

GEF-8 REQUEST FOR CEO ENDORSEMENT/APPROVAL

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General Project Information

Project Title

Rehabilitation and restoration of ecosystems in the Gum Arabic belt and sustainable use of forest resources in Mauritania

Region

Africa

GEF Project ID

11551

Country(ies)

Mauritania

Type of Project

FSP

GEF Agency(ies):

FAO

GEF Agency Project ID

Project Executing Entity(s)

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEV)

Project Executing Type

Government

GEF Focal Area (s)

Land Degradation

Submission Date

6/19/2025

Type of Trust Fund

GET

Project Duration (Months)

60

GEF Project Grant: (a)

5,329,452.00

GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)

0.00

Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)

506,298.00

Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)

0.00

Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)

5,835,750.00

Total Co-financing

9,000,000.00

PPG Amount: (e)

150,000.00

PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)

14,250.00

Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)

6,000,000.00

Project Tags

CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No

Project Sector (CCM Only)

Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Land Degradation, Food Security, Land Cover and Land cover change, Land Degradation Neutrality, Carbon stocks above or below ground, Sustainable Land Management, Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques, Income Generating Activities, Sustainable Livelihoods, Community-Based Natural Resource Management, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands, Ecosystem Approach, Sustainable Agriculture, Climate Change Adaptation, Climate Change, Community-based adaptation, Ecosystem-based Adaptation, Sustainable Development Goals, Drylands, Forest, Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Deploy innovative financial instruments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Demonstrate innovative approaches, Stakeholders, Participation, Type of Engagement, Consultation, Private Sector, SMEs, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Non-Governmental Organization, Beneficiaries, Local Communities, Communications, Strategic Communications, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Women groups, Gender-sensitive indicators, Access to benefits and services, Gender results areas, Participation and leadership, Access and control over natural resources, Capacity Development, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Workshop, Knowledge Generation, Training, Knowledge Exchange, Peer-to-Peer, Conference, Field Visit, Learning, Adaptive management, Innovation

Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
Significant Objective 1	Significant Objective 1	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? (iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The project 'Integrated Ecosystem Management Programme for the Sustainable Human Development in Mauritania' (GUMREST) responds to intertwined ecological, climatic, and socio-economic challenges in the critical Gum Arabic Belt of Mauritania. Located in the southern wilayas of Trarza and Assaba, this transboundary ecological corridor is experiencing rapid degradation of its agro-silvopastoralist landscapes due to factors like overgrazing, uncontrolled bushfires, extensive cultivation, climate change impacts (such as erratic rainfall and rising temperatures), and weak land tenure systems. This has led to declining Gum Arabic production, reduced fodder availability, biodiversity loss, increased food insecurity and rural vulnerability.

The project will provide integrated solutions to these challenges, anchored in ecosystem restoration. It will mobilize rural communities to engage more efficiently in non-timber forest product (NTFP) value chains, while also promoting more effective and economically viable restoration methods, thus creating a double incentive for their full engagement in sustainable development. The project aims to restore and sustainably manage 61,000 hectares of degraded agro-silvopastoralist landscapes, including 15,000 hectares of severely degraded lands and 46,000 hectares of moderately degraded lands. This will be achieved through an adaptive, integrated, participatory, and gender-responsive land restoration, management, and monitoring approach. The objective is to combat land degradation and strengthen the resilience of these ecosystems to climate change, while enhancing their ecological (soil, biodiversity, water conservation) and socio-economic (NTFPs, rural employment, food security) functions. Ultimately, 100,000 direct beneficiaries – at least 50% of whom will be women and youth – will directly benefit from the project's activities, which will be guided by a gender-responsive approach, with gender-responsive/sex-disaggregated indicators integrated across all components to ensure inclusive and equitable outcomes.

The project has four complementary components and one monitoring and evaluation component:

Component 1: Creating an enabling environment for sustainable management of agro-silvopastoralist landscapes in the Gum Arabic Belt. This component will support the development and validation of a national operational manual for gender-responsive integrated land-use and agro-silvopastoralist management plans and a national strategy for Gum Arabic and other selected NTFPs, with a focus on public-private partnerships. The capacities of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) and decentralized regional bodies like the Direction Régionale de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable (DREDD) staff will be strengthened through training on land use monitoring, social and environmental safeguards, and gender-responsive approaches, including the deployment of drones for aerial seeding and monitoring.

Component 2: Sustainable rehabilitation of agro-silvopastoralist landscapes to restore ecosystem integrity. This component will implement field interventions, including the restoration of 61,000 hectares of degraded land through manual reforestation, enrichment planting and assisted natural regeneration (ANR), mulching, manure application, and drone seeding. It will also support the establishment and operationalization of 24 market-oriented Agro-Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) and strengthen native seed systems through the establishment of Community Seed Groups linked to the National Forestry Seed Centre. Cooperation among agro-silvopastoralist resource users will be strengthened through the co-development and application of 12 integrated, gender-responsive land use plans, and the strengthening/establishment of self-managed and sustainable local institutions like Association de Gestion Locale Collective (Collective Local Management Association) (AGLCs).

Component 3: Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFP value chains strengthened to prevent land degradation and biodiversity loss. This component focuses on ensuring a sustainable pathway to deliver global environmental benefits by revitalizing NTFP value chains to incentivize conservation and deliver socio-economic co-benefits. It will strengthen the organizational, functional and technical capacities of 48 community cooperatives, particularly women- and youth-led groups, in sustainable production, harvesting, processing, and marketing. A market information system for NTFPs will be established, and 38 inclusive, gender-responsive business plans will be developed. The project also facilitates access to finance for cooperatives, including linkages with micro-finance institutions and private sector actors for commercial contracts.

Component 4: Knowledge Management and Learning. This component enhances knowledge exchange through public-private partnerships and learning opportunities for NTFP stakeholders. It will establish a public-private knowledge and dialogue platform and organize exchange visits to areas of good practice. Good practices will be identified, documented, and disseminated through a participatory communication strategy and guidelines on good agro-silvopastoral practices for Gum Arabic and NTFP value chains.

The project will significantly contribute to Mauritania's national priorities and international commitments to combat desertification and land degradation, adapt to climate change, conserve biodiversity, and promote sustainable development. It builds on the achievements and lessons learned from previous initiatives by FAO (AAD, BRIDGES) and GIZ (ProGRN), aiming to transform land and forest management practices by fully integrating local communities, with a strong focus on women and youth. This project thus represents a unique opportunity for a paradigm shift from fragmented and informal resource use to inclusive, integrated, and resilient governance of the agro-silvopastoral landscape, ensuring long-term sustainability and socio-economic benefits. The project will benefit agro-pastoralists, transhumant pastoralists, farmers, women and youth.

Project Objective

The objective is to combat land degradation through the restoration, sustainable management and use of agro-silvopastoral landscapes and associated ecosystem services as well as strengthened sustainability of restoration activities through value chain development of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs.

Project Components

Component 1: Creating an enabling environment for sustainable management of agro-silvopastoral landscapes in the Gum Arabic Belt.

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
483,395.00	816,323.00

Outcome:

1.1: Integrated land-use and agro-silvopastoral management planning capacities are developed and tools broadly used by local authorities and community-based organizations (CBOs)

1.2: Capacities of MEDD/DREDD staff at national- and Wilaya-level are strengthened to better assess land use and support Community-based organizations (including Collective Local Management Associations (AGLCs) and local development committees (ADCs)) in land restoration and sustainable management.

Output:

1.1.1: One national operational manual on the development of gender-responsive integrated land use and agro-silvopastoral management plans (LUPs) , with a focus on Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFPs for the wilayas in the Gum Arabic belt developed and validated.

1.1.2: One national strategy – with focus on private-public partnerships – for the development of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs value chains finalized, with focus on the entire value chain, and in support of gender equality.

1.2.1: Technological innovations are made available for land restoration activities and monitoring (e.g. drones for seeding).

1.2.2: MEDD/DREDD and other partner institution staff are trained in methods for collecting, storing and processing land use and biophysical data, and in best practices for monitoring and implementing gender-responsive integrated land use management, land restoration and monitoring in the Gum Arabic belt as well as in the use of equipment and methods acquired under Output 1.2.1

Component 2: Sustainable rehabilitation of agro-silvopastoral landscapes to restore ecosystem integrity

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)

2,644,230.00

4,465,387.00

Outcome:

2.1: Rehabilitated agro-silvopastoral systems contribute to ecosystem integrity and prevent, reduce and reverse land degradation.

2.2: Cooperation strengthened among agro-silvopastoralist resource users.

Output:

2.1.1: 24 Agro-Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) on market-oriented sustainable management of agro-silvopastoral, and agro-forestry and horticulture systems established and operationalized.

2.1.2: 61,000 hectares (ha) of Gum Arabic production areas and pasturelands reforested/restored (in Trarza and Assaba) with Gum Arabic, fodder and other relevant NTFP species (exact ratio to be determined under output 1.1.3) to preserve ecosystem integrity, in close collaboration with local communities, including men and women, and by using innovative technologies.

2.1.3: Local-level capacities for collection, management and provision/marketing of quality seeds for restoration through the establishment of Community Seed Groups in support of the National Forestry Seed Centre in Assaba.

2.2.1: Integrated and gender-responsive land use and agro-silvopastoral sustainable management plans and practices in production systems developed/amended and applied in Assaba and Trarza, covering 61,000 ha considering all resource users, and consistent with Output 1.1.1 .

2.2.2: Strengthening/establishment of self-managed and sustainable local institutions (such as ADCs, AGLCs, or other inclusive community groups) for the concerted management of agro-silvopastoral resources

Component 3: Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFP value chains strengthened to prevent land degradation and biodiversity loss

Component Type

Trust Fund

Technical Assistance

GET

GEF Project Financing (\$)

Co-financing (\$)

1,540,418.00

2,601,349.00

Outcome:

3.1: Community livelihoods and local biodiversity are strengthened through nature-positive Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFPs value chains.

Output:

3.1.1: Organizational and technical capacities of 48 community cooperatives enhanced to sustainably harvest, process, store, and market high-quality Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFPs, including value-added products (run in parallel with restoration sites).

3.1.2. NTFP market information system established and functional, in each wilaya.

3.1.3: 38 inclusive, participatory and gender-responsive business plans developed for the production and marketing of gum arabic and other NTFPs

3.1.4: 19 NTFP cooperatives supported to access financing opportunities, with a focus on women and youth.

Component 4: Knowledge Management and Learning

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
246,376.00	416,062.00

Outcome:

4.1: Knowledge exchange and learning enhanced through public-private partnerships and learning opportunities for NTFP stakeholders.

4.2: Good practices are identified and disseminated.

Output:

4.1.1.: One public-private knowledge and dialogue platform established and actively used to enhance public-private partnerships and knowledge exchange

4.1.2: At least 4 exchange visits organized to foster learning opportunities.

4.2.1: One Communication strategy developed to the different objectives and target audiences, with particular attention to local communities, women and young people

4.2.2: Guidelines on Gum Arabic and selected NTFP production and value chains, integrating a gender-responsive and nature-positive approach, as well as case studies of local successes, especially in relation to empowering women and advancing gender equality, produced and disseminated.

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
161,250.00	272,308.00

Outcome:

5.1 Project results and lessons learned are identified, documented, and communicated in a timely manner.

Output:

M&E Output 1: Continuous data collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination of results

M&E Output 2: Mid-Term Evaluation report shared

M&E Output 3: Final Evaluation report shared

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
Component 1: Creating an enabling environment for sustainable management of agro-silvopastoral landscapes in the Gum Arabic Belt.	483,395.00	816,323.00
Component 2: Sustainable rehabilitation of agro-silvopastoral landscapes to restore ecosystem integrity	2,644,230.00	4,465,387.00
Component 3: Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFP value chains strengthened to prevent land degradation and biodiversity loss	1,540,418.00	2,601,349.00
Component 4: Knowledge Management and Learning	246,376.00	416,062.00
M&E	161,250.00	272,308.00
Subtotal	5,075,669.00	8,571,429.00
Project Management Cost	253,783.00	428,571.00
Total Project Cost (\$)	5,329,452.00	9,000,000.00

Please provide Justification

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Mauritania and the Gum Arabic Belt

1. The Mauritanian section of the Gum Arabic Belt covers an estimated 220,000 km², of which 61,000 hectares are targeted for restoration under this project. This zone is characterized by dryland, woodlands and agro-silvopastoral systems where *Acacia senegal* (gommier) and other native trees like *Balanites aegyptiaca*, *Ziziphus mauritiana*, and *Faidherbia albida* play key ecological and socio-economic roles. These areas are characterized by degraded rangelands, declining gum stands, and fragmented agroforestry systems. The

landscapes serve as a critical buffer against desertification, but face increasing pressure from land degradation, overgrazing, and climatic extremes. Gum Arabic production, once an important economic activity in the region, has declined drastically due to reduced tree cover, aging stands, poor management, and weak value chain integration. Compared to annual crops, NTFPs such as gum arabic are significantly more resilient in drylands: for example, in Sudan's Kordofan region, gum arabic harvests failed only once in four decades, while annual crops failed 10–15 times over the same period. Restoration of this landscape presents a unique opportunity to enhance ecosystem functions, diversify livelihoods, and strengthen resilience to climate change.

Climate change

2. The targeted regions of Assaba and Trarza are located within the Sahelo-Sudanian climatic zone, characterized by low and highly variable rainfall, high temperatures, and frequent droughts. Annual precipitation in Assaba averages between 250 and 400 mm, while in Trarza, particularly near the Senegal River valley, rainfall can reach 450 to 600 mm. Rainfall is concentrated in a single short rainy season from July to September, followed by a long dry season extending from October to June. The average annual temperature ranges from 28°C to 34°C, with maximum temperatures exceeding 45°C during peak dry season months (April–May)
3. Climate change has significantly exacerbated the region's environmental vulnerabilities. Over the past decades, communities have reported increased climatic unpredictability, with late-onset rains, early cessation, and longer intra-seasonal dry spells. The frequency and intensity of heatwaves, strong winds, and dry thunderstorms has also increased, contributing to bushfires, reduced soil moisture retention, and tree mortality. Please see Annex Z for detailed Climate and Agriculture Risk Visualization Assessment.
4. These climate trends are already having serious impacts on agro-silvopastoral systems. For farmers, shorter and less reliable growing seasons are reducing yields and altering planting calendars. For herders, pasture regeneration is delayed and less productive, while traditional transhumance routes are becoming less viable due to drying water points and vegetation loss. For gum collectors and agroforestry systems, tree flowering, seed production, and gum exudation cycles may be affected by altered flowering patterns and heat stress. Notably, occasional extreme heat events have also been observed to stimulate gum production.
5. While past extreme droughts (e.g., in the 1970s) caused notable stress on gum-producing *Acacia* species, no widespread mortality has been recorded in recent decades. On the contrary, *Acacias* in general and *Acacia senegal* in particular are ecologically well-adapted to semi-arid climates, tolerating absolute temperature ranges from 14–48°C and rainfall from as low as 200 mm/year. These species exhibit strong physiological resilience to prolonged dry spells, provided degradation drivers are controlled, and trees are properly managed. Thus, their restoration remains a viable and climate-resilient strategy. Nevertheless, the degradation of dryland forests and ecosystems pushes the landscape toward open shrublands or bare soils. The risk of wind erosion, fire outbreaks, and sand dune mobilization is expected to increase unless land cover is restored at scale.
6. The economic consequences of these climate impacts are profound. Agriculture, forestry, and livestock together contribute over 40% of employment in the targeted regions and are all directly exposed to climate shocks. Without immediate investment in climate-resilient land management, restoration-based livelihoods, and community preparedness, the impacts of climate change will continue to undermine ecosystem services, food security, and local development in the Gum Arabic Belt.

Biodiversity

7. The landscapes targeted by the project, namely the wilayas of Assaba and Trarza, lie within the Sahelo-Sudanian ecological zone, a transition band between the arid Sahara and the more humid Sudanian savannahs. This zone is characterized by a mosaic of wooded savannahs, open dry forests, degraded rangelands, and fragmented agrosilvopastoral systems. Vegetation structure varies widely across the landscape, with native species such as *Acacia senegal*, *Balanites aegyptiaca*, *Ziziphus mauritiana*, and *Faidherbia albida* commonly associated with millet fields, transhumance corridors, and seasonal waterways. However, in many areas, tree cover has declined sharply due to intensive fuelwood harvesting and the absence of regeneration protocols. According to recent household surveys, 40% and 44% of respondents in Trarza cited *Acacia senegal* and *Ziziphus mauritiana*, respectively, as species in decline, citing grazing pressure and tree cutting as key drivers. The herbaceous layer is increasingly dominated by annual grasses and drought-adapted legumes, while remnant *Acacia* stands are aging and isolated, with minimal natural regeneration observed in non-fenced areas. Regeneration is further constrained by frequent browsing, recurring bushfires, and erratic rainfall patterns, which together are pushing the vegetation towards low-diversity, shrub-dominated systems.

8. Although Mauritania is not typically classified among the world's biodiversity hotspots, the southern wilayas function as critical ecological transition zones between the Saharan desert to the north and more humid savannahs to the south. The remaining natural and semi-natural vegetation in the Gum Arabic Belt provides habitats for dryland fauna, including gazelles, warthogs, jackals, reptiles, and migratory birds. These ecosystems also serve as key corridors for seasonal livestock mobility and contribute to regional biodiversity connectivity with Senegal and Mali. Riverine forest patches, particularly along tributaries of the Senegal River, offer biodiversity refuges and help stabilize microclimates, especially in areas vulnerable to desertification.

9. The region does not contain official National Parks within the strict project boundaries, but several classified forests and community-managed enclosures ("mises en défens") exist. These include 'forêts classées' designated by the government for protection and restoration (e.g., in Kankossa and Barkéol), and locally designated mises en défens, or community-agreed reforestation zones. While Mauritanian law foresees participatory forest management and the development of local forest plans, in practice many areas lack functioning management structures or clear enforcement mechanisms.

Agricultural practices

10. Agriculture and pastoralism form the economic backbone of the Assaba and Trarza regions, where over 75% of the active population is engaged in crop production, livestock rearing, or both. In these predominantly rural zones, livelihoods are closely tied to rainfed subsistence farming, seasonal transhumance, and small-scale exploitation of NTFPs such as gum arabic. Agroforestry, though widespread in traditional systems, remains underdeveloped in terms of productivity and lacks systematic technical support. Livestock husbandry—particularly of cattle, goats, and sheep—is a key component of agrosilvopastoral systems and a source of both income and cultural identity, with herding routes overlapping with cultivation zones.

11. The Assaba region, particularly around Kankossa and Barkéol, is a major area of rainfed cereal production, while in Trarza, irrigated perimeters near the Senegal River support horticulture and rice production. However, agricultural systems remain highly vulnerable to climate change, with rainfall irregularities, prolonged dry spells, and increasing heat stress reducing yields and undermining food security. Soil fertility has declined across most cultivated zones due to continuous cropping without organic inputs or nutrient management, leading to erosion, compaction, and nutrient depletion. Farmers often rely on extensive land use strategies rather than intensification, which further accelerates the degradation of marginal lands.

12. Unsustainable agricultural practices are widespread. These include:

- Clearing of tree cover to expand fields, often without integrating agroforestry components;

- Use of fire to clear fields or manage weeds, leading to the loss of regenerating species;
- Limited use of compost, organic matter or soil conservation techniques;
- Inadequate access to improved seeds and extension services, especially in remote areas;
- Fragmented implementation of Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and limited adoption of agroecological practices due to weak follow-up mechanisms and lack of farmer incentives.

