



FAO-GEF Project Implementation Report
2021 – Revised Template
 Period covered: 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021



1. Basic Project Data

General Information

Region:	RNE																																				
Country (ies):	Iraq																																				
Project Title:	Sustainable Land Management for Improved Livelihoods in Degraded Areas of Iraq (FSP)																																				
FAO Project Symbol:	GCP/IRQ/003/GFF																																				
GEF ID:	9745																																				
GEF Focal Area(s):	Land Degradation (LD)																																				
Project Executing Partners:	Ministry of Health and Environment																																				
Project Duration:	48 months																																				
Project coordinates: (Ctrl+Click here)	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">No</th> <th rowspan="2">Name</th> <th colspan="2">Coordinates</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Latitude</th> <th>Longitude</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="4">1</td> <td rowspan="4">Um-Al-akaf\ Muthana Governorate</td> <td>31.415676°</td> <td>45.146545°</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31.398920°</td> <td>45.147234°</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31.364962°</td> <td>45.203711°</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31.369486°</td> <td>45.213090°</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="4">2</td> <td rowspan="4">Al-Tar sub- district\ Thi Qar Governorate</td> <td>30.883603°</td> <td>46.590027°</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30.865321°</td> <td>46.602056°</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30.902305°</td> <td>46.741358°</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30.936467°</td> <td>46.748853°</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="4">3</td> <td rowspan="4">Shawya area\ Muthana Governorate</td> <td>30.534736°</td> <td>44.890009°</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30.441958°</td> <td>44.968110°</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30.462659°</td> <td>45.031907°</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30.571370°</td> <td>44.941183°</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No	Name	Coordinates		Latitude	Longitude	1	Um-Al-akaf\ Muthana Governorate	31.415676°	45.146545°	31.398920°	45.147234°	31.364962°	45.203711°	31.369486°	45.213090°	2	Al-Tar sub- district\ Thi Qar Governorate	30.883603°	46.590027°	30.865321°	46.602056°	30.902305°	46.741358°	30.936467°	46.748853°	3	Shawya area\ Muthana Governorate	30.534736°	44.890009°	30.441958°	44.968110°	30.462659°	45.031907°	30.571370°	44.941183°
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Milestone Dates:

GEF CEO Endorsement Date:	02 April 2019
Project Implementation Start Date/EOD :	01 January 2020
Proposed Project Implementation End Date/NTE¹:	01 January 2024
Revised project implementation end date (if applicable) ²	NA

¹ As per FPMIS

² In case of a project extension.

Actual Implementation End Date³:	NA
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Funding

GEF Grant Amount (USD):	3,549,321
Total Co-financing amount as included in GEF CEO Endorsement Request/ProDoc⁴:	21,200,000
Total GEF grant disbursement as of June 30, 2021 (USD m):	219,060
Total estimated co-financing materialized as of June 30, 2021⁵	545,000

Review and Evaluation

Date of Most Recent Project Steering Committee Meeting:	During the reporting period, several official meetings at central and governorates level have been conducted. However, the first Steering Committee meeting will be held in August 2021 as confirmed with the GEF OFP.
Expected Mid-term Review date⁶:	February-March 2022
Actual Mid-term review date:	NA
Mid-term review or evaluation due in coming fiscal year (July 2021 – June 2022)⁷:	Yes (might be postponed upon PSC request)
Expected Terminal Evaluation Date:	September-October 2023
Terminal evaluation due in coming fiscal year (July 2021 – June 2022):	No
Tracking tools/ Core indicators required⁸	Yes

Ratings

Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes (cumulative):	MS
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³ Actual date at which project implementation ends - only for projects that have ended.

⁴ This is the total amount of co-financing as included in the CEO document/Project Document.

⁵ Please see last section of this report where you are asked to provide updated co-financing estimates. Use the total from this Section and insert here.

⁶ The MTR should take place about halfpoint between EOD and NTE – this is the expected date

⁷ Please note that the FAO GEF Coordination Unit should be contacted six months prior to the expected MTR date

⁸ Please note that the Tracking Tools are required at mid-term and closure for all GEF-4 and GEF-5 projects. Tracking tools are not mandatory for Medium Sized projects = < 2M USD at mid-term, but only at project completion. The new GEF-7 results indicators (core and sub-indicators) will be applied to all projects and programs approved on or after July 1, 2018. Also projects and programs approved from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2018 (GEF-6) must apply core indicators and sub-indicators at mid-term and/or completion

Overall implementation progress rating:	MU The implementation progress rating is considered MU. During the inception phase, the project team has completed essential steps from recruitments to initiating field interventions, the results will materialize starting from Q4 2021 onwards.
Overall risk rating:	Low

Status

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

Contact	Name, Title, Division/Institution	E-mail
Project Manager / Coordinator	Ibrahim Abdulrazzaq, National Project Coordinator, FAO Iraq (until May 2021, new project coordinator under recruitment)	N/A
Lead Technical Officer	AbdelHamied Hamid Senior Forestry Officer, FAO Regional Office for Near East and North Africa	AbdelHamied.Hamid@fao.org
Budget Holder	Hajj Hassan, Salah FAO Representative in Iraq	Salah.ElHajjHassan@fao.org
GEF Funding Liaison Officer	Bergigui, Mohamed Fouad, GEF Portfolio Support and Project Development Specialist, FAO-GEF Coordination Unit	Mohamed.Bergigui@fao.org
	Chris Dirkmaat, Executive Officer, FAO-GEF Coordination Unit	Chris.dirkmaat@fao.org

