



## FAO-GEF Project Implementation Report

### 2023 – Revised Template

Period covered: 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

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## 1. Basic Project Data

### General Information

<b>Region:</b>	RAP
<b>Country (ies):</b>	Afghanistan
<b>Project Title:</b>	Combating land degradation and biodiversity loss by promoting sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in Afghanistan
<b>FAO Project Symbol:</b>	GCP/AFG/102/GFF
<b>GEF ID:</b>	10169
<b>GEF Focal Area(s):</b>	Multi Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Land Degradation
<b>Project Executing Partners:</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)
<b>Initial project duration (years):</b>	5 years
<b>Project coordinates:</b> <i>This section should be completed ONLY by:</i> a) Projects with 1st PIR. b) In case the geographic coverage of project activities has changed since last reporting period.	<i>[Projects in a) and b) categories should indicate YES here and provide the geocoded data in Annex 2]</i>

### Project Dates

<b>GEF CEO Endorsement Date:</b>	11-Mar-2021
<b>Project Implementation Start Date/EOD:</b>	01-Jan-2021
<b>Project Implementation End Date/NTE<sup>1</sup>:</b>	31-Dec-2025
<b>Revised project implementation End date (if approved) <sup>2</sup></b>	NA

### Funding

<b>GEF Grant Amount (USD):</b>	USD 5 906 850
<b>Total Co-financing amount (USD)<sup>3</sup>:</b>	USD 30 000 000
<b>Total GEF grant delivery (as of June 30, 2023 (USD):</b>	USD 796 609
<b>Total GEF grant actual expenditures (excluding commitments) as of June 30, 2023 (USD)<sup>4</sup>:</b>	USD 357 343
<b>Total estimated co-financing materialized as of June 30, 2023<sup>5</sup></b>	USD 7,200,000

<sup>1</sup> As per FPMIS

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

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

<sup>4</sup> The amount should show the values included in the financial statements generated by IMIS.

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

**M&E Milestones**

Date of Last Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting:	NA
Expected Mid-term Review date <sup>6</sup> :	September 2024
Actual Mid-term review date (if already completed):	NA
Expected Terminal Evaluation Date <sup>7</sup> :	September-December 2025
Tracking tools (TT)/Core indicators (CI) updated before MTR or TE stage (provide as Annex)	<i>[It is mandatory for projects to update the TT or CI before Mid-Term or Terminal Evaluation stage. For projects that have a planned MTR or TE in the next fiscal year, please indicate YES here and provide the updated TT or CI as Annex.]</i>

**Overall ratings**

Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes (cumulative):	S
Overall implementation progress rating:	S
Overall risk rating:	Medium

**ESS risk classification**

Current ESS Risk classification:	Moderate
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**Status**

Implementation Statuses (1 <sup>st</sup> PIR, 2 <sup>nd</sup> PIR, etc. Final PIR):	1 <sup>st</sup> PIR
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**Project Contacts**

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

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

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

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

Please indicate the project's main progress towards achieving its objective(s) and the cumulative level of achievement of each outcome since the start of project implementation.

Project or Development Objective	Outcomes	Outcome indicators <sup>8</sup>	Baseline	Mid-term Target <sup>9</sup>	End-of-project Target	Cumulative progress <sup>10</sup> since project start Level (and %) on 30 June 2023	Progress rating <sup>11</sup>
To combat land degradation and biodiversity loss by promoting sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in vulnerable landscapes of	Outcome 1.1: National, provincial, and local capacity and institutions in place supporting CBNRM <sup>12</sup> and integrated landscape planning and management.	(i) Number of national and provincial stakeholders (women and men) with increased knowledge and capacity to facilitate CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management.	(i) Zero (ii) Zero (iii) Zero (iv) Zero (v) Zero	(i) 20 national, 30 provincial (at least 25% women)  (ii) 10,000 ha (expected 8,000 ha of rangelands and 2,000 ha of forests)  (iii) Zero (iv) 1,000 ha	(i) 40 national, 60 provincial (at least 25% women)  (ii) 24,000 ha (expected 19,000 ha of rangelands and 5,000 ha of forests)  (iii) 100 000 ha	(i) 24 Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) plans are prepared and finalized in close consultation with the relevant stakeholders (excluding DfA) in the provinces of Khost, Laghman and Nuristan. Frequent visits were paid to the project sites for inspection of project ground level activities in the target communities. A	S

<sup>8</sup> This is taken from the approved results framework of the project.

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

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

<sup>11</sup> Use GEF Secretariat required six-point scale system: **Highly Satisfactory** (HS), **Satisfactory** (S), **Moderately Satisfactory** (MS), **Moderately Unsatisfactory** (MU), **Unsatisfactory** (U), and **Highly Unsatisfactory** (HU).

<sup>12</sup> Community-based natural resource management.

<p>eastern Afghanistan.</p>		<p>(ii) Area covered by CBNRM plans supporting the restoration and sustainable use of rangelands and forests.</p> <p>(iii) Area covered by integrated landscape management plans.</p> <p>(iv) Area of critical ecosystems providing habitat for globally important wildlife species included in CBNRM and/or landscape management plans.</p>		<p>(v) 5,000 (50% women)</p>	<p>(iv) 11 654 ha<sup>13</sup></p> <p>(v) 50 000 (50% women)</p>	<p>structured methodology (as per project document) was followed through consultative meetings, workshops, and community gatherings.</p> <p>As a result, 1855 project beneficiaries including 249 women at provincial level were capacitated in three target provinces.</p> <p>The project plan to procure satellite image for project area, however, currently we don't show such interventions using satellite images</p> <p>(ii): 24 CBNRM plans for 24 FMAs/RMAs in all three target provinces have been prepared and finalized in close consultation with local communities/ranchers, herders, and stakeholders, covering around, 3,600 ha of forest.</p> <p>A total of 10 980 ha of rangeland were covered for improved management, major interventions were</p>	
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13 Note: This figure is included in the 100,000 ha under (iii) above. See the budget file, "Calculations" tab, for detailed calculations.

	(v) Number of resource users (women and men) who benefit from improved management of target landscapes.				<p>quarantine, and rotational grazing.</p> <p>(iv): Several places with critical ecosystems providing habitat for globally important wildlife species have been identified in Khust and Laghman provinces with their respective GPS locations and are under further review by the project Kabul team for selection using satellite imagery and other secondary data available</p> <p>(v): The number of resource users (women and men) who benefited from improved management of target landscapes have reached 9785 persons out of which 1658 were women.</p>	
Outcome 2.1: Improved management and restoration/rehabilitation of 24,000 ha of degraded landscapes to enhance biodiversity,	Area of degraded landscapes under restoration/rehabilitation and improved management, benefiting biodiversity	Zero	5,000 ha	24 000 ha (of which 4000 ha of forest is under SFM, 1000 ha of forest restored/rehabilitated, and 19 000 ha of rangelands under improved	In this reporting period, the project has brought 10 980 ha of rangeland and 3 600 ha of forest under improved management and the Rangeland Management Associations (RMA) and Forest Management Associations (FMA) implemented rotational grazing and quarantine	S

<p>increase productivity and restore/rehabilitate degraded land.</p>	<p>and local livelihoods.</p>			<p>management for restoration).</p>	<p>measures to ensure sustainable use of the land in these areas.  Similarly, 452.6 ha of forest was restored and rehabilitated with the saplings of pine nut, walnut, almond, hop bush, and poplar cuttings. These efforts have contributed significantly to the conservation and restoration of the forest in all three targeted provinces.</p>	
<p>Outcome 2.2: Enhanced local capacity for processing and value-adding of rangeland/agroforestry products, generating socio-economic benefits for women and men, to provide incentives for sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation.</p>	<p>(i) Number of RMAs/FMAs and/or community enterprises benefiting from capacity building to support processing and value-adding of sustainable rangeland/agroforestry products.  (ii) Number of households benefiting from enhanced</p>	<p>(i) Zero (ii) Zero (iii) Zero</p>		<p>(i) At least 10 (out of 24 project-supported RMAs/FMAs; selected based on feasibility of interventions)  (ii) 450 (average 45 households per RMA/ FMA)  (iii) 100</p>	<p>The capacity building and awareness training on fundamentals of the value chain, market chain – harvest and post-harvest losses, and gender inclusion to value chain interventions conducted to project targeted communities.  In addition to capacity building, the project established 16.9ha of agroforestry plots of peach and sweet cherry saplings in Nuristan province, which both bear fruit on the third year.</p>	<p>S</p>