13. Despite their critical importance, sustainable land management (SLM) practices remain largely absent or limited in scale. The use of soil conservation techniques, such as zaï pits, half-moons (demi-lunes), or mulching with compost and organic matter, has been introduced mainly through isolated NGO- or project-led pilots and has yet to be institutionalized within extension services of MEDD/DREDD. Similarly, agroforestry integration (such as the planting of fodder trees in gardens or croplands) is uncommon and often poorly understood at the community level. The absence of adapted extension services, input supply chains, and long-term support mechanisms has hindered the uptake of these practices. While some FAO and IFAD-supported projects have introduced innovations on a demonstration scale, these remain exceptions.

Governance mechanisms in support of natural resource management

14. The governance of natural resources in Mauritania operates within a multi-level framework, integrating national, regional, and community-based institutions. At the national level, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) is the central authority, responsible for formulating environmental policies, overseeing natural resource management, and implementing sustainable development strategies. This includes leading efforts against desertification, advancing the Great Green Wall initiative, and ensuring Mauritania's adherence to international environmental agreements. Regionally, the Direction Régionale de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable (DREDD) acts as the MEDD's decentralized arm, tasked with implementing these policies on the ground, coordinating between national policies and local realities, and supporting community organizations involved in resource management.

15. Community-based organizations form the backbone of local natural resource governance, with Associations de Gestion Locale Collective (AGLCs) and Associations de Développement Communautaire (ADCs) being the only community-based entities recognized by the MEDD for managing communal lands. AGLCs, in particular, are legally recognized local user groups designed for the collective management of forest, pasture, and agricultural resources across inter-communal landscapes, often encompassing multiple villages based on a landscape approach rather than administrative boundaries. Their mandate is clearly defined within Mauritania's environmental legal framework, with precedents set by Law No. 1998.016, which previously supported similar management associations. While successful models of AGLCs have been implemented in gum-producing regions like Guidimakha and Hodh El Gharbi, such mechanisms are not yet functional in Trarza and Assaba, where the GEF8 project will intervene.

16. Similarly, ADCs focus on broader community development activities, and are typically established at the village level, including natural resource management, livelihood diversification, and social services. ADCs often collaborate with AGLCs and local authorities to implement integrated rural development projects supported by international partners such as IFAD and the World Bank. However, it is important to note that given the limited scope of ADCs responsibilities at the village level, these do not cover ecosystem governance matters over inter-village or inter-communal landscapes, limiting their impact for integrated land use planning and agro-silvopastoral ecosystem interventions. The ADCs would be the starting point for any future natural resource management activities.

17. Despite the emphasis on community empowerment within this decentralized framework, challenges persist, including local capacity constraints, limited financial resources, and the need for stronger institutional

coordination. Recent projects supported by international partners such as FAO, IFAD, and the World Bank have aimed to strengthen AGLCs and ADCs by providing technical assistance, facilitating financial access, and promoting gender inclusion. These initiatives seek to enhance local governance effectiveness, improve sustainable land management, and develop NTFP value chains, thereby contributing to both ecological restoration and poverty reduction. The GEF8 project aims to build upon these experiences, drawing insights from successful models like the GIZ-supported 'Management of Natural Resources' (ProGRN) project.

18. This decentralized ecosystem governance framework of the MEDD emphasizes community empowerment to address these issues. However, challenges remain in capacity constraints at the local level, limited financial resources, and the need to strengthen institutional coordination.

The main causes of land degradation

19. The main causes of land and natural resource degradation in the Gum Arabic Belt of Mauritania include:

- Clearing of tree cover for extensive cultivation, often through unsupervised slash-and-burn techniques;
- Uncontrolled bushfires, whether linked to land clearing, hunting, or traditional pastoral fire-setting practices are insufficiently controlled by fire breaks and lead to the destruction of many thousands of hectares with negative impact on livestock, especially in Assaba;
- The combination of natural droughts and human-induced land degradation has led to increased wind erosion, carrying large quantities of soil into the remaining wetlands (e.g. ponds of Kankossa and Kéwala) thus reducing water availability for livestock;
- Overgrazing by livestock, especially during the dry season when natural regeneration is most vulnerable, compounded by the absence of regulated transhumance corridors;
- Fuelwood extraction and charcoal production, which remain the primary energy sources in rural areas, leading to the decline of mature Acacia stands and other dryland species;
- Unregulated harvesting of NTFPs, particularly the tapping of Acacia senegal without adherence to sustainable saignée (bleeding) practices, and overharvesting of fodder and medicinal plants;
- Reduced fallow periods and lack of soil fertility management, resulting in nutrient depletion and soil structure breakdown;
- Inappropriate methods for irrigation development have led to the abandonment of hundreds of hectares of irrigated land, further contributing to land degradation, especially in the Trarza wilaya (e.g. in the M'Pourié and Bellara perimeters);
- Climate change impacts, including prolonged droughts, increasingly erratic rainfall, and higher average temperatures, which exacerbate erosion, reduce germination rates, and contribute to tree mortality;
- Encroachment on degraded rangelands by farming activities, leading to fragmentation of traditional pastoral systems and increased land-use conflict.

Non-timber forest product value chains/markets

20. Mauritania's non-timber forest products (NTFPs), particularly Gum Arabic, have historically been crucial for food, medicine, and income, and were once a significant export. However, the sector is currently underdeveloped and highly informal. Challenges include low productivity, aging tree stands, unsustainable

harvesting practices, and minimal value addition at the community level. Most gum collectors operate individually, lacking training in sustainable methods and access to markets beyond local intermediaries. Beyond Gum Arabic, other NTFPs like desert dates (*Balanites aegyptiaca*), jujube (*Ziziphus mauritiana*), *Boscia senegalensis*, and *Sclerocarya birrea* hold significant economic and nutritional value, being used for oil, traditional medicine, food, and soap. Furthermore, fodder shrubs and trees like *Acacia senegal* and *Acacia seyal* are vital for livestock sustenance during dry seasons, contributing to agro-silvopastoral systems that support land restoration, soil fertility, and biodiversity .

21. Furthermore, the demand for NTFPs in Mauritania is rising due to their diverse uses and shifting consumer preferences favouring natural and sustainably sourced products, amplified by a growing middle class . Gum Arabic, primarily from *Acacia senegal*, is a flagship NTFP with significant economic and ecological importance, valued globally at approximately \$900 million in 2022 and projected to reach \$1.8 billion by 2032 . African exports of raw Gum Arabic have also seen substantial growth, reflecting rising international demand . Despite this potential, the value chains for these products are poorly structured, lacking post-harvest processing, product standardization, and cooperative marketing. Most products are sold raw at low prices, and women , who are often the primary collectors, face limited access to equipment, training, and financing to improve product quality or access higher-value markets. The absence of market information, certification, and traceability systems further restricts opportunities for export and niche-market development.

22. Constraints affecting NTFP value chains in Mauritania include:

- Lack of organization among producers, collectors, and processors.
- Lack of market information system that provides regular and transparent pricing updates from different markets.
- Lack of tools and methodology for the visibility and assessment of NTFPs.
- Limited access to technologies for production, processing and marketing of NTFPs,
- Absence of quality standards or guidelines for sustainable harvesting and processing.
- Limited knowledge of market requirements, both domestic and international.
- Gender disparities in ownership, decision-making, and benefit-sharing.
- Insufficient support from public extension services and weak links to research institutions.
- No national information system on NTFP pricing, volumes, or demand trends.
- Lack of connection and collaboration between producers/collectors and the buyers.
- Lack of adapted and improved material and equipment for harvest, processing and marketing of NTFPs.
- Limited access to investment and finance .

23. Yet, there is growing recognition of the role that NTFPs can play in restoration-based economies and resilient livelihoods. Gum Arabic is included in national development and export strategies, while several pilot projects (e.g., Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières, FAO) have tested models for improved harvesting and local processing. However, these remain fragmented and lack scale.

24. Furthermore, the development of value chains in coherence with existing international standards, such as the Association for International Promotion of Gums (AIPG) can provide additional benefits beyond increased tree cover and land restoration. Aligning Mauritania's gum arabic production with international standards, such as the AIPG Good Practices Guidelines, can significantly enhance marketability and competitiveness while promoting environmentally responsible harvesting and capacity building among local stakeholders, ultimately supporting both ecological restoration and economic development.

Role of women in Gum Arabic and NTFP value chains

25. Women in Mauritania have traditionally been central to the collection and primary processing of NTFPs, including gum arabic, wild fruits, and medicinal plants. Their involvement is particularly pronounced in the post-harvest stages—cleaning, sorting, drying, and sometimes selling products at local markets. However, their participation in higher-value activities (such as bulk marketing, export, or value-added transformation) remains limited due to social norms, lack of access to credit, and exclusion from decision-making structures .

26. Recent interventions, such as the GIZ ProGRN project, have made significant strides in promoting gender inclusion. The project's evaluation highlights that, prior to the introduction of user-based collective management (via AGLCs), women had little to no say in resource governance. With the establishment of AGLCs, women's participation in decision-making—particularly in financial management—has increased, with 30% of key financial positions in newly created associations now held by women . This inclusion is critical for ensuring that women's voices are reflected in resource management and benefit-sharing.

27. Despite these advances, persistent barriers remain. Women often lack secure land tenure and access to formal credit, which limits their ability to invest in improved harvesting tools, storage, or value addition . Social norms may restrict their mobility or involvement in formal producer organizations. Furthermore, technical training and extension services are frequently targeted at men, leaving women with less access to innovation and market information.

Conflicts between community groups/land users

28. In the Assaba and Trarza wilayas, conflicts over natural resources are on the rise, primarily due to overlapping claims on agricultural lands, livestock pastures, and forest products. These disputes are most common during the dry season, when access to scarce water, shaded areas, and residual pastures becomes highly contested between sedentary farmers and transhumant pastoralists. Additionally, unclear boundaries and governance of community-enclosed restoration zones ("mises en defens) frequently lead to disagreements among different user groups. The situation is worsened by unclear land tenure arrangements, as most rural land fall under customary systems with limited formal recognition or demarcation , and users often lack documentation of rights, making to challenging to enforce agreements and prevent encroachment, particularly in areas experiencing degradation or agricultural expansion. This puts valuable agroforestry systems, gum-producing tree stands and natural regeneration zones at risk.

29. These conflicts are not limited to inter-group disputes; tensions also exist within communities, often revolving around access to resources and decision-making power. Women, who traditionally manage activities like non-timber forest product harvesting, are frequently excluded from crucial decisions regarding fencing or restoration sites. Similarly, youth are often marginalized from community-level governance, despite their vital roles in herding and labor. Existing conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms are weak, with local authorities and traditional leaders lacking consistent or formalized roles in natural resource governance. While community-based entities like ADCs and AGLCs are emerging, they need significant technical guidance and support to ensure their legitimacy and inclusivity across all user groups. To address these challenges, the project will focus on strengthening inclusive governance platforms, developing co-created land-use plans, and supporting local dialogue mechanisms that specifically incorporate the

perspectives of women, youth, and mobile populations, with a particular emphasis on integrated resource management and negotiated access agreements in areas where agricultural expansion overlaps with pastoral corridors or reforestation efforts.

Main policy documents relevant for the proposed project

30. The following national strategies and regulatory frameworks are particularly important for the implementation of the proposed Gum Arabic and dryland restoration project in Mauritania:

- The National Strategy for the Environment and Sustainable Development (SNEDD, 2017–2030) is the overarching environmental framework. It promotes sustainable management of natural resources, land restoration, biodiversity conservation, and adaptation to climate change.
- The National Reforestation Strategy (Stratégie Nationale de Reboisement, 2022) provides the roadmap for national efforts to restore degraded forest and agrosilvopastoral areas.
- The Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC, 2021) under the Paris Agreement commits Mauritania to reforesting over 200,000 ha of degraded lands by 2030, reducing emissions from land-use change, and promoting sustainable forest and rangeland management.
- The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP, 2011–2020, extension in progress) emphasizes dryland ecosystem conservation, the protection of medicinal and gum-producing species, and the importance of local community roles in biodiversity governance.
- The Great Green Wall National Action Plan (PNM-GMV, 2012, updated in 2021) focuses on land restoration, agroforestry, and natural resource governance across the Sahelian zone. It integrates sustainable livelihoods with ecosystem rehabilitation and supports regional coordination with other GWG countries. The targeted wilayas of Assaba and Trarza fall within its intervention zones.
- The Decentralization Framework (Code des Collectivités Territoriales, 2018) assigns increasing responsibilities to communes in land management, planning, and environmental protection. It provides a legal basis for integrating local land use plans (PUTs) and the creation of community-managed enclosures and resource governance platforms such as AGLCs and ADCs.
- The Forest Code (Code Forestier, Loi n° 97007, 1997) was developed to combat desertification and implement Mauritania's commitments to natural environmental conservation, though it did not sufficiently incorporate participatory dimensions.
- The Forest Code (Code Forestier, Loi 2007-055, 2007) and its implementing decree (Décret d'application 104-2009) introduce innovations for local and participatory management of natural resources, including the decentralization of forest classification and circulation of forest products, allowing local collectives to delegate management to associations. The Agricultural Development Policy (Politique Nationale de Développement Agricole - PNDA, 2015–2025) promotes sustainable intensification, climate resilience, and value chain development. It acknowledges the role of trees in farming systems but lacks specific incentives for agroecology or agroforestry integration. The new version currently under review is expected to reinforce these aspects.
- Mauritania's Gender Strategy for the Environment Sector (drafted under the SNEDD) promotes women's participation in resource governance and restoration activities. It guides gender mainstreaming across land-use planning, restoration, and rural entrepreneurship.

- The Environment Code (Code de l'Environnement, 2000) provides for the safeguarding of natural resources, stipulating rational and balanced management of forests, protected areas, and flora and fauna to prevent overexploitation and preserve ecological balance.
- The Pastoral Code (Loi 2000-044 portant code pastoral en Mauritanie, 2000) defines concepts and principles for rational management of pastoral areas, establishes precise rules for all aspects of pastoral activity, and aims to limit conflicts between livestock farming and agriculture by setting up new resolution mechanisms.
- Decree 2000/089 (2000) replaced an earlier decree, modifying the criteria for land development to include water retention dikes and tree planting as means to ensure land development, which is considered favorable for combating desertification.
- The Water Code (Loi 2005-030 portant code de l'eau, 2005) abrogates a previous ordinance and governs all aspects related to the exploitation of water resources, adapting the regime to the needs of sustainable development and the fight against biodiversity degradation.
- The National Food Security Strategy (Stratégie Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire - SNSA, Vision 2030) supports the revival of plant and animal productions to promote food security through various means, including land reform, protection of local productions, adapted financing policies, and the promotion of youth employment and gender integration
- The National Livestock Development Plan (Plan National de Développement de l'Elevage - PNDE, 2018-2025) aims to support and secure pastoral and traditional livestock farming, recognizing its importance in production and natural resource management, especially in the face of climate change.
- National Financial Inclusion Strategy (Stratégie Nationale d'Inclusion Financière - SNIF, 2023-2025): This strategy aims to significantly increase access to and usage of quality financial services for individuals, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), and other vulnerable groups.

Barriers to the sustainable management of natural resources

31. In Mauritania, despite strategic frameworks like the National Strategy for the Environment and Sustainable Development and the Forest Code, the operationalization of these policies at the local level is weak. Local authorities and community organizations often lack access to the practical tools and legal guidelines needed for implementation, leading to minimal enforcement and fragmented forest governance. This is particularly evident in Assaba and Trarza, where communes and their organizations have a limited understanding of regulations concerning forest protection, restoration, and non-timber forest product (NTFP) exploitation. Furthermore, intersectoral coordination between key ministries (Environment, Agriculture, Interior) is limited, especially locally, resulting in overlapping responsibilities, inconsistent planning, and missed opportunities for integrated land use and forest management. Existing Communal Development Plans are often outdated or not aligned with national restoration and climate resilience strategies, hindering coordinated interventions and exacerbating land-use conflicts due to inconsistent and gender-unresponsive land use planning.

32. Land tenure insecurity poses a significant barrier to sustainable forest and silvopastoral resource management, with a lack of land titles, unclear ownership, and overlapping claims leading to frequent disputes. Communities are often unaware of their rights and responsibilities under environmental laws, undermining incentives for long-term tree stewardship and the effectiveness of protection measures. Additionally, technical and operational capacities at the local level are inadequate, with forest agents and decentralized environmental services facing shortages in staff, training, and equipment, limiting their ability to support local organizations and enforce regulations. Community-based entities also lack the capacity to

implement improved land management practices, leading to continued unsustainable practices like overgrazing and uncontrolled harvesting. The NTFP value chains, including gum arabic, remain weakly organized, with inactive or fragmented producer cooperatives, inconsistent product quality, and a lack of local processing infrastructure. Women and youth, key actors in NTFP collection, have limited access to training, markets, and microfinance, resulting in low and unstable revenues that disincentivize sustainable harvesting. Finally, significant knowledge gaps exist, including a lack of ecological assessments, baseline data on biodiversity and forest regeneration, limited availability of climate-resilient seed varieties, and insufficient sharing of good practices with neighboring countries, all of which constrain effective planning and adaptive management.

Project Locations and Targeting Approach

33. The GEF8 GUMREST project employs a multi-layered targeting approach to prioritize geographic areas, restoration sites, and beneficiaries in Mauritania's southern Trarza and Assaba wilayas, which form part of the Gum Arabic Belt. This strategy balances ecological restoration objectives with socio-economic inclusivity, ensuring alignment with national priorities such as the Great Green Wall Initiative and the National Reforestation Strategy (2022). The project has preselected 20 municipalities (14 in Trarza, 6 in Assaba), all characterized by high gum arabic production potential and moderate to severe land degradation. From these, 10 priority municipalities (6 in Trarza and 4 in Assaba) were identified through a multi-criteria analysis (for greater detail, please see annex Z). Population density played a critical role, with areas such as Tiguent (Trarza) and Hamed (Assaba) prioritized due to their higher concentrations of communities dependent on agro-silvopastoral livelihoods. Synergies with existing initiatives (such as PRAPS II agro-pastoral charters and GCF-funded SURAGGWA project) were considered to ensure complementary and avoid duplication, particularly for transhumant populations. Ecological homogeneity guided the clustering of sites into contiguous zones to facilitate integrated landscape-level restoration.

