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FAO-GEF Project Implementation Report

2025 – Revised Template

Period covered: 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

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IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER:

The final version of this PIR will be submitted to the GEF Secretariat.

The report will then be publicly available on the GEF website ([click here](#)).

Sensitive information should be submitted in Annex to be uploaded separately.

In such cases, please contact faogef-pir-support@fao.org for guidance.

1. Basic Project Data

General Information

Region:	Near East and North Africa (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
Type of Trust Fund(s):	GFF
GEF Focal Area(s):	Land Degradation
Project Executing Partners:	Ministry of Environment, Iraq
Initial project duration (years):	4years

Project Dates

GEF CEO Endorsement Date:	02/04/2019
Actual Agency Approval Date	30/05/2019
Project Implementation Start Date/EOD:	01/01/2020
First Disbursement Date	02/12/2020
Planned Project End Date/NTE1:	15/01/2023
Revised project implementation End date (if approved)2:	01/01/2026
Actual Completion Date:	
Expected Financial Closure Date:	01/01/2027

Funding

GEF Grant Amount (USD):	\$3,549,321.00
Total GEF grant delivery (as of June 30, 2025 (USD):	2,812,790
Total Co-financing amount (USD)3:	\$21,200,000.00
Total estimated co-financing materialized as of June 30, 20254:	\$14,876,000.00

M & E Milestones

Date of Last Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting:	28/08/2024
Expected Mid-term Review date5:	
Actual Mid-term review date (if already completed):	04/01/2023
Expected Terminal Evaluation Date6:	07/01/2025

Overall ratings

Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes (cumulative):	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
Overall implementation progress rating:	Satisfactory (S)
Overall risk rating:	Low

Status

Implementation Status (1st PIR, 2nd PIR, etc. Final PIR):	5th PIR
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1 Date that was originally foreseen at the project's operationalization and indicated in FPMIS.
2 If NTE extension has been requested and approved by the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit.
3 This is the total amount of co-financing as included in the CEO Document/Project Document.
4 Please refer to the Section 13 of this report where updated co-financing estimates are requested and indicate the total co-financing amount materialized.
5 The Mid-Term Review (MTR) should take place after the 2nd 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.
6 The Terminal Evaluation date should be discussed with OED 6 months before the project's NTE date.

Project Contacts

Contact	Name, Title, Division/Institution	E-mail
Project Coordinator (PC) / Project Manager	Clayton Mashapa, Farmer Field School and Sustainable Land Management Specialist	Clayton.Mashapa@fao.org
Budget Holder (BH)	Hajj Hassan Salah, FAO Representative in Iraq	Salah.ElHajjHassan@fao.org
GEF Operational Focal Point (GEF OFP)	Dr. Jasim al-Falahi, the MoE's Deputy Minister for Higher Education	Moen.Iraq@gmail.com
Lead Technical Officer (LTO)	Fidaa Haddad, Senior Programme Officer, FAO	Fidaa.Haddad@fao.org
GEF Technical Officer (GTO)	Anika Seggel, GEF Technical Expert, OCBD	Anika.Seggel@fao.org

Key Project Management Unit Personnel

Please indicate the composition of the PMU as per the Terms of Reference in the ProDoc. If any new position was established during the project implementation, please insert it accordingly.

Position planned (as per ProDoc)	Position filled (Yes/No)	Start date, Name, Contact	Comments
FAO Iraq Country Representative	Yes	Dr. EL Hajj Hassan Salah, salah.elhajjhassan@fao.org	
FAO Iraq Deputy Country Representative	Yes	Ms. Quattrola Veronica, veronica.quattrola@fao.org	
International Senior Farmer Field School and Sustainable Land Management Specialist	Yes	Dr. Clayton Mashapa, clayton.mashapa@fao.org	
National Project Coordinator	Yes	Dr. Al Hasani Ali, ali.alhasani@fao.org	
National Sustainable Land Management Specialist	Yes	Eng. Hussein Mukhalad, mukhalad.hussein@fao.org	
International Natural Resource and Management Information System Specialist		Dr. Ramadan Mohsen, mohsen.ramadan@fao.org	Home-based consultant

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

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

Region:								
Project or Development Objective	Outcomes	Outcome indicators	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End-of-project Target	Cumulative progress level at 30 June 2025	% of cumulative progress	Progress rating
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	Overall outcome	Area of landscapes under sustainable land management (SLM) in production systems (GEF Core Indicator 4.3)	0 ha	2,000 ha	10,000 ha	12 330 ha put under Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in food production systems. Farmers adpoted Conservation Agriculture to produce cereal crops and Agroecology for vegetables and fruit production in ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates.This is relative to 0 ha at baseline.	123%	HS
		Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment (GEF Core Indicator 11)	Male: 0 Female: 0	Male: 750 Female: 750	Male: 1,250 Female: 1,250	Male: 2 049 Female: 589 The project continues to promote women participation (30.6% increase) as compared from the last reporting period, where 451 females were recorded last year. During the reporting period, as the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) training sessions were held across ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates, the project encourages married couples to attend with their wives. This is to improve participation by females after failing to meet the target on female farmers.	80%	S

	Outcome 1 Enhanced policy, legal, and institutional frameworks support SLM.	Number of national and governorate staff reporting higher SLM management capacity.	0: MOA 0: MOE 0: MOW 0: Muthanna Gov. 0: Thi-Qar Gov.	3: MOA 5: MOE 2: MOW 2: Muthanna Gov. 2: Thi-Qar Gov.	10: MOA 12: MOE 5: MOW 5: Muthanna Gov. 5: Thi-Qar Gov.	A total of 39 Ministries’ officials (surpassing the initial target of 37 participants) were trained on Policy making and enactment related to SLM practices of Conservation Agriculture (CA) and Agroecology (AE), with the breakdown as follows; 10: MOA 14: MOE 5: MOW, 5: Al-Muthanna governorate 5: ThiQar governorate This training was held in Baghdad on 25-27 February 2024. FAO Natural Resources Management (NRM) and Policy Expert delivered the training. 31 % of the 39 training participants were females.	105%	HS
		Number of Government staff exclusively mandated to support implementation of SLM programming, including agriculture and wetlands	0 CAD Staff 0 MOE Staff	20 CAD (Conservation Agriculture Directorate) Staff 20 MOE Staff	40 CAD Staff 40 MOE Staff	A total of 82 Ministries’ officials (surpassing the initial target of 80 participants), were trained on policy making and enactment related to SLM practices of Conservation Agriculture , Agroecology and Marshland Conservation, with a breakdown as follows; 42: MOE staff 40: Conservation Agriculture Directorate (CAD) Staff This training was held in Basara on 12-14 February and 18-20 February 2024. FAO Natural Resources Management and Policy Expert delivered the training. 31% of the 82 training participants were females.	103%	HS
		A national SLM strategy action plan developed with implementation financed by government	0 SLM strategy and action plan developed and financed	1 SLM strategy and action plan developed and financed	1 SLM strategy and action plan developed and financed	A consolidated national Sustainable Land Management Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan (2026-2030)document was developed and cleared by the technical lead assigned by the MOE. This strategic document is planned for a national lauch in July 2025 in Baghdad, by the MOE. Thereafter, FAO will facilitate the publication of this strategic document.	95%	S