	<p>value chains of sustainable rangeland/agriculture/forestry products (through increased incomes or other benefits).</p> <p>(iii) Number of women benefiting from value chains specifically designed to benefit women.</p>					
<p>Outcome 3.1: knowledge and data on sustainable rangeland management, ecosystem restoration, and biodiversity conservation are systematically created, shared and disseminated.</p>					<p>Knowledge and data on sustainable rangeland management, ecosystem restoration, and biodiversity conservation are being collected from the field through M&amp;E developed system. And shared as a success story via the FAO website.</p>	S
<p>Outcome 3.2: Effective project coordination, M&amp;E and NEPA</p>					<p>For an effective project M&amp;E, Kobo Toolbox is established for data management, and</p>	S



<p>and MAIL<sup>14</sup> institutional capacity development</p>					<p>knowledge management hub is under development.</p> <p>Data collection tools are developed to collect field data through smartphones. Furthermore, community- based M&amp;E guidelines as well as a draft community M&amp;E record books are developed to practically record M&amp;E data based on project interventions.</p>	
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**Measures taken to address MS, MU, U and HU ratings on Section 2**

Outcome	Action(s) to be taken	By whom?	By when?

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14 National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL).

### 3. Implementation Progress (IP)

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

Outcomes and Outputs <sup>15</sup>	Indicators (as per the Logical Framework)	Annual Target (As per the annual Work Plan)	Main achievements <sup>16</sup> (please avoid repeating results reported in previous year PIR)	Describe any variance <sup>17</sup> in delivering outputs
Output 1.1.1: Capacity development program on CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management developed and implemented for national and provincial stakeholders.	Number of trainings conducted.	<p>Activity 1.1.1.1: GEF 7 team will develop a capacity development program for national and provincial stakeholders (MAIL, NEPA, MRRD, MEW, universities, provincial and district officials, and community-based organizations), building on resource materials developed under GEF-6 and other relevant projects.</p> <p>Modules will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sustainable rangeland and forest management, biodiversity, and ecosystem conservation and restoration.</li> <li>2. Participatory resource assessment and facilitation of inclusive and gender-sensitive community-based planning (CBNRM).</li> <li>3. The concepts of natural capital, biodiversity, and land degradation neutrality (LDN), and linkages with SDGs 2 and 15.</li> </ol>	<p>A detailed capacity development plan, to enhance the capacities of national, provincial, and local stakeholders (excluding DfA), has been developed, meanwhile, the resource materials developed under the GEF6 project were customized/improved based on lessons learned and are being used for the GEF7 project. As a part of the mentioned capacity development Program. In addition, 70 trainings were conducted both for the project team, as ToT, and provincial and local community stakeholders.</p> <p>The module developed in this reporting period is "Participatory resource assessment and facilitation of inclusive and gender-sensitive community-</p>	

<sup>15</sup> Outputs as described in the project Logframe or in any approved project revision.

<sup>16</sup> Please use the same unit of measurement of the project indicators as per the approved Implementation Plan or Annual Workplan. Please be concise (max one or two short sentence with main achievements)

<sup>17</sup> Variance refers to the difference between the expected and actual progress at the time of reporting.

		<p>4. Main international frameworks and reporting systems (UNCCD, SDGs, SEEA). Land and Forest Assessment and Accounts. Notion of ecosystem services, extent, and condition (e.g.: soil productivity).</p> <p>5. Integrated landscape management.</p>	<p>based planning” However other modules are yet to be developed as:</p> <p>1) Sustainable rangeland and forest management, biodiversity, and ecosystem conservation and restoration,</p> <p>2) The concepts of natural capital, biodiversity, and land degradation neutrality (LDN), and linkages with SDGs 2 and 15,</p> <p>3) Main international frameworks and reporting systems (UNCCD, SDGs, SEEA). Land and Forest Assessment and Accounts. The notion of ecosystem services, extent, and condition (e.g.: soil productivity). and</p> <p>4). Integrated landscape management</p>	
<p>Output 1.1.2: Creation, registration and strengthening of 24 Rangeland Management Associations (RMAs) or Forest Management Associations (FMAs).</p>	<p>The number of RMAs or FMAs created and registered, and technical assistance/capacity building provided.</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>This activity is reported in the 1st PIR and is not part of this PIR.</p>
<p>Output 1.1.3: Participatory assessment of local natural resources, land degradation, and biodiversity in the target landscapes, integrated with geospatial data and environmental resources assessment.</p>	<p>The number of participatory assessments conducted (integrated with technical assessments) the at community level in view of preparation of CBNRM plans.</p>	<p>Activity 1.1.3.1: Conduct a large-scale assessment of the target landscapes using geospatial data (including data on land and water resources, ecosystems, and biodiversity, as well as impacts of climate change and land degradation), and any previous survey data, in close collaboration with MAIL, NEPA, WCS and relevant university staff.</p>	<p>A letter of agreement is finalized in close coordination with the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) (Project partner) to conduct the large-scale assessment of the target landscapes using geospatial data including activity 1.1.3.2. Through 9 consultation meetings and workshops a detailed scope of work and terms of reference are prepared for the mentioned</p>	

		<p>Activity 1.1.3.2: Organize participatory mapping and data collection in collaboration with local government, communities, and community institutions. The participatory assessment will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment of rangelands, following PRAGA or similar methodology. This will include the identification of current and potential (under appropriate grazing management) biomass productivity and carrying capacities.</li> <li>2. Assessment of forest and biodiversity resources, including potential areas that could be set aside for conservation, areas for restoration, and sustainable forest management.</li> <li>3. Evaluation of natural assets and related economic activities.</li> <li>4. Socio-economic information.</li> </ol>	<p>activity including work plan, budget and field implementation methodology. The LoA is being finalized through FAO administrative procedure.</p> <p>Complementary to the LoA, the project teams in provinces have conducted an initial assessment to support the large-scale assessment of the targeted landscapes in terms of land and water resources, ecosystems, biodiversity, and the impact of climate change and land degradation.</p> <p>Initial assessment means the first visits project team paid to each province; however, this is based on Nuristan being nominated as national park and as envisioned in the project document</p> <p>Initial assessment here means the first visits project teams paid to each province; however, this is based on Nuristan being nominated as national park and as envisioned in the project document</p> <p>The assessment was conducted considering the collection of</p>	
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			<p>both primary data and available secondary information.</p> <p>Organized participatory mapping and data collection in collaboration with local communities. All the maps have been prepared, and current and potential biomass productivity and carrying capacities, assessment of forest, and biodiversity resources, landscape condition, and potential sites have been identified for improved management.</p> <p>The needs, challenges, and priorities of local communities have been identified, and ecosystem species that are important globally have been highlighted.</p> <p>The information is gathered but the analysis has not been done yet and will be reported in the next PPR or PIR as it is a bit complex and needs some more data to report on</p>	
<p>Output 1.1.4: CBNRM plans developed in an inclusive and participatory process supporting the restoration and sustainable use of rangelands and forests.</p>	<p>The number of CBNRM plans developed through an inclusive and participatory process.</p>	<p>Activity 1.1.4.1: Organize inclusive, participatory, and gender-sensitive community meetings to validate the findings of the assessment and prepare CBNRM plans for each RMA/FMA. This will also involve ensuring free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of local communities</p>	<p>Female members included in the executive bodies of FMA/RMA so that all the consultation, coordination, and mobilization are gender inclusive and gender sensitive.</p>	

