skills that the different teams bring on board.

143. *Focused project target.* The project focused on only two PAs, Wadi El Rayan Protected Area and Lake Qarun PA, located within the Fayoum Governorate, which enhanced its success due to the concentration of available resources within a particular target area for a significant transformation rather than spreading minimal resources wide leading to no less impact.

144. Factors that negatively affected the project included delayed internal project clearance, COVID-19 lockdown, some project staff left EEAA and a new focal point was appointed.

145. *Delayed internal project clearance.* It took more than one year for the project to obtain internal clearance since IUCN was a non-Egyptian organisation and was new in the country. This delayed the actual start of the project.

146. *COVID-19 lockdown.* The lockdown affected most project activities requiring physical interaction, such as meetings and training sessions. The project strategically decided to focus on products that required minimum physical interaction, such as the management and communication plans to abet this.

147. *The project lost some of the key staff who participated in the project design (the Technical Advisor to the EEAA CEO, the PA Manager who was approving activities, and the Key Ecologist) , and a new focal point was appointed, which caused some delays, but not significantly affecting overall implementation.*

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

148. The project is well aligned with UNEP's programme of work: The Ecosystems sub-programme contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals and Vision 2030, particularly SDGs 6 and 15. It is consistent with UNDAF-Egypt and is aligned to NBSAP 2015-2030. The project works closely with other projects, such as the EIECP III project, to ensure that the work is complementary and not duplicative. The project further complements UNDP/GEF SPAFAM to establish a sustainable protected area financing system.

149. Overall, effectiveness was rated Satisfactory since the main milestones that influence the sustainable attainment of outcomes were achieved. Achievement of outputs was rated Satisfactory, achievement of project outcomes was rated Satisfactory, while the Likelihood of impact was rated Likely. The project focused on component one, which calls for a dedicated focus on component 2 during the remaining period to achieve the project targets and strengthen the aspects of community participation.

150. Among the factors that affected project performance and hence delayed project completion were delayed internal clearance, COVID-19 lockdown and the project lost some key staff, and a new focal point had to be assigned, which caused some delays, yet they were the main project implementers.

151. Under financial management, the EA, to a great extent, adhered to UNEP's financial policies and procedures; there was a great improvement in reporting effective January 2022, and the project is likely to be completed by 31st December 2024 without further extension.

152. The higher leadership and involvement by EEAA show strong political will and the likelihood of sustainability. The developed management and communication manuals, CEPA, and the Enforcement and Patrolling Plan, will continue to be utilised long after the project closure.

153. Routine monitoring of project implementation was rated Satisfactory. Systems, resources and plan are adequate for effective project monitoring. The PSC meetings were held regularly to monitor and provide strategic guidance to project implementation. The last one was on June 2023, and signed minutes were availed to the consultant.

154. However, the MTR noted that some indicators could not be easily measured by the project but relied on national assessments, which have not yet been conducted by the government, and hence, the ratings may not be a true reflection of their status.

These include I) Increase in condition measured by the Ecosystem Health Index (EHI) of critical biodiversity habitat as a result of improved management focused on the conservation of targeted species; II) Stable or increase in populations or habitat size of threatened species in the PAs and III) A 50% decrease in area with un-approved activities.

6.2 Summary of Project Findings and Ratings

155. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of 'Satisfactory'. Table 12 provides a summary of the ratings and findings discussed in Chapter **Error! Reference source not found.**

Table 12: Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance		
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	The project is well aligned to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities, it contributes to PoWPA goals 1.2, 1.4, 1.5 and 2.2.	Highly Satisfactory
2. Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	The project is aligned to GEF strategic priorities	Highly Satisfactory
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	It contributes to SDGs 6 and 15, UNDAF-Egypt and is aligned with Egypt's NBSAP 2015-2030.	Highly Satisfactory
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/coherence	The project cooperates closely other related projects such as the EIECP III project. The Prodoc further maps work already done by other partners in the Fayoum to avoid duplication.	Highly Satisfactory
Quality of Project Design	The project design was comprehensive, showing a strong alignment and relevance to UNEP/GEF, SDGs and national priorities, including all UNEP/GEF requirements as well as thorough stakeholder analysis.	Highly Satisfactory
Nature of External Context	The main issues that affected the project were delayed security clearance, COVID-19 and a high inflation rate.	Moderately Favourable
Effectiveness	Overall, effectiveness was rated Satisfactory because the main milestones to influence the sustainable attainment of outcomes were achieved.	Satisfactory
1. Availability/attainment of outputs	The project had 4 outputs with 6 targets, of which 4 (66.6%) had fully achieved mid-term targets, 1(16.7%) had achieved 41-60%, while 1(16.7%) was not measured.	Satisfactory
2. Achievement of project outcomes	The project had 7 outcome indicators, of which 2 (28.6%) had fully achieved mid-term targets, 2 (28.6%) had achieved 61-80%, while 3 (42.9%) had not yet been measured due to postponed national assessments.	Satisfactory
3. Likelihood of impact	The drivers to support the transition from Outputs to Project Outcomes are in place.	Likely
Financial Management		Satisfactory
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	The EA, to a great extent, adhered to UNEP's financial policies and procedures. The EA conducted regular analysis of actual expenditure against the budget and work plan, and expenditure is within the approved annual budget. However, in the early years of the project, expenditure reports were not submitted on time to UNEP. Not all quarterly financial reports were submitted to UNEP.	Moderately satisfactory

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
2. Completeness of project financial information	At the project design level, four co-financing partners had committed to funding the project. All the four co-financing partners submitted co-financing reports although they did not adhere to annual reporting guidelines as stipulated in the PCA. The project was audited annually by an independent auditor and received a clean opinion in each of the four years ending 31st December 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.	<i>Satisfactory</i>
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	There was regular communication between finance and project management staff.	<i>Satisfactory</i>
Efficiency	The project leveraged the IUCN's global expertise and location since the IUCN already has ongoing work in Fayoum, Egypt.	<i>Satisfactory</i>
Monitoring and Reporting		<i>Satisfactory</i>
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	The Prodoc included the monitoring budget, and it's reportedly adequate.	<i>Satisfactory</i>
2. Monitoring of project implementation	IUCN leveraged its systems to provide close monitoring of the project, and the PSC meetings were held regularly.	<i>Highly Satisfactory</i>
3. Project reporting	All narrative reports were submitted on time, but not all quarterly and co-financing reports were submitted.	<i>Moderately Satisfactory</i>
Sustainability		Likely
1. Socio-political sustainability	There is a high level of ownership, interest, and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project's achievements forward.	<i>Highly likely</i>
2. Financial sustainability	The Government currently has a programme (Water Energy and Food Access) that was launched before and during COP 27 together with the NBS, which complements the project outcomes. The project activities are integrated into government workplans and budgets.	<i>Likely</i>
3. Institutional sustainability	The actual implementation on the ground is carried out by EEAA, and the PSC is chaired by the Government representative. EEAA has established Governance structures and processes, policies, and sub-regional agreements to continue delivering the interventions beyond the project life cycle.	<i>Likely</i>
Factors Affecting Performance		<i>High Satisfactory</i>
1. Preparation and readiness	All required preparatory activities and essential documents were in place. The Inception Meeting was held.	<i>High Satisfactory</i>
2. Quality of project management and supervision	The Prodoc was very comprehensive, with all essential components well elaborated.	<i>High Satisfactory</i>
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	UNEP provided adequate guidance and project monitoring.	<i>High Satisfactory</i>
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	IUCN had adequate institutional, technical and financial capacity, which were leveraged to achieve project results. However, the government officials said that the non-location in Egypt brought coordination and communication challenges.	<i>Satisfactory</i>
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	All key stakeholders actively participated in producing project deliverables led by the government.	<i>Satisfactory</i>