2. Progress Towards Achieving Project Objectives and Outcome (DO) (All inputs in this section should be cumulative from project start, not annual)						
Project objective and Outcomes (as indicated at CEO Endorsement)	Description of indicator(s) ⁹	Baseline level	Mid-term target ¹⁰	End-of-project target	Level at 30 June 2021	Progress rating ¹¹
Objective(s): Reverse land degradation processes, conserve and sustainably manage land and water resources in degraded marshland ecosystems in Southern Iraq for greater access to services from resilient ecosystems and improved livelihoods						
Outcome 1: Enhanced policy, legal, and institutional frameworks support SLM	Number of national and governate staff reporting higher SLM management capacity.	0: MOA 0: MoH&E 0: MoW 0: Muthanna Gov. 0: Thi-Qar Gov.	3: MOA 5: MoH&E 2: MOW 2: Muthanna Gov. 2: Thi-Qar Gov.	10: MOA 12: MoH&E 5: MOW 5: Muthanna Gov. 5: Thi-Qar Gov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline assessments were carried out to inform the design and implementation of the core training program starting from Q4 2021 	MS
	Number of Government staff exclusively mandated to support implementation of SLM programming, including	0 CAD Staff 0 MoH&E Staff	20 CAD (Conservation Agriculture Directorate) Staff 20 MoH&E Staff	40 CAD Staff 40 MoH&E Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Coordination efforts were initiated with key national and local institutions to designate a gender sensitive cohort of decision makers that will benefit from the core trainings and will have the mandate to support the implementation of SLM programming 	MS

⁹ This is taken from the approved results framework of the project. Please add cells when required in order to use one cell for each indicator and one rating for each indicator.

¹⁰ 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.

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

	agriculture and wetlands					
	A national SLM strategy action plan developed with implementation financed by government.	0 SLM action plans developed and financed	1 SLM action plans developed and financed	1 SLM action plans developed and financed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A technical working group is being established and will be meeting starting Q4 2021 to supervise the technical assessments and develop an annotated outline for the proposed national SLM strategy and Action Plan starting from Q1 2022 	MS
	A national strategic action plan for agriculture and marshlands developed with implementation financed by government.	0 agriculture and marshlands action plans developed and financed	0 agriculture and marshlands action plans developed and financed	1 agriculture and marshlands action plans developed and financed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A technical working group is being established and will be meeting starting from Q4 2021 to supervise the development of the strategic marshland management assessment and management plan 	MS
	Number of annual users reported for project emplaced capacity and knowledge tools.	<p>0 users of project social media (e.g. Facebook)</p> <p>0 users of project emplaced knowledge management website</p>	<p>150 users of project social media (e.g. Facebook)</p> <p>500 monthly visitors of project emplaced knowledge management website</p>	<p>300 users of project social media (e.g. Facebook)</p> <p>1,000 monthly visitors of project emplaced knowledge management website</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media platforms are being established and will be operational starting Q4 2021. • A tracking system is being set in place to report on monthly users, it will be operational in Q4 2021 once the initial KM products (best practices hand-book) are shared via FAO's regional SLM platform and WOCCAT 	MS

	Number of annual national SLM progress reports delivered based upon information generated by GIS-based monitoring and knowledge platform.	0 national SLM progress reports	2 national SLM progress reports	4 national SLM progress reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first national SLM progress report will be delivered in Q1 2022 once the knowledge management and decision-making platform is operational 	MS
Outcome 2: SLM best practices promoted and delivering global environmental benefits	Number of extension officers with proven capacity to implement FFS SLM training programs.	0 extension officers	50 extension officers	50 extension officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The advanced training program for Master trainers (extension officers) is being planned and is expected to start in Q4 2021 	MS
	Number of hectares of degraded agriculture and grazing lands under improved SLM management as a result of FFS implementation.	0 ha	2,000 ha	Number of annual users reported for project emplaced capacity and knowledge tools.6,000 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The first FFS Cohort is expected to be established in Q4 2021 with the first trainings delivered in Q1 2022.</i> 	MS

	Number of agricultural producers reporting higher economic returns based upon participation in FFS SLM training programs.	0: men 0: women	N/A	Number of annual national SLM progress reports delivered based upon information generated by GIS-based monitoring and knowledge platform.150: men 150: women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The first FFS Cohort is expected to be established in Q4 2021 with the first trainings delivered in Q1 2022. 	MS
	Number of agriculture hectares (degraded and under SLM) monitored annually as a result of FFS programming with linkages to the national KM system.	0 ha monitored and reporting to national KM	15,000 ha monitored and reporting to national KM	30,000 ha monitored and reporting to national KM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The first FFS Cohort is expected to be established in Q4 2021. The first trainings will be delivered in Q1 2022 and the knowledge management and decision-making platform will be operational starting Q1 2022. 	MS
Outcome 3: Measures to restore and	Number of extension officers with	0 extension officers	20 extension officers	20 extension officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The wetland specific extension training program for Master trainers (extension officers) is being planned and is expected to 	MS

sustainably manage marshland ecosystems adopted	proven capacity to implement FFS agroecological training programs that support marshland conservation.				start in Q4 2021	
	Number of marshland dependent agricultural producers reporting higher economic returns based upon participation in FFS agroecological training programs.	0: men 0: women	N/A	100: men 100: women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first special FFS Cohort focused on wetlands conservation is expected to be established in Q1 2022 with the first trainings delivered in Q1 2022. 	MS
	Number of hectares of wetlands restored and sustainably managed as a result of FFS agroecological implementation.	0 ha restored	1,500 ha restored	4,000 ha restored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first special FFS Cohort focused on wetlands conservation is expected to be established in Q1 2022 with the first trainings delivered in Q1 2022. 	MS