		<p>(including any minority groups and Kuchi herders) in line with the defined process and establishing a process to address any conflicts or land tenure issues that may arise.</p> <p>Activity 1.1.4.2: Develop draft CBNRM plans based on the participatory process. The plans will be based on traditional management systems and international best practices and should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plans for improved management and restoration of natural resources in line with the concept of LDN (avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation).</li> <li>2. Plans for conserving ecosystems that provide critical habitat for globally important wildlife species.</li> <li>3. Allocation of resources for the implementation of the plans and definition of roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>4. Indicators and process for monitoring and evaluation of the plans. These plans will include around 15000 ha area in all three provinces.</li> </ol>	<p>Around 140 inclusive, participatory and gender sensitive community meetings were conducted to facilitate CBNRM planning process, management, and implementation as well as to validate the findings of the initial assessment to support the LoA</p> <p>A total of 24 CBNRM plans were updated and revised based on participatory process and local context including, improved management and restoration of natural resources and ecosystem conservation as well as resource allocation for the implementation and indicators for M&amp;E.</p> <p>In addition, more than 1,500 women have been included in the participatory assessments (FGDs surveys, consultation meetings) in Laghman, Khust, and Nuristan provinces so far.</p>	
Output 1.1.5: Multi-stakeholder platform for integrated landscape management established in two pilot districts.	Number of multi-stakeholder platforms established.	NA	NA	Not planned in this reporting period.
Output 1.1.6: Integrated landscape management plan developed in two pilot districts and implementation started.	Number of landscape management plans were developed, and endorsed	Activity 1.1.6.1: Based on assessments conducted under Output 1.1.3 and the multi-stakeholder platforms established under Output 1.1.5, lead	The consultation was initiated at the stakeholder level to identify appropriate sites for efficient	

	<p>by Provincial DAIL, and implementation started.</p>	<p>participatory process to develop an integrated landscape management plan in two pilot districts which will cover around 60,000 ha area. Discuss potential areas that could be set aside for conservation, areas for restoration, sustainable forest and rangeland management, agriculture, etc. Identify agencies in charge of implementing the plans, such as the PAIL/NRM district office, and provincial/district NEPA office, in collaboration with a multi-stakeholder platform. These landscape management plans will cover around 10,000 ha of area in three provinces.</p> <p>Activity 1.1.6.2: Provide technical assistance and capacity building to provincial and district stakeholders for the integrated landscape management planning process.</p> <p>Activity 1.1.6.3: Support finalization and initial implementation of the plans, such as through replication of CBNRM plans, capacity building, soil and water conservation, and ecosystem restoration and conservation measures.</p>	<p>and sustainable implementation of the integrated landscape management plans in two piloted districts. E.g., Paron district in Nuristan province and Bak district in Khust province</p>	
<p>Output 2.1.1: Learning sites established in three target districts for the effective dissemination of best practices of regenerative grazing and rangeland management (approx. 8-10 ha/site).</p>	<p>The number of districts with learning sites.</p>	<p>Activity 2.1.1.1: Prepare physical set-up of learning sites (facilities, fencing, water points, fodder demonstration site, medicinal plant demonstration, reforestation site if relevant, etc.) in collaboration with local government and communities. This will cover an</p>	<p>Criteria for setting up learning sites in all three provinces are prepared and finalized in close consultation/discussion with communities and FMA/RMA members in all 3 targeted provinces.</p>	

		<p>area of 14000 ha area in the most prominent FMAs/RMAs</p> <p>Activity 2.1.1.2: Define roles and responsibilities for the operation and maintenance of the learning sites, including after the project ends. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with clear roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Activity 2.1.1.3: Operation and regular maintenance of learning sites.</p>	<p>Selected four potential learning sites in Khost province for natural resource management. The selection process was carried out in consultation with the RMA/FMA, using predefined criteria.</p> <p>A total area of 500 ha of land in Khost province has been selected for the learning sites, with the aim of enhancing the management and conservation of natural resources in the area. These learning sites will serve as demonstration areas for best practices in natural resource management and will provide opportunities for knowledge-sharing and capacity-building among local communities and project stakeholders.</p> <p>Once the sites are selected a pre intervention video/photos will be recorded and after the intervention as well for comparison/results/impact</p> <p>The (500ha) in Khust province is only selected in this reporting period. However, the project staff together with all three provincial teams will surely expand the area next year</p>	
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<p>Output 2.1.2: Pastoralist-centric, gender-sensitive field schools implemented sustainable and regenerative rangeland management and biodiversity-friendly practices.</p>	<p>(i) Number of pastoralists having completed field school (disaggregated by gender).</p> <p>(ii) Number of field schools implemented.</p>	<p>Activity 2.1.2.1: Develop curriculum and implementation schedule for pastoralist field schools in each district, adapted to different target beneficiaries (including both sedentary and nomadic herders, vulnerable groups, women and men, poorer households, etc.).</p> <p>The curriculum will include modules on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Holistic grazing management</li> <li>2. Animal health (including human-livestock-wildlife interface)</li> <li>3. Winter feed alternatives</li> </ol> <p>The curriculum may also include elements on reforestation, medicinal plants, and value chain development.</p>	<p>The curriculum and implementation schedule for pastoralist field schools has been developed in all three targeted provinces and in their relevant districts. The curriculum included the modules of 1) Holistic grazing management, 2) Animal health, and 3) Winter feed alternatives.</p> <p>The project has established two pastoralist field schools, one for women and one for men per FMA/RMA in all three provinces.</p> <p>In the provinces of Khost and Laghman, 35 pastoralist field schools have been established, (18 female and 17 male groups), and each of these groups contains 20 livestock farmers on average. These field schools will play a crucial role in promoting sustainable grazing and livestock farming practices and enhancing the livelihoods of local communities.</p> <p>The Nuristan team has not started the establishment of pastoralist field schools, they will be established in the next year</p>	
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<p>Output 2.1.3: Holistic, regenerative grazing practices and restoration interventions applied in at least 19,000 ha of rangelands.</p>	<p>Area of rangelands under holistic, regenerative grazing practices.</p>	<p>Activity 2.1.3.1: Develop, and regularly update, holistic grazing plans for the areas covered by the CBNRM plans. These plans will cover an area of 12 000 ha.</p> <p>Activity 2.1.3.4: Provide equipment, training, and demonstration to strengthen veterinary services/veterinary field units.</p>	<p>Rangeland areas for quarantine and rotational grazing have been identified and selected, draft grazing management plans have been agreed in all three provinces. By law the rangelands belong to the government, however, in practice the rangeland belongs to the communities who reside close by and benefit from it. So, the agreement between the communities (who are also members of RMA/FMA), provincial directorate and project team were agreed.</p> <p>The control Grazing and Reseeding training program for 124 FMA/FMA members of 8 FMA/RMA in Laghman province has been delivered.</p> <p>RMA/FMA members have applied rotational grazing and quarantine measures on 10 980 hectares of rangeland in all three provinces. Currently, the project is monitoring these areas through project volunteers and provincial teams, however, the project would like to use geospatial tools to do so in the near future.</p>	
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			<p>The remaining 8020 ha will be covered in the next reporting period. This activity needs lots of mobilization and consultation meetings to be conducted with the community and RMA/FMA members to encourage and apply this practice. Therefore, the provincial team will do the needful consultation and mobilization next year and will cover the remaining target.</p> <p>These conservative practices have contributed significantly to protection, conservation and restoration of the natural resources in all three provinces, promoting sustainable use of the land and reducing the risk of overgrazing.</p>	
<p>Output 2.1.4: Technical assistance and support provided to women to operate small-scale greenhouses for income generation/household food security.</p>	<p>The number of women supported to operate small-scale greenhouses for income generation/household food security.</p>	<p>Activity 2.1.4.2: Implement regular community-based monitoring and evaluation of greenhouses/home gardening interventions and reflection on lessons learned.</p>	<p>9 Consultation meetings in all three provinces for beneficiary and crop identifications for the greenhouse establishment have been completed. However, the physical establishment of greenhouse/home gardening interventions has not yet been initiated.</p> <p>Based on the developed workplan, greenhouse/home gardening will be initiated in late 2023.</p>	