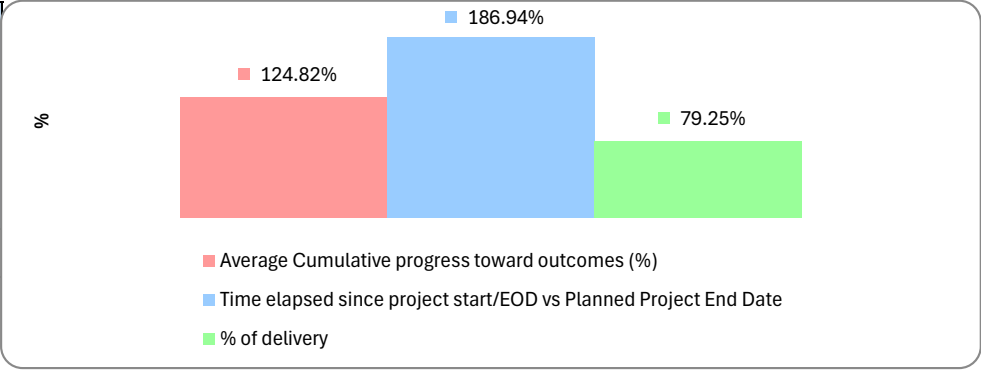
A national strategic action plan for agriculture and marshlands developed with implementation financed by government.	0 agriculture and marshlands conservation action plans developed and financed	0 agriculture and marshlands conservation action plan developed and financed	1 agriculture and marshlands conservation action plan developed and financed	Agriculture and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq was produced as a specific chapter within a consolidated document of the national Sustainable Land Management Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan of Iraq (2026-2030). This is the same strategic document reported above	95%	S
Number of annual users reported for project emplaced capacity and knowledge tools.	0 users of project social media (e.g., Facebook) 0 users of project emplaced knowledge management website	150 users of project social media (e.g., Facebook) 500 monthly visitors of project emplaced knowledge management website	300 users of project social media (e.g., Facebook) 1,000 monthly visitors of project emplaced knowledge management website	1 239 users (413% of the end-of-project target) visited and viewed the project social media of FAO Iraq X, launched 27 February 2023. https://x.com/faoiraq/status/1630123085448847361?s=46&t=ODwvXC Nn3sBn93R-vLxdNA 0 users visited the knowledge management website, because the developed platform website is not yet posted for the public. The developed knowledge management platform is planned for testing, validation and endorsement by the MOE during the Knowledge Management training workshop scheduled July 2025, with trainees drawn from the MOE, MOA and MOW.	70%	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.	1 national report, Need Assessment on SLM Knowledge Management (KM) in Iraq, was produced in 2023. 1 national SLM progress report produced in 2024 . 1 Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) document on SLM related Policy formulation and enactment in Iraq was prepared and pending is MOE review and clearance. 1 draft report writing in progress on, Land use and Land cover changes (2005-2020) in ThiQar and Al-Muthanna Governorate, southern Iraq.	80%	S

Outcome 2 SLM best practices promoted and delivering global environmental benefits.	Number of Government staff exclusively mandated to support implementation of SLM programming, including agriculture and wetlands	Number of extension officers with proven capacity to implement FFS SLM training programs.	0 extension officers	50 extension officers	60 Extension Officers from the MOA were trained as FFS facilitators on Conservation Agriculture practice for SLM. 22% of the 60 trainees were females. This training was held in Basra, February 2023.	120%	HS
	Number of hectares of degraded agriculture and grazing lands under improved SLM management as a result of FFS implementation.	0 ha	2,000 ha restored	6,000 ha restored	8 300 ha restored through adoption of Conservation Agriculture (CA) practices for Sustainable Land Management by farmers in ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates. This is relative to 0 ha at baseline.	138%	HS
	Number of agricultural producers reporting higher economic returns based upon participation in FFS SLM training programs	0: men 0: women	N/A	150: men 150: women	900 men who are agricultural producers, reported higher economic returns based upon participation in FFS training and adoption of Conservation Agriculture for SLM. 180 women who are agricultural producers, reported higher economic returns based upon participation in FFS training and adoption of Conservation Agriculture for SLM	250%	HS
	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	A total of about 48 000 ha of agricultural land greening (degraded and under SLM), is monitored annually (ThiQar governorate: 39 000ha and Al Muthanna governorate: 9 000ha) as a result of the FFS programming and reported through the developed national KM system. This is relative to 0 ha at baseline.	160%	HS

	Outcome 3 Measures to restore and sustainably manage marshland ecosystems adopted.	Number of extension officers with proven capacity to implement FFS agroecological training programs that support marshland conservation.	0 extension officers	20 extension officers	20 extension officers	40 Extension Officers from the MOA were trained as FFS facilitators on Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques. 13% of the 40 trainees were females. This training was held in Basra, (November 25 to 29, 2024),	200%	HS
		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	530 men who are marshland dependent agricultural producers reported higher economic returns based upon participation in FFS Agroecology and Marshland Conservation training program. 180 women who are marshland dependent vegetable and fruit producers, reported higher economic returns based upon participation in FFS Agroecology and Marshland Conservation training program.	200%	HS
		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	4 030 ha of wetlands restored by farmers through the adoption of Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques for SLM . This is relative to 0 ha at baseline.	101%	HS
		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	38 000 ha of marshland undergoing ecological restoration, monitored annually (ThiQar governorate: 25 000ha and Al Muthanna governorate: 13 000ha) to promote SLM practices and is reported through the developed national KM system.	190%	HS

	Outcome 4	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. 0% on-track for delivery	50% delivered. 50% on-track for delivery	100% delivered. 0% remaining for delivery	About 85% delivered and 15% remaining and on-track for delivery. Mid-term Project Evaluation report completed Terms of Reference for the Evaluation Specialist cleared and approved by the responsible division in FAO HQ. Hired international Senior Evaluation Specialist signed the contract and now on board to lead the Project Final Evalaution with effect from 01 July 2025.	80%	S
	Monitoring and evaluation informs knowledge management with best practices upscaled	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	The following reports are still being prepared and seeking necessary clearances for publication before being submitted to both WOCAT and the Regional SLM FAO Unit. 1. Farmers' adoption of Conservation Agriculture for SLM for Improved Livelihoods in southern Iraq: An assessment Report. 2. national SLM Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq (2026-2030). 3. Success Story as farmers adopt Conservation Agriculture in ThiQar and Al-Muthanna Governorates. 4. Land use and Land cover changes (2005-2020) in ThiQar and Al-Muthanna Governorate, southern Iraq - zero draft stage 5. Success Story of Most Significant Change as farmers adopt Agroecology and Marshland Conservation in ThiQar governorate - zero draft stage	70%	MS

Average Cumulative progress toward outcomes (%)	Time elapsed since project start/EOD vs Planned Project End Date	% of delivery
124.82%	186.94%	79.25%



Please note that the overall DO ratings should be substantiated by evidence and progress reported above. The ratings and comments should reflect the overall progress of results since project start

FY2025 Development Objective rating ¹	Project Manager/ Coordinator	Budget Holder	Lead Technical Officer	GEF Operational Focal Point	GEF Technical Officer (GTO)
	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
Comments/reasons ¹² justifying the ratings for FY2025 and any changes (positive or negative) in the ratings since the previous reporting period	Project outputs versus expected outcomes remain dominated by highly satisfactorily deliverables. The project is on track to yield significant global economic and environmental benefits without major shortfalls. Selected project results can be presented as good practice.	The project introduced for the first time high quality innovative activities on sustainable agriculture and land management practices, with impactful results delivered proved to improve livelihoods in degraded areas of Iraq, in addition to improving capacities of related national policies.	Progress towards outcomes is positive, with several indicators showing tangible advancement toward the intended results. Continued focus on remaining deliverables will ensure outcome achievement by project end.	The Ministry of Environment, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization, focused on eliminating project obstacles. The project achieved positive results at the national level by adopting advanced agricultural applications and practices and working to implement all project components in line with the work plan.	Key deliverables achieved are impressive and highly relevant to FAO overall portfolio. Implementation is progressing well. The project management team is doing a very good job.