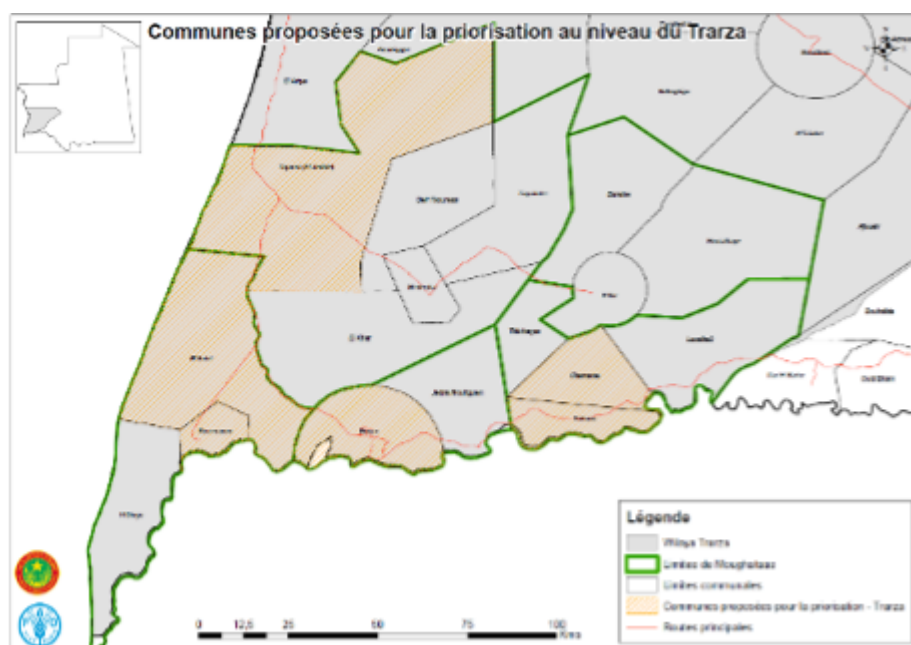


Image 8: Prioritized communes in Trarza for restoration site identification

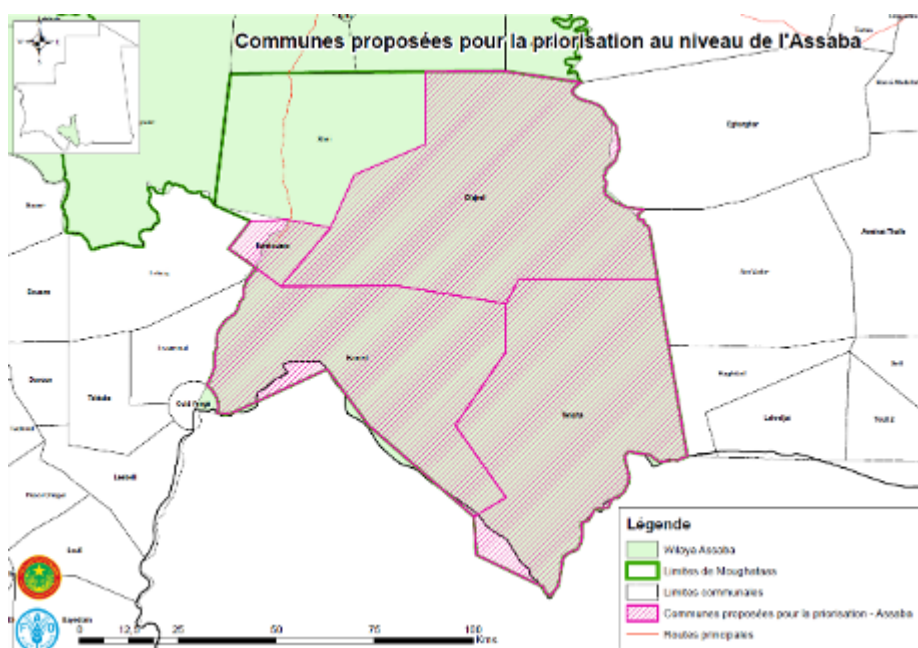


Image 9: Prioritized communes in Assaba for restoration site identification

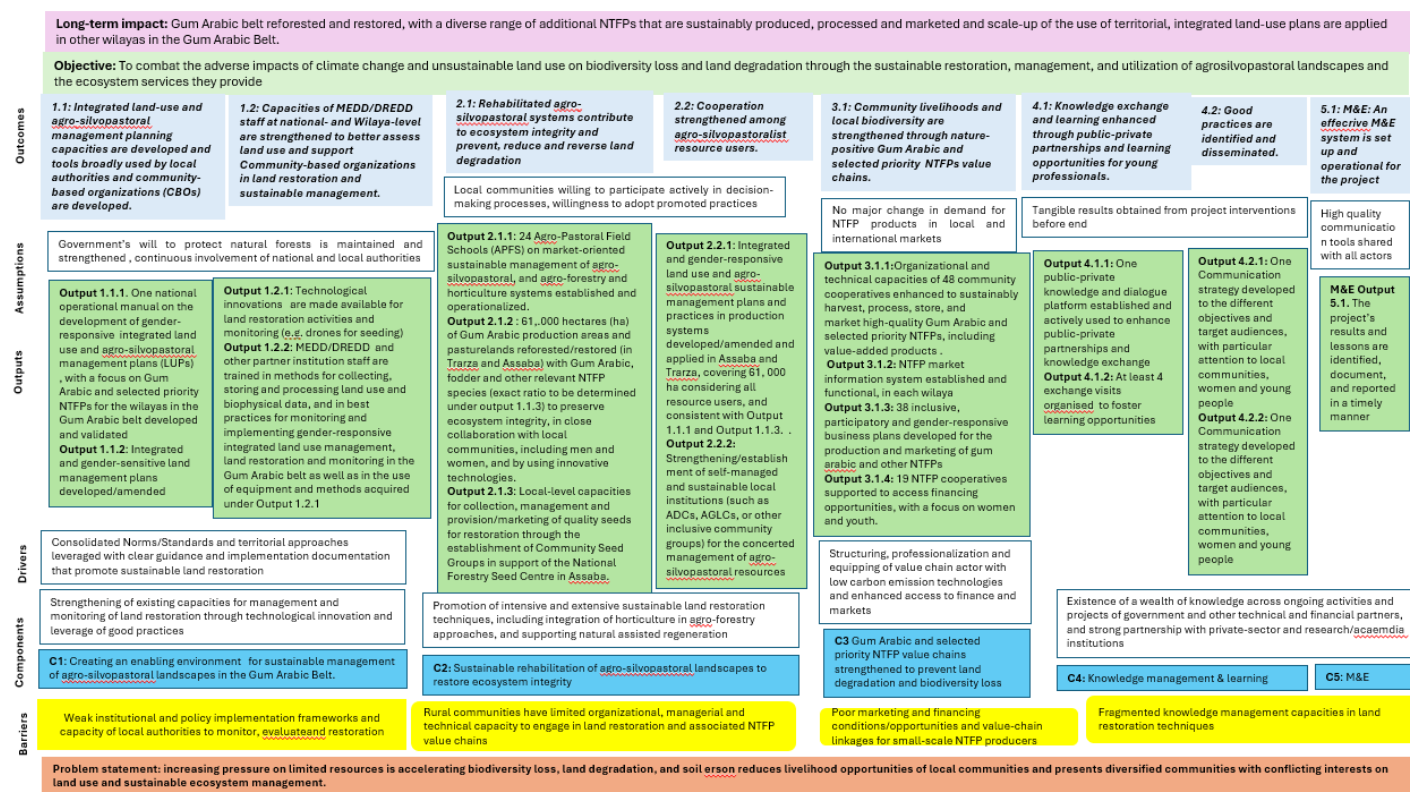
34. Restoration sites will be identified through a combination of geospatial analysis and community consultations (Output 2.2.1 and Output 2.2.2). Inclusion criteria emphasize areas with moderate-to-severe degradation, including dunes, overgrazed pastures, and low-productivity gum arabic zones. The presence of active village organizations engaged in gum arabic collection or NTFP processing—even at subsistence levels—ensures local ownership. Sites must also demonstrate compatibility with complementary projects (e.g., GCF SURAGGWA, PRAPS II) to leverage shared infrastructure and avoid overlap. Clear land tenure arrangements are mandatory to mitigate conflicts. Exclusion criteria eliminate areas with unresolved resource disputes or redundant interventions, ensuring efficient resource allocation. Beneficiaries include smallholder farmers, pastoralists, NTFP collectors, and cooperatives, prioritized through a dual lens of socio-economic and technical factors. Socio-economic criteria prioritize households deriving $\geq 30\%$ of income from gum arabic/NTFP activities, with a strong emphasis on gender equity (50% female participation in cooperatives) and youth inclusion. Market alignment ensures beneficiaries can meet quality standards for local and regional NTFP markets, while economic viability assessments verify their capacity to generate sustainable income through restored value chains. Technical criteria require basic skills in NTFP harvesting or processing, willingness to adopt sustainable practices, and readiness to form cooperatives. Benefit-sharing mechanisms are mandated to ensure equitable resource distribution among group members. The NTFP species prioritized for intervention include: gum arabic (*Acacia* spp), balanites (*Balanites aegyptiaca*), jujube (*Ziziphus mauritiana*), baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), doum palm (*Hyphaene thebaica*), henna (*Lawsonia inermis*), as well as fodder and grass species.

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

THEORY OF CHANGE AND DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT COMPONENTS

35. The Theory of Change (TOC) of GUMREST rests on the principle that inclusive community participation in the identification of lands (informed by scientific evidence and technical assistance) and restoration activities, to the management and monitoring of restored areas lays the groundwork for sustainable change. The project aims to reinforce this through the provision of capacity building activities at national, local and community-levels through targeted capacity building activities to ensure restoration and protection of restored areas, as well as providing avenues for income-generating activities anchored in the restoration activities through value chain development and gender-responsive community co-management of natural resources. 77.



The project's Theory of Change is based on four interconnected causal pathways:

- IF national and regional authorities are equipped with effective operational and implementation tools, and capacities for gender-responsive and participatory land use and agro-silvopastoral ecosystem planning, and IF local users (including pastoralists, farmers, and women) are actively engaged in planning and applying resource agreements and their subsequent management and monitoring, THEN pressure on natural resources will decrease, land and resource conflicts will be reduced, and management of agro-silvopastoral landscapes will become more equitable and sustainable.
- IF community capacities and extension services are strengthened, and IF innovative restoration technologies (e.g., drone-based seeding) are deployed alongside sustainable and traditional practices (e.g., assisted natural regeneration and half-moon construction), THEN degraded forests and pastures will be rehabilitated, improving ecosystem services, reversing land degradation, and increasing resilience to climate shocks, especially for women.
- IF producer cooperatives and other NTFP value chain actors (especially women-led) are organized, trained and equipped to sustainably harvest, process, and market Gum Arabic and other NTFPs, and IF private sector linkages and access to microfinance are strengthened, THEN communities will derive greater economic value from restored landscapes, incentivizing long-term stewardship and reducing reliance on unsustainable practices like tree-cutting and overgrazing.

- IF knowledge on sustainable land and NTFP management is documented, shared through platforms and public-private partnerships, and incorporated into local practices through youth and women training embedded in hands-on knowledge exchanges in communities where these practices have been put into practice, THEN best practices will scale across the Gum Arabic Belt, enhancing replication, sustainability, and long-term impact.

36. The objective of this project is to combat land degradation through the restoration, sustainable management, and use of agro-silvopastoral landscapes and associated ecosystem services and goods, with a particular focus on the valorisation of Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFPs. It aims to reverse the trend of degradation and biodiversity loss by integrating ecological restoration with sustainable livelihoods in Mauritania's Gum Arabic Belt, targeting the wilayas of Trarza and Assaba. The project is structured into five interlinked and complementary components: i) Creating an enabling environment for sustainable management of agro-silvopastoral landscapes in the Gum Arabic Belt; ii) Sustainable rehabilitation of agro-silvopastoral landscapes to restore ecosystem integrity ; iii) Gum Arabic and selected priority value chains strengthened to prevent land degradation and biodiversity loss; iv) Knowledge management and learning; and v) Monitoring and Evaluation. The project's components, outcomes, outputs and activities are described below.

37. The project is designed to address the main obstacles standing between the current situation and the goal of sustainable, adaptive and participatory management of these resources:

- Weak institutional and policy implementation frameworks and local government capacities to monitor, assess and restore degraded agro-silvopastoral landscapes, enforce land use regulations, and ensure long-term stewardship of restored areas;
- Rural communities have limited organizational, managerial and technical capacities to engage in land restoration and associated NTFP value chains , and face challenges in coordinating and harmonizing the sustainable use of resources among different user groups (such as agro-pastoralists, pastoralists, women's groups, and youth);
- Poor marketing and financing conditions/opportunities and linkages to the value chain for smallholder NTFPs producers;
- Fragmented knowledge management capacities in land restoration techniques.

Component 1: Creating an enabling environment for sustainable management of agro-silvopastoral landscapes in the Gum Arabic Belt.

Outcome 1.1: Integrated land-use and agro-silvopastoral management planning capacities are developed and tools broadly used by local authorities and community-based organizations (CBOs)

Indicators/Targets:

- One national operational manual on gender-responsive integrated land use and agro-silvopastoral management in the Gum Arabic Belt developed and validated
- One gender-responsive national Gum Arabic and selected NTFP strategy developed and validated, with a focus on public-private partnerships

38. Component 1 will focus on strengthening the enabling environment for land restoration and sustainable management in the Gum Arabic Belt by improving the policy framework, planning and implementation tools, and institutional capacity at both central and decentralized levels. The component will ensure that national and local authorities and resource users are equipped with clear and practical guidance,

inclusive planning methodologies, and functioning governance platforms for integrated and climate-resilient land use.

39. Under Output 1.1.1, the project will develop and validate a national operational manual that provides standardized procedures and tools for preparing gender-responsive and agro-silvopastoral ecosystem-based land use plans with a focus on Gum Arabic and other priority NTFP species. The manual will be co-developed through a consultative process with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD), its regional directorates (DREDDs), and local stakeholders, ensuring national ownership and field relevance. The operational manual development will capitalize on existing experiences across wilayas and aims to be piloted through Output 1.1.2 and implemented through Component 2 activities.

40. Under Output 1.1.2, the project will develop a national strategy for Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFP products with a focus on strengthening production, processing and marketing, in alignment with Association for International Promotion of Gum (AIPG) standards, through an inclusive, consultative process, including with the private sector. The development of the national strategy will benefit from international expertise in Non-Timber Forest Product Value Chain development with a view to expanding commercial opportunities and will be validated and adopted through two national consultations that will include all relevant national and local authorities, community-based organizations, as well as private sector stakeholders representing the whole value chain.

41. This component will be implemented by MEDD and NGOs, supported through technical inputs from the PMU and international expertise that will be recruited to prepare technical inputs and guidance to the national policy- and strategy development processes, with oversight from the Project Task Force and Lead Technical Officer. Under Output 1.1.1, the MEDD will benefit from the recruitment of a Chief Technical Advisor, International Land Restoration Expert and an International Non-Timber Forest Product Value Chain Specialist, to ensure technical stewardship of the review of existing materials and preparation of draft documents. MEDD will utilize its convening power and mandate to ensure that an inclusive process informs the preparation, discussion, drafting and validation of the National Operational Manual, as well as the Gum Arabic and priority NTFP national strategy. The activities relating to the preparation of training manuals and training for the use and maintenance of drone technologies will be sub-contracted to drone operating service providers, including for general maintenance of the drones throughout the project lifetime. Under Output 1.1.2, MEDD will identify relevant service providers for the preparation of training materials and undertake relevant trainings for the relevant staff identified by MEDD and the PMU. Finally, site coordination and monitoring in collaboration with participating communities will be ensured by one National Site Coordinator per wilaya, who will benefit from training on innovative and community-based land restoration monitoring approaches (under Activity 1.2.2.1. and 1.2.2.5), as well as support from the drone operations for land use monitoring.

42. The activities under this Component will benefit from MEDD/DREDD in the form of in-kind contributions of existing MEDD staff in support of the PMU and the national stakeholder engagement process required to ensure national ownership and buy-in, and to ensure validation of the documents by relevant stakeholders. This activity will also benefit from co-financing from PRAPS II to ensure synergies of the strategy development process takes into due consideration pastoralists and livestock development issues.

Output 1.1.1: One national operational manual on the development of gender-responsive integrated land use and agro-silvopastoral management plans (LUPs), with a focus on Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFPs for the wilayas in the Gum Arabic belt developed and validated

Activities Description

1.1.1.1 Develop one national operational manual, in French and Arabic to facilitate full accessibility and understanding of the range of natural resources users, through a consultative process to guide MEDD/DREDD

representatives and local authorities on best practices for developing gender-responsive integrated land-use and agro-silvopastoral management plans (LUP) , focusing on Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFPs

1.1.1.2 Organize two national consultations for the validation and adoption of the operational manual by national stakeholders

Output 1.1.2: One national strategy – with focus on private-public partnerships – for the development of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs value chains finalized, with focus on the entire value chain, and in support of gender equality.

Activities Description

1.1.2.1 Develop one national strategy, including quality standards for the production, processing and marketing of Gum Arabic (aligned with AIPG standards) and other selected priority NTFPs through an inclusive, consultative process

1.1.2.2 Organize two national consultations for the validation and adoption of the national strategy and quality standards

Outcome 1.2: Capacities of MEDD/DREDD staff at national- and Wilaya-level are strengthened to better assess land use and support Community-based organizations (including Collective Local Management Associations (AGLCs) and local development committees (ADCs)) in land restoration and sustainable management.

Indicators/Targets:

- 240 MEDD/DREDD and other partner institution staff trained on integrated land use planning, restoration monitoring, and gender-responsive approaches, 50% women
- Dimitra club training and operationalization in targeted villages
- 3 drones deployed and used for land restoration and monitoring
- MEDD's national database and M&E providing regular through staff trained on monitoring methodologies aligned with Collect Earth, for integrated reporting for national AFOLU sector
- At least 50% of trained staff able to apply acquired skills for field-level monitoring and planning

43. Outcome 1.2 will focus on building the institutional, technical, and operational capacity of government institutions—particularly the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) and its Regional Directorates (DREDDs), as well as other relevant institutions—to assess, plan, and monitor sustainable land and forest management activities in the Gum Arabic Belt. The component aims to strengthen both upstream planning capabilities and downstream community engagement support functions.

44. Under Output 1.2.1, the project will deploy technological innovations such as drones for aerial seeding and land use monitoring, and train technical staff in their use, maintenance and adaptation between aerial seeding and land use monitoring capabilities, as well as training MEDD/DREDD staff on innovative methodologies for land restoration monitoring. These tools will allow more efficient restoration planning and reduce labor and logistic costs, particularly in remote or degraded areas.

45. Under Output 1.2.2, training modules will be delivered to at least 40 MEDD/DREDD staff on themes including: natural resource assessment, GIS-based land monitoring (e.g., via Collect Earth), restoration tracking, and climate-smart planning. The training will also include social and environmental safeguards,

PSEA protocols, and gender-responsive approaches such as DIMITRA Clubs and equitable benefit-sharing. Staff will be equipped to accompany community-based organizations, including Community Development Associations (ADCs) and Collective Local Management Associations (AGLCs) in planning, field-level supervision, and adaptive management of agro-silvopastoral interventions.

46. Under Output 1.2.3, a localized field-monitoring framework will be established in all 12 targeted AGLC areas, enabling the production of annual restoration reports and feedback loops to inform adaptive implementation. Data from these frameworks will feed into the national MEDD environmental information system, strengthening integration with broader climate and biodiversity commitments.

Output 1.2.1: Technological innovations are made available for land restoration activities and monitoring (e.g. drones for seeding)

Activities Description

1.2.1.1 Procure and deploy 3 drones for aerial seeding and landscape monitoring

Output 1.2.2: MEDD/DREDD and other partner institution staff are trained in methods for collecting, storing and processing land use and biophysical data, and in best practices for monitoring and implementing gender-responsive integrated land use management, land restoration and monitoring in the Gum Arabic belt as well as in the use of equipment and methods acquired under Output 1.2.1

Activities Description

1.2.2.1 Train 120-240 of MEDD/DREDD staff, and other partner institutions on the use of natural resources assessment and land restoration technologies (drones for seeding, sensors and data management tools, including Collect Earth and other GIS/GPS data collection tools and methodologies, to ensure effective surveillance

1.2.2.2 Train 120-240 number of MEDD/DREDD staff and other partner institution on Sustainable Landscape and Natural Resource Management, with a focus on Gum Arabic, selected NTFP species and agro-forestry, including restoration seed management.

1.2.2.3 Train 80-120 number of MEDD/DREDD staff and other partner institution on gender responsive approaches, including DIMITRA clubs, environmental and social safeguards, including PSEA. and ensure implementation of DIMITRA clubs in selected villages, including radio broadcasts

1.2.2.4 Monitor vegetation cover in land restoration sites, in collaboration with community-based organizations involved in land restoration activities.