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	Gender mainstreaming was well incorporated into the Prodoc, but the actual implementation faced challenges. For instance, almost all PA managers and staff are male due to the distant nature of the job and the culture that doesn't encourage women to work away from their homes	<i>Moderately Satisfactory</i>
5. Environmental and social safeguards	The project's focus was to provide environmental and social safeguards.	<i>Highly Satisfactory</i>
6. Country ownership and drivenness	The government chaired the PSC and took the lead in implementation.	<i>Highly Satisfactory</i>
7. Communication and public awareness	The CEPA was developed but was yet to be implemented. The Community Environmental Educational Centre to be used for Community awareness activities was still under construction.	<i>Moderately Satisfactory</i>
Overall Project Performance Rating		<i>Satisfactory</i>

156. The weighted rating weightings per rating criteria are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Weightings table for review criteria ratings

Evaluation criteria	Rating	Score	Weight	Weighted Score
Strategic Relevance (select the ratings for sub-categories)	Highly Satisfactory	6.00	6	0.4
Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities	Highly satisfactory	6	0.5	
Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	Highly Satisfactory	6	0.5	
Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national issues and needs	Highly Satisfactory	6	2.5	
Complementarity with existing interventions	Highly Satisfactory	6	2.5	
Quality of Project Design	Highly Satisfactory	6	4	0.2
Nature of External Context	Moderately Favourable			
Effectiveness (select the ratings for sub-categories)	Satisfactory	5.00	45	2.3
Availability of outputs	Satisfactory	5	5	
Achievement of project outcomes	Satisfactory	5	30	
Likelihood of impact	Likely	5	10	
Financial Management (select the ratings for sub-categories)	Moderately Satisfactory	4.67	5	0.2
Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures	Moderately Satisfactory	4		
Completeness of project financial information	Satisfactory	5		
Communication between finance and project management staff	Satisfactory	5		
Efficiency	Satisfactory	5	10	0.5
Monitoring and Reporting (select the ratings for sub-categories)	Satisfactory	5.00	5	0.3
Monitoring design and budgeting	Satisfactory	5		
Monitoring of project implementation	Highly Satisfactory	6		
Project reporting	Moderately Satisfactory	4		
Sustainability (select the ratings for sub-categories)	Likely	5.00	20	1.0
Socio-political sustainability	Highly Likely	6		
Financial sustainability	Likely	5		
Institutional sustainability	Highly Likely	6		
Factors Affecting Performance (select the ratings for sub-categories)	Highly Satisfactory	5.17	5	0.3
Preparation and readiness	Highly Satisfactory	6		
Quality of project management and supervision	Highly Satisfactory	5.50		
UNEP/Implementing Agency: (select the ratings for sub-categories)	Highly Satisfactory	6		
Partner/Executing Agency: (select the ratings for sub-categories)	Satisfactory	5		
Stakeholder participation and cooperation	Satisfactory	5		
Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity	Moderately Satisfactory	4		
Environmental and social safeguards	Highly Satisfactory	6		
Country ownership and driven-ness	Satisfactory	5		
Communication and public awareness	Moderately Satisfactory	4		
			100	5.09
				Satisfactory

6.3 Lessons Learned

157. The following lessons were derived from good practices and successes of the project, which could be replicated in similar contexts and problems encountered which should be avoided in the future.

Lesson Learned #1:	It is essential to embed flexibility in project design since there is often a long time lag between design, approval and actual implementation of GEF projects. The flexibility also facilitates adaptive management to address emerging and unforeseeable circumstances such as the COVID-19 outbreak.
Context/comment:	Some initially planned activities had to wait for the COVID-19 lockdown to end before implementation. Although this risk was mitigated using virtual forums, some activities could not be implemented virtually on the ground. It was against this background that the project had a no-cost extension to cover that period where no work was done.
Lesson Learned #2:	Using the government as an implementation arm enhances ownership and sustainability since the strengthened capacity will continue to be utilised.
Context/comment:	The project activities were primarily implemented by EEAA, PAs and other local partners.

Lesson Learned #3:	Gender mainstreaming is done as part of program design in general, but without clear tools for its implementation and tracking, it remains abstract. Gender equity (equal access to opportunities) should be reflected in all project activities and governance structures.
Context/comment:	Gender mainstreaming was well incorporated into the Prodoc, but the actual implementation faced challenges. For instance, almost all PA managers and staff are male due to the distant nature of the job and the culture that doesn't encourage women to work away from their homes.
Lesson Learned #4:	Awarding conservation contracts to competent institutions such as IUCN leverages their experience and resources. However, the executing agency office should have an in-country office for faster communication and coordination.
Context/comment:	IUCN Regional Office for West Asia is based in Jordan and has no country office in Egypt, and the planned project implementation unit was not established due to delayed project clearance and the COVID-19 lockdown. The government respondents said this brought about coordination and communication issues. However, it was noted that IUCN brought on board a wealth of experience and would sometimes utilise its own resources to facilitate project activities while waiting for funds from UNEP.
Lesson Learned #5:	For greater continuity and minimal delays in implementation, institutions should ensure higher retention rates for key personnel engaged in the design and implementation. Regular refresher training bridges the capacity gap where high turnover is unavoidable.
Context/comment:	The project lost 3 of the key staff (the Technical Advisor to the EEAA CEO, the PA Manager who was approving activities, and the Key Ecologist) that had participated in the project design and it took some time to appoint a new focal point.
Lesson Learned #6:	Providing funds for more tangible outputs is perceived as more beneficial, such as regular maintenance of the tourism infrastructure and tracks, more infrastructure (sire museums, solar panels, cars and laboratory stations for scientific monitoring), road maintenance graders, a caterpillar for drainage cleaning, water tanks for the staff in remote areas, and museum in Jaba Qatrani.
Context/comment:	The key stakeholders complained that UNEP mainly funded capacity building and plans which are helpful but do not provide quick returns to strengthen tourism compared to more tangible outputs.

6.4 Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	Embed more flexibility in project design and management to facilitate adaptive management to address emerging circumstances such as the COVID-19 outbreak.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Some initially planned activities had to wait for the COVID-19 lockdown to end before implementation. Although this risk was mitigated using virtual forums, some activities could not be implemented virtually on the ground. It was against this background that the project had a no-cost extension to cover that period where no work was done.
Priority Level:	Medium level
Type of Recommendation	Important
Responsibility:	UNEP/GEF

Proposed implementation timeframe:	Future projects
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Recommendation #2:	Expedite the implementation of Output 2.1.2 and reflect its progress in the subsequent reports, e.g. PIR and half-year progress reports.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Output 2.1.2 was not rated because IUCN mixed it up with the indicator on permitting. To the understanding of the MTR reviewer, EEAA cancelled issuing permits to the resource users but did not cancel the implementation of the output.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Critical
Responsibility:	Executing agency
Proposed implementation timeframe:	Immediate and remaining period

Recommendation #3:	Focus on communicating, engaging and enhancing community participation (Component 2) and fast-track the completion of the community Environmental Educational Centre to facilitate this. The educational centre should ensure accessibility by people with disabilities (PWDs) and include washrooms, shades, and resting places for older people or young people.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project focused on producing relevant management tools and infrastructure improvement, with less focus on community participation.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Critical
Responsibility:	Executing agency
Proposed implementation timeframe:	Immediate and remaining period

Recommendation #4:	Conduct capacity building for local communities on socio-economic aspects and Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and sustainable use and management of infrastructure
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The local communities heavily rely on natural resources for livelihood, and hence, there is a lot of encroachment on PAs. Having diversified livelihoods would reduce pressure on natural resources. Additionally, the established and refurbished infrastructure should be sustainably used to serve communities longer.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Important
Responsibility:	Executing agency and PA managers
Proposed implementation time-frame:	2024