Measures to address MS, MU, U and HU ratings on Section 2 above

Outcome	Action(s) to be taken	By whom?	By When?
Outcome 1 Enhanced policy, legal, and institutional frameworks support SLM To ensure 1,000 monthly visitors of project emplace the knowledge management platform website	The developed Knowledge Management Platform website will be submitted to the MOE for its publication. The MOE is the custodian host of the platform website. The developed Knowledge Management Platform is planned for testing, validation and endorsement by the MOE during the Knowledge Management training workshop scheduled July 2025, with trainees drawn from the MOE, MOA and MOW.	FAO Natural Resources and Management Information Systems Specialist, FAO International Farmer Field School and Sustainable Land Management Specialist and MOE.	Sep-25
Outcome 4 Monitoring and evaluation informs knowledge management with best practices upscaled. To ensure that at least 4 reports are submitted to both the Regional SLM FAO Unit and WOCAT	Seek LTO clearances and PWS for the following papers on; 1) Farmers' adoption of Conservation Agriculture of SLM for Improved Livelihoods in southern Iraq. 2) national SLM Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq (2026-2030). 3) Success Story as farmers adopt CA in ThiQar and Al-Muthanna Governorates. 4) Land use and Land cover changes (2005-2020) in ThiQar and Al-Muthanna Governorate. 5) Success Story as farmers adopt Agroecology and Marshland Conservation in ThiQar governorate.	FAO International Farmer Field School and Sustainable Land Management Specialist, MOE, MOA and targeted Agroecology farmers.	Nov-25

7 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.

8 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).

3. Implementation Progress (IP)

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

Outcomes and outputs	Indicators (as per the logical framework)	Main achievements in the last 12 months (please DO NOT repeat results reported in previous year PIR)	Describe any variance 9 in delivering outputs
Project Objective: 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			
	Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems (GEF Core Indicator 4.3)	10 180 ha put under sustainable land management in production systems. Farmers adpoted Conservation Agriculture to produce field crops (wheat, barley, sorghum, millet, cowpeas, faba bean) and Agroecology for vegetables and fruit production in ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates.	No variance to report
	Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment (GEF Core Indicator 11)	Additional 138 female farmers targeted for the project during the reporting period. Thus, 589 females (48% of the end-of-project target) are targeted by the project.	Total number of beneficiaries increased to 2 638 farmers, above the planned project target of 2 500 farmers.
OUTCOME 1 Enhanced policy, legal, and institutional frameworks support SLM	A national SLM strategy action plan developed with implementation financed by government.	A consolidated national Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq(2026-2030) document was developed in collaboration with MOE and presented to the national Project Steering Committee in Baghdad on August 28, 2024. and cleared by the technical lead assigned by the MoE. This strategic document was submitted to the MOE who are palnning for the national launch mid July 2025 in Baghdad, thereafter this document will be published by FAO.	A single consolidated document (comprised of (i) national SLM strategy and (ii) Agriculture and Marshland Conservation Action Plan) was produced. This was a minor diviation from the initial project design where the two separate documents were planned to be produced.
	A national strategic action plan for agriculture and marshlands developed with implementation financed by government.	Agriculture and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq was developed as a specific chapter within a consolidated document of the national SLM strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq (2026-2030).	Variance explained above

	Number of annual users reported for project emplaced capacity and knowledge tools.	During the reporting period, only 2 users visited and viewed (to give an increased number of 1239 viewers) the project social media of FAO Iraq X, launched 27 February 2023. https://x.com/faoiraq/status/1630123085448847361?s=46&t=ODwvXCNN3sBn93R-vLxdNA	0 users visited the knowledge management platform website, because the fully developed platform website is not yet posted for the public domain. The developed knowledge management platform is planned for endorsement with a delayed public launch by the MOE and FAO, scheduled July 2025.
	Number of annual national SLM progress reports delivered based upon information generated by GIS-based monitoring and knowledge platform.	1 national SLM progress report produced in 2024 and submitted to the MOE. 1 Assessment report on Farmers adoption of Conservation Agriculture of SLM and Improved Livelihoods in southern Iraq, was produced.	No variance to report
Outcome 2:			

OUTCOME 2: SLM best practices promoted and delivering global environmental benefits.	Number of hectares of degraded agriculture and grazing lands under improved SLM management as a result of FFS implementation.	6 250 ha restored through famers’ adoption of CA practice for SLM, during winter and summer cropping seasons of the reporting period. Established 41 FFS Demonstration plots under CA. 65% of 1 635 FFS CA trained farmers adopted CA practices.	The driver for high rate of CA adoption could be increased crop yields – In zero-tillage planted crops with crop rotations under CA, crop (wheat, barley and alfalfa) yields were invariably higher by 10-33% per unit of land, compared to conventional agriculture practice. Whereas, farmers experiences recorded that considerable saving in water (15 - 33%) and nutrients are achieved with zero-tillage planting in laser levelled land planted crops under CA.
	Number of agricultural producers reporting higher economic returns based upon participation in FFS SLM training programs.	167 women and 857 men who are agricultural producers reported higher economic returns based upon their participation in FFS SLM training and adoption of CA. Profit margins were particularly high to produce wheat (33%, equivalent to 608 USD/ha), alfalfa (50%, equivalent to 760 USD/ha) and barley (20%, equivalent to 244 USD/ha) established under Conservation Agriculture practice in comparison to the same crops produced under conventional traditional agriculture practice per unit of land.	Through FFS, market linkages awareness sessions were held for targeted farmers
	Number of agriculture hectares (degraded and under SLM) monitored annually as a result of FFS programming with linkages to the national KM system.	A total of about 45 950 ha of agricultural land greening (degraded and under SLM), was monitored as a result of the FFS programming and reported through the developed national KM system.	GIS and Remote Sensing driven KM platform now operational and enables monitoring of large-scale landscapes
OUTCOME 3. Measures to restore and sustainably manage marshland ecosystems adopted.	Number of extension officers with proven capacity to implement FFS agroecological training programs that support marshland conservation.	In Basra (November 25 to 29, 2024), 40 Extension Officers from the MOA were trained as FFS facilitators on Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques. 13% of the 40 trainees were females. The training strengthened the agroecology and marshland conservation extension service delivery to farmers.	More Extension Officers were trained to reduce the Extension Officer/Farmer ration with more FFS Demonstration Plots established to reduce distance travelled by farmers to a learning site.
	Number of marshland dependent agricultural producers reporting higher economic returns based upon participation in FFS	514 men and 171 women who are marshland dependent agricultural producers reported higher economic returns based upon participation in FFS Agroecology and Marshland Conservation training program. Established 25 FFS Demonstration Plots under Agroecology on which 1003 targeted farmers were trainind on Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques for market-led	Through FFS, market linkages awareness sessions were held for targeted farmers. Pending is an in-depth quantitative assessment to ascertain to what extend are farmers generate income from vegetable production under the

	agroecological training programs.	vegetable production for both home consumption and sale of surplus.	agroecology practice
	Number of hectares of wetlands restored and sustainably managed as a result of FFS agroecological implementation.	3 930 ha of wetlands restored by farmers through the adoption of Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques for SLM	No variance to report
	Number of wetland agriculture hectares monitored annually to promote SLM practices and reporting to national KM system.	37 900 ha of marshland undergoing ecological restoration, was monitored to promote SLM practices and reported through the developed national KM system.	GIS and Remote Sensing driven KM platform now operational and enables monitoring of large-scale landscapes
Outcome 4.			
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.	About 85% delivered and 15% remaining and on-track for delivery. Hired international Senior Evaluation Specialist signed the contract and now on board to lead the Project Final Evalaution.	No variance to report
	Number of annual KM tool reports uploaded into regional and international KM tools.	The following reports were produced; 1. Farmers' adoption of Conservation Agriculture for SLM for Improved Livelihoods in southern Iraq: An assessment Report. 2. national SLM Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq (2026-2030). 3. Success Story as farmers adopt Conservation Agriculture in ThiQar and Al-Muthanna Governorates.	These reports are being finalized to seek necessary clearances for publications before being submitted to both WOCAT and the Regional SLM FAO Unit. Due to competing priorities, the MOE postponed to July 2025, the launch of the consolidated national SLM Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq (2026-2030).

Implementation Progress (IP) and Overall Assessment

Please note that the overall IP ratings should be substantiated by evidence and progress reported above. The ratings and comments shoud reflect the overall progress of results during the fiscal year (July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025).