1.2.2.5 Train 80-120 number of MEDD/DREDD staff on monitoring systems aligned with Collect Earth, for integrated reporting for the national AFOLU sector

Component 2: Sustainable rehabilitation of agro-silvopastoral landscapes to restore ecosystem integrity

Outcome 2.1: Rehabilitated agro-silvopastoral systems contribute to ecosystem integrity and prevent, reduce and reverse land degradation

Indicators/Targets:

- 3,000 ha reforested manually with gum arabic and other NTFPs in fenced communal areas across target 60 villages

- 40,000 ha restored in moderately degraded gum production areas outside fenced zones through sustainable management practices, assisted natural regeneration, and drone seeding.
- 500 ha of severely degraded lands restored through community-based construction of half-moons, zaï pits, and assisted natural regeneration.
- 14,500 ha reforested in severely degraded, inaccessible areas using drone seeding of gum arabic and other well-adapted species.
- 3,000 ha of mobile dunes stabilized through aerial seeding of soil-fixing species, with follow-up by community monitoring groups
- 6 Community Seed Groups established in support of the National Forestry Seed Centre in Assaba.
- 4 to 6 community seed centres constructed to support decentralized production and storage of restoration seeds.
- At least 1.5 million viable seeds produced and marketed annually through community seed centres for restoration purposes.
- 300 community members (at least 70% women) trained in restoration seed collection, storage, management, and marketing as part of the community seed centre system.

47. Outcome 2.1 aims to restore degraded agro-silvopastoral ecosystems across the Gum Arabic Belt of Mauritania, focusing on enhancing ecosystem services, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods through community-based and climate-resilient land management approaches. Activities will target both fenced and unfenced areas and will deploy a combination of manual reforestation, rainwater harvesting, and drone-assisted seeding to regenerate priority native species and restore gum tree systems, other NTFPs, as well as pasture and fodder. Restoration efforts will be tailored to site-specific degradation levels and socio-ecological conditions, promoting nature-based solutions that align with national restoration targets (Cf. Table 3).

48. To strengthen local capacities for sustainable land management, the project will establish 24 Agro-Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) across 60 villages (Output 2.1.1). These schools will function as decentralized platforms for knowledge dissemination and experiential learning on sustainable gum harvesting, agroforestry-based restoration, soil and water conservation, and integrated fodder production. The APFS methodology will foster inclusive learning and strengthen technical capacities among farmers, women, and youth, supporting a shift toward more resilient and productive land use systems.

49. Landscape restoration interventions will be implemented over 61,000 hectares of degraded land (Output 2.1.2), combining biophysical techniques and community engagement. This includes 3,000 ha reforested through manual planting, with 10 new fenced sites and 50 rehabilitated within existing community enclosures. An additional 40,000 ha of moderately degraded land will be restored through sustainable tree management practices (e.g. mulching, use of manure, pruning) to support assisted natural regeneration (ANR). This will be complemented by drone seeding for increasing the number and density of new gum producing trees. In severely degraded areas, the project will target 15,000 ha, creating water and soil retention structures such as half-moons and zaï pits on 500 ha, and drone seeding with gum producing trees on further 14,500 ha. Site selection and treatment types will be informed by land degradation assessments, Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) analyses (Output 2.2.1), and participatory land-use planning, including through the establishment of AGLCs and delegated authority to other community-based organizations where no AGLCs exist or are targeted for establishment by the project (Output 2.2.2.).

50. To ensure long-term sustainability of restoration efforts, the project will strengthen native seed systems through the establishment and operationalization of six Community Seed Groups (Output 2.1.3). These groups will be linked to the National Forestry Seed Centre in Assaba and will receive training, equipment, and infrastructure support. Six community seed storage units will be constructed, and at least 300 individuals (70% of them women) will be trained in native seed collection, cleaning, storage, and marketing, focusing on priority species such as *Acacia senegal*, *Balanites aegyptiaca*, and *Ziziphus mauritiana*. These seed groups will serve as local hubs for restoration materials and income-generating activities, anchoring restoration efforts within community-led, gender-responsive frameworks.

Output 2.1.1: 24 Agro-Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) on market-oriented sustainable management of agro-silvopastoral, and agro-forestry and horticulture systems established and operationalized.

Activities Description

2.1.1.1 Train 24 (12 women, 12 men) Facilitators (Training of Facilitators -ToF) on agro-silvopastoral management and participatory extension methods

2.1.1.2 Establish and operationalize 24 market-oriented Agro-Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) integrating agro-silvopastoral management and smallholder horticulture empowerment and promotion modules, including small-scale water use systems (solar-powered pumps, drip irrigation, etc..) in selected sites.

Output 2.1.2: 61,000 hectares (ha) of Gum Arabic production areas and pasturelands reforested/restored (in Trarza and Assaba) with Gum Arabic, fodder and other relevant NTFP species (exact ratio to be determined under output 1.1.3) to preserve ecosystem integrity, in close collaboration with local communities, including men and women, and by using innovative technologies.

Activities Description

2.1.2.1 Reforest 3,000 hectares manually with gum trees and other NTFP species to establish sustainable silvopastoral systems in fenced communal areas in 60 villages (10 villages with new fencing, 50 villages with existing fencing).

2.1.2.2 Reforest/ rehabilitate 40,000 hectares of moderately degraded gum production areas and pasturelands outside fenced areas through sustainable tree management, assisted natural regeneration, and the use of drone seeding.

2.1.2.3 Restore 15,000 hectares of severely degraded gum production areas and pasturelands, including 500 ha through community engagement in the construction of water and soil retention structures (half-moons and zaï pits) supporting assisted natural regeneration (ANR), and 14,500 ha through drone seeding of gum producing trees and other NTFPs species.

2.1.2.4 Fix 3.000 ha of mobile dunes with well-adapted soil-fixing species through drone seeding.

Output 2.1.3: Local-level capacities for collection, management and provision/marketing of quality seeds for restoration through the establishment of Community Seed Groups in support of National Forestry Seed Centre in Assaba.

Activities Description

2.1.3.1 Establish 6 Community Seed Groups in support of the National Forestry Seed Centre in Assaba.

2.1.3.2 Construct 4–6 seed centres and equip them for seed storage and processing.

2.1.3.3 Community seed centres produce at least 1.5 million viable seeds for restoration.

2.1.3.4 Train 300 community members (70 % women) on restoration seed collection, storage, management and marketing as part of the community seed centres.

Outcome 2.2: Cooperation is strengthened among agro-silvopastoralist resource users

Indicators/Targets:

- 2 maps produced to identify priority zones for restoration, degraded lands, and existing fenced areas
- 48 multi-stakeholder consultations conducted to support co-development of land use plans, ensuring at least 50% participation of women
- 60 local communities mobilized (50% women) and involved in development of integrated land-use and agro-silvopastoral management plans, identification of restoration sites and species
- 12 integrated, gender-responsive land use and management plans validated and applied across 60 villages and a total of 61,000 ha of land (the same 61,000 ha to be restored under this project)
- 4–6 AGLCs established or revitalized with functional governance frameworks, encompassing between 25–30 project intervention villages, with minimum 50% representation of women, including in management committees
- 2,400 resource users trained in the participatory management and monitoring of natural resources, 50% women

51. Outcome 2.2 aims to strengthen the inclusive and collaborative governance of agro-silvopastoral landscapes in the regions of Assaba and Trarza by empowering local communities and institutions to jointly plan, manage, and monitor natural resources. Recognizing that land degradation and conflict are often rooted in weak governance, unclear mandates, and fragmented decision-making, the project will support the establishment or revitalization of community-based organizations and participatory land-use planning processes, under the oversight of local authorities and technical partners. These efforts will ensure long-term ownership, equity, and sustainability of restoration activities.

52. To support evidence-based planning and equitable land access, the project will first produce two high-resolution geospatial maps identifying existing fenced areas and degrees of land degradation (moderate and severe). These maps will serve as a basis for the co-development of twelve integrated land use and ecosystem management plans (Output 2.2.1). Developed through a participatory, multi-stakeholder process involving all relevant user groups (including pastoralists, gum collectors, farmers, women, and youth) the plans will define restoration priorities, species selection, and zoning of no-use areas, agroforestry plots, and corridors. Where they exist, inter-communal agropastoral charters will be incorporated to ensure continuity and local legitimacy.

53. To anchor restoration in strong local governance systems, the project will mobilize 60 communities to establish or strengthen community-based organizations, with a view to structuring 4–6 Collective Local Management Associations (AGLCs) as platforms for landscape co-management and implementation of land use plans (Output 2.2.2). The project will also provide targeted training to 2,400 stakeholders (1,200 women, 1,200 men) in participatory natural resource management, community-level monitoring, and conflict resolution. These governance mechanisms coupled with capacity development activities will facilitate the application of the twelve-land use and ecosystem management plans (developed under Output 2.2.1), covering 61,000 hectares targeted for restoration under Outcome 2.1 and aligned with participatory diagnostics and species prioritization tools developed under Output 1.1.1.

54. This outcome will be implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD), which holds the national mandate for land restoration and for delegating management authority to community-based organizations in the absence of formalized AGLCs. Their direct role in executing this outcome will be instrumental in institutionalizing participatory planning, building functional governance systems, and enabling replication beyond the initial sites. project builds upon MEDD's experience with previous and ongoing restoration and EbA initiatives, including PROPEP, SAWAP, ProGRN, and SURAGGWA. The latter, financed by the Green Climate Fund and executed by FAO, shares strong operational and thematic synergies with this GEF-financed intervention. MEDD will also draw on technical lessons from the UNEP-executed GEF-7 EbA project and will ensure coordination through the National Steering Committee.

55. Furthermore, MEDD's field presence through the Regional Directorates for the Environment and Sustainable Development (DREDDs) and National Site Coordinators will facilitate decentralized technical support. MEDD will mobilize co-financing in the form of in-kind contributions (e.g., additional drone capacity for land monitoring and seeding) and deployment of staff trained under Output 1.2.2. to support the implementation coverage of the 61,000-ha targeted for restoration. Their direct role in executing this outcome will be instrumental in institutionalizing participatory planning, building functional governance systems, and enabling replication beyond the initial sites.

Output 2.2.1: Integrated and gender-responsive land use and agro-silvopastoral sustainable management plans and practices in production systems developed/amended and applied in Assaba and Trarza, covering 61,000 ha considering all resource users, and consistent with Output 1.1.1

Activities Description

2.2.1.1 Produce two maps of existing fenced areas, moderately and severely degraded lands and identify priority restoration areas in Assaba and Trarza, including using Africa OPEN Deal software.

2.2.1.2 Conduct 48 multi-stakeholder consultations (4 per AGLC) for the co-development of 12 integrated, gender-responsive land use plans in Assaba and Trarza.

2.2.1.3 Update, validate, and apply 12 local land use and ecosystem management plans (covering 61,000 ha) of Assaba and Trarza.

Output 2.2.2: Strengthening/establishment of self-managed and sustainable local institutions (such as ADCs, AGLCs, or other inclusive community groups) for the concerted management of agro-silvopastoral resources

Activities Description

2.2.2.1 Support/establish and structure 4-6 AGLCs, through a MEDD/DREDD accompanied process to ensure full ownership and participation from the communities.

2.2.2.2 Train 2 400 members of community-based organizations (1 200 women and 1 200 men) on sustainable landscape management (agroforestry, silvopastoralism, ANR, half-moons, zaï pits), and monitoring of restored lands and agro-silvopastoral resources.

Component 3: Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFP value chains strengthened to prevent land degradation and biodiversity loss

Outcome 3.1: Community livelihoods and local biodiversity are strengthened through nature positive Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFPs value chains.

Indicators/Targets:

- 48 cooperatives' capacities strengthened in organizational, financial management and legal literacy, 70% of which are women-cooperatives and 30% of which are youth-led cooperatives/actors
- 19 cooperatives structured and registered, 50% of which will be women-cooperatives
- At least 2 commercial contracts signed for value-chain financing
- At least 50% business plans developed are implemented
- At least one new NTFP-specific financial product developed and implemented
- At least 10 cooperatives receive credit through micro-finance institutions

56. Component 3 focuses on revitalizing the Gum Arabic and NTFP value chains as a sustainable economic driver for rural communities, particularly women and youth, while reinforcing incentives for forest conservation and land restoration. The project will invest in the organization, training, and market integration of producers to ensure that increased value from gum and other NTFPs translates into improved livelihoods and sustainable landscape management.

57. Under Output 3.1.1, the project will strengthen the technical, organizational, and financial capacities of 48 cooperatives in NTFP production, harvesting, processing, and marketing. Emphasis will be placed on women- and youth-led cooperatives, with training in leadership, financial literacy, and restoration-linked entrepreneurship. Cooperatives will be supported to access appropriate harvesting tools, storage infrastructure, and processing equipment.

58. Under Output 3.1.2, the project will operationalize a market information system for NTFPs linked to existing market information systems that are already established in the project areas and ensure that AGLCs, ADCs, cooperatives and other value chain actors can access and use the system to improve transparency, negotiation capacity, and market connectivity.

59. Under Output 3.1.3, the project will support the development of 38 inclusive, gender-responsive business plans, including 19 that will receive targeted technical support for implementation and guidance for accessing financial services in Mauritania. These will focus on gum arabic and selected NTFPs such as Balanites, Ziziphus, and other dryland species with economic and nutritional value.

60. Under Output 3.1.4, the project will facilitate access to finance, working with 2–4 financial institutions to develop tailored products for NTFP and restoration value chains, and support cooperatives in engaging with them through business plan submission and participation in trade fairs to facilitate market linkages between producers, processors and marketers of Gum Arabic and NTFP products. These trade fairs and B2B meetings should result in the signing of commercial contracts between supported cooperatives and private sector actors in Mauritania, or from other regional or international companies. Those cooperatives that will be supported under Output 3.1.4 will be identified based upon the robustness of the business plans developed under Output 3.1.3. Those cooperatives which will not be able to access formal financing mechanisms through micro-finance institutions or commercial contracts (i.e. value chain financing) will benefit from the establishment and functioning of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and community revolving funds.

61. While synergies between Component 3 activities and Component 2 activities for land restoration activities should be assured, the timeline for the project necessitates the identification of existing NTFP production and activities within farmlands to assure that participating communities will be able to perceive income-generating benefits through capacity development, enhanced processing equipment and marketing skills within the project life cycle. Except for fast-growing fodder and grass species, those tree species planted through Component 2 restoration activities will not be available to the communities for income-generating

activities through Component 3, as Gum Arabic trees only become productive after 5 years. This is the main rationale for ensuring inclusion of a mix of native species along with Gum Arabic to ensure the sustainable management and monitoring of land restoration activities under Component 2. As such, the focus of this component lies predominantly on market-oriented production and processing practices with existing Gum Arabic and NTFP resources. MEDD will work in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry through in-kind co-financing to ensure that private sector value chain development links well with restoration activities. Component 3 activities have a specific focus on marketing and the development of micro-enterprise and cooperatives. This requires partnership with relevant private sector entities with the capacities and know-how for organizational, management and financial literacy training as well as business development facilitation of private sector linkages for commercial contracting, as well as engagement with micro-finance institutions. This component will thus be sub-contracted to such relevant institutions, under the overall supervision of FAO.

Output 3.1.1.: Organizational and technical capacities of 48 community cooperatives (50% women-led) enhanced to sustainably harvest, process, store, and market high quality Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFPs, including value added products (run in parallel with restoration sites).

Activities Description

- 3.1.1.1: Identify available NTFPs in targeted villages/communities and co-identify community-based organization and cooperative level interest in species to be utilized for restoration and value chain development project activities.
- 3.1.1.2. Develop community-based NTFP monitoring and assessment tool for Gum Arabic and selected NTFPs
- 3.1.1.3 Strengthen the technical capacities of 48 cooperatives (approximately 1500 individuals, at least 60% women) in sustainable production, harvesting and storage of Gum Arabic and identified NTFP species, leadership, management and financial literacy, including the use of the NTFP monitoring and assessment tool developed under 3.1.1.2.
- 3.1.1.4: Facilitate access to materials, equipment and related training for the harvest, storage, processing and marketing of NTFPs for cooperatives and multi-purpose buildings of MEDD.
- 3.1.1.5 Support 3-4 local artisans per wilaya for the fabrication and repair of harvesting and processing equipment for NTFP value chain actors supported by the project
- 3.1.1.6 Train at least 20 targeted cooperatives and community representatives on the establishment and implementation of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) and revolving funds.
- 3.1.1.7 Technical assistance provided to at least 19 NTFP value chain actors in structuring, organization and registration of the cooperatives/associations.
- 3.1.1.8 Facilitate exchange visits for learning and experience sharing purposes amongst Gum Arabic and NTFPs' value chain actors

Output 3.1.2: NTFP market information system established and functional, in each wilaya

Activities Description

- 3.1.2.1 Train DREDD and community-based organization representatives to actively contribute to market information system on NTFP including Gum Arabic and selected NTFPs, including seasonal quantities and prices.

3.1.2.2 Conduct a rapid diagnostic of the existing market information system and reinforce based on the finding to improve access to market information by the NTFPs actors.

Output 3.1.3: 38 inclusive, participatory and gender-responsive business plans developed for the production and marketing of gum arabic and other NTFPs

Activities Description

3.1.3.1 Train 2-3 members each from 48 cooperatives to develop viable business plans, with a focus on cooperatives led by women and youth (targeting 60% women-led cooperatives, and 30% youth-led)

3.1.3.2 Support 38 cooperatives to develop business plans targeted for implementation, with a focus on cooperatives led by women and youth (50% women-led; 30% youth-led)

Output 3.1.4: 19 NTFP cooperatives supported to access financing opportunities, with a focus on women and youth.

Activities Description

3.1.4.1 Provide technical assistance and training to 2-4 micro-finance and other financial/commercial institutions' to develop new/appropriate financial products for Gum Arabic and other NTFP value chains on offer strengthened.

3.1.4.2 Support 19 cooperatives to access financial services, including value-chain financing and targeted micro-finance institutions through B2B meetings and business plan submission.

3.1.4.3 Organize 6 trade fairs including international, regional and national buyers.

Component 4: Knowledge Management and Learning

Outcome 4.1: Knowledge exchange and learning enhanced through public-private partnerships and learning opportunities for NTFP stakeholders

Indicators/Targets:

- One public-private knowledge and dialogue platform established and actively used for knowledge exchange (e.g., at least 4 platform events undertaken and one best practices report developed and made available).
- At least 4 exchange visits organized for 40 persons (with 50% women participation), resulting in documented lessons learned and direct input from participants.

62. Outcome 4.1 focuses on enhancing knowledge exchange and learning through public-private partnerships and opportunities for NTFP stakeholders to observe and learn directly from communities that have benefitted from the adoption of similar agro-silvopastoral production and management approaches, including related inter-communal governance mechanisms. This component aims to ensure that good practices are identified, documented, and disseminated, fostering replication and long-term impact across the Gum Arabic Belt. This component will equally benefit from the outputs and processes developed under Component 1, especially in relation to the development of the National Operational Manual on integrated land use planning and the National Gum Arabic and priority NTFP value chain strategy, including quality standards.

63. This platform will support the exchange of innovations, research, and traditional knowledge on best agro-silvopastoral practices and promote gum arabic and other NTFPs. Additionally, the project will organize

exchange visits for various stakeholders in the NTFP value chains, including DREDD officials, AGLCs, cooperatives, and SMEs, to identified good practice areas, ensuring significant participation of women.

64. Under Output 4.1.1, the project will establish a public-private knowledge platform that will promote the lessons-learned and knowledge generated from the project activities, including highlighting successful stories and experiences through the project's capacity development activities, Agro-Pastoral Field Schools, different land restoration approaches and highlighting/promoting innovative NTFP value addition activities. These platforms will involve the showcasing from direct beneficiaries, as well as inviting other actors engaged in similar activities.

65. Under Activity 4.1.1.2, exchange visits will be organized to promote learning and knowledge exchange through exchange visits to communities identified as having successfully adopted sustainable agro-silvopastoral ecosystem and land-use approaches, including the integration of NTFP value added activities for income generation. The exchange visits will focus on community-level exchanges of direct land restoration beneficiaries to further promote adoption and replication of identified best practices. The learning and experiences from these exchange visits will be integrated into the public-private knowledge platform events.