			<p>The project made progress in raising awareness and providing technical assistance for income-generating activities in Khost, Laghman, and Nuristan provinces, these efforts resulted in increased awareness, frequent mobilization, and greater participation by women in income-generating activities for food security.</p>	
<p>Output 2.1.5: Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) implemented in 4,000 ha of forest areas for sustainable use of forest products.</p>	<p>Area of forest land under SFM.</p>	<p>Activity 2.1.5.1: Support field implementation of SFM interventions in line with the CBNRM plans in at least 2500 ha of forest.</p> <p>Activity 2.1.5.2: Implement regular, community-based monitoring and evaluation of interventions, and adjustment, where required.</p>	<p>In the provinces of Laghman, Khost, and Nuristan, 3600 hectares of forests are identified and selected for improved management activities based on the CBNRM plans.</p> <p>Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) related activities are running smoothly in the local communities, including control of illegal logging, quarantine, reforestation, controlled grazing, natural regeneration, protecting the forest from fire, and prohibiting hunting.</p> <p>These efforts have contributed significantly to the conservation and restoration of forest resources, promoting sustainable use of the land, and reducing the risk of over-exploitation of natural resources.</p>	

<p>Output 2.1.6: Restoration/rehabilitation, reforestation and/or agroforestry implemented in 1,000 ha of degraded or deforested forest areas.</p>	<p>Area of forest land under restoration/rehabilitation, reforestation and/or agroforestry.</p>	<p>Activity 2.1.6.1: Support field implementation of forest restoration/rehabilitation, reforestation and/or agroforestry in line with the CBNRM plans. This may include, but is not limited to ecological restoration, establishment of community-based nurseries, seed ball and tree plantations using native species, contour planting to reduce soil erosion and stabilize slopes, and agroforestry. This will be done in close collaboration with the relevant provincial forestry and NRM officers.</p>	<p>The project, in all three targeted provinces, cumulatively reforested/afforested 452.5ha of forest (162.6ha in Khost, 98.2ha in Laghman, and 191.7ha in Nuristan) with the saplings of pine nut, walnut, almond, hop bush and poplar cuttings.</p> <p>Furthermore, in the province of Nuristan, the project established 16.9ha of agroforestry plots of peach and sweet cherry saplings and groundnut seed.</p>	
<p>Output 2.1.7: Small check dams/Keyline dams and water ponds established or rehabilitated to support sustainable grazing and forest restoration and improved watershed management in upper catchment areas.</p>	<p>Total volume of check dams and water ponds established or rehabilitated by the project.</p>	<p>Activity 2.1.7.3: Establish/rehabilitate check dams and water ponds.</p>	<p>The contract for the construction of water reservoirs and check dams in Laghman and Nuristan provinces is awarded, while the construction of water reservoirs and check dams is already in progress in Khost province.</p>	
<p>Output 2.2.1: Value chain analysis conducted for selected rangeland/agroforestry products and recommendations formulated on value-addition and market access.</p>	<p>(i) Number of value chain analyses conducted.</p>	<p>Activity 2.2.1.1: Conduct value chain analysis for selected rangeland/livestock/agroforestry products identified and prioritized during participatory meetings. This will involve an assessment of current and potential economic benefits derived from these products, their potential for market development, their significance for women's livelihoods and poor households, and their potential to contribute to sustainable management and conservation of dryland ecosystems</p>	<p>Value chain assessment survey questionnaires were developed for two prominent value chains (Pine nuts and intermediate livestock) according to the project document. The assessment process is ongoing in a project targeted province, the pine nuts market assessment survey is completed in Khost province, and for the rest provinces, the process is underway. The activity is around 30 percent complete and after</p>	

		<p>and biodiversity (including rangelands and forests) in the target provinces and beyond. A baseline survey of major value chains in target provinces like pine nuts, dairy and walnut and some of medicinal plants will be conducted.</p> <p>Activity 2.2.1.2: Organize inclusive and gender-sensitive community meetings to validate findings and prioritize value chain interventions.</p>	<p>the collection of data, the analysis will be done. Gender-inclusive and sensitive community meetings are organized during the assessment process to know their priorities and contribution.</p>	
<p>Output 2.2.2: Selected value chain interventions implemented for rangeland/agroforestry products, including strengthening of RMA/FMA and community enterprises' capacity to support value chains.</p>	<p>(i) Number of processing and/or packaging facilities established or improved. (ii) Number of women and men participating in selected value chain activities (such as for example, for pine nuts, medicinal plants, agroforestry, honey, or dairy and other livestock products).</p>	<p>Activity 2.2.2.1: Provide technical assistance and capacity building to local communities for the implementation of improved value chains (such as, for example, for pine nuts, medicinal plants, mushrooms, agroforestry, honey, or dairy, and other livestock products, as prioritized by the communities in a participatory process), including on maintaining the operations after the project ends. Around 200 households will benefit from these value chains.</p> <p>Activity 2.2.2.2: Establish or improve small-scale, cost-effective, and innovative processing and/or packaging facilities, in collaboration with RMAs/FMAs or other community-based institutions/enterprises. This may also include replication in other districts/provinces. Ground nut processing, tomato processing, and some dairy processing kits will be</p>	<p>The assessment process is ongoing for two selected value chains related to rangeland and forestry, while the assessment is completed, and groundwork is initiated then the project will be providing technical support capacity building to local communities for the implementation of the value chains.</p> <p>In close collaboration with the provincial team and communities, some dairy processing and hygiene equipment are planned and are under procurement process to be distributed during this year to FMA/RMA members in return for conservation activities in rangeland and forest areas.</p>	

		<p>distributed to the communities within FMAs/RMAs.</p> <p>Activity 2.2.2.3: Support the sustainable production of medicinal plants through reseeding and natural conservation. Support the sustainable production of selected agroforestry products and/or beekeeping in coordination with Activity 2.1.4.1.</p> <p>Activity 2.2.2.4: Support the development of an inventory of species diversity and a community seed bank or nursery to promote ex-situ conservation of selected agroforestry products and/or medicinal plants (pilot in at least one community).</p>	<p>This activity has not been done and is to be reported in the next reporting period.</p> <p>This activity has not been done and is to be reported in the next reporting period.</p>	
<p>Output 3.1.1: Data on land degradation, biodiversity, and natural assets is generated, centrally stored, and shared through the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL.</p>	<p>A number of indicators<sup>18</sup> for which data is generated, centrally stored and shared through the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL.</p>	<p>Activity 3.1.1.1: Provide capacity building to MAIL, NEPA, MEW, MRRD and National Statistic and Information Authority (NSIA) staff on data collection and management, including linkages with SDGs. This will also involve further strengthening of the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL and other relevant institutions.</p> <p>Activity 3.1.1.2: Organize a workshop with national and provincial stakeholders to discuss lessons learned and the use of data in future planning and decision-making. At</p>	<p>These activities are not initiated as per the UN working modality with DfAs in the country</p> <p>GEF6 project already initiated to develop a knowledge Hub, which was supplementary to the establishment of CoE. in case the GEF6 due to Political changes in the country is not able to establish CoE, then the project can surely store data on land degradation, biodiversity,</p>	

18 Such as for sub-indicators under SDG indicators 2.3.1 (Productivity of small-scale food producers), 15.1.1 (Forest area as a proportion of total land area) and 15.3.1 (Proportion of degraded land over total land area).