Recommendation #5:	Conduct fresh and refresher training for key project partners, such as EEAA, PAs, CEDARE and RAED, on the green list and other key project aspects to mitigate the high staff turnover.
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Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Due to high staff turnover within the government technical staff and for quality assurance, training is essential, targeting new staff and refreshing the continuing staff since the training was last conducted at the beginning of the project.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Critical
Responsibility:	Executing agency, EEAA and PA managers
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Immediate and remaining period

Recommendation #6:	Establish a project management unit in Egypt for more effective management and enhanced coordination and communication between the executing agency and key implementing partners. In the meantime, county-based project technical staff should be recruited to track activities faster and serve as the liaison between EEAA (government) and IUCN ROWA (executing agency), project area management staff and other partners CEDARE, Italian Corporation and local NGOs and communities.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project is executed by the IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA), based in Aman, Jordan. The project faces coordination and communication challenges at both country and site levels since IUCN has no offices in Egypt and did not establish a PMU in the country as per the project design. The MTR was informed that IUCN could not establish the PMU due to delays caused by lengthy government clearance processes and the COVID-19 lockdown. However, these reasons do not sound sufficient enough to justify why the PMU was not established in the country after the clearance and the COVID-19 lockdown.
Priority Level:	Medium
Type of Recommendation	Critical
Responsibility:	Executing agency, EEAA and PA managers
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Immediately

Recommendation #7:	Revise GEF financial reporting templates to capture analysis by component and provide hands-on training on the revised templates on data capture to the project management staff.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The MTR guidelines require the reviewer to analyse expenditure by component. However, the UNEP financial reporting template does not capture expenditure by component. Consequently, the reports from the EA do not show expenditure by component. Therefore, it is difficult for the reviewer to analyse expenditure by component.
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP Finance Unit
Proposed implementation time-frame:	3 Months

Recommendation #8:	Develop a sustainability and exit strategy for the project to provide clear guidance to EEAA and PAs on sustaining the interventions and raising more complementary funding for the interventions. Support the implementation of selected activities in the developed management plans.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The developed plans (management plans for the two sites, the Communication, Education and Public Awareness Plan and the Enforcement and Patrolling Plan) and general conservation work required sustained funding for implementation and monitoring. The plans were developed and finalised, but they are not funded, which limits their implementation. The rehabilitated tourism infrastructure and repaired vehicles require regular maintenance to keep running.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Critical
Responsibility:	Executing agency and EEAA
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Remaining period

Recommendation #9:	Develop methodologies and conduct assessments to provide the information required for measuring the indicators that were not rated during this MTR. These are indicators 4, 5 and 7. The assessments should be conducted as early as possible to provide a midterm point, and then another assessment should be conducted at the end of the project to be used for the terminal evaluation. If possible, IUCN and UNEP can have meetings to agree on the methodologies to be employed.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Three out of seven indicators had not been tracked by the project (4, 5 and 7) and, therefore, were not rated during this MTR.
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	IUCN
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Immediately

ANNEXES

ANNEX I. ANNEX A: RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Table 14: Response to stakeholder comments *received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriate*

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
	N/A, all comments were addressed	N/A	N/A

ANNEX II. ANNEX B: PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE TERMINAL REVIEW

No.	Institution	Name (s)	Designation
1.	EEAA	Dr. Ali Abu Saneh	EEAA CEO/PSC Chair
2.	EEAA	Dr. Shaimaa Taha	General Manager of the Technical Office, Nature Conservation Sector/ Contact Point
3.	EEAA	Dr. Hoda Elshawadfy	GEF Focal Point
4.	EEAA	Usama Al Najjar	Qarun Protected Area Manager
5.	EEAA	Ayman Salem	Wadi El Rayan Protected Area Manager
6.	EEAA	Dr. Mohammad Sameh	X - PAs manager
7.	EEAA	Dr. Khaled Allam	Consultant
8.	Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)	Dr. Emad Adly	General Coordinator
9.	Birdlife International – Middle East Division	Ibrahim Khader	Regional Director
	Local government		
10.	Fayoum governorate	Dr. Ali El Batal	General archaeological manager
11.	Fayoum governorate	Dr. Mohammad Eltouny	Governor assistant
12.	IUCN ROWA	EL SHAER Hany	Regional Director – IUCN West Asia Office
13.	IUCN ROWA	BOULAD Natalia	Protected Areas and Biodiversity Programme Manager/ Project Manager
14.	IUCN ROWA	HADDAD Hanna	Programme Assistant
15.	IUCN ROWA	HAMDAN Omar	Regional Finance manager
	Co-Finance organisations		
16.	Egyptian/Italian Environmental Cooperation	Dr. Yousriah Hamed	Project Manager
17.	Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)	Dr. Amr Abdel Meguid	Regional Director
	UNEP		
18.	UNEP Task Manager	Jane Nimpamya	(TM)
19.	UNEP Fund Management Officer	George Saddimbah	Finance Management Officer (FMO)

ANNEX III. ANNEX C: REVIEW FRAMEWORK

Review Themes	Sub-Criteria	Review Questions	Data Collection Methods	Data Sources
Relevance	Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW)	What is the level of project alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) Programme of Work (POW)?	Document review	Project documents and the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW)
	Alignment to UNEP / Donor/GEF Strategic Priorities	To what extent was the project aligned with UNEP's policies and strategies?	Document review and Interview	UNEP Task Manager, Project management team, Project partners and government officers. Project documents
		To what extent was the project aligned with GEF strategic priorities?	Document review	GEF Project Document and its appendices approved PM, TM
	Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities	To what extent is the project relevant to National Environmental Priorities?	Document review	GEF Project Document and its appendices approved The national environmental strategy documents
		To what extent are the intervention suited, or respond to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of beneficiaries?	Document review and Interviews	UNEP Task Manager, Project management team, Project partners and government officers at national and district levels. Project documents
	Complementarity with Existing Interventions	To what extent is the project's complementarity with other interventions addressing the needs of the target groups?	Document review and Interviews	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and district level. Project documents including.
Effectiveness	<i>Delivery of Outputs</i>	Were the project outputs appropriately stated in the design?	Document review	Project documents
		Has the project delivered on the stated or revised outputs successfully in line with the milestones in the project design document?	Document review and Interviews	Project documents, UNEP Task Manager, Project management team, Project partners, government officers and the beneficiaries
		Have the outputs delivered met both quantity and quality? Is there clear ownership of the outputs by the project?	Document review and KIIs	UNEP Task Manager Project management team UNEP, project partners and government officers at national and district level. Project documents

Review Themes	Sub-Criteria	Review Questions	Data Collection Methods	Data Sources
		Do the beneficiaries express opinions on the usefulness of the outputs, and are these positive opinions?	Interviews and FGDs	Project beneficiaries
		What factors influenced the level of output delivery?	Document review and Interviews	UNEP Task Manager Project management team, Project partners and government officers Project documents
		What project modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design?	Document review and Interview	UNEP Task Manager Project management team, Project partners and government officers Project documents
		What lessons can be derived to inform future programming?	Interviews	UNEP Task Manager, Project management team, Project partners and government officers at the national and regional level
	Achievement of Direct Outcomes	What changes have been realised in people and institutions as a result of using the project outputs?	Interviews and FGDs	UNEP Task Manager, Project management team, project partners and government officers at national and district levels and beneficiaries at the community level
		Has this been monitored through the Project M&E systems and processes?	KIIs and Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team, Project partners and government officers at national and district levels.
		Which groups of people and institutions should have consumed the outputs? Has this happened?	Interviews and Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project progress reports and progress reports from collaborating partners
		Is there evidence of attribution? If the changes can be attributed to multiple players, what has been the project's part in it? How can this be confirmed (where is the evidence)?	Document review and Interviews	Project documents Implementing partners Project beneficiaries Project Management Team Task Manager