Output 4.1.1: One public-private platform organized to support the exchange of innovations, research and traditional knowledge on best agro-silvo-pastoral practices and the promotion of gum arabic and other NTFPs.

Activities Description

4.1.1.1 Creation and management of a public-private knowledge and dialogue platform on experiences and best-practices in best agro-silvo-pastoral and Gum Arabic and selected NTFP practices

4.1.1.2 Organization of 4 exchange visits for 40 persons between stakeholders in the NTFP value chains, including DREDD officials, AGLCs, cooperatives, SMEs to identified good practice areas in agro-silvopastoral management and agroforestry (e.g. Guidimakha and Hodh El Gharbi), ensuring 50% participation of women

Outcome 4.2: Good practices are identified and disseminated

Indicators/Targets:

- One integrated and participatory communication strategy developed and made available
- Communication materials and presentations highlighting project lessons learned produced and visibly disseminated in different languages.
- At least one report on good practices in sustainable NTFP production and development made available through the Knowledge Platform and other channels.
- One guideline on good agro-silvopastoral practices for Gum Arabic and selected NTFP value chains developed and made available through the Knowledge Platform and other channels.
- At least 3 information sessions organized and documented (1 per wilaya and 1 in Nouakchott) on Gum Arabic and NTFP-related guidelines produced through the project and disseminated.

66. Under Outcome 4.2, the project will ensure communication and awareness raising of project promoted pilot approaches, impacts and results, as well as ensuring documentation is publicly available and easily accessible by all relevant stakeholders, including through the archiving of documents, reports and other materials within the MEDD as well as through an online repository through the MEDD monitoring database and website.

67. Under Output 4.2.1, project will develop an integrated and participatory communication strategy tailored to different objectives and target audiences, with particular attention to local communities, women, and young people. This strategy will guide the production and distribution of information and awareness materials in Arabic, French, and local languages, as well as the organization of awareness campaigns and sharing of experiences through various media like radio and TV.

68. Under Output 4.2.2 the project will collect and analyze good practices in NTFP production and development, publishing them through digital and physical resource centres. It will also develop and disseminate guidelines on good agro-silvopastoral practices for Gum Arabic and selected NTFP value chains and organize information sessions to share these guidelines with relevant stakeholders.

69. This Component will be implemented by the MEDD through the PMU, with specific technical inputs and drafting of materials led and coordinated by the National Knowledge Management expert and with inputs from the M&E officer, the National Land Restoration Specialist, the National NTFP Value Chain Expert and the Gender and Safeguards specialist. Resources are also made available to the MEDD to sub-contract specific studies and generation of knowledge, under the technical supervision and coordination of the PMU, to specialized national consultancy firms.

Output 4.2.1: One Communication strategy developed to the different objectives and target audiences, with particular attention to local communities, women and young people

Activities Description

4.2.1.1 Development of an integrated and participatory communication strategy.

4.2.1.2 Production and distribution of technical documentation from Components 1 and 2 as well as information and awareness materials, in Arabic, French and local languages, as required.

Output 4.2.2: Guidelines on Gum Arabic and selected NTFP production and value chains, integrating a gender-responsive and nature-positive approach, as well as case studies of local successes, especially in relation to empowering women and advancing gender equality, produced and disseminated.

Activities Description

4.2.2.1 Collection and analysis of good practices in the production and development of NTFPs, women empowerment and gender equality, published and available through the digital and physical resource centre

4.2.2.2 Development of guidelines on good agro-silvopastoral practices for Gum Arabic and selected NTFP value chains

4.2.2.3 Dissemination of communication and knowledge materials to relevant stakeholders

Component 5: Monitoring & Evaluation

Outcome 5.1: Project results and lessons learned are identified, documented, and communicated in a timely manner.

Indicators/Targets:

- 5 Project Steering Committee meeting reports
- Annual project implementation progress reports drafted and publicly accessible

- One Mid-Term Review report
- One Terminal Evaluation report

70. Under Component 5, the progress, results, good practices and lessons learned will be systematically captured and shared locally and nationally in a way that it is easily usable by a diversity of organisations and initiatives. This will be led by MEDD, including through the leadership of the National M&E officer under the supervision of the Chief Technical Advisor, National Technical Coordinator and other national specialists in the PMU, and in close collaboration with FAO. This component requires continuous efforts throughout the five years of implementation, and integration with the MEDD's existing data and statistics platform. This component will also leverage on FAO's Africa OPEN Deal and Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM), the official platform for tracking restoration progress under the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. FERM's GIS-based system allows GEF staff and stakeholders to visualize and report on areas under restoration, displaying clear indicators like project completion percentages. Additionally, FAO's System for Earth Observation Data Access, Processing, and Analysis for Land Monitoring (SEPAL) provides rapid remote sensing data processing to assess project implementation progress effectively. Together, these tools enable systematic monitoring of restoration outcomes.

71. MEDD will provide in-kind contributions to ensure that central-level and local-level staff support the National Site Coordinators and communities in regular data collection and transmission of information to the National M&E officer, who will compile and provide regular reporting to the Chief Technical Advisor, National Technical Coordinator and the National Steering Committee. The MEDD will also provide in-kind contributions in the form of access to vehicles and fuel to facilitate the movement of the staff to project sites and to engage with beneficiary communities for data collection.

Output 5.1.1: Continuous data collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination of the results, with gender disaggregated data.

Activities	Description
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5.1.1.1 Develop and implement an effective, gender-responsive community-based monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system for project interventions and results, building necessary synergies with activities and monitoring of restoration under Component 1, 2 and 3.

5.1.1.2 Adopt the necessary monitoring tools in collaboration with partners (e.g. Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring - FERM; Africa OPEN Deal to monitor land use change)

5.1.1.3 Regular National Steering Committee meetings take place, including validation of Annual Work Plan and Budgets and appreciation of activities implemented in previous year.

Output 5.1.2: Mid-term evaluation report shared.

Activities	Description
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5.1.2.1 Undertake a mid-term evaluation of the project

Output 5.1.3: Final Evaluation Report shared.

Activities	Description
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5.1.3.1 Undertake the final evaluation of the project

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

72. From November 2024 to February 2025, stakeholder consultations were carried out both at the national level in Nouakchott and through field missions in the Assaba and Trarza regions. The process was launched with an inception workshop held on 26 November 2024 in Nouakchott, which gathered representatives from key ministries, technical departments, international and local NGOs, private sector actors, academia, and donor agencies. The objective was to validate the project's scope, discuss alignment with national strategies, and establish a shared understanding of restoration priorities and governance approaches. The consultation also included a review of related initiatives, promoting complementarity and synergies across ongoing interventions such as PRAPS II, and PRODEFI projects.

73. Building on the inception workshop, a participatory field mission was conducted in February 2025 across several target communes in the wilayas of Trarza and Assaba. This mission enabled direct engagement with regional environmental directorates (DREDDs), local development committees (ADCs), village-based organizations (AGLCs), and producer groups involved in gum arabic and NTFP value chains. The consultations helped identify local priorities, co-management challenges, and practical restoration opportunities on the ground. The findings informed the refinement of project components, ensured local ownership, and laid the groundwork for participatory planning in project implementation.

Date	Name of the organization	Focal point
26-Nov-24 (Inception workshop)	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD)	Minister of MEDD; Technical Advisor; Director of DPERS; Deputy Director of DPERS; Head of Service
	Agence Nationale de la Grande Muraille Verte (ANGMV)	Director General; Technical Advisor
	Ministry of Agriculture	Not specified
	Ministry of Livestock	Not specified
	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance	Not specified
	Association pour la Promotion de la Gomme Arabique (APGMV)	Not specified
	Groupe National des Agropasteurs (GNAP)	Kane Allou
	Chambre de Commerce, d'Industrie et d'Agriculture de Mauritanie	Moulaye Abdelkader
	Ets Toogga (private sector)	Not specified
	UNDP (PNUD)	Not specified
	WFP (PAM)	Not specified
	European Union (UE)	Not specified
	GIZ	Not specified
	ENABEL	Not specified
	Small Grants Programme (SGP/GEF)	Not specified
	Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	Not specified
	FIDA / PRODEFI	Not specified
	ONG Sud Conseil	Hadli Dia
	ONG APIF	Dewel Amdou Diop
	ONG KISSAL	Cheikh Oumar Ndong
	Other NGOs (NAHDA, Naforé, GRADD, SDPE, ASSALA, Voix de l'Espoir, AEDD)	Not specified
	Resource persons	Corera Alassane; Ethmane ould Boubacar; Mohamed Selmé
	Université de Nouakchott (Faculté des Sciences et Technologie)	Mohamed Mahmoud Abidine
	Université El Asriya Nouakchott	Not specified
	Institut Supérieur d'Enseignement Technologique (ISET)	Not specified
February 2025 (mission in the field)	Direction Régionale de l'Environnement (DREDD), Trarza	Not specified
	Direction Régionale de l'Environnement (DREDD), Assaba	Not specified
	Local village committees in Trarza and Assaba	Not specified
	PRAPS Mauritanie (Projet Régional d'Appui au Pastoralisme au Sahel)	Bernard Bonnet (IRAM) Aboudaye Fall (PRAPS II project staff) Aminata Corera (CILSS)

74. To enhance ownership and ensure effective implementation, the project is structured to promote inclusive and continuous dialogue with all stakeholder groups. In alignment with GEF stakeholder engagement guidelines, stakeholders will be meaningfully involved in identifying project risks, shaping mitigation strategies, and co-designing actions that maximize environmental and socio-economic benefits. Their roles, interests, and the specific benefits they may derive from project activities are summarized in Table 5 below. Additional feedback and stakeholder-specific recommendations as well as the overall stakeholder engagement approach and process are presented in Annex J.

Table 5: Roles of project stakeholders

Stakeholder	Primary Role(s) Relevant to the Project	Benefit from Project
Government - Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) - General Directorate for the Environment and Sustainable Development (DGEDD) and Regional Directorates for the Environment (DREDDs) - Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism; - Ministry of the Interior, Promotion of Decentralization and Local Development; Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Mauritania, - Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Employment, Sports and Civic Service - Ministry of Livestock; - Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, - Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development, - Wilaya-level authorities in Assaba and Trarza - Regional inspection units	- Lead in project execution and coordination - Provide strategic oversight - Provide policy guidance and ensure coherence with national strategies and policies - Monitor implementation of project activities - Beneficiaries and contributors to the programme's learning, knowledge exchange events and technical assistance.	- Complementary investment - Improved coordination of restoration efforts - Improved participatory planning processes (PDCs) - Sustainable economic benefits for communities - Enhanced ecosystem services, reduced vulnerability to impacts of climate change - Capacity building - Access to learning and knowledge exchange - Strengthened co-management conditions with communities - Enhanced territorial and ecosystem management
Local communities - Traditional authorities of the wilaya/commune - Existing community-based organizations (AGLC or ADCs where they exist) - Producers organizations and cooperatives engaged in NTFP production/processing (with a focus on women-led and youth-led cooperatives) - Inter-communal charter platforms (established under PRAPS II) or other inclusive ecosystem/natural resource based dialogue and decision-making platforms - Small-scale farmers and other inhabitants of the targeted communes - Village Saving and Loan Associations	- Participate in the development of PDC, and gazetted and community-managed forests' management plans, including participatory mapping - Participate to the identification and selection of good practices for improved forests and agroforests management - Lead the development of their microprojects - Support implementation and monitoring of community-based project activities - Beneficiaries and contributors to learning and knowledge exchange	- Access to technical assistance and capacity building - Sustainable economic benefits - Enhanced ecosystem services, reduced vulnerability to impacts of climate change - Access to learning and knowledge exchange - Strengthened co-management conditions
Civil society organizations (CSOs) - ONG Sud Conseil - Groupeement National des Associations Pastorales (GNAP) - ONG Ensemble - Save the Children	- Contribute through the National Steering Committee - Beneficiaries and contributors to learning and knowledge exchange	- Access to learning and knowledge exchange - Improved coordination of restoration and community-based decision-making and engagement efforts
Private sector - Private companies (eg. Toogga) involved in the selected NTFP value chains - Chamber of Commerce - Microfinance institutions - Private consulting and technical services - Drone operators/service providers - Local artisans	- Participation in decision-making processes - Adoption of climate-resilient and nature-positive practices - Strengthened commitment in selected value chains, including through commercial contracts - Development of financing products adapted to agroforestry producers - Promotion of sustainable production practices	- More secured sources of income from value chains - Maintenance of ecosystem services that benefit operations - Enhanced linkages to financial service providers - Technical assistance and training
International partners - GIZ - FAO - UNEP - ENABEL - World Bank (PRAPS II)	- Information sharing between projects, and complementarity of interventions in the targeted zone - Beneficiaries and contributors to learning and knowledge exchange	- Improved coordination - Improved success and sustainability of investments - Capacity building - Access to learning and knowledge exchange
Academia /Research institutions - Institut Supérieur de l'Enseignement Technologique (ISET) - Centre Nationale de recherche agronomique et de développement agricole (CNIARDA)	- Provide expertise for land restoration and biodiversity monitoring, sustainable management of natural resources and development of alternative livelihoods - Beneficiaries and contributors to learning and knowledge exchange	- New data - Research opportunities - Platforms for knowledge exchange

PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

75. The private sector actors will play a critical role in the implementation of the component 3 interventions. These private sector actors include financial institutions, buyers/exporters, processors, business development service providers, equipment and material manufacturers. They will be engaged in various domains and intervention of the project, from training, capacity development and coaching activities, provision of financial and non-financial services including market information, materials and equipment supply and repair/maintenance, etc. The role of the project is to promote and facilitate collaboration and partnership between the NTFPs actors and the private sector in a win-win situation and for sustainability.

76. The project will facilitate links between cooperative and small-scale NTFP processors to access finance from micro-finance institutions and larger off-takers, suppliers and processors within Mauritania and neighbouring countries (Output 3.1.4.). Activities also include the strengthening of enabling factors including facilitating access to equipment and strengthening cooperative and small-scale NTFP processors' technical and organizational capacities (Output 3.1.1.) and drafting a national Gum Arabic and NTFP strategy and associated standards (Output 1.1.1.). This value chain financing could serve as an additional, substantial source of financing even beyond the project duration. More specifically, the project will identify a private sector sub-contractor with experience in business plan development, coaching and commercial contracting

facilitation and in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry to engage with financial services providers to facilitate access to finance to the NTFPs value chain actors through the development of inclusive and participatory cooperative business plans as mentioned in Outputs 3.1.3 and 3.1.4. With regard access to materials and equipment, the project has planned to engage with local artisans and fabricators that will be trained (3 to 4 per Wilaya) and given opportunity to produce and sell tailored materials and equipment to the supported value chain actors as mentioned in Activity 3.1.1.4. of the project. The project will engage also with buyers and processors for the negotiation and establishment of partnerships with supported producers/collectors.

77. The approach of the project is to support strong private sector partnerships to ensure sustainability of project activities and ensure an exit strategy for the project activities, promoting a pilot model for future replication in-country. Local communities who rely on the collection of the non-timber forest products will be better linked with the private sector along the value chain. These private sector actors are involved in aggregating the collection of the products, transporting, processing and trading them in the domestic and international markets. There is considerable private sector interest in a range of NTFPs, however, their engagement has been limited due to lack of community organizations and groups that can help to aggregate produce and assure them of a certain minimum volume according to an agreed schedule. While private sector and commercial organizations within Mauritania on NTFP products is currently limited, there are examples of such entities with whom the project can partner. Additionally, the project location, bordering Mali and Senegal offer ample opportunities for engagement with private sector actors across the border where NTFP markets are more developed. The exit strategy is premised on previous experiences which indicates that once mutually beneficial contractual relationships are established between community groups collecting the NTFPs and private sector interested in purchasing them, these relationships sustain the strength of the benefits generated for both. The project will provide the organizational, functional and technical capacity for aggregating the produce and enhancing the quality through improved collection, storage and processing techniques and equipment. Incentives for both parties are expected to increase over time with increased volumes and quality of production.

INNOVATION & TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, POLICY COHERENCE AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Innovations & transformative change

78. Southern Mauritania's agro-silvopastoral systems are facing acute degradation in many areas, with extensive losses of vegetation cover, declining production of gum and other NTFPs, and increased conflicts over land use in some areas. However, several locally appropriate and restoration-aligned practices—such as the use of sustainable agroforestry and silvopastoral practices, community-built half-moons and zaï pits, and drone seeding of native species—present strong potential for ecological recovery and livelihood improvement. While these practices have been tested on a pilot scale, they remain fragmented, underfunded, and poorly documented. The project will bridge this gap by promoting evidence-based scaling of restoration techniques through demonstration sites, Agro-Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) (Output 2.1.1.), and community seed systems (Output 2.1.3.) to support the National Forestry Seed Centre, facilitating broader adoption and behavioural change.

79. The project will also promote transformative governance innovations, particularly the strengthening of Collective Local Management Associations (AGLCs), Community Development Associations (ADCs) and other existing community-based organizations (Output 2.2.2), which have not yet been widely adopted in Trarza and Assaba but yielded great benefits for local communities and ecosystems in other Mauritanian wilayas. These governance mechanisms will enable co-management of fenced and unfenced restoration zones, negotiation of land use agreements, and long-term community monitoring of tree and land health. The model will be reinforced through participatory land use planning at the territorial level (Output 2.2.1.), bringing together different villages and communes to ensure a territorial, rather than an administrative, management of

agro-silvopastoral resources, thus creating the necessary pre-conditions for durable institutions for collaborative decision-making. This approach, bolstered by synergies with agro-pastoral and transhumant pastoralist governance mechanisms, provides a scalable governance blueprint for dryland restoration elsewhere in Mauritania and the Sahel. The project activities act as a precursor to the establishment of formal AGLCs, which can take considerable years, but which will be essential for viable implementation of land restoration at larger scale.

80. The project will be transformative by integrating livelihoods with restoration outcomes, notably through the revitalization of the Gum Arabic and other NTFP value chains (Component 3). Women and youth-led cooperatives will receive support to enter higher-value segments of the value chain—harvesting, sorting, processing, marketing—thereby shifting the economic rationale from exploitation to sustainable stewardship of tree resources (Output 3.1.1., 3.1.2., 3.1.3., 3.1.4.). By combining environmental and economic incentives, the project will strengthen the viability of nature-based enterprises and reduce degradation drivers.

81. Finally, the use of drones for direct seeding in hard-to-reach or highly degraded sites—coupled with participatory regeneration in accessible zones—represents a cost-effective and technically innovative approach (Output 2.1.2.). The integration of geo-referenced monitoring systems, linked with Collect Earth and the MEDD’s national databases, will provide a foundation for evidence-based restoration tracking and climate reporting.

Knowledge Management

82. The project is designed to extensively leverage existing knowledge while systematically generating, capturing, and sharing new insights to benefit current stakeholders and inform future initiatives. It will benefit from the valuable experiences of the FAO-implemented Action Against Desertification Project (AAD) and the GIZ-implemented Natural Resource Management Project (ProGRN), which demonstrated the effectiveness of community motivation in land restoration and their vested interest in preserving communal lands for livelihoods. The project will also capitalize on existing experiences across wilayas to inform the development of a national operational manual for land use planning. Furthermore, it will draw upon international expertise in Non-Timber Forest Product Value Chain development to expand commercial opportunities.