		least one such workshop at each province level and one at the center would be organized.	and natural assets in the Knowledge Hub.	
Output 3.1.2: Provision of 10 small research grants for universities to conduct research on topics relevant to the project such as biodiversity surveys, ecosystem valuation and natural capital, socio-economic surveys, Eastern Forest Complex ecosystem services, and climate change impacts.	Number of research grants provided (approx. USD 5,000 per grant) and research reports are available.	Activity 3.1.1.1: Establish criteria and selection process for the provision of research grants. At least 2-3 grants should be dedicated to an ecosystem valuation/natural capital assessment of Nuristan National Park. At least three such grants will be granted to universities in each province to conduct research based on the project output needs.  Activity 3.1.1.2: Implement the selection process and provide 10 grants (approx. USD 10,000 per grant).	The initial meetings with the relevant universities have been conducted and a detailed discussion with each director of the university has been held. However, the criteria and selection process for the provision of research grants are not yet initiated. The progress in this activity will be reported in the next year.	
Output 3.1.3: Biophysical and socio-economic surveys conducted in view of the preparation of a justification document for Nuristan National Park.	The number of biophysical and socio-economic surveys conducted, and reports are available.	NA	LoA is being finalized with AIT and will be initiated in September 2023.	
Output 3.1.4: Knowledge and outreach strategy developed and implemented on sustainable rangeland management, restoration ecology, and biodiversity conservation through the National 'Centre of Excellence' at MAIL as well as through the use of innovative information and mobile technology.	(i) Number of knowledge and outreach products developed and disseminated (such as video/TV clips, audio/radio clips, posters, flyers, brochures, and publications).  (ii) Number of project beneficiaries and other stakeholders reached by knowledge and outreach activities.	Activity 3.1.4.1: Develop knowledge and outreach strategy on sustainable rangeland management, integrated landscape management, restoration ecology, and biodiversity conservation. The strategy will be based on previous assessments (such as by the GEF-6 project), as well as additional identification of needs and gaps. The strategy will target stakeholders in the target landscapes and beyond.	The knowledge management and outreach strategy were developed for the GEF project and is now updated and modified for this project. The strategy clearly identified methods and approaches of sustainable rangeland management, integrated landscape management, restoration of ecology, and biodiversity conservation.	



<p>Output 3.2.1: Effective project coordination and M&amp;E undertaken.</p>	<p>(i) Number of PSC meetings and stakeholder workshops conducted.</p> <p>(ii) M&amp;E deliverables (PSC meetings, reports, MTR, TE, etc. as outlined in the ProDoc) are submitted on time.</p>	<p>Activity 3.2.1.3: Lead effective project coordination and M&amp;E, including adaptive planning and management. Preparation and implementation of annual budgets and work plans. Involve NEPA in regular project monitoring, including monitoring missions to the project sites.</p> <p>Activity 3.2.1.4: Conduct social analysis and define risk mitigation measures as per the project’s Environmental and Social Management Plan (including the FPIC process).</p> <p>Activity 3.2.1.5: Support and monitor the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and FPIC. Organize gender and FPIC trainings for project staff and provincial/district focal points</p>	<p>For an effective project M&amp;E, Kobo Toolbox is established for data management. Data collection tools are developed to collect field data through smartphones. Furthermore, community-based M&amp;E guidelines as well as a draft community M&amp;E record book are developed to practically record M&amp;E data based on project interventions.</p> <p>The project conducted training regarding social safeguarding and FAO policies for the project staff, in addition, the project has done social safeguarding risk assessment survey for each FMA/RMA to find out social and environmental challenges.</p> <p>A gender action plan has been developed and the implementation is ongoing in all the project interventions. Hired female volunteers who are supporting the project team to easily reach out to women beneficiaries in Laghman, Khost, and Nuristan provinces. The gender inclusion/gender mainstreaming training has been conducted for the project staff based in Kabul as well as the provinces, the subject training helped project staff to consider</p>	
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			gender inclusion in project implementation. Gender inclusion has been considered in environmental risk assessments to identify specific measures in terms of risk management for each gender group during the project implementation.	
Output 3.2.2: NEPA's and MAIL's institutional capacity strengthened to support project capacity-building monitoring, replication and scaling up.	<p>(i) Number of NEPA and MAIL technical staff (women and men) with increased capacity in topics related to project implementation, M&amp;E, data collection and management, and/or planning and decision-making.</p> <p>(ii) Increase in capacity in select areas highlighted in the HACT assessment, see Activity 3.2.2.1.</p>	NA	Not planned in this reporting period	

## 4. Summary on Progress and Ratings

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

- Initial assessment to conduct large scale assessment of the targeted landscapes in terms of land and water resources, ecosystems, biodiversity, and impact of climate change and land degradation was conducted.
- A total of 140 inclusive, participatory, and gender-sensitive community meetings were conducted to facilitate the CBNRM planning process, management, and implementation as well as to validate the findings of the assessment.
- A total of 24 CBNRM plans were prepared and then updated and revised based on participatory process and local context including, improved management and restoration of natural resources and ecosystem conservation as well as resource allocation for the implementation and indicators for M&E.
- In the provinces of Laghman, Khost, and Nuristan, 3 600 hectares of forests are identified and selected for improved management activities based on prepared CBNRM plans.
- A total area of 500 ha of land in Khost province has been selected for the learning sites
- In Khost and Laghman provinces, 35 pastoralist field schools have been established.
- Applied rotational grazing and quarantine measures on 10 980 hectares of rangeland
- The project in all three targeted provinces cumulatively reforested/afforested 452.5ha of forest
- In Nuristan province, the project established 16.9ha of agroforestry plots
- The knowledge management and outreach strategy are developed, based on the strategy of previous GEF-funded projects. The strategy identified methods and approaches of sustainable rangeland management, integrated landscape management, restoration of ecology, and biodiversity conservation.
- For project M&E, Kobo Toolbox was established for data collection and management. Data collection tools are developed to collect field data through smartphones.

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

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

	<b>FY2023 Development Objective rating<sup>19</sup></b>	<b>FY2023 Implementation Progress rating<sup>20</sup></b>	<b>Comments/reasons<sup>21</sup> justifying the ratings for FY2023 and any changes (positive or negative) in the ratings since the previous reporting period</b>
<b>Project Manager / Coordinator</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<i>The project has made good progress in terms of implementation and achieving development objectives. This includes training modules, afforestation/reforestation, improved management of rangeland in terms of (rotational grazing, and quarantine) agroforestry plots establishment, developing the gender action plan, and developing CBRNM plans. Furthermore, field visits were conducted to the project target areas to make sure all activities are in line with the developed work plan. Although some of the project interventions initiations were affected by political stability in Afghanistan</i>
<b>Budget Holder</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<i>Despite the social and political challenges including security, COVID-19, and the collapse of the government in the country the project has taken progressive steps toward the accomplishment of results</i>
<b>GEF Operational Focal Point<sup>22</sup></b>			<i>In line with the UN Transitional Engagement Framework for Afghanistan, the de facto authorities are not officially engaged since August 2021 due to uncertain political situation</i>
<b>Lead Technical Officer<sup>23</sup></b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<i>Despite various challenges since the project implementation, the project has made satisfactory progress, particularly in the identification and establishment of 24 RMA/FMA, participatory sustainable rangeland and natural resource management via establishment of learning sites and afforestation/reforestation interventions, training manuals, and so on. Full and intensive implementation of the project in the next reporting period is anticipated.</i>

<sup>19</sup> **Development Objectives Rating** – A rating of the extent to which a project is expected to achieve or exceed its major objectives. For more information on ratings and definitions, please refer to Annex 1.

<sup>20</sup> **Implementation Progress Rating** – A rating of the extent to which the implementation of a project's components and activities is in compliance with the projects approved implementation plan. For more information on ratings and definitions, please refer to Annex 1.

<sup>21</sup> Please ensure that the ratings are based on evidence

<sup>22</sup> In case the GEF OFP didn't provide his/her comments, please explain the reason.

<sup>23</sup> The LTO will consult the HQ technical officer and all other supporting technical Units.