	Project Manager/ Coordinator	Lead Technical Officer	Budget Holder	GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP)	GEF Technical Officer (GTO)
FY2025 Implementation Objective rating10	Satisfactory (S)	Satisfactory (S)	Satisfactory (S)	Satisfactory (S)	Satisfactory (S)
Comments/reasons justifying the ratings for FY2025 and any changes (positive or negative) in the ratings since the previous reporting period	With an approved 2-year project extension, most project components were timely implemented and accomplished within acceptable limits of compliance with the approved revised workplan. With the remaining timeline, the project is excepted to finalize a few software components of Outcome 4, mainly the publication of the available technical reports. Preparation of the project final evaluatiuon are on track.	Overall, the project is progressing well, with many activities rated as satisfactory or highly satisfactory. In several cases, results have already surpassed the end-of-project targets within the current reporting period. Pending issues are being closely monitored and are expected to be finalized before project completion.	During the reporting period, the project continued to progress in line with the revised work plan, while the recommendations of the MTR were addressed. Project implementation of most components is on track, while pending is the publication of the documented best practices and lessons learnt.	The project is advancing positively with most planned activities recorded as satisfactory to highly satisfactory ratings. In some instances, outcomes have already exceeded the planned end-of-project targets during this reporting cycle. Pending activities are under active review and are anticipated to be implemented and achieved prior to project exit.	The project is implementing well, and producing highly useful results. The project manager is having an excellent oversight of progress as well as pending issues.

4. Summary on progress and challenges

Please provide a summary paragraph on project implementation progress consistent with the information reported in section 2 and 3 of the PIR (Max 400 words)
(This section will be uploaded to the GEF portal)

Recorded **ecological and economic benefits as drivers of farmers’ adoption of Conservation Agriculture (CA) for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in southern Iraq**, included the following factors.

- **Water and Nutrients** - Limited validation trial results from 41 FFS Demonstration Plots and 213 farmers’ experiences recorded that considerable saving in water (15 - 33%) and nutrients are achieved with zero-tillage planting in laser levelled land planted crops under CA.
- **Increased crop yields** – In zero-tillage planted crops with crop rotations under CA, crop (wheat, barley and alfalfa) yields were invariably higher by 10-33% per unit of land, compared to conventional agriculture practice.
- Survey results of CA compared to conventional traditional agriculture, there were **1 080 farmers who reported reduction in cost of crop production under CA** with its three main principles of (i) zero tillage (reduce cost on land preparation), (ii) soil cover/mulch (reduce cost on irrigation due to **ecological benefits of improved soil and moisture conservation**, reduce cost of weeding due to improved weed growth suppression by mulch/soil cover) and (iii) crop rotation (reduced cost of production with less incidence of pest and disease control, reduced cost of chemical fertilization due to **ecological benefits related to improved soil fertility with soil organic matter built up** and legume crop inclusion in the rotation). **Profit margins were particularly high for producing wheat (33%, equivalent to 608 USD/ha), alfalfa (50%, equivalent to 760 USD/ha) and barley (20%, equivalent to 244 USD/ha) established under CA.**

Furthermore, 40 (13% female) Ministry of Agriculture Extension Officers were **trained on Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques, and this knowledge was cascaded to farmers through training of 1003 farmers** across 25 FFS Demonstration Plots under Agroecology.

Consequently, **10 180 ha have been put under SLM across food production systems as farmers adopt CA in ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates, southern Iraq**. In that regard, a total of about **86 000 ha of greening land (degraded and under SLM) in ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates which are undergoing ecological restoration** as a result of the FFS programming was monitored and reported through the developed national Natural Resources Knowledge Management digital platform. Thus, leveraging to derive and record evidence-based solutions to SLM in Iraq.

To ensure sustainable project outcomes upon project exit, a **national SLM strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan (2026-2030) was developed**. This strategic document is planned for a national launch in July 2025 in Baghdad, by the Ministry of Environment.

Please provide a summary paragraph on challenges of project implementation consistent with the information reported in section 2 and 3 of the PIR (Max 400 words)
(This section will be uploaded to the GEF portal)

In southern Iraq, where the challenges of climate change induced water scarcity are most severe, farmers have long struggled with desertification, salinization and land degradation. Yet, a new chapter of hope is unfolding – a paradigm shift as farmers are adopting Conservation Agriculture (CA) practices for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Improved Livelihoods. While the ecological and economic benefits of farmers’ adoption of CA are being realized, the transition has not been without challenges. Farmers’ adoption of CA practices requires high initial investment for specialized farm machinery, and this derailed farmers’ adoption rates. Delayed in-kind distribution of agricultural inputs for 2 638 targeted farmers’ support as co-financing of the project from the Government of Iraq remain a challenge. Thus, FAO in Iraq communicated through a formal letter to the Ministry of Environment (MOE), requesting the complete package of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, irrigation equipment and farm machinery) distribution to farmers. Furthermore, the project developed a national SLM strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq (2026 – 2030) aimed at establishing a conducive policy environment to address challenges of the agricultural project cycle management to enhance sustainable food systems.

During the Need Assessment to inform the establishment of a Natural Resource Knowledge Management Platform for Iraq, the MOE representatives forgot to disclose that the MOE was developing a similar platform with other partners. This was leading to duplication of a deliverable and the plan to address this challenge caused delay on the development of the platform. In that regard, a gap analysis was later done to inform areas of collaborations on the existing platform with the MOE. Based on the gaps identified, FAO and key stakeholders (MOE, MOA, MOW) later developed a more complex platform with added value, addressing the prior identified knowledge gaps. This digital platform development further delays the production and publication of planned national SLM progress reports which are based upon information generated by GIS-based monitoring and the digital platform.

The FAO in Iraq faces challenges due to regional security dynamics, including increased community protests and instability, which on few occasions restricted access to project locations, hindering FAO staff ability to implement project activities. To overcome the challenge, FAO continued with a high frequency of remote project management through trained MOA Extension Officers and online meetings across the project locations to advance the delayed tasks and elaborate some key issues.

Implementation of Exit Strategy

Has the project developed an Exit Strategy? If yes, please describe the progress to implement it.

Not Yet

How is the project enhancing institutional capacities to foster country ownership for more durable / sustained results?

Funded by the Global Environment Facility, co-financed with the Government of Iraq through the Ministry of Environment (MoE), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Water Resources (MoW), the project has successfully been implemented by FAO with collaboration from the MOE, MOA, MOW and the local authorities in ThiQar and Al Muthanna Governorates, all as implementing partners. As part of the implementation strategy to foster country ownership for more durable and sustainable project results, the factors below will ensure the sustainability of the project outcomes.

- Firstly, FAO invested in the capacity building through training of these implanting partners with 121 senior Government staffs who will be able to continue support implementation of SLM programming, including sustainable agriculture and wetlands conservation, closely linking this to a broader SLM Policy support process from grassroots to central level. Secondly; 60 MOA Extension Officers were trained as facilitators of the established 66 FFS Demonstration Plots which serve as living learning sites for farmers, while trained extension officers will be expected to continue provide sustainable agriculture and SLM related extension service delivery to farmers.
- The project entrenched Local Ownership and Governance to ensure the sustainability of the project outcomes: the implementation strategy ensure transfer of project ownership and management to community organizations like the active Farmers Associations of ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates and the Iraq government key implementation partners. In collaboration with key partners the project developed (i) national SLM strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq (2026-2030), and (ii) national Monitoring and Knowledge Management Platform which can inform SLM decision-making in Iraq.
- The Government of Iraq through the MOE is committed to secure fiscal funds from the national budget (resource mobilization) to finance the implementation of the developed Strategic Action Plan (2026-2030). Upon project exit (01 January 2026). This Strategic Action Plan (2026-2030) provides evidence of the strong partnership created under this project and mutual commitment by both partners to seek and support a further upscaling and/or replicating the successful gains and lessons learnt to other locations of Iraq.
- The Integration of adopted sustainable agriculture practices into Local Policies ensures the sustainability of the objectives of the project: integration of successful project components into existing policies and standard practice (such as seen with the promotion of Conservation Agriculture and Agroecology practices of SLM as piloted under this project and can be replicated and/or upscaled in other governorates).
- Community Empowerment and household income generation ensures the sustainability of project outcomes: the lead farmer approach where lead farmers serve as host of FFS Demonstration Plots on their farms within the community ensures community ownership and engagement for continued learning on sustainable agriculture practices for SLM and improved livelihoods. Farmers adoption of Conservation Agriculture and Agroecology is proving to directly linked to the profitability of the local farming systems. With increased household income farmers would be able to save working capital for agricultural production in subsequent cropping seasons.

5. Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS): risks from the project

Initial ESS Risk Classification (at CEO Endorsement/Approval Stage)	Low-risk project classification
New environmental and social risks.	None
Progress made towards implementing the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) (only for Moderate and High Risk Projects)	Not applicable for the project classified as low risk.
Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)	FAO Iraq operates a well-established Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), known as the Community Feedback and Response Mechanism (CFRM). Guided by core principles—confidentiality, mutual respect, impartiality, equality, transparency, adherence to national norms, honesty, and respect for human rights—the CFRM provides a safe and accountable process for individuals to raise concerns and seek redress. Its primary objective is to offer a clear and trusted channel for those who believe they have been negatively affected by FAO’s interventions, personnel, or implementing partners. The mechanism addresses grievances related to actual or potential violations of FAO’s ethical, social, and environmental standards, including sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEA/SH). By proactively managing complaints, the CFRM facilitates timely resolution, mitigates the risk of escalation into legal or reputational issues, and supports the smooth implementation of FAO initiatives. Stakeholders have the right to express their views—positive or negative—about actions that affect them. Grievances or suggestions related to FAO activities can be submitted through multiple accessible channels: toll-free phone calls or SMS, WhatsApp, email, or direct engagement with FAO or partner staff during field visits. While the CFRM contact details have been communicated through various means to the project partners, no grievance was received under the project.

6. Risks to the Project

The following table summarizes risks identified in the Project Document and reflects also any new risks identified during the project implementation.					
	Type of risk	Risk rating11	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Description of Risk	Mitigation measure implemented
1	Political	Low	Yes	Political instability and civil unrest in addition to internal conflict	Continuous consultation with UNDSS, FAO Security Unit and local government representatives of ThiQar and Al Muthanna Governorates to identify possible interventions to address risks in case of any political instability or uprising. Project work plan and activities are implemnted based on informed security clearances from both UNDSS and the Local Project Implementation Units of ThiQar and Al Muthanna Governorates.
2	Safety & Security	Moderate	Yes	Security issues make recruitment and placement of international technical support difficult.	While national sucurity issues are relatively stable. Regional conflicts remain moderately unstable and UNDSS continue to monitor the situation and inform FAO.UNDSS mitigation measures limit the long-term mission of UN staff in the targeted governorates due to lack of cleared hotels. Project implementation strategy provides both on-site and remote technical farmer support through trained resident MOA Extension Officers.
3	Partnership & Coordination	Low	Yes	Challenged project coordination	FAO maintains routine communication with the different stakeholders across the project coordination units to manage and timely execute the project. 1 x Steering Committee meeting, 3 x PMU meetings and at governorate level 3 x Local Project Implementation Unit meetings were held during the reporting period.
4	Legal & Regulatory	Low	Yes	Land tenure issues will challenge implementation	Farmer selection criteria ensured targeted beneficiaries have access to crop land and/or grazing land/marshlands with no conflict of interest.Local authorities ensures that targeted small holder farmers are the rightful owners of their land or are otherwise legally entitled to work on the land upon project exit.
5	Institutional	Low	Yes	Low capacity of local and national institutions	The project supports the institutional framework and technical capacity development at national and local levels, a capacity building program through training ensured that 121 Government staff were trained and mandated to facilitate SLM programming, whereas 60 MOA Extension Officers were trained as FFS facilitators to provide agricultural extension servise to farmers.

6	Partnership & Coordination	Low	Yes	The current level of commitment and interest to work on multi-sectoral approach on sustainable agriculture diminishes.	This project is designed with the full support of both primary and secondary stakeholders. Extensive meetings are held at both the national Project Steering Committee and governorate levels (Local Project Implementation Unit) with responsible representatives sensitized and mobilized for high level of commitment to the project. This is ensured through an approach that continues to be highly inclusive and facilitates full engagement by multi-sectoral stakeholders across the existing project coordination and management units at both national and local level.
7	Social	Low	Yes	Low ownership and lack of sustainability of new technologies and techniques	Household economic records and crop production economic analysis clearly show that there is an ecological and economic benefits derived from farmers adoption of SLM practices for improved livelihoods. Economic benefits are drivers and incentive famers to adopt the new techniques of sutsinable agriculture practices. TTargeted farmers began to report higher economic returns based on the adoption of CA for SLM.
8	Economic	Low	Yes	Incentives for local stakeholders are not adequate to generate engagement	Project funding provide local travel financial allowances to cover for transportation cost as stakeholders engage in project support travels. Regarding the provision of agricultural input support to farmers. FAO communicated the need for complete package of in-kind agricultural inputs distribution required as Gol co-funding support to the targeted farmers.
9	Environmental	Low	Yes	climate change	SLM practices implemented through the FFS trainings are based on their potential contribution to more climate resilient production systems and marshland ecosystems. Trained farmers are applying CA principles on their farms, mainly minimum soil disturbance and promotion of soil organic matter built up through crop residue retention which contribute to local carbon sequestration, a mitigation measure to climate change. Project procured 1 025 fruit and forest forage tree seedlings which are planted on 25 FFS plots to demonstrate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures through planting trees of economic value. Farmers are dis-adopting burning of surface crop residue and this reduce the emmission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere thereby mitigating climate change

Project overall risk rating (Low, Moderate, Substantial or High):		
FY2024 rating	FY2025 rating	Comments/reason for the rating for FY2025 and any changes (positive or negative) in the rating since the previous reporting period

LOW	LOW	The overall risk is low During the reporting period, the project was able to significantly deliver both qualitative and quantitative results dominated by 65% (<i>n</i> = 1635) farmers adopting CA and put 12 330 ha landscape of food systems under SLM. All of the anticipated risks, which had been pre-identified and recorded in the project document with mitigation measures in place. Thus, these measures were well implemented to prevent or address the challenges. Hence, most risk factors remained low and of less threat to the project execution. Given the fluidity nature of Iraq context which is highly influenced by the regional security dynamics, the risks related to political instability, safety and security conflicts during the remaining project duration cannot be completely ruled out. However, mitigation measure of remote management with international experts as home-based and project execution on-site through trained government extension officers remain an option if need be.
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7. Follow-up on Mid-term review or supervision mission

If the project had an MTR or a supervision mission in 2024, please report on how the recommendations were implemented during this fiscal year as indicated in the Management Response or in the supervision mission report.

N/A	
MTR or supervision mission recommendations	Measures implemented during this Fiscal Year
Recommendation 1:	
Recommendation 2:	
Recommendation 3:	
Recommendation ...	
Recommendation...	