Review Themes	Sub-Criteria	Review Questions	Data Collection Methods	Data Sources
		What intended and unintended positive and negative impacts of the project have been or are likely to be achieved?	Document review and Interviews	Project documents Implementing partners Project beneficiaries Project Management Team Task Manager.
		What conditions are necessary to facilitate the transition of immediate outcomes into those positive and likely negative impacts? Do they exist?	Document review and Interviews	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level.
		In case of likely negative impacts, can these conditions be mitigated?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government levels. Project Documents
		To what extent is the project playing a catalytic role or is promoting longer-term scaling up and/or replication?	Interviews	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government levels.
	<i>Likelihood of Impact</i>	What explains the level of delivery of impacts (both intended and intended) and what lessons can be learned for future programming?	Interviews	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government levels.
Efficiency		To what extent did the project deliver results in an efficient manner, given the scope of the project and the budget and the time frame available?	Interviews	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government levels.
		To what extent have project interventions achieved or is expected to achieve its results at the lowest possible cost?	Interviews	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level.
		What were the cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximize results?	Interviews	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level.

Review Themes	Sub-Criteria	Review Questions	Data Collection Methods	Data Sources
		To what extent have the inputs translated into outputs and outcomes?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Documents
		To what extent were the planned activities delivered according to expected timeframes?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Documents
		Where equipment has been purchased, is there budget to maintain it and who controls this?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team,
		Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Documents
		Did the project team make use of, and link to, pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programs and projects? Did this increase project efficiency?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Documents
		Did UNEP finance management systems contribute to project efficiency?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team, FMO,
		What factors explain the status of efficiency and what lessons can be derived for future programming?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Documents
Sustainability	<i>Socio-political Sustainability</i>	To what extent do social or political factors support the continuation and further development of project direct outcomes? What are these factors?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Documents

Review Themes	Sub-Criteria	Review Questions	Data Collection Methods	Data Sources
		What is the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders adequate and likely to take the project achievements forwards? Do they have capacity to sustain these results?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Beneficiaries Project Documents
		Is there an adaptive mechanism to respond to changes in the socio-political context?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Documents
	Financial Sustainability	Which results require financial resources to sustain them? What sort of financial resources and who should have them?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Documents
		Are such financial resources available? What plans are in place to provide these resources if not immediately available?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Beneficiaries Project Documents
		What are the likely effects of the availability or lack of such resources on sustaining impacts?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Beneficiaries Project Documents
		Is there an exit strategy with a financial component?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Documents
	Institutional Sustainability	To what extent do the sustainability of project outcomes (especially those relating to policies and laws) dependent on issues	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team

Review Themes	Sub-Criteria	Review Questions	Data Collection Methods	Data Sources
		relating to institutional frameworks and governance?		Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Beneficiaries Project Documents
		Are these conditions in place to sustain the results and impacts? Are the current institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Beneficiaries Project Documents
		To what extent has been the capacity of relevant individuals enhanced and how are they seen to exercise increased influence towards direct outcomes?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Beneficiaries Project Documents
		Is there an exit strategy with an institutional component?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government level. Project Beneficiaries Project Documents
		What lessons can be derived for future programming?	Interviews, Document review	UNEP Task Manager Project management team Project partners and government officers at national and local government levels. Project Beneficiaries Project Documents

ANNEX IV. ANNEX D: KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

1. Project Identification Form (PIF)
2. CEO Endorsement Request
3. Final Project Document with all annexes
4. Project monitoring plan, with associated budget
5. Project preparation documents (e.g. minutes from design workshops, partner capacity assessments, etc.)
6. Inception report
7. Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) and associated management plans (if any)
8. All Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)
9. Progress reports (quarterly, semi-annual or annual, with associated workplans and financial reports)
10. Minutes of Project Board Meetings and of other meetings (i.e., Project Appraisal Committee meetings)
11. Financial data, including actual expenditures by project outcome, including management costs, and including documentation of any significant budget revisions.
12. Cash advance requests documenting disbursements: disbursement (Funds Transfer) documents (cash statement) from a) funding source(s) to UNEP and b) UNEP to Partners
13. Co-financing data (cash and in-kind) contributions with expected and actual contributions broken down by type of co-financing, source, and whether the contribution is considered as investment mobilized or recurring expenditures.
14. Audit reports, for externally executed project in excess of \$200,000 in GEF funding and Management Responses to audits, where applicable
15. Electronic copies of project outputs (booklets, manuals, technical reports, articles, etc.)
16. Communication plan and Sample of project communications materials
17. Data on relevant project website activity, if available
18. Summary list of formal meetings, workshops, training etc. held, with date, location, topic, and number of participants.
19. Any relevant socio-economic monitoring data, if available
20. List of contracts and procurement items over ~US\$5,000 (i.e., organizations or companies contracted for project outputs, etc., except in cases of confidential information)
21. List of related projects/initiatives contributing to project objectives approved/started after GEF project approval (i.e., any leveraged or "catalytic" results)
22. List and contact details for project staff, key project stakeholders, including Project Board members, RTA, Project Team members, and other partners to be consulted.
23. Project deliverables that provide documentary evidence of achievement towards project outcomes
24. Email exchanges that demonstrate joint (Project/Task Manager and Fund Management Officer) decision-making (these are more likely where there have been complex issues)

ANNEX V. ANNEX E: FINANCIAL TABLES

Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures is rated **Unsatisfactory**

Component	Estimated cost at design		Actual Cost/ expenditure		Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)	
	GEF Funds	Co-financing	GEF Funds	Co-financing	GEF Funds	Co-financing
All figures as USD						
Component 1: Strengthen management capacities of targeted PAs for the conservation of threatened and important species and their habitats	559,940	1,967,200				
Component 2: Establish effective community participation in PA management and conservation / management of natural resources.	659,924	6,832,800				
Project Management Costs (PMC)	100,000	-				
Totals	1,319,864	8,800,000	789,662	4,679,530	60%	53%

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures: - Moderately Satisfactory			
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ² to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules	Yes	HS	IUCN has to date made two cash advance requests; the 1 st one was made on 4/7/2019 and funds were disbursed on 24/9/2019; 12 weeks after the request. The 2 nd request was made on 15/11/2022 and disbursed on 2/12/2022, which was within 2 weeks as stipulated in the PCA. In the first two years of the project, expenditure reports were analysed against budget on a quarterly basis, however the reports were submitted annually. Expenditure reports are now analysed and submitted quarterly effective Jan 2022
Completeness of project financial information – Satisfactory			
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below) -			
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes HS	The design document had a detailed section of project financing and budget. Both GEF funds and co-financing are analysed by component. The major sources and type of co-finance raised are clearly indicated. Both GEF funds and co-financing are further broken-down by component and by activity / budget line. - HS
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes S	There was only one budget revision at the no-cost extension of the project to 31 December 2024 and cited Covid period and long Government bureaucratic procedures to approve the project as reasons for No-cost extension.
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes S	The EA provided some relevant legal documents; the PCA, the subcontractor agreements and the respective amendment are available and were duly signed by respective authorities. The EA worked with two subcontractors (CEDARE and RAED) to contribute towards delivery of outputs on the project. The signed contracts

² If the Review raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation may be given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

			indicate the amount to be transferred to the subcontractors, and proof of funds transfer, from the EA to subcontractors is available
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes S	Proof of funds transfer, from UNEP to the EA, and from the EA to subcontractors are available,
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes MU	At the project design level, four co-financing partners had committed to funding the project. All the four co-financing partners submitted co-financing reports although they did not adhere to annual reporting guidelines as stipulated in the PCA. There is no evidence of proof of cash co-financing.
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes S	A summary of the expenditure report analysed by year and by activity has been provided, The expenditure report is not analysed by component, GEF reporting templates do not have a provision for capturing data on expenditure by component, therefore the EA did not analyse the data by component.
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	Yes S	The project was audited annually by an independent auditor 'Experience Provider M.E.' a member of tgs Global. The project received a clean opinion in each of the four years ending December 31 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. The audits for the years ended 31 December 2019, 20220 and 2021 were all carried out between April and November 2022; at the time of request for additional funds. The auditors provided their observations on the internal control strengths and weaknesses on the project.
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	Yes S	Inventory reports – annual inventory reports for the non-expendable items were provided, however, there is no evidence that an annual physical verification of the non-expendable items was carried out as stipulated in the PCA.