<b>GEF Technical Officer, GTO (ex Technical FLO)</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<i>Though the overall disbursement is low, the project has made good progress in implementing activities. The project needs to start preparing for the upcoming MTR in 2024 by consolidating good practices and lessons learned in addition to indicators from the initial project cycle.</i>
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## 5. Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)

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

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

Social & Environmental Risk Impacts Identified at CEO Endorsement	Expected mitigation measures	Actions are taken during this FY	Remaining measures to be taken	Responsibility
<b>ESS 1: Natural Resource Management</b>				
<p>Could this project result in any changes to existing tenure rights (formal and informal) of individuals, communities, or others to land, fishery, and forest resources?</p> <p>Yes. However, only positive change through the CBNRM process.</p>	<p>The project will closely follow MAIL’s CBNRM process and address any land tenure issues when they arise. The CBNRM process is in line with the principles of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT).</p> <p>In addition, the project will apply a conflict-sensitive approach in line with the FAO Corporate Framework to support sustainable peace in the context of Agenda 2030.</p>	<p>FMA/RMAs are established and are officially registered with the NRM/MAIL.</p> <p>CBNRM Plans have been prepared and finalized and implementation have been initiated.</p> <p>A social risk analysis was conducted, and a more detailed analysis and mitigation measures have been identified.</p>	<p>The CBNRM planning process has been chosen as a demonstrated approach for community-based, conflict-sensitive natural resource management. Furthermore, participatory approaches have been incorporated throughout the project’s implementation plan.</p>	<p>PMU, Community, and stakeholders</p>

	<p>Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this could not be conducted during PPG and had to be postponed to project implementation. Terms of Reference for the assignment have been prepared.</p> <p>This risk will be closely monitored and managed, under the overall responsibility of the PMU and the involvement of the National Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist.</p>			
<b>ESS 2: Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Natural Habitats</b>				
<b>ESS 3: Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</b>				
<p>Would this project involve access to genetic resources for their utilization and/or access to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that are held by local communities and/or farmers? Low risk.</p>	<p>The medicinal plants and agroforestry products promoted by the project are already in the public domain (promoted by the government). Benefits are only expected to arise for the local communities themselves.</p> <p>Should changes take place about the access and use of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources held by local communities, their consent</p>	<p>The Implementation of the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) process is completed.</p>	<p>Although categorized as low risk, this risk will continue to be monitored by the PMU.</p>	<p>RAP/HQ team, PMU, Community, and stakeholders</p>

	will be sought through the implementation of the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) process. Through FPIC, a community benefit-sharing mechanism will be established.			
<b>ESS 4: Animal - Livestock and Aquatic - Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</b>				
<b>ESS 5: Pest and Pesticide Management</b>				
<b>ESS 6: Involuntary Resettlement and Displacement</b>				
<b>ESS 7: Decent Work</b>				
<b>ESS 8: Gender Equality</b>				
<b>ESS 9: Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage</b>				
Are there different ethnic groups/vulnerable groups living in the project area where activities will take place?	Several ethnic groups are present in the project area (Pashtun, Tajik, Pashai, Nuristani, Gujar, Tajik). In addition, Kuchi nomadic herders are present in the project areas.	The project doesn't include any indigenous people; however, several ethnic groups are present in each province who are all included in consultation. coordination and implementation phases of project.  The Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) process is applied to all local	This risk will be closely monitored and managed, under the overall responsibility of the PMU and the involvement of the National Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist.	PMU, Community, and stakeholders



		communities in this area		
<b>New ESS risks that have emerged during this FY</b>				

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

<b>Initial ESS Risk classification</b> (At project submission)	<b>Current ESS risk classification</b> Please indicate if the Environmental and Social Risk classification is still valid <sup>24</sup> . If not, what is the new classification, and explain?
Moderate	Moderate

<i>Please report if any grievance was received as per FAO and GEF ESS policies. If yes, please indicate how it is being/has been addressed.</i>

<sup>24</sup> **Important:** please note that if the Environmental and Social Risk classification has changed, the ESM Unit ([Esm-unit@fao.org](mailto:Esm-unit@fao.org)) should be contacted. The project shall prepare or amend an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) or other ESS instruments and management tools based on the new risk classification (please refer to page 13 <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9870en/cb9870en.pdf> )

## 6. Risks

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

	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>25</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
1	Uncertainty due to evolving security situation and the nonrecognition status of the de facto government is affecting the project progress in some cases.	H	Yes	Considerations on environmental security, in line with GEF guidance, have been incorporated into the project design to address security risks related to environmental management. Nevertheless, the evolving security situation in the target provinces may pose a risk to project implementation. The project will adhere to UN Security Rules as always stipulated in the Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) system under the guidance of UN-DSS.	The UNDSS security protocols are strictly followed to cope with this challenge using other alternative ways	FAO security team is providing regular updates and assistance regarding field security management. After the political changes in the country, FAO is highly following UNDSS and FAO security rules for road and air missions to targeted provinces that require additional time to plan missions.

<sup>25</sup> Risk ratings means a rating of the overall risk of factors internal or external to the project which may affect implementation or prospects for achieving project objectives. Risk of projects should be rated on the following scale: Low, Moderate, Substantial or High. For more information on ratings and definitions please refer to Annex 1.

	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>25</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
2	COVID-19 risks and opportunities	M	Yes	Afghanistan is suffering from one of the most severe food crises worldwide. According to the 2020 Global Report on Food Crises, Afghanistan is ranked as the third worst crisis country globally, and food insecurity has significantly worsened since the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) broke out in the country.	WHO covid-19 prevention and mitigation measure are followed in close consultation with the Joint Medical Services (JMS) team	Guidance and support on every individual health is strictly followed.
3	Co-financing may not materialize at the level foreseen.	M	Yes	It is not anticipated that co-financing will be reduced due to COVID-19, due to the additional investments in humanitarian and socio-economic response.	At national level, the co-financing has not been materialized due to the current DfA, however, other relevant FAO projects are considered as co-finance for now.	Consultation/coordination with stakeholders is administered to insure co-finance
4	Continued threats to forests, rangelands, and protected areas through uncontrolled exploitation.	M	Yes	The project aims to provide incentives for the protection of forests, rangelands, and surrounding areas by supporting key alternative income and livelihood opportunities. It is anticipated that the restoration, holistic grazing, agroforestry, and medicinal plant interventions help to reduce pressure on natural ecosystems.	The awareness level of local communities has been enhanced, as a result, illegal logging, deforestation and rangeland over-exploitation have been remarkably minimized within the project area.	This mitigation measure is ensured at all levels of the project implementation.

**Project overall risk rating** (Low, Moderate, Substantial, or High):

FY2022 rating	FY2023 rating	Comments/reason for the rating for FY2023 and any changes (positive or negative) in the rating since the previous reporting period
M	M	

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

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

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

## 8. Minor project amendments

Minor amendments are changes to the project design or implementation that do not have a significant impact on the project objectives or scope, or an increase of the GEF project financing up to 5% as described in Annex 9 of the GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy Guidelines<sup>26</sup>. Please describe any minor changes that the project has made under the relevant category or categories and provide supporting documents as an annex to this report if available.