8. Minor project amendments

Minor amendments are changes to the design or implementation that do not have significant impact on the project objectives or scope, or an increase of the GEF project financing up to 5% as described in Annex 9 of the GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy Guidelines 12. 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. (This section will be uploaded to the GEF Portal)			
Category of change	Provide a description of the change	Indicate the timing of the change	Approved by
Results framework	Two initial planned strategic documents as per the ProDoc, namely, (i) national SLM Strategy and Action Plan and (ii) Agriculture and Marshland Conservation Action Plan, were consolidated into a single deliverable document namely, the national SLM strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq (2026-2030).	May, 2025	Project LTO and Alternate project LTO
Components and cost	None		
Institutional and implementation arrangements	None		
Financial management	None		
Implementation schedule	None		
Executing Entity	None		
Executing Entity Category	None		
Minor project objective change	None		
Safeguards	None		
Risk analysis	None		
Increase of GEF project financing up to 5%	None		
Co-financing	None		
Location of project activity	None		
Other minor project amendment (define)	None		

9. Stakeholders' Engagement

Please report on progress, challenges, and outcomes on stakeholder engagement (based on the description of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan) included at CEO Endorsement/Approval during this reporting period. (This section will be uploaded to the GEF Portal)			
Profile	Stakeholder name	Type of partnership	Progress, results & Challenges on Stakeholder's Engagement
Government Institutions	Ministry of Environment (MOE)	Co-finacing and implementing partner	MOE, Facilitated and chaired a project national Steering Committee (SC) meeting on 28 August 2024 in Baghdad. MoE members participated in national Project Management Unit (PMU) meetings in Baghdad (19 December 2024, 16 March 2025, 03 June 2025) and the governorate -level Local Project Implementation Unit (LPIU) meetings in ThiQar governorate (12 August 2024, 18 December 2024 and 28 April 2025) and Al Muthanna Governorate (12 August 2024, 17 December 2024 and 29 April 2025). MOE assaigned a Natural Resource Expert to co-lead the development of a consolidated national SLM Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan (2026-2030), this strategic document will be launched mid July 2025. FAO communicated a reminder through MOE, the need for complete package of in-kind agricultural inputs required as Gol co-funding support to the targeted farmers. There is a delayed response to this communique from the MOE side.
Government Institutions	Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)	Implemnting partner	Participated in a project Steering Committee meeting. MoA members participated in PMU and LPIU meetings. 40 MoA Extension Officers were trained as facilitators on 25 FFS Demonstration Plots under Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques. These trained Extension Officers provide extension service to farmers.
Government Institutions	Ministry of Water Resources (MOW)	Implemnting partner	Participated in a project national Steering Committee meeting. MOW members participated in PMU and LPIU meetings. MOW supported FFS Demonstration Plots with provision of irrigation water during the hot summer season when irrigation water was limited.
Government Institutions	National Centre for Water Resource Management	Member of Steering Committee	Implementation of the project's water management plan for SLM in partnership with MOW and MOA. Participated in a project Steering Committee and PMU meetings, steering the strategic direction on integrated water resource management. Stakeholders were continuously advised to remind farmers to avoid stream/river-bank cultivation.
Government Institutions	The Sate Commission Authority for Groundwater	Member of Steering Committee	Participated in a project Steering Committee and PMU meetings. Stakeholders requested to remind farmers on the need for water permit for ground water extraction and to inform farmers avoid illegal watergronund extraction.

Government Institutions	Department for Underground Water in Muthanna and Thi-Qar governorates	Member of the Local Project Implemntation Unit at governorate level	Participated in the LPIU meetings. Stakeholders requested to remind farmers on the need for water permit for ground water extraction and to inform farmers avoid illegal watergronund extraction.
Government Institutions	Al Muthanna Governorate	Implementing partner	Local authority within the project location at Al Muthanna governorate level. Chairs the LPIU meetings. Instrumental for project site level implementation in Al Salman district (Al-Shaweaa) and Al-Rumaitha district (Al-Majid).
Government Institutions	ThiQar Governorate	Implementing partner	Local authority within the project locations across ThiQar governorate level. Chairs the LPIU meetings. Instrumental for project site level implementation across all districts in ThiQar governorate.
Government Institutions	Office of Forests and Combating Desertification	Member of the Steering Committee	Participated in a project Steering Committee and PMU meetings. Contributed to the development and reviews of the national SLM Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan (2026 - 2030).
Government Institutions	Office of Agriculture Research	Member of the Steering Committee	Participated in a project Steering Committee meeting. Supported in the development and review of the national SLM Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan (2026-2030).
Government Institutions	Office of Agriculture Extension Services and Training	Member of the Steering Committee	Participated in a project Steering Committee meeting. Trained Extension Officers at governorate level continue to serve as Facilitators of FFS training program. 1 003 famers were trained on Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques for SLM.
Government Institutions	Centre for Restoration of Iraqi Marshlands	Member of the Local Project Implemntation Unit at governorate level	Participated in the LPIU meeting for ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates. Urged stakeholders to continue guide farmers on marshland conservation techniques and avoid pollution of wetlands due to agricultural chemical applications.
Government Institutions	National Council for Seeds	Member of the Steering Committee	Participated in a project Steering Committee meeting. Continued to support FAO with Seed quality analysis for Inspection, a pre-requisite for seed procurement meant distribution to farmers for FFS Demonstration plot planting.
NGOs	Association of Extension and Development for Iraq Women	Member of the Local Project Implemntation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner	Participated in the LPIU meetings at governorate level and delegated to promote and encourage females' participation in project activities. Encouraged Female MOA Extension Officers to be pro-active which resulted the project to register additional 138 female farmers during the reporting period.
NGOs	Association of Agricultural Engineers	Member of the Local Project Implemntation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner	Participated in the LPIU meetings. Delegated to advise extension officers and to encourage farmers to adopt soil and moisture conservation technique of laser land levelling.
NGOs	Association of Veterinary Services	Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit	Participated in the LPIU meetings. Delegated to inform extension officers and farmers on good practices grazing land management to avoid overgrazing and combat desertification.

Private Sector entities	Association Private Sector Service Providers	Member of the Local Project Implemantation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner	Participated in the LPIU meetings at governorate level and delegated to promote market linkages for mutual benefits between farmers and goods/service providers.
Others	Iraqi Farmer's Association	Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner	Provide support in the development of Farmer Associations and cooperatives at the smallholder level. Attended all LPIU meetings and presented farmers request for agricultural input support. GoI through the MOE and MOA continue to delay in distribution of the requested agricultural inputs to the targeted farming households.
Government Institutions	University of ThiQar	Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner	Participated in the LPIU meetings in ThiQar governorate. A source of technical knowledge on agricultural research in the region. Produce peer-reviewed research into the local capacity to support farmers adoption of Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques.
Government Institutions	University of Al Muthanna	Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner	Participated in the LPIU meetings in Al Muthanna governorate. A source of technical knowledge on agricultural research in the region. Produce peer-reviewed research into the local capacity to support farmers on CA in arid and semi-arid environments and soil rehabilitation techniques to reverse salinization and soil degradation and improve yields.
Others	Smallholder farmers	Beneficiaries	1003 farmers (18% females) trained on Agroecology and Marshland Conservation for SLM. 25 FFS Demonstration Plots under Agroecology planted with selected vegetable crops.
Government Institutions	College of Agricultural Engineers and Marshlands in Thi Qar governorate	Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner	Participated in the LPIU meetings in ThiQar governorate. Tertiary education institution which also serve as a source of literature and knowledge on food systems and local agroecosystem management.
Government Institutions	College of Agricultural Engineers in Al Muthanna governorate	Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner	Participated in the LPIU meetings in Al Muthanna governorate. Tertiary education institution which also serve as a source of literature and knowledge on food systems and local SLM techniques.
Government Institutions	Tree seedling Nursery Production_Directorate of Agriculture Al Muthanna Governorate	Strategic partner	A good source of forestry and fruit tree seedlings slaes to afrmers. Produce at mass production the forest and fruit tree seedlings viable for SLM.