	Number of wetland agriculture hectares monitored annually to promote SLM practices and reporting to national KM system.	0 ha monitored and reporting to national KM system	10,000 ha monitored and reporting to national KM system	20,000 ha monitored and reporting to national KM system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first special FFS Cohort focused on wetlands conservation is expected to be established in Q1 2022. The first trainings will be delivered in Q1 2022 <i>and</i> the knowledge management and decision-making platform will be operational starting Q1 2022. 	MS
Outcome 4: Monitoring and evaluation informs knowledge management with best practices upscaled	Percentage of intended outputs and indicators reported by the project's mid-term and final report as delivered and/or on-track for delivery.	0% delivered 100% on-track for delivery	50% delivered 50% on-track for delivery	100% delivered 0% remaining for delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project MTR is planned for 2022 pending further guidance from the PSC with regards to a possible extension. 	MS
	Number of annual KM tool reports uploaded into regional and international KM tools.	0: reports submitted to WOCAT 0: reports submitted to Regional SLM FAO Unit	2: reports submitted to WOCAT 2: reports submitted to Regional SLM FAO Unit	4: reports submitted to WOCAT 4: reports submitted to Regional SLM FAO Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The initial KM tool (SLM best practices handbook) will be shared through the regional SLM Network hosted by FAO's Regional Office and the WOCAT database in Q4 2021 	MS

Action plan to address MS, MU, U and HU ratings

Outcome	Action(s) to be taken	By whom?	By when?
Enhanced policy, legal, and institutional frameworks support SLM	<p>The project team will use adaptive management and double its efforts in coordination with national and local partners to ensure that the baseline assessments are finalized, the core training programs for decision makers are designed/implemented, and the technical working groups for SLM and wetlands are established in Q4 2021.</p> <p>Special efforts will be made by the PMU to accelerate the design of a knowledge management and decision-making platform using FAO's open source digital land use mapping.</p>	FAO, MoA, MoW, MoHE	Q4 2021
SLM best practices promoted and delivering global environmental benefits	The project team will use adaptive management and innovative solutions to overcome the existing difficulties, in coordination with national and local partners, in order to ensure that the baseline assessments are effectively used to inform the design of technical curricula in Q4 2021 to accelerate the implementation of FFS programs aiming to have the first Cohorts in Q1 2022.	FAO, MoA, MoW, MoHE	Q4 2021 & Q1 2022
Measures to restore and sustainably manage marshland	The project team will strive to develop appropriate management responses to overcome the existing difficulties, in	FAO, MoA, MoW, MoHE	Q4 2021 & Q1 2022

ecosystems adopted	coordination with national and local partners, to design specialized technical curricula related to marshlands conservation in Q4 2021 to accelerate the implementation of marshlands-specific FFS programs with the first Cohorts expected in Q1 2022.		
Monitoring and evaluation informs knowledge management with best practices up-scaled	The project team will consistently update the M&E dashboard to anticipate any delays in execution. Careful planning will be made to disseminate KM tools generated by the projects through the SLM Network hosted by FAO's Regional Office, the WOCAT database and other relevant platforms.	FAO	Throughout the project lifecycle (first KM tool to be shared in Q4 2021)

3. Progress in Generating Project Outputs (Implementation Progress, IP)

(Please indicate progress achieved during this FY as planned in the Annual Work Plan)

Outputs ¹²	Expected completion date ¹³	Achievements at each PIR ¹⁴					Implement. status (cumulative)	Comments Describe any variance ¹⁵ or any challenge in delivering outputs
		1 st PIR	2 nd PIR	3 rd PIR	4 th PIR	5 th PIR		
Output 1.1 National SLM training program established	Q4 Y2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A baseline survey was conducted which will inform the design of a Comprehensive Capacity Building Strategy to ensure national and local decision makers are exposed to international SLM principles and best practices •A Core Training program for decision makers is being developed and will be implemented starting from Q4 2021 					25%	Covid-19 and security related restrictions giving national and local circumstances in Iraq did negatively impact the deployment of international and national experts. During the reporting period the national team was able to access the
Output 1.2 National SLM strategy and	Q4 Y2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A technical working group is being established and will be meeting starting from Q4 2021 to supervise the technical assessments and 					15%	

¹² Outputs as described in the project logframe or in any updated project revision. In case of project revision resulted from a mid-term review please modify the output accordingly or leave the cells in blank and add the new outputs in the table explaining the variance in the comments section.

¹³ As per latest work plan (latest project revision); for example: Quarter 1, Year 3 (Q1 y3)

¹⁴ Please use the same unity of measures of the project indicators, as much as possible. Please be extremely synthetic (max one or two short sentence with main achievements)

¹⁵ Variance refers to the difference between the expected and actual progress at the time of reporting.