2. Communication between finance and project management staff – Satisfactory

Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.	HS	Both the PM and TM are aware of the project's financial status and the financial management issues facing the project.
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.	HS	The current FMO started supervising the project in June 2020. The FMO is aware of project progress/status when disbursements are done, the budget revisions made, reasons for extension and project closure date as evidenced during the interview session with him.
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.	MS	The TM and FMO have meetings every 2 weeks to review the portfolio, focus is mainly on review of projects that have closed or are due to close. Meetings are done via Teams, however, there is no record of minutes taken. The TM and FMO have used such meetings to address and resolve financial management issues of the project. The project began in June 2019, the FMO took over in June 2020, and noticed there was a gap in reporting. The FMO worked together with PM to streamline the reporting, thereafter, reporting has been a bit consistent. Finance reports are now submitted quarterly as stipulated in the PCA (effective January 2022)
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer,	S	The PM and the EA submit financial and progress reports through TM, TM reviews narrative reports, FMO reviews the financial reports. The TM and FMO thereafter agree on final review comments and passes

Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		review points to the PM through the TM. TM provides feedback to the Executing Agency. Where a meeting is necessitated, they all (PM, TM, FMO) participate in the meeting.
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process	S	The responsiveness from the Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer to financial requests during the review process was good. Both the TM and FMO provided all the necessary information that was available.
Overall rating	Satisfactory	

ANNEX F: Brief CV of the evaluator

Name: Dr. Julian K. Bagyendera, PhD

Profession	Project Management and Evaluation Specialist
Nationality	Ugandan
Country experience	• Europe: Netherlands • Africa: Uganda, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, DR Congo, Nigeria, and Senegal. • Americas: U.S.A and Canada. • Asia: P.R. China, Thailand
Education	• PhD in Project Management, (majoring in monitoring and evaluation); a Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA), Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences

Short biography

I am a Project Management, Evaluation and Gender Specialist with over 26 years of work experience in: climate change (CC), environment, agriculture, HIV/AIDS, population, reproductive health, malaria, socio-economic strengthening, social protection, education, gender mainstreaming and integration, human and child rights, governance, advocacy, private/public partnerships, capacity building and community development. Experienced in managing complex programs with multiple implementers and funding agencies; particularly: the World Bank GEF, UNRCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UN Women, UNEP Kenya, WHO, CDC, EU, USAID, DoD, US Embassy, Pearce Corps, Iris Group, DFID, DANIDA, SIDA, Italian Corporation, Irish Aid, Makerere School of Public, Uganda AIDS Commission, Welshare, Comic Relief, Danish Aid, Amref Health Africa, and Save the Children International. I have international experience working in Uganda, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, P.R. China, Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi, U.S.A, Thailand, Netherlands and Canada.

As a team leader, I worked a national and international consultant for over 60 related assignments such as International consultant for midterm review of **GEF/UNEP** for evaluating SLM/SFM project in Kenya, End-term evaluation for: **World Bank (WB)/GEF** terminal evaluation for enhancing performance and accountability of social service contracts in Uganda; **WB** Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation (SCCE) in Uganda, as part of 23 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa; Terminal Evaluation (TE) for CBTI capacity strengthening project Conservation International Foundation ('CI'), **conducted proposal reviews for over 300 CSOs and technical support for developing M&E frameworks and theory of change**, developed the national CC indicators for Uganda and facilitated a series workshops for mainstreaming CC into ministries supported by **USAID/Feed the future**, end-term evaluation for: **WB/GPSA** project evaluation for enhancing performance and **accountability of social service contracts** in Uganda; developed the Country Program for Liberia **EU/UN** Spotlight to address GBV and SRHR issues, International consultant for UNAIDS/Geneva HIV/Social Protection Assessment Malawi. Developed the national climate change indicators and facilitated 38 Feed the Future Districts to develop CC action plans.

I currently work as the Executive Director/Team Leader Evaluations for Provide and Equip (P&E) Ltd, an M&E/Management Consultancy Firm headquartered in Uganda. I previously worked in several senior project management positions that include: Chief of Party, M&E Program Director /Deputy Chief of Party, Senior M&E Technical Advisor, M&E Coordinator and M&E Manager. I hold a PhD in Project Management, majoring in monitoring and evaluation; a Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA), majoring in project management and Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences. I am a member of the Uganda Evaluation Association (UEA), AFREA and SAMEA, and IDEAS. I am skilled in MS Office packages, SPSS, STATA, NVIVO, GIS Mapping, PDA, Smart Phone and GPS electronic data collection technologies and SQL /Access databases. I am an experienced team leader with a niche in timely performance excellence and integrity.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Project Management, Evaluation commissioning and producing, Gender, team leadership & report writing.

Selected assignments and experiences

Independent evaluations:

No.	Contractor's Name	Period	Brief Overview of Accomplishments
1.	GEF/UN Environment Programme (UNEP)	07/02/223 – 07/06/23	As an international consultant , conducted the Terminal Evaluation Expert - EADN – Equatorial Africa Atmospheric Deposition Network" (GEF ID – 3401)
2.	The Food And Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations/GEF	20/06/2022 – 15/09/22	Conducted mid-term evaluation of integrating climate resilience into agricultural and pastoral production in Uganda, through a farmer/agro-pastoralist
3.	UNEP Programme (UNEP)/GEF	06/06/2022 – 30/08/22	As an international consultant , conducted the Mid-Term Review of the UNEP/GEF Project "Sustainable Land Management of Lake Nyasa Catchment in Tanzania" "GEF ID Number 5691".
4.	African Development Bank (AFDB), Africa Climate Change Fund	20/9/21 to 19/01/22	International Consultant to Review Concept Notes and Project Proposals of Applicants for the Third Call of Proposals on Gender Equality and Climate Resilience Projects in Africa.
5.	Conservation International Foundation (CI)/GEF	1/7/21 to 20/9/21	Conducted Terminal Evaluation (TE) for the "Strengthening the Capacity of Institutions in Uganda to Comply with the Transparency Requirements of the Paris Agreement" program.
6.	GEF/UN Environment Programme (UNEP)	06/04/2021 – 06/06/21	As an international consultant , conducted a Mid-Term Review of the UNEP/GEF Project "Developing the Microbial Biotechnology Industry from Kenya's Soda Lakes in line with the Nagoya Protocol".
7.	GEF/UN Environment Programme (UNEP)	01/04/20 to 31/12/20	As an international consultant , conducted a Mid-Term Review of the UN Environment/Global Environment Facility Project "Scaling Up Sustainable Land Management and Agro-Biodiversity Conservation to Reduce Environmental Degradation in Small-Scale Agriculture in Western Kenya
8.	World Bank, Independent Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)	22/3/19 to 30/6/19	Conduct ex-ante Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation (SCCE) in Uganda, as part of 23 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, covering 6 GEF projects that closed 10 years before with interventions on conservation of biodiversity in Albertine region, protected areas management and sustainable use, invasive plant management, overcoming land degradation in the cattle corridor, Integrated landscape management
9.	USAID/Uganda Feed the Future, Enabling Environment for Agriculture, Chemonics International.	15/3/16 to 29/7/16	Developed the national climate change indicators. Facilitated a series of workshops for 38 Feed the Future Districts to develop Climate Change (CC) action plans aligned to the national Output Based Budgeting. Conducted CC technical capacity assessment and facilitated the development of CC strengthening action plans for the Ministry of Water and Environment and Ministry of Agriculture Animal industry and Fisheries.
10.	USAID/EEA, Chemonics International	24/11/14 to 30/4/15	Facilitated a workshop for District Leaders and Climate Change Focal point persons on mainstreaming Climate Change (CC) into the District Development Plans and developing Climate Change indicators for the national Output Based Budgeting.
11.	USAID/EEA, Chemonics International	24/11/14 to 30/4/15	Facilitated a district leader's workshop for mainstreaming Climate Change (CC) into the District Development Plans
12.	United Nations Development Program (UNDP)/RCO	23/7/18 to 22/10/2018	Conducted Midterm Review of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for all UN agencies in Uganda, including SDGs, NDP II and new UN reforms covering Governance, Human Capital Development (HCD) and Sustainable and Economic Development. Including all 11 refugee hosting districts.
13.	USAID/Uganda Feed the Future, Enabling Environment for Agriculture (EEA), Chemonics International.	21/4/15 to 30/6/15	Facilitated a workshop for District Technical Planning Committees on mainstreaming Climate Change (CC) into the District Development Plans and developing Climate Change action plans indicators for the national Output Based Budgeting.
14.	UN Women, Liberia	6/8/18 to 20/8/18	International Results Based Management (RBM) Consultant – Country Program Document Development for Liberia EU/UN Spotlight Initiative to address all forms of violence against women and girls ; and align it to SDGs.
15.	USAID/Uganda Feed the Future Commodity Production & Marketing, Chemonics International.	5/14/13 - 11/15/13	Designed and provided technical support to the implementation of Feed the Future (FTF) baseline survey regarding improving the quantity and quality of coffee, maize, and beans produced and marketed by small-holder farmers. Developed the project results framework and performance management Plan (PMP) .

No.	Contractor's Name	Period	Brief Overview of Accomplishments
16.	Civil Society Fund Monitoring and Evaluation Agent	20009- 2012	Conducted proposal reviews for over 300 CSOs implementing HIV/AIDS, OVC, Social Economic Strengthening, education, and crosscutting issues such as CC and gender. Provided technical support for developing M&E frameworks and theory of change.
17.	UNAIDS Geneva/MoGCW Malawi	7/8/2020 to 30/10/2020	As an international consultant , conducted an HIV and Social Protection Assessment in Malawi.
18.	Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI)	09/03/20 to 31/7/20	Combined baseline, mid-term and end-of-term evaluation for West-West Nile and Kampala Regional projects.
19.	UNHCR	10/02/20 to 31/12/20	Conducted the Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (ERP) Baseline Survey in all 13 Refugee hosting districts
20.	American Cancer Society/Clear Outcomes	17/01/20 to 31/05/24	Provided data collection and evaluation support for baseline survey, process and outcome evaluations for ACS Global Patient Navigation Expansion Initiative
21.	World Bank/ Global Partnership for Social Accountability	23/12/19 to 31/12/20	Conducted end-of-project evaluation for enhancing performance and accountability of social service contracts in Uganda project
22.	UNICEF	22/11/19 to 30/06/2020	Developed the National Nutrition Communication Strategy and Plan of Action; and Karamoja Nutrition Communication Campaign
23.	Uganda AIDS Commission	21/12/19 to 30/4/20	Served as the lead M&E consultant for developing the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan 2020/21- 2025/26 and Its M&E Plan and indicator handbook, and aligned them to SDGs and NDP III.
24.	USAID Uganda/Global Health Pro	12/8/19 to 02/11/19	Performed M&E system assessment, support and data verification for the DREAMS project (HIV, FP, GBV and IGA) in 7 districts of northern Uganda (Acholi and Lango Regions).
25.	Overseas Development Institute (ODI)/UNDP/ NPA	01/4/19 to 30/9/19	Conducted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) policy and institutional gap analysis in Uganda.
26.	UNICEF	5/2/19 to 30/5/19	Conducted the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) assessment on the Key Family Care Practices (KFPCs) in 30 districts . KFPCs included RMNCH, nutrition, WASH, education and child protection.
27.	UNAIDS Geneva/MGLSD	10/09/18 to 19/01/19	Conducted an HIV and Social Protection Assessment in Uganda, including interviews with people living with HIV, key populations and sexual minorities such as transgender, commercial sex workers, truck drivers, injectable drug users and men having sex with men.
28.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	11/6/18 to 15/08/18	Conducted DO1 (Socio-economic Strengthening) data quality Assessments and MEL System Assessments for 4 USAID-funded projects (<i>Power Africa Uganda Electricity Supply Accelerator, Producer Organizations, Send the Cow Uganda, and Youth Leadership for Agriculture</i> across 7 districts).
29.	USAID Regional Health Integration to Enhance Services in the Acholi Region of Northern Uganda (USAID RHITES-N Acholi)	25/5/18 to 7/7/18	Conducted gender, youth and social inclusion analysis baseline survey in 8 districts of Northern Uganda, Acholi Region (Agago, Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum, Lamwo, Nwoya, Omoro, and Pader).
30.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	15/5/18 to 15/07/18	Conducted DO3 (Family Health) data quality Assessments and MEL System Assessments for 12 USAID-funded health projects 14 districts (RHITES-SW, RHITES-EC, RHITES-E, HIWA, Voucher Plus, MAPD, SITES, Indoor Residual Activity, CHC, UHSC, SMA and Defeat TB) in TB, malaria, family planning, and FP, reproductive health, water and sanitation programs.
31.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	11/12/17 to 31/07/18	Provided training and data collection management services for the evaluation of the USAID/Uganda Private Health Support (PHS) Program.
32.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	07/11/17 to 15/12/17	Provided training and data collection management services for the evaluation of 'Obulamu' campaign under Communication for Health Communities/FHI360.
33.	UNFPA	28/9/2017 to 30/11/17	Conducted a Baseline Survey on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)/GBV in 16 Selected Drought Affected Districts in Uganda (including 4 Karamoja districts ; in line with SDGs, NDP II and HSSP).
34.	UNAIDS	28/9/2017 to 30/11/17	Conducted a Baseline Assessment of SRH)/HIV Linkages in Uganda (including 5 Karamoja districts); in line with SDGs, NDP II and HSSP.
35.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	07/8/17 to 30/09/17	Conducted DO1 (Socio-economic Strengthening) data quality Assessments and MEL System Assessments for 7 USAID-funded projects across 6 districts.
36.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	15/6/17 to 30/09/17	Conducted DO3 data quality Assessments and MEL System Assessments for 10 USAID-funded health projects (<i>Uganda Social Marketing Activity (SMA), Maternal and Child Survival program (MCSP), Regional Health Integration to</i>