83. New knowledge will be generated through various project activities, including the consolidation of innovative drone seeding technologies and associated training in land rehabilitation, water infiltration, and soil improvement techniques (Output 1.2.1, Output 1.2.2., Output 2.1.1.). Data from localized field-monitoring frameworks, across restoration sites and beneficiary communities, will feed into the national MEDD environmental information system, strengthening integration with broader climate and biodiversity commitments and generating new data on restoration outcomes (Output 1.2.2)

84. New knowledge will also be generated through several activities under Component 2. This includes: the establishment and operationalization of 24 Agro-Pastoral Field Schools to serve as learning platforms for community-based restoration and sustainable land management (Output 2.1.1); the restoration of 61,000 hectares using innovative and documented techniques such as manual reforestation, drone seeding, and assisted natural regeneration, with results systematically recorded and shared (Output 2.1.2); and the formation of community seed groups to support local seed systems and restoration efforts (Output 2.1.3). In addition, the project will support the co-development and implementation of integrated, gender-sensitive land use and agro-silvopastoral management plans with local communities (Output 2.2.1), and the establishment or strengthening of Collective Local Management Associations and other community-based governance structures for improved resource management and coordination among user groups (Output 2.2.2). The project will also produce two high-resolution maps identifying priority zones for restoration, degraded lands, and existing fenced areas, serving as a basis for integrated land use and ecosystem management plans (Output 2.1.2.). Collection and analysis of good practices in NTFP production and development will lead to the publication of new case studies and guidelines (Output 4.1.2.).

85. This knowledge will be captured, stored, and shared through multiple channels to ensure wide accessibility and long-term benefit. An integrated and participatory communication strategy will guide the production and distribution of information and awareness materials in Arabic, French, and local languages, utilizing various media like radio and TV (Output 4.2.1.). A public-private knowledge and dialogue platform will be established and actively used to promote lessons learned, research, and traditional knowledge on best agro-silvo-pastoral practices and NTFPs, showcasing direct beneficiaries and inviting other relevant actors (Output 4.1.1.). Exchange visits will be organized for stakeholders to learn directly from communities that have successfully adopted sustainable practices, ensuring documented lessons learned and direct input from participants (Output 4.1.1.). All project documents, reports, and materials will be archived within the MEDD and through an online repository via the MEDD monitoring database and website, ensuring public availability and easy accessibility (Output 1.2.2., M&E Output 1). The project will also leverage FAO's Africa Open DEAL and Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM) and System for Earth Observation Data Access, Processing, and Analysis for Land Monitoring (SEPAL) to systematically monitor and report on restoration progress and outcomes (training for the use of these systems are under Output 1.2.1). This systematic approach to knowledge management will provide a robust foundation for evidence-based restoration tracking and climate reporting, ultimately contributing to scaling best practices and informing future projects across the Gum Arabic Belt and beyond.

Policy coherence

86. The project is strategically designed to operationalize and expand the implementation of Mauritania's priority national policies and international commitments, as outlined in paragraph 52 of the project document. By aligning with the National Strategy for the Environment and Sustainable Development (SNEDD 2017-2030), the project reinforces SNEDD's emphasis on participatory governance and agroforestry through Component 1 activities, including the development of a national operational manual for gender-responsive land use planning. This manual, co-developed with the MEDD, standardizes procedures for integrating agro-silvopastoral management in communal planning, directly addressing SNEDD's Objective 3.1 on sustainable natural resource management.

87. The National Reforestation Strategy (2022) and the Great Green Wall National Action Plan (PNM-GMV 2021) is advanced through Component 2's restoration of 61,000 hectares of degraded lands, prioritizing native species such as Acacia Senegal and leveraging drone-assisted seeding (Output 1.2.1, Output 2.1.2.) to scale efforts in remote areas. This aligns with the strategy's focus on community engagement and climate-resilient species, as outlined in its Appendix A. Simultaneously, the project contributes to Mauritania's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 2021) by integrating carbon sequestration metrics into local land use plans. Activities under Output 1.2.2. and Component 5 to strengthen GIS-based monitoring and use of FAO's FERM/SEPAL tools enable real-time tracking of restored areas, directly supporting the NDC's target of rehabilitating 200,000 hectares by 2030.

89. These efforts are further reinforced by the Decentralization Framework (2018), which delegates land management authority to communes. The project's 12 integrated land use plans (Output 2.2.1.) and empowerment of AGLCs (Output 2.2.2.) institutionalize decentralized governance, ensuring communal ownership of restoration outcomes.

90. Gender equity, a cornerstone of the National Gender Strategy for the Environment Sector, is embedded across all components. Component 3 specifically targets women-led NTFP cooperatives (Output 3.1.1.) and a gender-responsive market information system (Output 3.1.2.), ensuring women's participation in value chain decision-making. Similarly, the Forest Code (2007) is bolstered through capacity-building for MEDD and DREDD staff (Output 1.2.2.) and community-led land management protocols (Activity 2.1.2.1.) which operationalize the code's participatory management provisions.

91. By interlinking these policies with tangible outputs – such as NTFP value chain development (Component 3) advancing the Agricultural Development Policy (PNDA 2015-2025) – the project creates a replicable model for scaling prioritized strategies. The synthesis of MEDD’s environmental information system (Output 1.2.2.; Component 5) and 12 land use plans (Output 2.2.1.) ensures coherence across sectors, paving the way for future reforms to the Pastoral Code (2001) and Water Code (2005). This integrated approach not only addressed immediate degradation but also institutionalizes long-term resilience, aligning Mauritania’s ecological and socio-economic goals with global climate and biodiversity frameworks.

Capacity Development

92. The project relies on a comprehensive approach to capacity development, systematically addressing human, institutional, and technical needs across national and local levels. Recognizing, however, that the resources allocated to the project are limited in order to impact human, institutional and technical capacities at a systemic level. As such, the capacity development activities are specifically targeted to leverage existing knowledge and experiences into planning and institutional tools that can be piloted within the project lifecycle and replicated in other Gum Arabic Belt wilayas. At the national and wilaya levels, capacity building focuses on equipping governmental staff with essential skills for integrated land use planning, gender-responsive approaches, and advanced monitoring technologies (Output 1.2.2), including the use of drones for both aerial seeding and land monitoring (Output 1.2.1.). This also entails the development of national operational manuals and strategies, ensuring consistent guidance and ownership for sustainable land management (Output 1.1.1.).

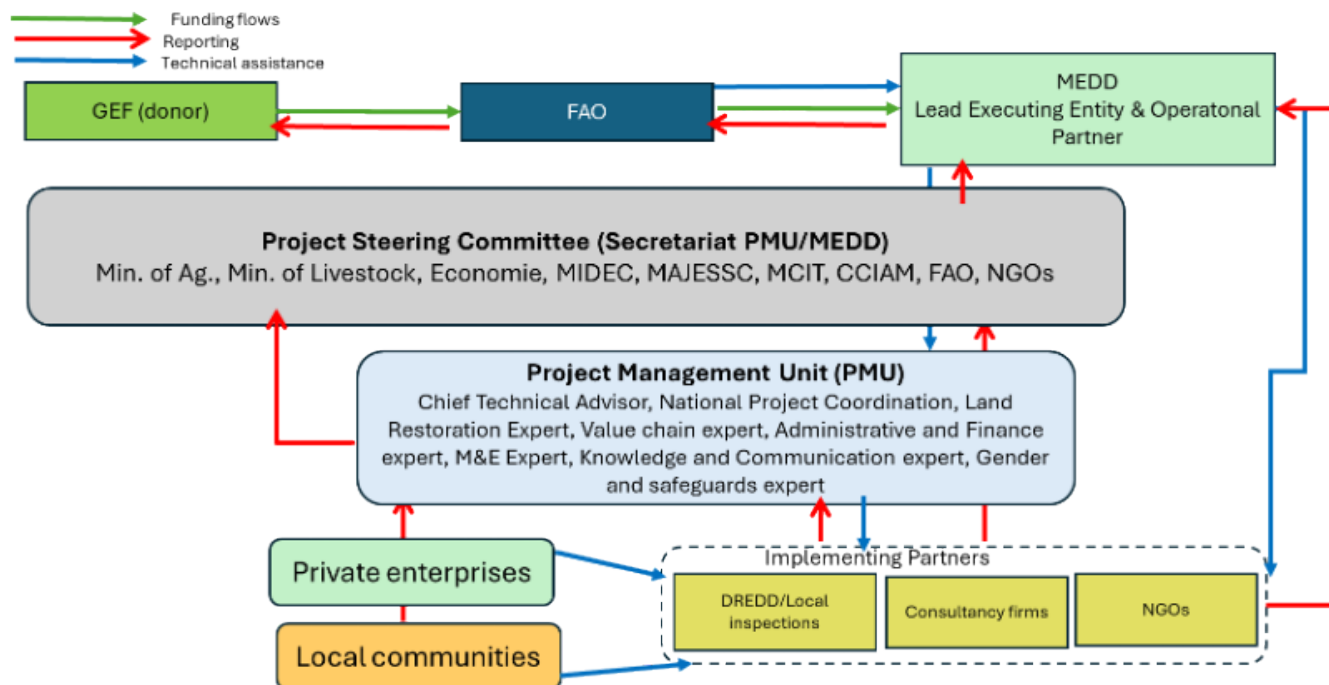
93. At the local level, the project prioritizes direct engagement and empowerment of communities and local organizations, building upon successful experiences from FAO’s Action Against Desertification and BRIDGES projects, as well as the experiences from GIZ’s implemented ProGRN. This includes establishing Agro-Pastoral Field Schools (Output 2.1.1.) to impart practical knowledge in sustainable agro-silvopastoral practices and agroforestry restoration. Furthermore, capacities are built for community-led restoration efforts through training in seed management and the establishment of community seed centres in support of the National Forestry Seed Centres, currently under construction (Output 2.2.1.). Crucially, the project contributes to the establishment of local governance structures like Collective Local Management Associations (AGLCs) and Community Development Associations (ADCs) (Output 2.1.2), empowering them in participatory resource management, conflict resolution, and monitoring. For economic empowerment, support is provided to cooperatives, particularly women and youth-led groups, through training in sustainable harvesting, processing, and marketing of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), with private sector involvement in capacity development and business coaching (Output 3.1.).

Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Please describe the Institutional Arrangements for the execution of this project, including financial management and procurement. If possible, please summarize the flow of funds (diagram), accountabilities for project management and financial reporting (organogram), including audit, and staffing plans. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

94. The MEDD will act as the lead executing agency and will be responsible for the day-to-day management of project results entrusted to it in full compliance with all terms and conditions of the indirect execution modality, which will include both Operational Partnership Agreement (OPA) signed with FAO and Letters of Agreement. As OP of the project, the MEDD is responsible and accountable to FAO for the timely implementation of the agreed project results, operational oversight of implementation activities, timely reporting, and for effective use of GEF resources for the intended purposes and in line with FAO and GEF policy requirements.

95. The institutional arrangements of the project are as follows:



Roles and Responsibilities

96. **Technical National Project Coordinator:** the government will designate a National Project Coordinator. Located in the MEDD offices in Nouakchott, the NPC will be responsible for coordinating the activities with all the national bodies related to the different project components, as well as with the project partners. The NTC will act as the Secretary to the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC will meet once per year to ensure: i) oversight and assurance of technical quality of outputs; ii) close linkages between the project and other ongoing projects and programmes relevant to the project; iii) timely availability and effectiveness of co-financing support; iv) sustainability of key project outcomes, including up-scaling and replication; v) effective coordination of government partner work under this project; vi) approval of the six-monthly Project Progress and Financial Reports, the Annual Work Plan and Budget; vii) making management decisions when guidance is required by the **Technical National Project Coordinator** of the PMU. S/He will also be responsible for providing technical supervision and guidance to the national technical experts.

97. **Project Steering Committee:** The MEDD will chair the Project Steering Committee which will be the main governing body of the project. The PSC will be comprised of representatives from Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism; Ministry of the Interior, Promotion of Decentralization and Local Development; Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Mauritania, Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Employment, Sports and Civic Service; Ministry of Livestock; Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development, Civil Society, and FAO. The PSC will meet annually to approve Annual Work Plans and Budgets and review Annual Progress Reports, thus providing strategic guidance to the Project Management Team and to all executing partners. The members of the PSC will each assure the role of a Focal Point for the project in their respective agencies. Hence, the project will have a Focal Point in each concerned institution. As Focal Points in their agency, the concerned PSC members will: (i) technically oversee activities in their sector; ii) ensure a fluid two-way exchange of information and knowledge between their agency and the project; iii) facilitate coordination and links between the project activities and the work plan of their agency; and iv) facilitate the provision of co-financing to the project.

98. A Project Management Unit (PMU) in Nouakchott, will be co-funded by the GEF and established within the MEDD's central offices. The main functions of the PMU, following the guidance of the Project Steering Committee, are to ensure overall efficient management, coordination, implementation and monitoring of the project through the effective implementation of the annual work plans and budgets (AWP/Bs). The PMU will be composed of a National Project Coordinator, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Administrative and Finance Officer, National Land Restoration expert, National Value Chain Expert and Gender and Safeguards Officer who will ensure smooth implementation full-time.

99. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will be the GEF Implementing Agency (IA) for the Project, providing project cycle management and support services as established in the GEF Policy. As the GEF IA, FAO holds overall accountability and responsibility to the GEF for delivery of the results. In the IA role, FAO will utilize the GEF fees to deploy three different actors within the organization to support the project (see Annex M for details):

- The Budget Holder, which is usually the most decentralized FAO office, will provide oversight of day-to-day project execution;
- The Lead Technical Officer(s), drawn from across FAO will provide oversight/support to the projects technical work in coordination with government representatives participating in the Project Steering Committee;
- The Funding Liaison Officer(s) and the GEF Technical Officers (GTO) within FAO will monitor and support the project cycle to ensure that the project is being designed and carried out in accordance with FAO and GEF minimum fiduciary and technical standards.

100. FAO responsibilities, as GEF agency, will include:

- Administrate funds from GEF in accordance with the rules and procedures of FAO;
- Oversee project implementation in accordance with the project document, work plans, budgets, agreements with co-financiers, Operational Partners Agreement(s) and other rules and procedures of FAO;
- Provide technical guidance to ensure that appropriate technical quality is applied to all activities concerned;
- Conduct at least one supervision mission per year; and
- Reporting to the GEF Secretariat and Evaluation Office, through the annual Project Implementation Review, the Mid Term Review, the Terminal Evaluation and the Project Closure Report on project progress;
- Financial reporting to the GEF Trustee.

Will the GEF Agency play an execution role on this project?

If so, please describe that role here and the justification.

N/A

Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

Project/Resource Name	Timeframe and budget	Key Lessons-Learned
SIZ ProGRN	EUR 10,370,000 2014-2017	The project's approach emphasized strengthening decentralized natural resource management in agricultural, woodland, and pasture areas. Key takeaways include the importance of empowering local communities and user associations, with a notable success in increasing women's representation in leadership positions within these groups (from 6% to 36%). The initiative also demonstrated that successful outcomes are achieved through robust policy advice to the Ministry of the Environment, leading to improved legal frameworks, and the implementation of professional management tools. A crucial lesson was the strategic shift from direct support to user associations towards building the capacities of relevant ministries and municipalities, highlighting that long-term sustainability and broader impact depend on strengthening local governance structures and facilitating skill transfer. However, it should be noted that the ProGRN project alone did not establish the AGLC structures on its own, as it was succeeded by further projects that continued building on these efforts. As such continued synergies and investments are required for long-term sustainability of such community-based governance mechanisms.
FAO's Action Against Desertification	AAD: 2016 – 2022	A 2022 evaluation of AAD by FAO showed that the project was relevant and contributed to improving the productivity of agro-silvo-pastoral landscapes and the capacity to plan land restoration and manage forest and land resources. Livelihood improvements were found in all AAD countries, with a concrete positive incidence on household income, food security, crops and milk production, and community interactions. The project increased awareness and informed and supported policy makers developing intervention strategies that address desertification, land degradation and drought (D/LDD). These initiatives have engaged in large scale land restoration interventions and have restored since 2018 close to 3,000 hectares in over 50 sites using techniques such as direct seeding, reforestation, and dune fixation, while empowering local communities—including training women over 100 women trained in seed collection, planting, and income-generating activities like wild fruit harvesting and vegetable gardening (FAO, 2022). These projects have seen positive impacts in their results.
NB/GEF-Mauritania Sustainable Landscape Management Project	2015 – 2021 USD 24 million	The project's experience underscored issues such as disorganized marketing channels, an absence of suitable marketing financing structures, and a lack of research capacity to develop locally appropriate production technologies, along with improper data management and low-quality extraction techniques. Future land restoration projects, especially those incorporating NTFPs, should prioritize strengthening local implementation and governance structures, integrating robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks from the outset, and addressing market and value chain development alongside technical restoration interventions.
The Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS II)	2021 – 2027 USD 437 million (regional) Mauritania additional financing: USD 42 million	The project emphasizes that sustainable landscape management and improved governance of pastoral lands are fundamental, including securing mobility routes and enhancing access to natural resources like water infrastructure. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of improving livestock value chains and facilitating regional livestock trade to boost economic benefits. A significant lesson is the need for socio-economic inclusion, particularly for women and youth, by providing access to training (including functional, digital, and financial literacy), supporting income-generating activities, and improving access to social and civil registries. The project design also implicitly acknowledges that addressing complex issues like land ownership and regional integration requires sustained cross-border and cross-sectoral collaboration, involving various stakeholders and institutions. The project also underlines the importance of building on previous successes and scaling up "transformative" activities.
GCF SURAGGWA	USD 222,000,000 2025 - 2035	GCF SURAGGWA is a land restoration project that aims to implement inclusive land restoration approaches supported by NTFP value chain development, as well as ensuring enhanced capacities of the National Agencies of the Great Green Wall Initiative through the provision of training and technologies for land restoration monitoring using technologies and methodologies that are equally targeted for capacity development in this project. GCF SURAGGWA will also be implemented by MEDD and can offer a singular chance to build synergies across all components of this project. The PMU of this project will be working closely together to leverage synergies and avoid duplication while undertaking project activities.

101. Consideration of these lessons-learned have led to the identification of the following specific cooperation and synergy elements with ongoing and pipeline projects:

102. The PRAPS II (2023-2027) : the project will work in close collaboration and synergy with the World Bank-financed PRAPS II project in relation to livestock corridor rehabilitation, water infrastructure and for inclusive inter-communal governance mechanisms which include transhumant pastoralists. The targeting of the project intervention areas is proposed also based on the presence of synergistic activities as well as governance mechanisms with this project.

103. GCF SURAGGWA (expected for 2024 – 2029) : Green Climate Fund financed Scaling Up Resilience in Africa's Great Green Wall (SURAGGWA) will undertake land restoration activities in the Great Green Wall area of Mauritania, which includes Trarza and Assaba. The project aligns in terms of its land restoration activities utilizing native species, community-based approach and capacity development activities in relation

to land restoration, natural resource management and monitoring. This project will seek co-finance to ensure complementarity across the Sahel landscape.

104. GIZ ProGRN: While the project is not ongoing, local knowledge and institutional memory exist within GIZ in the establishment, capacity development of successful AGLC models and the strengthening, structuring of NTFP value chain actors with a focus on women- and youth-led initiatives. The Guidimakha experiences can serve as an important destination for knowledge exchange visits and learning by doing, through continued engagement and advice from GIZ staff previously involved in the implementation of ProGRN.

105. Opportunities for resource sharing and transfer of know-how have been identified with these projects, in particular through:

- Use of existing governance structures (e.g. agro-pastoral, inter-communal charters) The mobilization of local experts, trainers or facilitators who have already collaborated with previous projects (e.g. experts in Agro-Pastoral Field Schools, community restoration seed centres) local community involvement from the Integrated Landscape Management in Less Developed Regions project).
- Sharing of reports and technical tools (AGLC establishment and good practices, productive partnerships under NTFP value chain development) developed in previous projects.
- Coordination with ongoing projects to avoid duplication and maximize leverage.

106. The project will also include in its implementation plan regular coordination meetings with projects active in the intervention zones, notably via the PSC, to ensure effective complementarity in the field and in mobilizing beneficiaries.

Core Indicators

Indicate expected results in each relevant indicator using methodologies indicated in the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework Guidelines. There is no need to complete this table for climate adaptation projects financed solely through LDCF and SCCF.