<p>action plan developed and implemented</p>		<p>develop an annotated outline for the proposed national SLM strategy and Action Plan starting from Q1 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Technical Assessments are being initiated to review best practices and challenges pertaining to SLM in the areas of best available farm technologies, sustainable agriculture policies, strengthening of extension services, preservation of ecosystem services, use of incentives for agro-ecological production, improvement of livelihoods and food security, mainstream gender considerations, resource mobilization for financing, existing capacity gaps and relevant monitoring and reporting mechanisms. 					<p>targeted governorates only once. Additionally, the implementation was impacted by the reduced number of government staff working (25% to 50% max) and communication disruptions.</p>
<p>Output 1.3 National strategic action plan for agriculture and marshlands developed and implemented</p>	<p>Q1 Y3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A technical working group is being established and will be meeting starting from Q4 2021 to supervise the development of the strategic marshland management assessment and management plan •Technical Assessments are being initiated to develop a strategic marshland management assessment and management plan aiming for a first draft by Q2 2022 				<p>15%</p>	

Output 1.4 National monitoring and knowledge management platform to inform SLM decision-making established	Q2 Y3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The design of a knowledge management and decision-making platform is being initiated using digital land use mapping, with its operationalization planned starting from Q1 2022 					10%	
Output 2.1 Locally adapted SLM best practices described and prioritized for target areas	Q3 Y2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A baseline survey was conducted in May, providing site-level assessments of current SLM best practices in target areas which will be used to generate an initial best practice hand-book starting from Q4 2021. These results will be used to generate teaching and training tools starting from Q4 2021 to be utilized by extension services for the implementation of FFSs 					50%	The project team faced many difficulties in their attempt to collect the information due to Covid-19 movement restrictions, as well as the special working hours for government employees and enumerators.
Output 2.2 SLM extension training program established	Q4 Y2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The advanced training program for Master trainers (extension officers) is being planned and is expected to start in Q4 2021 					15%	
Output 2.3 SLM	Q2 Y3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The identification of beneficiaries within the targeted areas who will 					10%	

production systems established with FFS program		<i>benefit from the FFS trainings was initiated together with institutional and local partners. The first FFS Cohort is expected to be established in Q4 2021 with the first trainings delivered in Q1 2022.</i>						
Output 3.1 Agroecology best practices described and prioritized for marshlands	Q1 Y3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A baseline survey was conducted in May, providing marshlands-related assessments of current Agroecology best practices in target areas which will be used to generate teaching and training tools to be utilized by extension services for the implementation of specialized FFS on Agroecology and marshland production systems starting from Q1 2022 					50%	Covid-19 and security related restrictions giving national and local circumstances in Iraq did negatively impact the deployment of international and national experts. During the reporting period the national team was able to access the targeted governorates only once. Additionally, the implementation was impacted by the reduced number of government staff
Output 3.2 Agroecology and marshlands extension training program established	Q3 Y3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The wetland specific extension training program for Master trainers (extension officers) is being planned and is expected to start in Q4 2021 					15%	

<p>Output 4.2. Project lessons and practices captured and disseminated</p>	<p>Q4 Y3</p>	<p>The initial best practices hand-book being generated based on the baseline survey conducted in May will be disseminated in Q4 2021 through workshops, outreach events and site visits. It will be also shared through the regional SLM Network hosted by FAO's Regional Office and the WOCAT database.</p>					<p>10%</p>	
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4. Information on Progress, Outcomes and Challenges on Project Implementation

Please briefly summarize main progress achieving the outcomes (cumulative) and outputs (during this fiscal year):

- **Enhanced policy, legal, and institutional frameworks support SLM**

A Household assessment with a total of 364-interviews in two targeted governorates of Muthanna and ThiQar to an estimated area populated by 51,600, was conducted in coordination with the Ministries of agriculture, environment and water as well as the local governments who assisted directly in the selection of enumerators that were junior graduates from the areas of assessment. Special efforts are being made by the PMU to accelerate the design of a knowledge management and decision-making platform using FAO's open-source digital land use mapping.

- **SLM best practices promoted and delivering global environmental benefits**

The project team made significant efforts to overcome the existing difficulties, in coordination with national and local partners, in order to accelerate the design of technical curricula in Q4 2021 to ensure a proper implementation of FFS programs with the first Cohorts planned in Q1 2022.

- **Measures to restore and sustainably manage marshland ecosystems adopted**

The project team strived to develop appropriate management responses to overcome the existing difficulties, in coordination with national and local partners, to design specialized technical curricula related to marshlands conservation by Q4 2021 and initiate the implementation of marshlands-specific FFS programs by Q1 2022.

- **Monitoring and evaluation informs knowledge management with best practices up-scaled**

The project team developed an M&E dashboard to anticipate potential delays in execution given the challenging circumstances on the ground. Proper planning was made to generate and disseminate KM tools through relevant KM platforms in line with the ProDoc.

What are the major challenges the project has experienced during this reporting period?

The key challenges faced by the project during this initial reporting period were mainly shaped by the Covid-19 and the security situation on the ground resulting in significant delays and implementation challenges. The lockdown affected project operations and delivery in the country. All national staff and non-essential international staff are working remotely; in addition, non-essential travel has been suspended. FAO Iraq, made every effort to maintain business continuity in the country level operations, and remained in close contact with the GEF's stakeholders though it was very challenging due to movement restrictions, reduced number of government staff working (25% to 50% max) and communication disruptions.