No.	Contractor's Name	Period	Brief Overview of Accomplishments
			<i>Enhance Services-SW (RHITES-SW), Health Initiatives in Workplace Activity (HIWA) and Uganda Health Supply Chain Program (UHSC), USAID's Malaria Action Program for Districts (MAPD), Procurement and Supply Management (PSA), Voucher Plus, RHITES-EC.) (TB, malaria, family planning, and FP, reproductive health, water and sanitation)</i>
37.	World Health Organisation (WHO)	05/6/17 to 15/08/17	Conducted a meningitis vaccination coverage survey including household listing in 39 districts (including all northern and all Karamoja districts)
38.	Save the Children International	15/5/17 to 31/7/17	Conducted a mid-term evaluation for the maternal, neonatal and child health program in Ntoroko district and assessed alignment to NDP II.
39.	Amref Health Africa	24/5/17 to 31/5/17	Conducted a mid-term evaluation for the maternal, neonatal and child health program in 2 districts; and assessed alignment to NDP II.
40.	Danish People's Aid (DPA)	01/03/17 to 28/03/17	Conducted the End of Project Evaluation Report for Improving Environmental Sanitation and Livelihoods in Kampala by Upscaling the Use of the Community Lead Urban Environmental Sanitation (CLUES II) Approach.
41.	Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC)	17/10/16 to 31/1/17	Conducted Data Quality Assessment in Kenya (Nairobi and Mombasa), Tanzania (Dar es Salaam and Lindi) and Uganda (Kampala and Arua) for the Strengthening Education Systems in East Africa (SESEA) project.
42.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	20/10/16 to 30/07/16	Conducted DO3 data quality Assessments and MEL System Assessments for 7 USAID funded health projects (<i>family planning, HIV/AIDS, nutrition and malaria</i>)
43.	DFID/ECO-Fuel Africa	27/5/16 to 20/6/16	Conducted Midline Evaluation to assess learning outcomes using Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) Assessment tools.
44.	The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF)/RHITES-SW	13/4/16 to 15/5/16	Conducted a baseline survey USAID Regional Health Integration to Enhance Services Project in 16 districts in South Western Uganda
45.	Makerere University School of Public Health	20/11/15 to 28/2/16	Conducted end of Project Evaluation of the Maternal and Neonatal Implementation for Equitable Systems (MANIFEST) study (January 2013 – April 2016)
46.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	12/12/15 to 23/12/15	Conducted DO1 data quality Assessments and MEL System assessments for 7 USAID-funded Agriculture and Socio-Economic Development projects.
47.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	23/10/15 to 11/11/15	Conducted DO3 data quality Assessments and MEL System Assessments for 8 USAID funded health projects (<i>family planning, HIV/AIDS, nutrition and malaria</i>)
48.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	22/10/15 to 1/6/18	Performed sub-contract management for the program on M&E systems and frameworks, conducting surveys to support evaluations and research, collecting and analyzing data, and delivering data quality assessments.
49.	Iris Group	14/10/15 to 31/12/15	Conducted data quality Assessments for socioeconomic entrepreneurs
50.	AMREF	15/7/15 to 31/8/15	Conducted a baseline survey for the maternal, neonatal and child health programs in 2 districts.
51.	USAID/URC/ASSIST	13/7/15 to 31/12/15	Provided M&E Technical Support to the project including conducting DQAs and MEL System Assessment.
52.	UNFPA	15/6/15 to 30/8/15	Conducted an end-of-program evaluation for the UN Joint Population program in Uganda implemented by 10 UN Agencies in 15 districts (including 7 Karamoja districts).
53.	USAID/Monitoring and Evaluation of Emergency Plan Progress (MEEPP) Uganda	4/6/15 to 30/11/15	Provided management and technical support supervision services to 13 Senior Consultants for District M&E Capacity Building for Strengthening Health Management Information System (HMIS) and Orphans and Vulnerable Children Management Information System (OVC MIS) and DQAs.
54.	DEVINA	9/3/2015 to 30/3/15	Performed technical review of DENIVA M&EL Plan and indicators , designed data collection tools and trained project implementers on M&E
55.	Uganda AIDS Commission	17/2/2015 to 15/3/15	Developed the National HIV/AIDS M&E Plan 2015/16–2019/20 and NSP Indicator Handbook
56.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	13/1/2015 – 5/2/15	Conducted End of Term Evaluation using the Client Exit Survey methodology for the End of Project Evaluation for STAR East, STAR South West and STAR East Central and produced reports
57.	Iris Group, USA	5/1/2015 to 27/3/15	Conducted data quality assessments for Vital Voices Fellows in Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria
58.	UNAIDS Uganda	22/10/14 to 30/12/14	Designed and conducted the end-of-term evaluation for the UN Joint Program Support for HIV and AIDS (JUPSA) in Uganda; that entailed a nationwide consultative process across a multi-sectoral spectrum of stakeholders. Developed the January to December 2015 JUPSA work plan (including 5 Karamoja districts).
59.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	20/10/14 to 5/11/14	Conducted a Cost Efficiency Assessment Survey for 'Save a Mother Give a Life' project in 40 health facilities, 4 districts. Analysed data and produced data sets per facility, and indicator; developed a comprehensive field report.

No.	Contractor's Name	Period	Brief Overview of Accomplishments
60.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Contract	22/9/14 to 15/10/14	Designed and conducted M&E system assessment as well as data quality assessments for 8 USAID Feed the Future Projects implementing agriculture and climate change (CPM, EEA, Community Connector, Ag-Inputs, Harvest Plus, ABSP 2, ACIDI/VOCA and Mercy Corps).
61.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Contract	1/9/14 to 15/9/14	Designed and implemented data quality assessments for TB, Malaria and medical procurement projects.
62.	Uganda AIDS Commission	4/8/14 to 10/10/14	Conducted the midterm review for the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan 2011/12- 2014/15 and developed the National Strategic Plan 2015/16– 2019/20; and assessed alignment to SDGs and NDP II.
63.	UN Women/MFPED	8/8/14 to 8/10/14	Developed the gender strategy and indicators for the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development contracted by UN Women
64.	USAID/EEA, Chemonics International	14/8/14 to 18/8/14	Facilitated a district leader's workshop for mainstreaming Climate Change (CC) into the District Development Plans using MFPED Output Budget Tool (OBT) and developed a detailed plan for rolling it out to district technical planning committees in USAID Uganda 19 CC focus districts.
65.	Uganda AIDS Commission	4/8/14 to 9/9/14	Designed and conducted a capacity assessment for UAC Self Coordinating Entities and developed and capacity-building strategy.
66.	Wellshare International	6/6/14 to 2/8/14	Designed and conducted a baseline survey for the HIV/AIDS and Family Planning Integration Project in Arua District.
67.	Data Care (U) Ltd	27/5/14 to 30/7/14	Developed Board of Directors' Guidelines , and board handbook ; and facilitated the board orientation session.
68.	USAID/EEA, Chemonics International	17/4/14 - 30/5/14	Designed and conducted the Climate Change Mapping and Inventory survey in the four regions of Uganda. Performed qualitative and quantitative data analysis and report writing.
69.	USAID/QED Group LLC, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Contract	15/1/14 - 14/2/14	Designed and implemented the health facility youth data validation survey in 49 health facilities across 10 districts; performed analysis; produced a comprehensive validation report.
70.	USAID/Monitoring and Evaluation of Emergency Plan Progress (MEEPP) Uganda	26/11/13 - 14/12/13	Designed materials and facilitated the annual review and work plan development workshop and staff retreat. Produced a comprehensive workshop/retreat report with lessons learnt and recommendations.
71.	USAID/EEA, Chemonics International	8/5/13 - 9/30/13	Designed and conducted baseline surveys on ' climate change data for adaptation use by government decision-makers at the district level'; and 'stakeholder perceptions on the agricultural policy enabling environment'. Performed data analysis and produced reports for the baseline surveys.
72.	USAID/ MEEPP Uganda	7/8/ 13 - 8/30/13	Coordinated and worked with Medical, Public health and M&E Specialists to conduct PMTCT data quality assessments in 19 districts among 103 health facilities . Compiled 19 comprehensive district reports and one aggregate national report.
73.	USAID/ MEEPP Uganda	2/25/13 - 5/13/13	Mentored and provided technical support the PEPFAR implementing partners in the use of the upgraded HIBRID partner reporting system. Conducted data analysis and generation of reports using aggregate country PEPFAR semi-annual 2013 report.