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
80000	81000	0	0

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
80,000.00	61,000.00		

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
Natural grass		20,000.00		

Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	61000	0	0

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	61,000.00		

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (direct)	313000	600000	0	0

Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (indirect)	0	0	0	0
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Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (direct)	313,000	600,000		
Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting	2025	2025		
Duration of accounting	20	20		

Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Total Target Benefit	Energy (MJ) (At PIF)	Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)
Target Energy Saved (MJ)				

Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	30,000	50,000		
Male	30,000	50,000		
Total	60,000	100,000	0	0

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

101. Core Indicator 3: Area of land and ecosystems under restoration (hectare) – Identified by total hectares of overlapping, degraded forests/woodlands and pasture areas under restoration (61,000 ha) transformed into (agro-) forest lands (Sub-indicator 3.2: Area of forest and forest land under restoration) and 20,000 ha of pastures restored (Sub-indicator 3.3: Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration) in the targeted agro-silvopastoral landscapes within the Gum Arabic Belt. Note: the 20,000 ha restored pastures are located within the 61,000 ha of forests/woodlands and pasturelands, and this is based on an approximate estimation that 40% of agricultural land in Mauritania is classified as pastureland. Restoration interventions will vary according to the level of degradation of the lands identified. The project aims to restore 15,000 ha of severely degraded lands (Activity 2.1.2.3) and 46,000 ha of moderately degraded lands (Activity 2.1.2.2). The restoration methods for severely degraded lands include

assisted natural regeneration (ANR) (Activity 2.1.2.3), re-establishment of native forest/woodland landscapes, aerial sowing/seeding (Activities 2.1.2.2, 2.1.2.3, 2.1.2.4) and direct seeding with local communities for agroforestry systems (Output 2.1.2). The project aims to support land restoration activities under Component 2 with a weighted average cost of USD 29/ha, which is far below the average cost of land restoration in Mauritania). The final composition of restoration methods applied, including forestry and agroforestry systems, will be decided together with local authorities and communities during project activities (specifically Activity 2.2.1.2 and Output 1.1.1).

102. Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectare) – Estimated at 61,000 ha to be sustainably managed through the co-construction of gender-responsive and integrated agro-silvopastoral and land use plans with local communities and implemented through the delegated authority of community-based organizations, including but not limited to AGLCs and ADCs (Output 2.2.1) using improved agro-silvopastoral practices suitable for semi-arid climates (Output 2.1.1, Output 2.1.2) and in support of crop and NTFPs production (Component 3, Output 2.1.1) (sub-indicator 4.3: Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems).

103. Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric tons of CO₂e) – At the end of the project implementation (2030), the climate change mitigation potential is expected to increase to around 55,000 tCO₂-e, and -600,000 tCO₂-e 20 years after project implementation (2045) (FAO, NEXT analysis, May 2025, see Annex O for further details).

104. Core Indicator 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (Count) – 100,000 direct project beneficiaries include local agro-silvopastoral communities and/or nomadic silvopastoralists living within and/or benefiting from the target agro-silvopastoral landscapes along the Gum Arabic Belt. These include 50,000 women and 50,000 men, youth and other social groups and population sub-categories whose livelihoods depend on agriculture, livestock production, collection, and valorization of NTFP including Gum Arabic. Special consideration will be given to engaging women and youth groups to ensure an inclusive and gender-responsive approach (Output 2.2.2, Output 3.1.3, Activity 1.2.2.3, Activity 3.1.3.1)

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Substantial	Current climate variability is threatening the fragile natural equilibria in the Gum Arabic Belt. Recent trends show delayed rains, early cessation, longer intra-seasonal dry spells, and more intense heatwaves. Mid-to long-term climate projections (2050-2100) show a significant temperature increase and projections of annual precipitation remain uncertain: some models suggest slight increases (RCP 8.5), while others indicate decreases (RCP 4.5), especially in southern Mauritania. Both scenarios foresee a shorter rainy season, erratic rainfall, and rising frequency of extreme temperatures (above 40°C), increasing risks of drought-induced degradation, seedling failure, loss of tree cover, and water scarcity for people and livestock, with consequent higher likelihood for conflicts. However, gum-producing Acacia species, particularly Acacia senegal, are resilient to prolonged dry spells, provided degradation drivers are managed. Also, it is important to note that for most

		Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP), drought is a much lesser risk to production than for local annual crops. The project will capitalize on lessons learned from previous investments in the Gum Arabic Belt and support adaptive capacity taking into consideration current climate variability and future climate projections including innovations such as solar-powered and water-efficient productive systems to support restoration, improved practices and livelihoods.
Environmental and Social	Moderate	The environmental risk associated with the project is limited, as the interventions focus on restoring degraded lands (modified habitats only) using native species, which is expected to generate net environmental and ecological benefits. However, the overall environmental and social risk is rated as moderate, due to potential vulnerabilities related to community dynamics, gender-based violence (GBV), and unequal participation in benefits. Social risks primarily concern the roles of women and girls in the value chains for non-timber forest products (NTFPs), including gum arabic, and the specific challenges they may face in safely and equitably engaging in project activities. Women are primarily responsible for collecting, processing, preserving, and marketing NTFPs—a set of tasks that can take up to 72 hours per week, with sales sometimes requiring more than 10 days per month. Their contribution is essential, yet they face mobility restrictions, limited access to resources, and greater exposure to risks such as GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), especially during solitary work or travel to markets. There is also the risk that, as NTFP value chains become more profitable, men may begin to dominate activities traditionally led by women, further exacerbating gender inequalities. To mitigate these risks, the project will be implemented in accordance with FAO's Framework for Environmental and Social Management. It will adopt a comprehensive gender-responsive and socially inclusive approach. Gender analysis and stakeholder mapping will inform the development of a Gender Action Plan, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, as well as a Grievance Redress Mechanism will be established to address any social risks. Capacity development will target both female and male stakeholders, with particular support provided to women's cooperatives, young women entrepreneurs, and persons with disabilities. Specific attention will be given to addressing women's time burdens, mobility needs, and security, including by bringing value-added activities closer to villages and providing labor-saving technologies such as mills and modern packaging equipment. The project will also provide SEA/PSEA training to implementing staff and government partners (under Output 1.2.2), and promote women's leadership within AGLCs, ADCs, seed centres, and value chain cooperatives. These efforts aim to ensure that women not only participate in restoration activities but are also empowered to benefit from the social, economic, and environmental gains of the project on an equal footing with men.
Political and Governance	Moderate	Government turnovers, inadequate institutional capacities, weak cross-sectoral cooperation, overlapping institutional mandates together with low

		levels of monitoring and enforcement, multidimensional poverty, and tensions over the use of natural resources, can delay or derail project interventions. The project will strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration and coordination to support integrated territorial planning and landscape management to reduce or reverse deforestation and land degradation.
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INNOVATION

Institutional and Policy	Moderate	Risks related to the Integrated Landscape Management Plans and the National Strategy for the valorization of NTFP including Gum Arabic (GA) not being operationalized due to lack of capacity and/or financing, will be mitigated through capacity building to inform decision-making processes, enhanced cross-sectoral coordination, knowledge dissemination and the development of integrated agro-silvopastoral and land use plans as an implementation tool at decentralized and community-level. To minimize these risks, the project will adopt a participatory and progressive approach throughout, involving all stakeholders from the earliest stages. A series of inclusive consultations, combined with awareness-raising campaigns, will be organized to strengthen the buy-in of local communities and political decision-makers
Technological	Low	While the NTFP cultivation and processing methods promoted by the project might be new in the Trarza and Assaba wilayas, they have been tested and adopted successfully in other wilayas in the country.
Financial and Business Model	Low	The financial and business model proposed through the project activities is by putting the NTFP value chain actors through an incubation approach, including structuring, registering and providing the necessary trainings not only for sustainable harvest, production, processing and packaging practices, but also for the development of viable business plans. The project will also facilitate linkages between NTFP value chain actors with viable business plans to micro-finance institutions and other private sector actors for value-chain financing. This sets up a sustainable and low-risk approach to investment made by the project. The processing technologies and equipment will be provided based on the development of viable business plans.

EXECUTION

Capacity	Moderate	There is little institutional and technical capacity to deliver project results giving the disconnect between national and regional aspirations and field achievements. The project activities, especially under Outcome 1.1 and Outcome 1.2 aim to strengthen MEDD/DREDD capacities to bridge the gap between national policies and field-level implementation with implementation-oriented and operational tools to deliver GEBs and socio-economic co-benefits.
Fiduciary	Moderate	The project may face risks related to financial management and procurement arrangements. These risks include delays in procurement processes, insufficient staff to manage financial and procurement functions. Such challenges could lead to inefficiency in the use of financial resources, delays

		in implementation, and a loss of confidence among stakeholders and donors. To minimize these risks, the project will draw on the long-standing experience of the MEDD in managing procurement and contracts with partners, and will adopt rigorous financial management and procurement procedures, ensuring that lines of responsibility and functions are clearly defined and separated. The project will also establish robust monitoring mechanisms to ensure transparency.
Stakeholder	Moderate	The project's engagement with communities, local authorities and technical partners is a critical vehicle for successful implementation. While, there are risks in relation to potential disagreement or disputes among different stakeholders, MEDD/DREDD have a longstanding policy in place that puts decentralization and community-based management of ecosystems at the centre. The project activities, including restoration site selection and species selection will be inclusive and participatory through community consultations based on exiting inclusive platforms, and will build upon existing multi-stakeholder governance and cooperation mechanisms. The project has specific activities and budget allocated to ensure continuous community engagement to inform monitoring of activities as well as ensuring lessons learned are integrated into a phased approach for project implementation. Furthermore, the project will benefit from these mechanisms as many NTFP value chain actors are also members of existing community-based governance and engagement mechanisms.
Other		
Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	The risks identified for the effective implementation and sustainability of project activities, including potential social and environmental threats, relate to challenges inherent in the implementation of land restoration approaches, project management and exogenous factors. The main risks stem from the instability of the political and administrative context, but these will be mitigated by a transparent and participatory approach. In addition, the climatic risks, deemed substantial, further underline the urgency and necessity of action within the framework of this project.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Explain how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

107. The 'Integrated Ecosystem Management Programme for the Sustainable Human Development in Mauritania' (GUMREST) project, implemented by FAO, is designed to align with several global and national environmental and development strategies, demonstrating a comprehensive approach to land restoration and sustainable resource management.

108. The project strongly supports GEF-8 programming strategies by addressing its Land Degradation Focal Area. It directly contributes to Objective LD-1: Avoid and reduce land degradation through sustainable land management (SLM) by strengthening community-based natural resource management (Components 1, 2, and 3), and Objective LD-2: Reverse land degradation through landscape restoration by actively restoring degraded agro-silvopastoral landscapes. By rehabilitating native agro-silvopastoral landscapes, the project is expected to yield significant biodiversity co-benefits. Furthermore, the project's emphasis on integrated and participatory approaches, including the development of national strategies for Gum Arabic and NTFPs and the deployment of innovative technologies like drone seeding, aims for transformative change by linking ecological recovery with economic incentives and community empowerment. This multi-faceted approach, incorporating socio-economic dimensions and a 'demand-side' strategy for restoration, is crucial for the long-term sustainability of the interventions.

109. At the national level, the project is well-aligned with Mauritania's key policy documents and commitments. It contributes to Mauritania's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (2021) under the UNCCD by focusing on capacity building, regulatory frameworks, institutional coherence, and funding for land rehabilitation and improved agro-silvopastoral practices. The project also significantly contributes to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Specifically, it supports Target 1 through interventions improving planning capacities and participatory integrated landscape management (Outputs 1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 2.2.1, 3.1.2). Target 2 is addressed through the effective restoration of degraded ecosystems to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services (Outputs 1.1.3, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5). Target 10 is supported by promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity and adoption of biodiversity-friendly practices (Outputs 2.1.3, 3.1.2). Target 20 is advanced through capacity building, access to innovation, and scientific research (Outputs 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 3.1.2, 4.1.2, 4.2.1, 4.2.2). Finally, Target 23, which focuses on providing women with equal opportunities, is addressed through interventions related to land use planning, value chain development, and knowledge exchange (Outputs 2.2.1, 3.1.3, 4.1.2, 4.2.). The project aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 15, related to poverty, food security and nutrition, climate-smart agriculture, land restoration, and the resilience of livelihoods, vulnerable populations, and ecosystems. Since 2002, Mauritania has set voluntary Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets to be achieved by 2030, and this GEF8 project directly contributes to achieving this ambition, complementing other ongoing LDN initiatives in the country.

Alignment to FAO Strategic framework, SDGs and Country Programming Framework

110. The project is also aligned with the Country Programming Framework (2024-2027) between FAO and Mauritania, focusing on Priority 1 – Inclusive and Sustainable Growth. More specifically, the project contributes to Product 1.1, strengthening the technical and operational capacities of stakeholders in the value chain of animal, agricultural and forest products for the sustainable transformation of agri-food systems; and Product 1.3, reinforcing the resilience of national institutions and vulnerable communities to cope with the effects of climate change through an approach based on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus. Focusing on gum arabic and other nature-friendly NTFP value chains, the project strengthens communities' livelihoods and local biodiversity.

111. To enhance the project's impact, a national strategy, focused on public-private partnerships, will be developed for gum Arabic and other NTFPs, with an attention on the entire value chain and gender equality (Output 1.1.2).

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed during Project Preparation as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

1) Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive-measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

Yes

If the project expects to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment, please indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality:

Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;

Yes

Improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or

Yes

Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

Yes

2) Does the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during Project Preparation as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B) and that a Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed before CEO endorsement.

Yes

Select what role civil society will play in the Project

Consulted only;

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor;

Co-financier;

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body ; Yes

Executor or co-executor;

Other (Please explain)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in section B project description?

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguards

We confirm that we have provided information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program, including risk screenings/ assessments and, if applicable, management plans or other measures to address identified risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex E).

Yes

Please provide overall Project/Program Risk Classification

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Low	Medium/Moderate		

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described during Project Preparation in the Project Description and that these activities have been budgeted and an anticipated timeline for delivery of relevant outputs has been provided.

Yes

Socio-economic Benefits

We confirm that the project design has considered socio-economic benefits to be delivered by the project and these have been clearly described in the Project Description and will be monitored and reported on during project implementation (at MTR and TER).

112. The project is designed to deliver significant socio-economic benefits at the local level in Mauritania, piloting an integrated approach that links land restoration efforts with value chain development. This aims to anchor Mauritania's restoration and protection activities in direct short- and long-term economic benefits for local populations, primarily through enhancing production and productivity levels of Gum Arabic and other critical Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), including fodder and grass. The project intends to support target communities in transitioning from an informal, low-value extraction model to a more structured, market-oriented approach, thereby delivering direct socio-economic benefits. Furthermore, the project will specifically target women- and youth-led cooperatives to benefit from value-chain strengthening activities, recognizing that women predominantly participate in the Gum Arabic and other NTFP value chains, with opportunities to integrate youth into production, aggregation, and marketing segments.

113. While Gum Arabic is a priority value chain and strategic crop for Mauritania, the full potential for economic benefits from restoration activities within the project's lifetime is acknowledged as somewhat limited for newly planted trees. As such, the project aims to valorise existing and varied high-potential NTFP species, including *Balanites aegyptiaca* (desert date), *Ziziphus mauritiana* (jujube), *Adansonia digitata* (baobab), and various fodder species. Although target communities already engage in some production and processing of these products, current systems are poorly structured, lacking post-harvest processing, standardization, and direct market access, which leads to low and unstable revenues for producers. This is particularly evident with Gum Arabic, often viewed as a supplemental income source due to its dry season collection. However, significant value-added potential exists; for instance, information collected through field missions indicate that raw Gum Arabic sells for 100-200 MRU/kg locally, while processed Gum Arabic can fetch 350-400 MRU/kg in Nouakchott. Similarly, jujube powder can sell for 60-100 MRU/kg compared to raw fruit at 20-50 MRU/kg. Prices for NTFPs like gum, jujube, and baobab can increase by up to 200% during the off-season due to high national demand and low availability.

114. By introducing improved harvesting tools and processing equipment that will be identified through the development of a catalogue of NTFP appropriate harvesting, processing and packaging equipment (Activity 3.1.1.4), and providing technical training in sustainable harvesting, processing, and storage (Activity 3.1.1.3), the project aims to improve product quality and quantity. This is crucial given the current low gum production (averaging 100g per tree, down from 300g previously). Training in enterprise development and business management (Activity 3.1.3.1) will enable cooperatives to create viable business models and access financing (Activity 3.1.4.3) through coaching and facilitation services with a private sector partner and in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry. Furthermore, the project will establish an NTFP market information system (Output 3.1.2) to improve transparency and negotiation capacity for communities. Engagement with private sector actors, including buyers and exporters from Mauritania and neighboring countries like Mali and Senegal through trade fairs, will facilitate commercial contracts and long-term, mutually beneficial relationships (Activity 3.1.4.3). The project recognizes the potential for cross-border trade, building on existing regional trade patterns where NTFP markets are more developed, and aiming to ensure traceability and quality for regional and international markets through the development of the National Gum Arabic and priority NTFP strategy and standards (Output 1.1.1.), as well as ensuring B2B facilitation and trade fairs that include not only national companies but also those that are active in the sub-region, and if possible internationally.

115. The project interventions, by enhancing understanding and approaches to sustainable agro-silvopastoral land restoration (Output 2.1.2) through agroforestry approaches, management, and monitoring (Output 1.2.2), and by connecting these with market-oriented production and processing practices, including not only Gum Arabic but also fodder/grass species (Component 3), aim to ensure benefits are accrued in an inclusive manner while promoting restoration and protection practices for sustainability.

116. Furthermore, the communities' involvement in decision-making processes for the management of agro-silvopastoral ecosystems (Output 2.2.1, Output 2.2.2) and the establishment/strengthening of community-based organizations (AGLCs, ADCs) under the delegated authority of the MEDD (Output 2.2.2) will increase their sense of ownership and responsibility in the management and monitoring of their natural resources. This will also reduce conflicts around land tenure and use rights among different resource users (Output 2.2.1, Activity 2.2.1.2). Through these participatory decision-making processes, the project will contribute to identifying a combination of actions and land-use practices that best support sustainable and equitable access to, and utilization of, socio-economic benefits derived from agro-silvopastoral landscapes while restoring natural resources and enhancing ecosystem functioning.

117. The agroforestry practices to be adopted under the project (Output 2.1.2) will generate multiple co-benefits across environmental, social, and health dimensions. These include land restoration, improved water retention, and enhanced soil fertility, which are essential for maintaining agricultural productivity, regulating microclimates, and for supporting community health and environmental sustainability. Additionally, the

restoration of grasslands and pasturelands (Output 2.1.2) will contribute to the recovery of key ecological functions, supporting biodiversity conservation, water catchment protection, and sustainable fodder production. This is particularly critical in Assaba and Trarza, where NDVI analyses and field reports indicate a decline in vegetative cover and the collapse of tree regeneration in many agro-silvopastoral systems.

118. By reintroducing multipurpose native species such as *Acacia senegal*, *Balanites aegyptiaca*, and *Ziziphus mauritiana* into croplands, pastures, and communal rangelands (Output 2.1.2), the project will enhance ecological complexity, increase carbon sequestration, and strengthen the capacity of rural ecosystems to deliver services. These interventions align with GEF's global environmental objectives, particularly in the areas of land degradation neutrality, dryland biodiversity, and climate-smart landscapes. In doing so, the project aims to reinforce nature-positive agro-silvopastoral livelihoods, while reducing reliance on resource-extractive and unsustainable practices.