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) during this reporting period. (This section will be uploaded to the GEF Portal)		
Category	Yes/No	Briefly describe progress and results achieved during this reporting period.
a. Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources	Yes	Forage and live fencing forest trees (Talh and Gum arabica) and fruits trees (pomegranate, date palm and olive) were planted around the 25 Farmer Field School (FFS) Demonstration Plots under Agroecology and Marshland Conservation for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Degraded Areas of southern Iraq. This is demonstrating to women, men and youths, the importance of crop-tree-livestock mixed cropping in forest gardens. Women are adopting this practice as they now own and control these beneficial trees at household level back yard forest gardens with vegetables, fruit and forage trees. In Iraq, the cultural norm is that women own and control small livestock like sheeps and goats for dairy and meat. Forage trees planting is well accepted by women to supplement their livestock feed for sheeps and goats, while fruits trees planting is contributing to household dietary diversity.
b. Improving women's participation and decision making	Yes	During the reporting period, additional 138 female farmers were registered and 589 female farmers are now targeted for the project. The project continues to promote women participation (29% increase) as compared from the last reporting period, where 451 females were recorded last year. During the reporting period, as the FFS training sessions were held across ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates, the project encourages married couples to attend with their wives. This is to improve participation by women who play a greater role in passing knowledge and skills to the future generation as women spend more time with children, daily after evening meals and during school holidays. With the FFS trainings on Agroecology and Marshland Conservation, female farmers were increasingly contributing to household income generation from sales of surplus vegetable produce. This suggested that the intervention project facilitate women economic empowerment, allowing women to play a more active role in financial decision-making at household level with improved household purchasing power.
c. generating socio-economic benefits or services for women	Yes	Informed by an end of cropping seasons assessment held in the first quarter of 2025. The assessment recorded that, 167 women (113% of the end-of-project target) who are agricultural producers (wheat, alfalfa, barley) reported higher economic returns based upon their participation in FFS SLM training and adoption of CA for SLM. 171 women (171% of the end-of-project target) who are marshland dependent vegetable producers reported higher economic returns based upon participation in FFS Agroecology and Marshland Conservation training program. Pending is an in-depth quantitative assessment to quantify profit margin among vegetable producers.
Any other good practices on gender		The assessment analysis recorded that as farmers adopt CA, 94.8% ($n = 213$) farmers believed the project was addressing equal opportunities for male and female farmers, while 5.2% ($n = 213$) explicitly stated no impact. The most significant impact of the project in relation to equal opportunities of male and female, were the reports of reducing labor demands for female farmers and creating more time for household chores and timely attend to school children after their return home from school. This indicated that many female farmers experienced relief from the physically demanding intensive farm labour under the conventional traditional agriculture practice, potentially improving overall quality of life for female farmers adopting the relatively less labour intensity associated with CA for Sustainable Land Management in southern Iraq.

11. Knowledge and Learning Activities

Knowledge activities/products (when applicable), as outlined in Knowledge Management (and Learning) Approach approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval, during this reporting period. (This section will be uploaded to the GEF Portal)	
Knowledge management and Learning (KML): Does the project have a KML strategy?	No
If YES, what is the implementation progress? In your answer, please describe how the project is fostering knowledge sharing and learning among stakeholders at national and sub-national level.	N/A
If NO, how does the project identify, collect and document good practices?	FAO Natural Resource Knowledge and Management Information System Specialist in collaboration with GIS and Remote Sensing Experts from the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture and Water Resources lead the design and operationalization of the National Monitoring and Knowledge Management Platform to inform Sustainable Land Management (SLM) decision-making in Iraq. This team is developing a digital platform integrating selected land resources field data, remote sensing, and GIS technologies for mapping and analyzing land degradation status, land use-land cover changes and ecological restoration. The platform utilizes Google Earth Engine (GEE) for scalable and real-time data which is uploaded for analysis, quantification, mapping, annual monitoring and reporting on land use-land cover changes based on various layers (degraded land, desert greening, vegetation cover, croplands, grazing lands, wetlands, ecological restoration and urbanization). A total of about 48 000 ha of agricultural land greening (degraded and under SLM), is monitored annually (ThiQar governorate: 39 000ha and Al Muthanna governorate: 9 000ha) as a result of the FFS programming and reported through the developed national KM system. Whereas, about 38 000 ha of marshland undergoing ecological restoration, is monitored annually (ThiQar governorate: 25 000ha and Al Muthanna governorate: 13 000ha) to promote SLM practices and is reported through the developed national KM system. Furthermore, the project registered within the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM) portal. The GPS coordinates of the established 61 Farmer Field Demonstration Plots Conservation Agriculture, Agroecology and Marshland Conservation were entered into the FERM system to ensure comprehensive tracking and reporting of agroecosystem restoration efforts across Al Muthanna and ThiQar governorates. The portal integrates Earth observation data, geospatial tools, and a user-friendly dashboard to provide clear and detailed visualizations of project progress and achievements.
Please list good practices, including key-technical and/or institutional innovations, from the project thus far.	FAO in Iraq is promoting Conservation Agriculture (CA) practices, Agroecology and Marshland Conservation which are universally applicable in all agricultural landscapes and cropping systems. An assessment done in December 2024 recorded that, about 66% of targeted 1 635 farmers adopted the principles of CA namely, (i) land preparation with minimum soil disturbances/zero tillage to improve soil structure, (ii) mulching/soil cover crops for soil moisture conservation, reduce run-off and erosion (iii) crop rotations or intercropping to improve soil fertility, break cycle of pest and diseases. The assessment results confirmed that farmers adoption of CA practices led to increased crops yield, which can be linked to improved household food security. Compared to conventional traditional agriculture practices, it was recorded that CA result in crop yield improvements which were evident across all major crops, with alfalfa showing the highest increase (33%), followed by wheat (20.7%) and barley (10%). This suggests that CA enhances soil health and resource efficiency, leading to more sustainable farm productivity with ecological benefits. With adoption of CA, trained farmers are dis-adopting land preparation of deep ploughing (+30cm soil depth) as this exposes the soil to the rain or surface flood irrigation causing erosion, whereas, deep ploughing also expose the soil to the sun-heat which exacerbate soil moisture loss through evaporation.

	FAO promotion of Agroecology practice and Marshland Conservation which target 1003 farmers in ThiQar ana Al Muthanna governorates, demonstrate the importance of mixed farming which enhance biodiversity: Vegetable crop and fruit/fodder forest trees integration for Sustainable Land Management to improve livelihoods in degraded areas of southern Iraq. This good practice of crop-tree integration provides; (i) livelihood economic benefits (crops - fruit trees produce diversified food for home consumption and sale of surplus for household income generation, legume forest trees supplement fodder and income, diversified agriculture-based livelihood options), and (ii) environmental benefits (tree root system and tree canopy as wind-breaks combat soil erosion, legume forest trees improve soil fertility, wind-break trees provide micro-climate to the home garden and reduce moisture loss, growing trees is a mitigation measure on climate change as trees utilize excess carbon dioxide, thus, reduce greenhouse gas concentration from the atmosphere), (ii) Trained farmers are dis-adopting the practice of burning surface crop residues which contributes to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide. This mitigates climate change by reducing the emission of greenhouses gases into the atmosphere. Burning of crop residues also contribute to loss of plant nutrients which can be otherwise recycled through proper crop residue management.
Communication strategy: Does the project have a communication strategy?	No
Please provide a brief overview of the communications successes and challenges this fiscal year.	FAO Iraq effectively increased the visibility of its GEF-funded Sustainable Land Management project through a combination of digital, field-level, and institutional communications. A key success was the publication of a compelling success story on the UN Iraq website for World Desertification Day, highlighting field-level impact—such as yield increases, water savings, and improved land productivity—with powerful visuals and direct farmer testimony. FAO Iraq’s social media platforms actively showcased field activities, training sessions, and tangible results for farmers and restored land boosted by short key messages, fiels photos and videos . Additionally, the team produced a project factsheet and leaflet, and distributed branded visibility items and clothing to reinforce the identity of the project and its GEF/FAO partnership across events and local engagements. Noting that all publications are in arabic to reach local audience and english . However, challenges remain. Communications were fragmented across platforms, with no central online hub for project materials on FAO Iraq’s website (Has been refurbished and put online soon) . Limited engagement with local press because of the topic technicality reduced the visibility of results beyond the UN ecosystem. Addressing these gaps would significantly enhance communication impact.
Human-interest story: 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.	Farmer Hashem Kuoti shared a success story of most significant change, “By adopting Conservation Agriculture practice of SLM, I was able to harvest one ton of alfalfa from just half a donum (0.13ha) of land. In comparison, same crop under conventional traditional agriculture practice used to yields a quarter of a ton for the same area. This difference in crop productivity and crop yield significantly impacts earnings as well. With adoption of Conservation Agriculture practice of SLM, I am now earning between 100-150 thousand Iraqi dinars per month, whereas with conventional traditional agriculture practice I used to just earn 60-70 thousand Iraqi dinars every two to three months. Encouraged by these economic benefits with alfalfa, I am now applying the same Conservation Agriculture practices to sesame and sorghum production in subsequent cropping seasons.” The shift to Conservation Agriculture practices has also led to significant crop production cost reductions. “Conventional traditional agriculture practice tends to be more expensive due to its higher application rates for chemical fertilizers use, seed and irrigation water supply,” noted farmer Issa Ramadhan. “As a result, Conservation Agriculture practice of SLM stands out as a more sustainable and cost-effective option. Crop production costs are significantly lower with Conservation Agriculture, making it a more attractive choice for long-term economic sustainability.” https://www.fao.org/neareast/news/stories/details/harvesting-hope--reversing-desertification-through-conservation-agriculture-for-sustainable-land-management-in-southern-iraq/en
Please provide links to related website, social media account	https://mohsen-ramadan-ee.users.earthengine.app/view/land-degradation-monitoring-for-iraq