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

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

	FY2021 Development Objective rating ¹⁶	FY2021 Implementation Progress rating ¹⁷	Comments/reasons ¹⁸ justifying the ratings for FY2021 and any changes (positive or negative) in the ratings since the previous reporting period
Project Manager / Coordinator	MS	MU	The implementation rate is not as planned in the project document, several challenges were illustrated. The most important is the GoI partners role and obligations, where it was clear in many circumstances that partners are not committed to providing funds for many essential actions. This has affected directly on the overall progress rate. However, FAO will keep urging partners and provide more resilient approaches to overcome this problem in the future.
Budget Holder	MS	MU	Availability of technical experts in the country is a significant challenge. The establishment of the national and international team is still ongoing. Government support and engagement is limited and the project after one year did not manage to hold a Steering committee meeting nor to establish the Local Implementation Unit.
GEF Operational Focal Point	MS	MU	Iraq is very interested in implementing this project with FAO, despite the current challenges as a result of the effects of Covid 19 as the project will enhance sustainable land management and reduce land degradation, and the Ministry is committed to coordinating with all national partners to implement the project in accordance with technical requirements and implementation timetables.
Lead Technical Officer¹⁹	MS	MU	<i>More efforts needed to put the project delivery on track</i>
FAO-GEF Funding Liaison Officer	MS	MU	<i>The project faced key obstacles over this initial reporting period including significant security challenges and Covid-restrictions. This seriously slowed the recruitment/deployment of key personnel within the project team, complicated</i>

¹⁶ **Development/Global Environment Objectives Rating** – Assess how well the project is meeting its development objective/s or the global environment objective/s it set out to meet. For more information on ratings, definitions please refer to Annex 1.

¹⁷ **Implementation Progress Rating** – Assess the progress of project implementation. For more information on ratings definitions please refer to Annex 1.

¹⁸ Please ensure that the ratings are based on evidence

¹⁹ The LTO will consult the HQ technical officer and all other supporting technical Units.

			<p><i>the necessary coordination with key national/local partners due to mobility restrictions and low staffing. Exceptional efforts need to be made over the July-December 2021 window to implement an adaptive management response based on alternative and viable solutions to deliver sound and timely results and bring the project on-track to meeting its expected targets.</i></p>
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5. Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)

Under the responsibility of the LTO (PMU to draft)

This section of the PIR describes the progress made towards complying with the approved ESM plan, when appropriate. 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 add recommendations to improve the implementation of the ESM plan, when needed.

Social & Environmental Risk Impacts identified at CEO Endorsement	Expected mitigation measures	Actions taken during this FY	Remaining measures to be taken	Responsibility
ESS 1: Natural Resource Management				
ESS 2: Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Natural Habitats				
ESS 3: Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture				
ESS 4: Animal - Livestock and Aquatic - Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture				
ESS 5: Pest and Pesticide Management				
ESS 6: Involuntary Resettlement and Displacement				
ESS 7: Decent Work				
ESS 8: Gender Equality				
ESS 9: Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage				
New ESS risks that have emerged during this FY				

In case the project did not include an ESM Plan at CEO endorsement stage, please indicate if the initial Environmental and Social Risk classification is still valid; if not, what is the new classification and explain.

Overall Project Risk classification (at project submission)	Please indicate if the Environmental and Social Risk classification is still valid²⁰. If not, what is the new classification and explain.
Low	Environmental and social risk classification is still valid

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

²⁰ **Important:** please note that if the Environmental and Social Risk classification is changing, the ESM Unit should be contacted and an updated Social and Environmental Management Plan addressing new risks should be prepared.

6. Risks

Risk ratings

RISK TABLE					
<p>The following table summarizes risks identified in the Project Document and reflects also any new risks identified in the course of project implementation. Please make sure that the table also includes the Environmental and Social Management Risks captured by the Environmental and social Management Risk Mitigations plans. The <u>Notes</u> column should be used to provide additional details concerning manifestation of the risk in your specific project, as relevant.</p>					

	Risk	Risk rating²¹	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions²²	Notes from the Project Task Force
1	Political instability and civil unrest in addition to internal conflict	L	The political instability may lead many difficulties in the project implementation; it can also limit the access to some areas and/or access to data as well as limit the potential for some income generating activities. It is vital to undertake mitigation measures. This includes continuous consultation with the Governments to identify possible interventions to solve any new risk faces the project and working closely with local community to provide them with the needed skills and tools to be used once the	FAO team with support from UNDSS and UNAMI is always keen to follow up the security status in the targeted areas, not only political side and protesting, but even the conflict between tribes in the rural areas. Feedback from Gol is always on track, which assists in the evaluations.	

²¹ GEF Risk ratings: Low, Moderate, Substantial or High

²² If a risk mitigation plan had been presented as part of the Environmental and Social management Plan or in previous PIR please report here on progress or results of its implementation. For moderate and high risk projects, please Include a description of the ESMP monitoring activities undertaken in the relevant period".

			political situation enhanced.		
2	Security issues make recruitment and placement of international technical support difficult.	M	Iraq is facing substantial security issues. This was recently seen with unrest in Basra. The project is designed to provide both on-site and remote technical support. This includes field visits by Iraq colleagues to Rome for training by experts.	Projects' international and national staff are holding meetings via online platforms as a main mitigation of Covid-19 lockdown, and the difficult face-to-face reach by international staff. GoI partners are being more active with online platforms day by day.	
3	Challenged project coordination	L	The project will ensure that there is close coordination between the relevant agencies within Iraq. Close and collaborative cooperation between many institutional stakeholders will be essential for the project to achieve its stated goal and objectives. This is mitigated to some extent by the positive experience of collaboration of project management team and project steering committee as well as FAO's long-standing experience.	Several face-to-face meetings were held during Q1&Q2 2021 in the venues of MoHE and MoWR to push the delayed tasks, and to unlock some key issues. The proposed kick off PSC workshop will be organized with all partners to agree about the next steps until the end of the year.	