Category of change	Provide a description of the change	Indicate the timing of the change	Approved by
Results Framework	NA		
Components and cost	NA		
Institutional and implementation arrangements	NA		
Financial management	NA		
Implementation schedule	NA		
Executing Entity	Due to the current political changes in the country FAO Afghanistan along with local communities I.e., Forest and Rangeland Management associations are executing the project.		
Executing Entity Category	Community		
Minor project objective change	NA		
Safeguards	NA		
Risk analysis	NA		
Increase GEF project financing by up to 5%	NA		
Co-financing	400 00 co-finances have been delivered by the Private sector in this reporting period. The cumulative figures are 800 000 USD		
Location of project activity	NA		
Other minor project amendment (define)	NA		

<sup>26</sup> Source: <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/guidelines-project-and-program-cycle-policy-2020-update>

## 9. Stakeholders' Engagement

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

Stakeholder name	Type of partnership	Progress and Results on Stakeholders' Engagement	Challenges to Stakeholder engagement
<b>Government institutions</b>			
Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and livestock (MAIL)	Lead Executing Agency.	The official registration of RMA/FMA has been referred to MAIL by provincial PAIL office, and informal consultation meeting has been conducted with MAIL to speed up the process.	Recent political changes hindered the formal engagement of the De Facto authorities' entities in the project.
National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA)	In charge of policy making and protected area planning.	Informal consultation meeting has been conducted with NEPA. Moreover, the provincial technical working group meetings are informally attended by project provincial team	As above.
Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)	In charge of rural development	Informal consultation meeting has been conducted with MRRD. Moreover, the provincial technical working group meetings are informally attended by project provincial team	As above.
Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW)	In charge of energy and water infrastructure development	Informal consultation meeting has been conducted with MEW. Moreover, the provincial technical working group meetings are informally attended by project provincial team	As above.
National Statistic and Information Authority (NSIA)	Will be closely engaged in data collection and management efforts, including on natural capital accounting, SDGs and LDN.	Informal consultation meeting has been conducted with NSIA. Moreover, the provincial technical working group meetings are informally attended by project provincial team	As above.
Ministry of Urban Development and Land (MUDL)	Will be engaged in project activities related to rangeland surveys	Informal consultation meeting has been conducted with MUDL. Moreover, the provincial technical working group meetings are	As above.

	and landscape-level planning.	informally attended by project provincial team	
Independent General Directorate of Kuchis (IGDK)	Will continue to be engaged in the project implementation to ensure that the interests of Kuchi herders will be considered and that Kuchi herders are able to benefit from the project interventions.	Informal consultation meeting has been conducted with IGDK. Moreover, the provincial technical working group meetings are informally attended by project provincial team	Low level dispute on rangeland due to un authorization of rangeland law. However, the project team is not intended to select and cover disputed areas for implementing project interventions.
Universities, colleges, and research institutes	Will be involved for knowledge sharing, generation of data, and monitoring and evaluation for LD, CC, and BD impacts under Component 3	NA	NA
<b>NGOs<sup>27</sup></b>			
Civil society	Civil society will be engaged as stakeholders in the project implementation, for community-based and landscape-level planning, as well as the implementation of restoration and sustainable management initiatives and capacity building. Relevant civil society organizations include, among others, the Aga Khan Development Network, TLO and WCS	consultative meetings held with civil society including WCS, Agha Khan Foundation and AIT. Moreover, two LoAs are in the final stages to be signed with AIT and WCS for biophysical and socio-economic assessment in Nuristan national park.  Geospatial assessment of natural forests and rangeland in the country context are included in the LoA of AIT.	
<b>Private sector entities</b>			

<sup>27</sup> Non-government organizations



<p>Private sectors (Are yet to be identified)</p>	<p>The project will seek to engage with private sector entities, in particular community-based enterprises, and associations, in the value chain activities under Outcome 2.2. It will aim to enhance their capacity to support sustainable value chains.</p>		<p>NA</p>
<b>Others<sup>28</sup></b>			
<p>Donors, international agencies, Food Security Cluster of Afghanistan (FSAC) members</p>	<p>The project will seek regular exchange and collaboration with other donor-funded initiatives and international agencies, including UN agencies, to maximize the use of expertise and experience, and increase awareness, collaboration, and replication.</p>	<p>The project task team is in close consultation with other relevant projects/institutions e.g., nursery growers' associations, TLO, ICARDA, GEF6, GCF and other relevant FAO projects.</p>	<p>The current political situation has a deep impact on other institutions working in the sector, such as WCS, WHH, some of these NGOs are still not operational in the country.</p>
<b><i>New stakeholders identified</i></b>			

<sup>28</sup> They can include, among others, community-based organizations (CBOs), Indigenous Peoples organizations, women’s groups, private sector companies, farmers, universities, research institutions, and all major groups as identified, for example, in Agenda 21 of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and many times again since then

## 10. Gender Mainstreaming

Information on Progress on Gender-responsive measures as documented at CEO Endorsement/Approval in the gender action plan or equivalent (when applicable) <u>during this reporting period.</u>		
Category	Yes/No	Briefly describe progress and results achieved during this reporting period.
Gender analysis or an equivalent socio-economic assessment is made at formulation or during the execution stages.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project has done gender analysis during the project design and during the implementation, most of the pre-assessments for certain interventions such as alternative livelihood, and cash for work assessments were conducted based on gender-sensitive approaches of the GEF and FAO gender strategy.</li> </ul>
Any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A gender action plan has been developed and the implementation is ongoing in all the project interventions.</li> <li>Hired female volunteers who are supporting the project team to easily reach out to women beneficiaries in Laghman, Khost, and Nuristan provinces.</li> <li>The gender inclusion/gender mainstreaming training has been conducted for the project staff based in Kabul as well as the provinces, the subject training helped project staff to consider gender inclusion in project implementation.</li> <li>Gender inclusion has been considered in environmental risk assessments to identify specific measures in terms of risk management for each gender group during the project implementation.</li> </ul>
Indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality (as identified at the project design stage):		
a) Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per the designed gender action plan of the project, the efforts for closing gender gaps and providing the proper responses for the issues are continuously carried on.</li> <li>The project gender specialist is conducting bi-weekly meetings with project staff and female volunteers to track gender mainstreaming progress in the targeted areas/communities that make each staff member able to find the</li> </ul>

		specific needs, priorities, and concerns to take proper actions against the gender inclusion concerns.
b) Improving women's participation and decision making	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During awareness-raising campaigns female participants were informed of the benefits of natural resource conservation and the consequences of losing/damaging natural resources, to this end women are encouraged to participate in decision-making over natural resource.</li> <li>• The alternative livelihood interventions are designed to include more women in the project.</li> <li>• Community consultation meetings are another option to include women's decision-making process.</li> </ul>
c) Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The value chain assessment survey conducted in targeted districts included input from both men and women. The responses from women beneficiaries enabled the project team to identify priorities in generating socio-economic benefits/services for women. The socio-economic services that have been considered for women beneficiaries are as bellow. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fuel-efficient cookstoves</li> <li>○ Dairy Processing and Hygiene kits</li> <li>○ Solar Cookers</li> <li>○ Kitchen Gardening</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
M&E system with gender-disaggregated data?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project M&amp;E system is developed that has gender-disaggregated data collection options.</li> </ul>
Staff with gender expertise	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project hired a social safeguard and gender specialist.</li> </ul>
Any other good practices on gender	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project volunteers are hired as couples (husband and wife) which seems a very good practice toward the cultural restrictions and movement of female.</li> </ul>

## 11. Knowledge Management Activities

Knowledge activities/products (when applicable), as outlined in Knowledge Management Approach approved at CEO Endorsement / Approval, <u>during this reporting period.</u>	
Does the project have a knowledge management strategy? If not, how does the project collect and document good practices? Please list relevant good practices that can be learned and shared from the project thus far.	Yes, the project has a knowledge management strategy, and based on a communication plan, all good practices and other knowledge management and communication activities are being implemented.
Does the project have a communication strategy? Please provide a brief overview of the successes and challenges of the communications this year.	<p>Yes, as aforementioned, the project has a communication strategy, and based on the mentioned strategy all activities are carried forward.</p> <p>Materials for the awareness-raising campaigns have been developed and printed. During the reporting period, the project was printed.</p> <p>During the past year, the project team has conducted 243 awareness-raising campaigns for a total number of 7310 participants including 1184 women from the local community people and FMA/RMA members.</p> <p>For better project visibility, the project has designed and printed visibility materials such as Pens, notebooks, wall and desk calendars, and file folders. The items were equally transferred to project sites for distribution among project beneficiaries.</p>
Please share a human-interest story from your project, focusing on how the project has helped to improve people's livelihoods while contributing to achieving the expected Global Environmental Benefits. Please indicate any Socio-economic Co-benefits that were generated by the project. Include at least one beneficiary quote and perspective, and please also include related photos and photo credits.	<p><b>Increasing forest cover to reduce global warming effects and soil erosion.</b></p> <p>Khost province is in Southeastern Afghanistan, and it is almost entirely covered by mountains and forests. The population is largely rural and grows cereals and vegetables such as wheat, barley, maize, rice, onions, potatoes, spinach, and leek on whatever land is left of forest cover.</p> <p>The rise in population and resultant pressure has pushed people living in this province to either immigrate for work, and those left behind have resorted to collecting firewood, illegal forest logging, and overgrazing to survive.</p> <p>Deforestation and rangeland overuse put Khost province in a critical position, with 0.2ha of forest destroyed on an annual basis. So far 278ha out of 15,300ha have been destroyed since 2000.</p> <p>FAO with funds from Global Environment Facility (GEF) established nine Rangeland and Forest Management Associations (RMAs/FMAs) in three districts (Sabari, Baak, and Zazi Maidan) of Khost province and registered them with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) in 2022. Each (RMA &amp; FMA) has 11 key members and the whole community under each RMA &amp; FMA are direct and indirect beneficiaries. FAO developed Community-based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) plan for each FMA/RMA and</p>