Please provide a list of publications, leaflets, video materials, newsletters, or other communications assets published on the web, if any.	Success Story "Harvesting Hope: Reversing Desertification through Conservation Agriculture" (UN Iraq – 17 June 2025) 🔗 https://iraq.un.org/en/296501-harvesting-hope-reversing-desertification-through-conservation-agriculture-sustainable-land Press Releases GCF Approves \$39 Million for FAO-Led Project on Water Scarcity & Climate Change 🔗 https://iraq.un.org/en/282025-gcf-approves-39-million-support-fao-led-project-addressing-water-scarcity-and-climate-change FAO and Ministry of Environment Develop Strategy for Sustainable Land Management 🔗 https://iraq.un.org/en/277871-fao-and-moe-are-developing-national-strategy-sustainable-land-management-iraq FAO Global – A Year of Impact (includes Iraq in GEF/GCF project mobilization) 🔗 https://www.fao.org/climate-change/news/news-detail/a-year-of-impact/en FAO and the Ministry of Environment: Starting the implementation of a Comprehensive Training Program on Sustainable Land Management Policy formulation with Support from the Global Environment Facility 🔗 https://iraq.un.org/en/260512-fao-and-ministry-environment-starting-implementation-comprehensive-training-program FAO empowers 40 extension officers to promote Agroecology and Marshland Conservation for SLM in southern Iraq 🔗 https://iraq.un.org/en/284841-fao-empowers-40-extension-officers-promote-agroecology-and-marshland-conservation-slm FAO in Iraq Newsletter https://iraq.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/FAOIQ%20Newsletter-NOVandDEC2024-EN.pdf https://iraq.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/En-%20NEWSLETTER-JAN%26FEB-FV.pdf Tweets https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1602633212664188929 https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1602633054866096128 https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1862810891839824136 https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1797163865160978588 https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1757312082930741501 https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1757312089260015620/photo/2 https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1677601850198032385/photo/1 Facebook Post https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=122134747100245800&set=pcb.122134747364245800. https://www.facebook.com/share/p/15UKPktZ79/ https://www.facebook.com/share/p/16aM2EQRFn/ https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1B6KiS5ccQ/
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Please indicate the Communication and/or knowledge management focal point's name and contact details.

Ms. Khawla Ben Aicha - International Communication Specialist: khawla.benaicha@fao.org
Dr. Ramadan Mohsen – Natural Resource and Management Information System Specialist: mohsen.ramadan@fao.org

12. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communitess 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 on-going/completed, legitimate consultations to obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) with the indigenous communities.

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

Local communities and indigenous peoples were consulted through the MOA Extension Officers to identify and establish FFS Demonstration Plots (41 plots under Conservation Agriculture and 25 plots under Agroecology and Marshland Conservation) across ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates. Farmers-led selection criteria of FFS Demonstration Plots location included factors like consent of the host farmer to avail 0.25ha of the farm to establish a FFS Demonstration PLOT, walking distance close proximity of the host farm to farmer group members, host farm's with access to reliable irrigation water and legal farm ownership of the host farm. As reported in the previous report, indigenous people “Me’dan” who are buffalo breeders are demonstrating the importance of sustainable crop-livestock integration for Sustainable Land Management to improve their livelihoods across the marshlands ecosystems of ThiQar governorate. The project is promoting the production of fodder crops like sorghum, millet, barley, alfalfa and barseem which are harvested by farmers for supplementary feeding of grazing livestock and/or pen fattening of dairy buffaloes. Informed by the indigenous people and local communities, leguminous forest fodder tree (*Vachellia* species) seedlings (500 seedlings) were planted around 25 FFS Demonstration Plots under Agroecology practice and Marshland Conservation to demonstrate the use of trees as windbreaks and live fencing around backyard forest gardens, while in the long run these leguminous forest trees will provide forage to livestock as well as fuelwood green energy to farmers. Whereas, livestock also provide manure for composting to improve soil fertility and organic matter content which directly boost local agricultural productivity. Indigenous and local farmers are upscaling and replicating this agrosilvopastoral practice on their farms to diversify their livelihood options. Based on indigenous knowledge and skills, strengthened is the local agrosilvopastoral system which is a sustainable land management approach that integrates trees, crops, and livestock on the same land unit, creating a more sustainable and diversified farming system. It combines the practices of agriculture (growing crops), silviculture (growing trees), and pastoralism (raising livestock).

13. Co-Financing Table

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Amount pledged at CEO endorsement/approval	Amount Materialized at 30 June 2022
Recipient Country	Ministry of Environment	In-kind	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 4,103,000
Recipient Country	Ministry of Agriculture	In-kind	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 4,276,000
Recipient Country	Ministry of Water Resources	In-kind	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 3,860,000
Recipient Country Government	ThiQar and Al Muthanna	In-kind	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 737,000
Private Sector	USAID/WADA	In-kind	\$ 1,200,000	\$ -
GEF Agency	FAO	In-kind	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 1,900,000
Total		Total	\$21,200,000	\$14,876,000

Please explain any significant changes in project co-financing since CEO Endorsement/Approval, or differences between the pledged and materialized co-financing amounts.

14. Geo Location Information

This section should be completed **ONLY** by projects with 1st PIR and in case the geographic coverage of project activities has changed since last reporting period.
This information is required by GEF Secretariat in GEF Portal

Are there any changes in the geographic coverage of the project activities since the last PIR report?

No

[illegible]

Annex. Monitoring Area-based GEF Core Indicator Commitments and Progress with FERM

The Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM), developed by FAO, is the official monitoring platform for tracking global progress and disseminating good practices for the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. The FERM can serve as an integrated GIS-based platform, providing GEF staff and all relevant stakeholders the chance to display the progress of committed versus achieved land under restoration or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use, along with clear results such as the percentage of project achievement. Having a common tracking and monitoring platform allows users to comprehensively assess and report on project progress. A user-friendly dashboard showcasing project results gives stakeholders a clear understanding of the extent to which project targets have been achieved. Projects with area-based GEF Core Indicators (GEF Core Indicators 1-5 and LDCF Core Indicator 2) are encouraged to register in the FERM platform.

Useful links:

- [FERM website](#)
- [FERM User Guide \(PDF\)](#)
- [FERM YouTube channel](#)
- [Email Carmen Morales](#)

26 It also supports countries in reporting areas under restoration for the Kunming-Montreal GBF Target 2 (areas under restoration) for which FAO is the custodian agency.