ANNEX VI. ANNEX G: EVALUATION TORS

Terms of Reference for a consultancy to conduct a Mid-Term Review of the UNEP/GEF project “: Effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas” GEF ID 9671

Request for: Consultant ☒ Individual contractor ☐

Organizational Unit: Ecosystems Division: GEF-Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit / Level C

1. Purpose

1.1 Requirements for a consultant

The United Nations Environment Programme is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment". Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action. UNEP's Ecosystems Division works with international and national partners, providing technical assistance and capacity development for the implementation of environmental policy, and strengthening the environmental management capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. This consultancy post is located in UNEP / Ecosystems Division / GEF Biodiversity unit and reports to the respective GEF Task Manager Jane Nimpamya.

UNEP is implementing a GEF project titled "Effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas" in Egypt executed by the IUCN-Regional Office for West Asia (IUCN-ROWA) in collaboration with the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA).

UNEP would like to recruit a consultant to conduct a Mid-Term Review of this project. The Mid-Term Review will use a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the review process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the review implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the review findings.

The findings of the review will be based on the following:

- a) A desk review of: Relevant background documentation, inter alia, Project Document and Appendices, Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget; Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool etc.; Evaluations/Reviews of similar projects; relevant policy and strategy documents, particularly when assessing

relevance and alignment of the project. The consultant will also review all documentation of the subgrantees including their contracts.

- b) Interviews (individual or group) with: UNEP Task Manager (TM); Project management team; UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO); All project partners, Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – Regional office for West Asia (IUCN/ROWA), Italian Development Cooperation-EIECP-III, Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), all levels of governance, PSC, local government officials and project management teams through virtual meetings and field visits: Other data collection tools: If needed, to be decided at the inception phase including Focus Group discussion (FGDs) with targeted beneficiaries to bring out community voices.

Review Deliverables and Procedures

The review team will prepare:

Inception Report: containing confirmation of the results framework and theory of change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, review framework, quality of project design and a tentative review schedule.

Preliminary Findings Note: the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings.

Draft and Final Review Reports: containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the review findings organised by review criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table. Come up with findings on the status of the implementation process to date, challenges faced, best practices and make recommendations to support the implementation of the Project.

The consultancy will be home-based. Travel will be organized if required guided by the agreed workplan.

1.2 Qualifications/special skills or knowledge

The Consultant should have:

Academic Qualifications:

Master's degree in Natural sciences, Natural resources Management, Environmental Sciences, monitoring and evaluation, International Development or other relevant political or social sciences area.

Experience:

- A minimum of 10 years of technical/evaluation experience, including of project planning, management, monitoring and evaluation.
- Experience in evaluation of GEF projects is highly desirable.
- Excellent writing skills; team leadership experience and, where possible, knowledge of the UN system, specifically of the work of UNEP and GEF programming is an asset.
- Experience in managing partnerships, knowledge management and communication is desirable for all evaluation consultants.

Language:

- English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat.

- For the post advertised, fluency in oral and written English is required.

1.3 Ultimate result of services:

Mid-Term Review Report of the "Effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas". The results are expected to guide the execution of the project in its remaining term.

1.4 Title and identification number of projects:

GEF ID: 5626

Project Title: UNEP-GEF "Effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas"

1.5 Duration

This consultancy will run for a period of three months.

2. Funding

Source of Funds Regular Budget ☐ Extra-budgetary ☒

2.1 Budget Line: - Umoja coding block M99-32GFL-11207-14AC0003-SB-008233.06..

3. Travel involved –

Travel will be organized by Substantive Office ☒

If possible, the consultant maybe required to travel to Egypt for stakeholder consultations and to conduct field observations to be able to come up with objective inferences.

4. Work plan

Objectives: In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual, the Mid-Term Review (MTR) is undertaken approximately halfway through project implementation to analyze whether the project is on-track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required. The MTR will assess project performance to date (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the likelihood of the project achieving its intended outcomes, including their sustainability.

The consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the Task Manager, for overall management of the review and timely delivery of its outputs, described below. The consultant will ensure that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

Specifically, the consultant will be required to complete the following tasks:

Inception Report: will contain confirmation of the results framework and theory of change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, review framework and a tentative review schedule.

Preliminary Findings Note: the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings.

Draft and Final Review Reports: will contain an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the review findings organised by review criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

Review of the draft MTR report. The review team will submit a draft report to the Task Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Task Manager will share the cleared draft report with key project stakeholders for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Task Manager for consolidation. The Task Manager will provide all comments to the review team for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

Expected Outputs (Deliverables):

Tentative schedule for the review

Milestone	Indicative Timeframe
Inception Report	15 Oct 2023
Review Mission	15 – 30 Oct 2023
Telephone interviews, surveys etc.	1 – 15 Nov 2023
Presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	20 Nov 2023
Draft Report to Task Manager	25 Nov 2023
Draft Report shared with the wider group of stakeholders	30 Nov 2023
Final Main Review Report	15 Dec 2023
Final Main Review Report shared with all respondents	20 Dec 2023

4.2 Reporting lines:

The consultant will work under the direct supervision of the Task Manager, based in Nairobi, Kenya) and the overall guidance of the Head, GEF BD/LD Unit, of the Biodiversity Ecosystem Service Branch based in Nairobi.

ANNEX H. GEF RISKS TO ACHIEVING PROJECT OUTCOMES (for GEF funded projects) for Egypt Wadi

RISK CATEGORIES	RATINGS	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Low	Risks are made a detailed risk analysis and spelt out risk management measures. The project objective is grounded in key national policy and planning documents. The project is consistent with Egypt's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2015-2030, which is the principal policy document that drives biodiversity conservation in Egypt.
Environment and Social	Low	The project seeks to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss through improved management and infrastructure of the protected area network, including the development. The project will work very closely with regulatory authorities to ensure compliance with environmental and social safeguards as provided in various statutory regulations.
Political and Governance	Low	The higher attention given to the project by the Ministry of Environment shows the political will to develop the area by the Ministry and Government. The PSC is chaired by the Government, and the project is aligned with the national plans of relevant ministries.
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Low	The Prodoc Clearly defined the roles, and responsibilities of key stakeholders at national and local government levels. - Synergy built for district and national institutions.
Technological	< Select rating >	NOT Applicable
Financial and Business Model	Moderate	The Government of Egypt was working on a new GEF grant for Qarun based on the community and educational centre to continue the work. However, effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas, such as the maintenance of GIS units, solar panels, and educational centre, requires financial resources, which are inadequate to sustain these interventions
EXECUTION		
Capacity for Implementation	Low	The developed management plans, improved staff capacity, and renovated infrastructure have great potential for sustaining the project result, contributing to the likely impact. The Community Environmental Education Centre, under construction, will be used for continued community sensitisation and training on conservation matters.
Fiduciary	Low	IUCN has sound financial management and procurement policies that guided the project. The IUCN provided quality reports and accounted for all their money. During the period of January to November 2022, IUCN pre-financed the project as they waited for the money from UNEP to avoid lagging behind.
Stakeholder	Low	An effective strategy that will create a win-win result and taken care of various stakeholder interests
Other	Low	
Overall Risk Rating	Low	The project is a low-risk one and have devised measures to mitigate the potential risks.