	<p>selected potential sites in consultation with FMA/RMA members for project interventions to be implemented.</p> <p>RMA &amp; FMA are responsible for monitoring project interventions regularly, helping provincial staff to identify potential beneficiaries for project interventions, facilitating the excavation of pits, participating in awareness-raising campaigns, and spreading the knowledge to the whole community, allocating land for establishing home-based nurseries as well as conducting regular weekly and monthly meetings among themselves to better facilitate project activities in the field.</p> <p>In addition, FAO provincial team trained the local community and RMA/FMA members on the importance of the conservation of natural resources, particularly forests, and rangelands. The project is utilizing a bottom-up approach - working at the village, district, and provincial levels to ensure sustainability for a longer period. To enhance the livelihoods and socio-economic conditions of the local communities who directly or indirectly depend on forest resources, FAO planted nearly 129 840 saplings of almond, walnut, hop bush, and poplar cuttings, that covered 162.6 ha of land at the beginning of 2023. The selection of these species was because of their high resistance to drought, giving fruits and producing wood for fuel.</p> <p>The aim of this plantation was to decrease pressure on forests and rangeland and restore biodiversity. Based on field-level observation, the survival rate of these saplings is around 95 percent, and the community with the help of RMA &amp; FMA key members regularly look after the saplings, by irrigating and carrying out another required follow-up.</p> <p>The community as part of their in-kind contribution did the plantation layout, excavating pits and basins, and irrigation arrangements. The plantation was made with contributions from local communities and RMA/FMA members through a large gathering locally called “<i>Ashar</i>”.</p> <p>“I deeply appreciate the demonstration of afforestation/reforestation and supporting local communities, and farmers by FAO. We are lucky to be selected for this project, as our basic needs such as alternative livelihood, reforestation, afforestation, woodlots for fuel wood and sustainably managing the rangeland are considered. We hope to have restored forests, rangeland, and biodiversity as well as a healthy climatic environment for the upcoming generation,” says Mr. Hekmat Khan, Zambar RMA/FAM head.</p> <p>Bakhtawar Khan is one of the beneficiaries of Sapari RMA/FMA, who has individually received 500 almond and walnut saplings from FAO.</p> <p>“Besides being a member of Sapari RMA/FMA, I used to be a member of the youth committee as well. We’ve planted thousands of saplings every year in our forest area. The local community through “<i>Ashar</i>” manages the plantation. This year we’ve cumulatively planted 34 140 different types of saplings provided by the FAO, and we are responsible for taking care of the saplings and</p>
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	irrigation. We've hired guards locally called "Arbaky" who look after the planted area and do irrigation regularly."
Please provide links to related websites, social media account	Bakhtar and Hero news agency <a href="https://bakhtarnews.af/en/moail-conducting-long-term-project-to-protect-forests-in-nuristan/">https://bakhtarnews.af/en/moail-conducting-long-term-project-to-protect-forests-in-nuristan/</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/BakhtarNAP/posts/pfbid036rCsf5TdD8FBbyYZEgTwpWr3vQVd7BkcCswGvNALqncW17hgv2M3nYVWedtiXel">https://www.facebook.com/BakhtarNAP/posts/pfbid036rCsf5TdD8FBbyYZEgTwpWr3vQVd7BkcCswGvNALqncW17hgv2M3nYVWedtiXel</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/herotvlaghman/videos/245978891192148/?sfnsn=wa&amp;mibextid=1Yhcl9R">https://www.facebook.com/herotvlaghman/videos/245978891192148/?sfnsn=wa&amp;mibextid=1Yhcl9R</a>
Please provide a list of publications, leaflets, video materials, newsletters, or other communications assets published on the web.	NA
Please indicate the Communication and/or knowledge management focal point's name and contact details.	Azatullah Sahil <a href="mailto:Azatullah.sahil@fao.org">Azatullah.sahil@fao.org</a>

## 12. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Involvement

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

If applicable, please describe the process and current status of ongoing/completed, legitimate consultations to obtain Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) with the indigenous communities.

Do indigenous peoples and or local communities have active participation in the project activities? If yes, briefly describe how.

The target provinces don't have any designated Indigenous people, however, local communities in all targeted provinces had active participation while developing CBNRM plans and making decisions regarding the classification of forest, pasture, and rangeland rehabilitation. Furthermore, indigenous people in local communities have developed an understanding of rangeland management issues, particularly on quarantine, control, and reseeding of rangelands.

In addition, local communities were consulted during project site selection, and, only after getting their agreement the project team selected FMAs/RMAs members and forests and rangeland areas for project intervention.

### 13. Co-Financing Table

Sources of Co-financing <sup>29</sup>	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing <sup>30</sup>	Amount Confirmed at CEO endorsement/approval	Actual Amount Materialized on 30 June 2023	Actual Amount Materialized at Midterm or Closure. (Confirmed by the review/evaluation team)	Expected total disbursement by the end of the project.
Government	MAIL	In-Kind	11 000 000	2,200,000	NA	11 000 000
Government	NEPA	In-Kind	5 000 000	1,000,000	NA	5 000 000
Government	MRRD	In-Kind	4 700 000	940,000	NA	4 700 000
Donor Agency	FAO-GCF	Grant	5 300 000	1,060,000	NA	5 300 000
GEF Agency	FAO	In-Kind	2 000 000	800,000	NA	2 000 000
Private Sector	Local Private Sector	Grant	2 000 000	1,200,000	NA	2 000 000
<b>TOTAL</b>			30 000 000	7,200,000	NA	30 000 000

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

The co-finance amount remains the same for all the government agencies as per the 2022 PIR due to the current political dilemma in the country the contribution of the stakeholders mentioned in the table above are not counted in this reporting period and all the contribution to the project co-finance are from the local private sector during this reporting period.

<sup>29</sup>Sources of Co-financing may include: GEF Agency, Donor Agency, Recipient Country Government, Private Sector, Civil Society Organization, Beneficiaries, Other.

<sup>30</sup>Grant, Loan, Equity Investment, Guarantee, In-Kind, Public Investment, Other (please refer to the *Guidelines on co-financing* for definitions)

[https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF\\_FI\\_GN\\_01\\_Cofinancing\\_Guidelines\\_2018.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_FI_GN_01_Cofinancing_Guidelines_2018.pdf)



## Annex 1. – GEF Performance Ratings Definitions

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

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

<b>Risk rating</b> will assess the overall risk of factors internal or external to the project which may affect implementation or prospects for achieving project objectives. Risk of projects should be rated on the following scale:	
<b>High Risk (H)</b>	There is a probability of greater than <b>75%</b> that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face high risks.
<b>Substantial Risk (S)</b>	There is a probability of between <b>51%</b> and <b>75%</b> that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face substantial risks
<b>Moderate Risk (M)</b>	There is a probability of between <b>26%</b> and <b>50%</b> that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face only moderate risk
<b>Low Risk (L)</b>	There is a probability of up to <b>25%</b> that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face only low risks

**Annex 2.****GEO LOCATION INFORMATION**

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

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	Geo Name ID	Location & Activity Description

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