			Proposed mitigation measures include intra-governmental agency liaison by the Project Management Unit; inspection of coordinated activities by the Project Board; and, overview of coordinated activities by the Project Steering Committee.		
	Land Tenure issues will challenge implementation	Low	To mitigate against the risk of exasperating social division and land related conflicts, the project will need to ensure that the small-holder farmers are the rightful owners of their land or are otherwise legally entitled to work on the land after the project end.		
	Low capacity of local and national institutions	Low	National institutions capacity and technical expertise at various levels are sometimes low. To mitigate this risk, the project will support the institutional framework and technical capacity development at national and local levels, a capacity building program and training.	Capacity building has been slow due to Covid lockdown. Face to face meetings are mandatory at the beginning of the working relationship with the institutions. The work that has been done through online meetings has been essential but it is	

				important to mix them with face-to-face meetings to increase effectiveness.	
	The current level of commitment and interest to work on multi-sectoral approach on sustainable agriculture diminishes.	Low	This project is designed with the full support of both primary stakeholders. Extensive meetings were held at both the national and state levels with responsible representatives. The level of commitment to this project and general project design has been excellent to date and is expected to continue through-out implementation. This will be insured through an approach that continues to be highly inclusive and facilitates full engagement by multi-sectoral stakeholders.	MoHE, as the executive partner of Gol is coordinating with the stakeholders from other ministries and local governments. Partners from all parties are always joining mainly online or face to face meetings.	
	Low ownership and lack of sustainability of new technologies and techniques	Low	Lack of ownership and subsequent lack of sustainability of new technologies promoted under the project could cause difficulties in achieving desired adoption levels. This will be mitigated through capacity		

			<p>building and awareness targeted at project beneficiaries. This will involve tools, such as economic models and plans, economic analysis that clearly show that there is an economic and social benefit to the adoption of these technologies (win-win).</p>		
	<p>Incentives for local stakeholders are not adequate to generate engagement</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The project is designed to engage fully with local stakeholders. This will make certain that stakeholder desires, including local resource users, have the opportunity to help define how best to conserve steppe resources. A major part of this effort will involve working directly with pastoralists to assist them to measure how various steppe conservation activities result in economic benefits. For instance, the project will provide stakeholders with the technical support required to measure how improved management delivers both enhanced ecosystem services as well as production improvements. This will serve</p>		

			as a major incentive for local project support. In addition, project funding will provide a bridge to reduce risks to producers who may be hesitant to adopt “new” technologies.		
Climate Change	Moderate	<p>Although appreciable climatic changes are unlikely to occur over the course of implementation, on-going climatic trends are one of this project’s primary inducements. The project’s approach will enable stakeholders better understand vulnerabilities and strategically adapt. Emplacing this resilience will be key to the project’s long-term success. SLM and CA practices will be selected based on their potential contribution to more resilient production systems and marshland ecosystems. Steps will be taken to build resilience measures into project design to minimize the risk and/or adapt to new conditions when possible.</p>	<p>SLM and Agroecology practices have been selected based on their contribution to more resilient production according to the most appropriate adaptation pathways for the local producers.</p> <p>According to the HH results; due to poor management 90% of the respondents in the governorates of Muthanna and ThiQar have many problems with their crops and livestock. Some of the next steps to improve agriculture conditions in both governates should be for instance the promotion of</p>		

				alternative crops and more diversified cropping patterns.	
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Project overall risk rating (Low, Moderate, Substantial or High):

FY2020 rating	FY2021 rating	Comments/reason for the rating for FY2021 and any changes (positive or negative) in the rating since the previous reporting period
Low	Low	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effects of protests on the political and security situations in the country are now comparatively less. 2. Project parties are now adapting better with the measures of Covid-19. 3. Project team succeeded in the HH survey, which is the first large scale field activity. This is after better coordination with project partners.

**7. Adjustments to Project Strategy –
Only for projects that had the Mid-term review (or supervision mission)**

If the project had a MTR review or a supervision mission, please report on how the MTR recommendations were implemented as indicated in the Management Response or in the supervision mission report.

MTR or supervision mission recommendations	Measures implemented
Recommendation 1:	
Recommendation 2:	
Recommendation 3:	
Recommendation 4:	

Adjustments to the project strategy.

Please note that changes to outputs, baselines, indicators or targets cannot be made without official approval from PSC and PTF members, including the FLO. These changes will follow the recommendations of the MTR or the supervision mission.

Change Made to	Yes/No	Describe the Change and Reason for Change
Project Outputs		
Project Indicators/Targets		

Adjustments to Project Time Frame

If the duration of the project, the project work schedule, or the timing of any key events such as project start up, mid-term review, final evaluation or closing date, have been adjusted since project approval, please explain the changes and the reasons for these changes. The Budget Holder may decide, in consultation with the PTF, to request the adjustment of the EOD-NTE in FPMIS to the actual start of operations providing a sound justification.

Change	Describe the Change and Reason for Change
Project extension	Original NTE: _____ Revised NTE: _____ Justification: _____

8. Stakeholders Engagement

Stakeholder	Role in project implementation	Progress on Engagement
Ministry of Health and Environment (MoHE)	Responsible for the overall implementation of the project's activities, Coordinate with other national stakeholders. Provision of digital mapping services. Executive Partner from GoI	One official meeting with FAO management and technical staff has been held besides informal meetings to coordinate project interventions.
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)	In partnership with other national partners provide implementation resources and technical SLM/CA support. Provision of digital mapping services.	MoA participated in meetings, usually through the directorate of desertification. More engagement is needed as the project is moving forward.
Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR)	Implementation of the project's water management plan in SLM/CA in partnership with MoHE and MoA.	MoWR representatives participated in project meetings. More efforts are needed to coordinate joint interventions on the ground to improve and/or rehabilitate the water infrastructure in the targeted areas.
National Centre for Water Resource Management	Implementation of the project's water management plan in SLM/CA in partnership with MoHE and MoA	One official meeting with FAO management and technical staff has been held besides informal meetings to coordinate project interventions.
The State Commission Authority for Ground Water	Implementation of the project's water management plan in SLM/CA in partnership with MoHE and MoA	One meeting was held with the Deputy of the commission, he provided key information about the intervention in Al-Salman district. Also, during the field visit to Al-Salman a representative provided support to the team.
Department for Underground Water in Muthanna and Thi-Qar governorates	Implementation of the project's water management plan in SLM/CA in partnership with MoHE and MoA	One official meeting with FAO management and technical staff has been held besides informal meetings to coordinate project interventions.
Muthanna Governate	Instrumental for project site level implementation Al Salman district (Al-	The Agricultural consultant of the governorate had participated in

Stakeholder	Role in project implementation	Progress on Engagement
	Shaweaa) and Al-Rumaitha district (Al-Majid)	project meetings, he made recommendations about the project implementation. The heads of districts in Al-Majed and Al-Salam cooperated with the team and provided support during the HH survey.
Thi-Qar Governate	Instrumental for project site level implementation Al-Chibayish district (Al-Tar)	The head of Al-Tar District provided support during the HH survey.
Office of Forests and Combating Desertification	Consultations for the implementation of SLM/CA.	The office made available the latest information on desertification in the areas of interventions.
Office of Agriculture Research	Support universities in delivering published research into the socio-economic and environmental benefits of SLM/CA.	One official meeting with FAO management and technical staff has been held besides informal meetings to coordinate project interventions.
Office of Agriculture Extension Services and Training	Support MoA extension services in project implementation in partnership MoWR, ICARDA, FAO and private sector SPs.	One official meeting with FAO management and technical staff has been held besides informal meetings to coordinate project interventions.
Centre for Restoration of Iraqi Marshlands	The Centre will be consulted in the process of carrying research on the marshes.	The center has shared the latest reports on the marshlands.
National Council for Seeds	Will partner with the project in supporting the development of private sector seed nurseries and seedbanks.	One official meeting with FAO management and technical staff has been held besides informal meetings to coordinate project interventions.
Iraqi Farmer's Association	Provide support in the development of Farmer Associations and cooperatives at the smallholder level.	The representatives of the associations had joined all the field visits in the targeted areas, they presented their perspectives and recommendations, also they had highlighted the main challenges existing in the areas
University of Thi-Qar	Be a source of technical knowledge on agricultural research in the region. Produce peer-reviewed research into capacity of the identified soil rehabilitation techniques to reverse salinisation and soil degradation and improve yields.	One official meeting with FAO management and technical staff has been held besides informal meetings to coordinate project interventions.

Stakeholder	Role in project implementation	Progress on Engagement
University of Muthanna	Be a source of technical knowledge on agricultural research in the region. Produce peer-reviewed research into capacity of the applied soil rehabilitation techniques to reverse salinisation and soil degradation and improve yields.	One official meeting with FAO management and technical staff has been held besides informal meetings to coordinate project interventions.
Smallholder farmers.	The main focus of project activities is improving livelihoods, food security and environmental rehabilitation.	A HH surveys was conducted to better understand the farmers priorities.
Private Sector Service Providers	Providing local employment and function as facilitators and providers of technical support to the smallholder farmers as well as guaranteed buyers and the link to market.	One official meeting with FAO management and technical staff has been held besides informal meetings to coordinate project interventions.

Please report on progress, challenges, and outcomes on stakeholder engagement (based on the description of the Stakeholder engagement plan included at CEO Endorsement/Approval (when applicable))

For the assigned period of the report, the following was achieved:

- a. Engagement of the most GoI partners in the socialization of project steps, consultation, and focus-group meetings.
- b. Multi stakeholder consultation workshops at national and governorate level.
- c. NGOs at the governorates level had participated only in the consultation meetings at the governorates level.
- d. During the HH survey, GoI partners from MoHE and local governments were engaged in the implementation of the survey. Further, the local communities in the targeted area had identified their needs.

The following was not achieved:

- a. Some of the stakeholders in the list did not participate in the consultation or decision-making; these parties are the agricultural research office, national seeds council, and extension services office from MoA. Also, University of Thi-Qar and University of Muthana. The invitation was sent by MoHE however the representation was very low, this will be addressed in the next meeting
- b. Private sector was not engaged yet, as there were no implementation activities in the meanwhile.
- c. NGOs did not engage in the full scale as planned. NGO representatives in the governorates had joined the meetings at MoHE offices in the targeted governorates, but they haven't taken any action in term of implementation.
- d. Participatory monitoring has not been applied yet as the activities from the FFS training haven't started yet. ToT curricula will promote MoE as a part of project outputs, then, this point will be fulfilled.

9. Gender Mainstreaming

Information on Progress on gender-responsive measures as documented at CEO Endorsement/Approval in the gender action plan or equivalent (when applicable)

Gender mainstreaming into project interventions was carefully considered. This includes exploring ways to improve access of women to decision-making processes and ways to build capacity to engage more independently within the agriculture sector; at the moment the FFS training has not started yet, aiming for gender-balanced cohorts of beneficiaries with 50% (1250) of women farmers as well as female extensionists. It was difficult during the baseline survey to reach the target number of female enumerators. The list approved and provided by the local government had 30% female; however, the majority did not accept to participate. We are including recommendations to raise the participation of women in the project. The project will use knowledge management tools to facilitate the development of networks of women contributing to project objectives. The project will support this through a network of women FFS cohorts established through extension and community services.

10. Knowledge Management Activities

Knowledge activities / products (when applicable), as outlined in knowledge management approved at CEO Endorsement / Approval

The initial best practices hand-book being generated based on the baseline survey conducted in May will be disseminated in Q4 2021 through workshops, outreach events and site visits. It will be also shared through the regional SLM Network hosted by FAO's Regional Office and the WOCAT database. The project is making sure that lessons learned are magnified regionally. Monitoring and reporting will capture best practices and feed these into regional and international platforms to make certain results help to inform international efforts to identify best practices for the delivery of SLM and associated global environmental benefits.

11. Indigenous Peoples Involvement

Are Indigenous Peoples involved in the project? How? Please briefly explain.

IPs will be included in FFS interventions starting from Q1 2022. The indigenous groups in the marshlands are the so called "Me'dan" who are buffalo breeders. One of the targets of the project is to upscale the biodiversity integration in the marshlands, where the increasing of cultivation intensity will secure more fodders to livestock breeders, keeping in mind that buffalos are the main source of income for Me'dan communities.

12. Innovative Approaches

Please provide a brief description of an innovative²³ approach in the project / programme, describe the type (e.g. technological, financial, institutional, policy, business model) and explain why it stands out as an innovation.

One of the main challenges faced by the project is to manage the activities remotely with key stakeholders and GoI partners. The HH survey is an example of innovations introduced to overcome the restrictions in movement resulting from Covid-19 and the prevailing security situation. Kobo ToolBox was used as an online tool for the HH survey and helped to fill the questionnaire electronically, create a daily report about phone numbers and coordinates of each participant, create a daily report about the progress of each enumerator and real time total number of participants, and significantly reduced the time for data entry.

²³ Innovation is defined as *doing something new or different in a specific context that adds value*

13. Possible impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the project

Please indicate any implication of the Covid-19 pandemic on the activities and progress of the project. Highlight the adaptative measures taken to continue with the project implementation.

- Are the outcomes/outputs still achievable within the project period.
The outcomes and outputs will be achievable with some expected delays. Once the FFS are implemented the rest of the activities will follow.

- Will the timing of the project MTR or TE be affected/delayed?
Given the delays experienced by the project, the situation will be further assessed during the PSC meeting in August 2021, to plan the MTR/TE accordingly given the current implementation timelines towards achieving the expected results.

- What is the impact of COVID-19 on project beneficiaries, personnel, etc.
The Covid situation had a negative impact on the project, especially with regards to awareness raising, gathering people and collecting data. In order to achieve the project activities, we will follow an adaptive protocol to have gatherings and trainings with beneficiaries.

- Are there good practices and lessons learned to be shared?
The only comments regarding lessons learned is about data collection. It is important to organize the collection with no major event happening like Ramadan, also it is important to advocate for gender inclusive processes from selecting the enumerators to involving women-headed HHs.

14. Co-Financing Table

Sources of Co-financing ²⁴	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Amount Confirmed at CEO endorsement / approval	Actual Amount Materialized at 30 June 2021	Actual Amount Materialized at Midterm or closure (confirmed by the review/evaluation team)	Expected total disbursement by the end of the project
Gov	Ministry of Environment	In Kind	USD 5,000,000	USD 257,000		USD 5,000,000
Gov	Ministry of Agriculture	In Kind	USD 5,000,000	USD 144,000		USD 5,000,000
Gov	MoWR	In Kind	USD 5,000,000	USD 144,000		USD 5,000,000
Local Governments	Local Governments of Muthanna and Dhi Qar	In Kind	USD 2,500,000			USD 2,500,000
Bilateral Aid Agency + Private Sector	WADA	Grant	USD 1,200,000			USD 1,200,000
GEF Agency	FAO	Grant	USD 2,500,000			USD 2,500,000
		TOTAL	USD 21,200,000	USD 545,000		USD 21,200,000

²⁴ Sources of Co-financing may include: Bilateral Aid Agency(ies), Foundation, GEF Agency, Local Government, National Government, Civil Society Organization, Other Multi-lateral Agency(ies), Private Sector, Beneficiaries, Other.

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

Limited progress have been made during the reporting period for the reasons above mentioned. Overall, the pandemic and security situation had a negative impact on the FAO and government activities. For this reason, the level of co-financing is less than expected.

Annex 1. – GEF Performance Ratings Definitions

Development/Global Environment Objectives Rating – Assess how well the project is meeting its development objective/s or the global environment objective/s it set out to meet. **DO Ratings definitions:** **Highly Satisfactory (HS)** - Project is expected to achieve or exceed **all** its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”); **Satisfactory (S)** - Project is expected to achieve **most** of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings); **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** - Project is expected to achieve **most** of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve **some** of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits); **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)** - Project is expected to achieve of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only **some** of its major global environmental objectives); **Unsatisfactory (U)** - Project is expected **not** to achieve **most** of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits); **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)** - The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, **any** of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.)

Implementation Progress Rating – Assess the progress of project implementation. **IP Ratings definitions:** **Highly Satisfactory (HS):** Implementation of all components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised implementation plan for the project. The project can be resented as “good practice”. **Satisfactory (S):** Implementation of most components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan except for only a few that are subject to remedial action. **Moderately Satisfactory (MS):** Implementation of some components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with some components requiring remedial action. **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):** Implementation of some components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with most components requiring remedial action. **Unsatisfactory (U):** Implementation of most components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan. **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):** Implementation of none of the components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.