119. Climate resilience is a central objective of the project. Project activities will build the adaptive capacity of agro-silvopastoral systems to cope with projected climate risks such as intensified rainfall events, longer dry spells, and rising temperatures. To address these stressors, the project will promote climate-adaptive practices such as species diversification, water-efficient agroforestry practices, soil moisture conservation techniques (e.g., demi-lunes, mulching, composting), and rotational grazing systems in degraded rangelands (Output 2.1.2).

120. Beyond technical solutions, the project will also support climate governance and institutional resilience at multiple levels. At the community level, Collective Local Management Associations (AGLCs) and Community Development Associations (ADCs) will lead local monitoring and adaptive management (Output 2.2.2, Activity 2.2.2.2), while at the institutional level, the project will enhance the capacities of regional (DREDD) and national authorities (MEDD) to coordinate cross-sectoral land use planning and resource management (Output 1.2.2). This multi-scalar approach ensures that climate adaptation is embedded in both grassroots practices and national policy frameworks, thereby enhancing long-term sustainability and systemic resilience in the face of climate shocks.

121. The project champions decent rural employment by integrating principles of fairness, equity, and participation throughout its interventions. Restoration activities themselves will create employment opportunities for local communities through manual reforestation (Activity 2.1.2.1), rainwater harvesting (Activity 2.1.2.3), and the promotion of labor- and time-saving use of innovative technologies like drone seeding (Activity 2.1.2.2, Activity 2.1.2.4). Strengthening NTFP value chains (Component 3) will generate employment in harvesting, processing, and marketing (Output 3.1.1), providing alternative income sources to traditional, often precarious, agricultural jobs.

122. Women are primary collectors of many NTFPs but face significant barriers in accessing equipment, training, and finance. The project specifically targets community cooperatives (with a focus on women and youth-led cooperatives) (Output 3.1.1, Activity 3.1.1.3), providing them with leadership, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship training (Output 3.1.1, Activity 3.1.1.3). This directly addresses gender disparities in economic opportunities and decision-making roles within communities. While youth school attendance in Mauritania is high, the unemployment rate for young people (14-35 years) in Mauritania was 18.5% in 2019. By providing vocational training and entrepreneurial support (Output 3.1.3), the project creates pathways for young people to engage in sustainable, nature-based livelihoods.

123. By formalizing value chains and strengthening cooperatives (Output 3.1.1, Activity 3.1.1.7), the project aims to improve working conditions, ensure fair prices for products, and reduce reliance on informal, often exploitative, market intermediaries. The project will work with financial institutions to develop tailored financial products for NTFP and restoration value chains (Output 3.1.4). This is crucial in a country where financial inclusion is low, with only 20.9% of adults having a bank account or mobile money in 2017, and a significant gender gap. By establishing revolving funds and strengthening Village Savings and Loans

Associations (VSLAs) (Activity 3.1.1.6), the project will enhance local financial management and access to capital for community-led initiatives. These deliberate interventions ensure that the project's ecological restoration efforts are mutually reinforcing with socio-economic development, creating sustainable livelihoods and fostering dignified employment opportunities for Mauritania's rural population while addressing poverty and vulnerability in a climate-responsive context.

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
FAO	GET	Mauritania	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-1	Grant	2,664,726.00	253,149.00	2,917,875.00
FAO	GET	Mauritania	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-2	Grant	2,664,726.00	253,149.00	2,917,875.00
Total GEF Resources (\$)						5,329,452.00	506,298.00	5,835,750.00

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Was a Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

150000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

14250

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
FAO	GET	Mauritania	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-1	75,000.00	7,125.00	82,125.00
FAO	GET	Mauritania	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-2	75,000.00	7,125.00	82,125.00
Total PPG Amount (\$)					150,000.00	14,250.00	164,250.00

Please provide Justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
FAO	GET	Mauritania	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	4,000,000.00
FAO	GET	Mauritania	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	2,000,000.00
Total GEF Resources					6,000,000.00

Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
LD-1	GET	2,664,726.00	4500000
LD-2	GET	2,664,726.00	4500000
Total Project Cost		5,329,452.00	9,000,000.00

Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type

Please include evidence for each co-financing source for this project in the tab of the portal

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4000000
Recipient Country Government	MEDD (National Agency of Great Green Wall)	Grant	Investment mobilized	3000000
Recipient Country Government	MEDD (National Agency of Great Green Wall)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1000000
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Livestock (PRAPS II)	Grant	Investment mobilized	500000
Private Sector	Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500000
Total Co-financing				9,000,000.00

Please describe the investment mobilized portion of the co-financing

The co-financing of USD 9.0 million reflects the commitment of the national authorities and the international community to ensuring a lasting and structuring impact of the project. Most of the co-financing, i.e. 8 million dollars, is provided by the MEDD in two forms: i) additional recurrent expenditure in the form of in-kind financing and public investment, which includes hosting of the PMU (office space, vehicles, etc...) and staff time contributing directly to the implementation of project activities; ii) parallel financing through GCF-funded SURAGGWA project, which will be implemented by the National Agency of the Great Green Wall (NA-GGW under MEDD). The grant under SURAGGWA will help to ensure synergies in geographic targeting, establishment of community seed groups as well as cross-fertilization of land restoration monitoring methodologies and frameworks and knowledge management and exchange. The NAGGW also has aerial seeding drones, which the project can have access to in its seeding activities. SURAGGWA will also provide support to NTFP value chain development and MEDD will equally benefit from synergies with capacity building activities for land restoration monitoring, under SURAGGWA. Furthermore, the GEF8 project will benefit from grant financing from the Ministry of Livestock with the PRAPS II project, which will provide opportunities to engage with existing governance structures that effectively include transhumant pastoralists, as well as combined planning towards ensuring livestock corridor demarcation, rehabilitation and development activities benefit communities targeted under GEF8 project, and vice versa.

Alongside this investment, the Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry is contributing USD 0.5 million, which is in the form of in-kind contributions, but is critical to bolster the private sector engagement for the development of economically and financially viable NTFP value chains. The Chamber of Commerce will provide critical engagement with private sector actors and contribute to the organization of B2B, trade fair activities as well as accompany any commercial contracts signed under the project.

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	6/17/2025	Jeffrey Griffin		jeffrey.griffin@fao.org

Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template.

Name of GEF OFP	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Lalya Aly Kamara	OFP Focal Point	Ministry of Environment	2/23/2023

ANNEX C: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Please indicate the page number in the Project Document where the project results and M&E frameworks can be found. Please also paste below the Project Results Framework from the Agency document.

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
Project Objective: The objective is to combat land degradation through the restoration, sustainable management and use of agro-silvopastoral landscapes and associated ecosystem services as well as strengthened sustainability of restoration activities through value chain development of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs.						
Component 1: Creating an enabling environment for sustainable management of agro-silvopastoral landscapes in the Gum Arabic Belt.						
Outcome 1.1: Integrated land-use and agro-silvopastoral management planning capacities are developed and tools broadly used by local authorities and community-based organizations (CBOs)						
Output 1.1.1: One national operational manual on the development of gender-responsive integrated land use and agro-silvopastoral management plans (LUPs), with a focus on Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFPs for the wilayas in the Gum Arabic belt developed and validated	1.1.1.1: One national operational manual on gender-responsive integrated land use and agro-silvopastoral management in the Gum Arabic Belt developed and validated	Existing land use plans are developed in a fragmented manner with little consolidation of lessons-learned from previous experience, and do not take into account dynamics of integrated ecosystem restoration, including economic potential and gender-responsive aspects aiming to ensure inclusion of women	Stocktaking and lessons-learned report of current land use planning and agro-silvopastoral management approaches, highlighting different case studies, and providing technical guidance to inform the development of the national operational manual.	One operational manual, validated and available to all Gum Arabic Belt wilayas through an inclusive process.	Technical analysis reports on existing planning approaches and processes. Publication and dissemination of National Operational Manual. MEDD, FAO	Existing land use plans are available in usable versions (paper or digital) with no major access restrictions for the project team or international experts. DREDD and other local authorities are willing to share technical information, facilitate field visits and get involved in the manual development and validation process. Community-based organizations, NTFP value chain actors, women, transhumant pastoralists, agro-pastoralists are available and willing to be consulted and express their perceptions of the current limits of land use and agro-silvopastoral ecosystem management.

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
Output 1.1.2: One national strategy – with focus on private-public partnerships – for Gum Arabic and other NTFPs finalized, with focus on the entire value chain, and in support of gender equality in the context of NTFP value chains in Mauritania.	1.1.2.1. One national Gum Arabic and selected NTFP strategy developed and validated, with a focus on public-private partnerships	No National NTFP strategy exists, and no quality standards are published by the national authorities.	Diagnostic and background studies undertaken and draft Strategy prepared	One Gum Arabic on other selected NTFPs national strategy, including accompanying quality standards (aligned with AIIPG)	Publicly available and validated Gum Arabic and NTFP strategy and standards MEDD, FAO	MEDD and value chain actors are engaged in the process; private sector and women's groups participate actively; Understanding of the importance of Gum Arabic harvesting practices for both production and quality through the AIPG standard is internalized.
Outcome 1.2: Capacities of MEDD/DREDD staff at national- and Wilaya-level are strengthened to better assess land use and support Community-based organizations (including Collective Local Management Associations (AGLCs) and local development committees (ADCs)) in land restoration and sustainable management						
1.2.1: Technological innovations are made available for land restoration activities and monitoring (e.g. drones for seeding)	1.2.1.1: 3 drones deployed and used for land restoration and monitoring	MEDD/DREDD currently have one functional drone out of 3 only for land monitoring	3 aerial seeding and land monitoring drones procured and functional for project activities	3 drones for aerial seeding available and functional at MEDD	Drone seeding mission reports and image captures included in regular M&E of the project MEDD, FAO	
1.2.2: MEDD/DREDD and other partner institution staff are trained in methods for collecting, storing and processing land use and biophysical data, and in best practices for monitoring and implementation of gender-responsive integrated land use management, land restoration and monitoring in the Gum Arabic belt as well as in the use of equipment and methods acquired under Output 1.2.1	1.2.2.1: 240 MEDD/DREDD and other partner institution staff trained on integrated land use planning, restoration monitoring, and gender-responsive approaches, 50% women 1.2.2.2. Dimitra club training and operationalization in targeted villages	Previous capacity building (World Bank SAWAP, IUCN/GEF, UNCCD) but gaps remain in advanced technologies and data management. No Dimitra listening clubs in targeted villages	Training modules made available; 8 training sessions undertaken, including ToT MEDD/DREDD staff trained on Dimitra and other gender-responsive approaches (including PSEA); at least 6 villages equipped and	240 staff trained (at least 40% women and youth); all trained staff able to demonstrate use of drones, sensors, and Collect Earth At least 12 Dimitra clubs operational under the aegis of the AGLC/ADCs with delegated authority to discuss topics relevant to women in targeted villages, including sharing	Training attendance lists, pre/post training assessments, training materials and reports MEDD, FAO Training attendance lists, radio broadcasts, logs of listening clubs and radio broadcasts MEDD, FAO	Staff retention in MEDD/DREDD remains high; trained staff cascade knowledge to colleagues That Dimitra clubs can work at AGLC level (representing multiple villages) rather than just at AGLC level

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
			using Dimitra radios	of experiences on sustainable natural resources management and NTFPs		Women participating in the project activities are willing and able to make time for listening clubs
	1.2.2.3. 3 drones deployed and used for land restoration and monitoring	MEDD has limited aerial seeding drones (1 functional)	3 drones effectively utilized for drone seeding and land restoration monitoring activities	3 drones effectively utilized for drone seeding and land restoration monitoring, including by MEDD/DREDD trained staff	Drone seeding mission logs, aerial photos and monitoring records MEDD, FAO	Drones remain operationally effective
	1.2.2.4.: MEDD's national database and M&E providing regular through staff trained on monitoring methodologies aligned with Collect Earth, for integrated reporting for national AFOLU sector	No systematic use of Collect Earth or integrated AFOLU reporting	2 training sessions held on monitoring data and information, including MEDD SI and Collect Earth	4 training sessions held on monitoring data and information, including MEDD SI and Collect Earth.	Training attendance lists, session reports, data outputs from Collect Earth MEDD, FAO	National reporting systems remain compatible and up to date
	1.2.2.5. At least 50% of trained staff able to apply acquired skills for field-level monitoring and planning	No regular, systematic monitoring of restoration sites	8 monitoring visits completed (4 per wilaya) per year	16 field monitoring reports made available, including results from aerial monitoring with the drones	Monitoring reports, site visit photos, georeferenced data available MEDD, FAO	Sufficient staff and logistical support for regular site visits

Component 2: Sustainable rehabilitation of agrosilvopastoral landscapes to restore ecosystem integrity

Outcome 2.1: Rehabilitated agrosilvopastoral systems contribute to ecosystem integrity and prevent, reduce and reverse land degradation through community-led action and integration of locally adapted restoration practices, and the support to national seed infrastructure

2.1.1: 24 Agro-Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) on market-oriented sustainable management of agrosilvopastoral, and agro-forestry and horticulture systems established and operationalized.	2.1.1.1: Train 24 (12 women, 12 men) Facilitators (Training of Facilitators - ToF)	No APFS facilitators trained in the project area	24 facilitators trained (12 women, 12 men) on agro-silvopastoral management, horticulture, water use, and	24 facilitators trained (12 women, 12 men) on agro-silvopastoral management, horticulture, water use, and participatory extension.	Training reports, attendance lists, facilitator certification MEDD., FAO	Local partners and extension services support APFS roll-out
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Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
			participatory extension.	Training reports made available		
	2.1.1.2: Establish and operationalize 24 market-oriented Agro-Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) integrating agro-silvopastoral management and smallholder horticulture empowerment and promotion modules, including small-scale water use systems in selected sites.	No APFS established in targeted sites	Establishment of 24 APFS integrating agro-silvopastoral management and intensive agro-forestry.	Establishment of 24 APFS integrating agro-silvopastoral management and intensive agro-forestry At least 600 farmers (minimum 50% women) trained through the APFS network.	Activity reports for each APFS including curriculum, attendance, and technical modules delivered. Documentation of functioning water use systems in selected APFS. One video produced on APFS activities and results. MEDD., FAO	Community interest and participation is maintained by ensuring the transmission of forestry and agroforestry practices that can provide income generating activities for the beneficiary communities prior to Gum Arabic production, and ensure gender balance in APFS maintained.
2.1.2: 61,000 hectares (ha) of Gum Arabic production areas and pasturelands reforested/restored (in Trarza and Assaba) with Gum Arabic, fodder and other relevant NTFP species (exact ratio to be determined under output 1.1.3) to preserve ecosystem integrity, in close collaboration with local communities, including men and women, and by using innovative technologies.	2.1.2.1: Reforest 3 000 hectares manually with gum trees, fodder and other NTFP species to establish sustainable silvopastoral systems in fenced communal areas in 60 villages (10 villages with new fencing, 50 villages with existing fencing). 2.1.2.2: Reforest/rehabilitate 40.000 hectares of moderately degraded gum production areas and	No recent large-scale community reforestation in fenced areas.	1,500 ha reforested in 30 villages	3,000 ha within fenced areas reforested with gum trees and other NTFP.	GPS-referenced reforestation maps and monitoring reports. Species list, planting densities, and survival rate report. MEDD., FAO	Community engagement and survival rates of planted species remain high, including through close monitoring from communities as well as local authorities.
		No recent large-scale restoration of severely degraded areas targeted by a project.	20,000 ha rehabilitated using innovative drone seeding technologies,	40,000 ha rehabilitated using mulching, sustainable pruning, and drone seeding.	Field monitoring reports with photos and geospatial evidence.	Drone seeding and community techniques are effective and adopted.

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
	pasturelands ¹ [1] outside fenced areas through sustainable tree management, mulching and the use of manure and drone seeding.		mulching, sustainable pruning.		List of species and techniques applied. MEDD., FAO	
	2.1.2.3: Restore 500 hectares of severely degraded gum production areas through community-based construction of half-moons, zai pits, and assisted natural regeneration engagement in the construction of half-moons and zai pits for rainwater harvesting and assisted natural regeneration (ANR), and 14 500 ha of gum production areas and pastureland reforested through drone seeding of Gum Arabic, fodder/grass species and other NTFPs.	No recent large-scale restoration of severely degraded areas targeted by a project.	7,500 ha restored (250 ha with half-moons/zai pits; 7,250 ha with drone seeding)	500 ha restored with the construction of half-moons and zai pits. 14,500 ha reforested via drone seeding.	Reports on community mobilization, technical implementation, drone application, GIS layers for restored areas MEDD., FAO	Community mobilization and technical support are sustained
	2.1.2.4. 14,500 ha reforested in severely degraded, inaccessible areas using drone seeding of gum Arabic and other well-adapted species	Severely degraded lands with no systematic drone seeding or reforestation activities	7,250 ha reforested	14,500 ha reforested	Reports on community mobilization, technical implementation, drone application, GIS layers for restored areas MEDD, FAO	Drone operations go smoothly Minimal need for re-seeding
	2.1.2.4. Fix 3,000 ha of mobile dunes with adapted species through drone seeding of a variety of species including Gum Arabic,	No systematic dune fixation in targeted areas	1,500 ha of dunes fixed	3,000 ha of dunes fixed using adapted trees and shrubs species. Drone seeding report with flight	Drone seeding report, flight data, species mix, before/after photos, monitoring forms MEDD., FAO	Drone seeding is effective for dune fixation;

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
	fodder/grass species and other NTFPs.			data and species mix.		
2.1.3: Local-level capacities for collection, management and provision/marketing of quality seeds for restoration through the establishment of Community Seed Groups in support of National Forestry Seed Centre in Assaba	2.1.3.1. 6 Community Seed Groups in support of the National Forestry Seed Centre in Assaba established (1 restoration seed cooperative per 5 villages)	No formal community seed groups in project area	6 seed cooperatives established	Before/after photo documentation and monitoring forms. 12 seed cooperatives formally established (1 per 5 villages), with inclusive membership (minimum 50% women).	Community mobilization reports. Cooperative charters, statutes, and operational guidelines developed and endorsed by members.	Community interest and gender balance in seed groups maintained
	2.1.3.2: Construct 4-6 community seed centres	No community seed centres in targeted areas	2 seed centres constructed and equipped	At least 4 fully constructed and equipped community seed centres.	MEDD., FAO Site selection reports including technical specifications. Infrastructure completion certificates and inventory lists of basic equipment. MEDD., FAO Handover agreements signed between the project and the cooperatives/AGL Cs	Construction proceeds without major delays; centres are used as intended
	2.1.3.3: Community seed centres produce at least 1.5 million viable seeds for restoration.	No community-based seed production for restoration	750,000 viable seeds produced	Production of at least 1.5 million viable seeds (or quantity based on species-specific planting densities).	Quarterly seed production reports from seed centres detailing species, quantities, source material, and treatment methods.	Seed production and quality standards are met as per training provided
					Germination test results and quality control records.	Community groups are offered technical support and accompanime

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
	2.1.3.4: Train 300 community members (70 % women) on restoration seed collection, storage, management and marketing as part of the community seed centres.	No systematic training on seed collection and management	150 trained (min 105 women)	At least 300 individuals trained (minimum 210 women) in seed collection, drying, pre-treatment, storage, germination techniques, and basic marketing.	Seed distribution logs indicating quantities and recipients per restoration site. MEDD, FAO Participant lists, training materials, reports, evaluations, marketing plan MEDD, FAO	nt by DREDD and local authorities also trained in sustainable restoration seed management Women's participation and interest remain high Community groups are offered technical support and accompaniment by DREDD and local authorities also trained in sustainable restoration seed management
				Disaggregated participant lists (by gender and youth inclusion).		
				Training materials used and distributed.		
				Training reports including session agendas, photos, feedback evaluations, and knowledge assessment summaries.		
				Community-led seed marketing plan developed in at least 6 centres.		

Outcome 2.2: Cooperation strengthened among agro-silvopastoralist resource users.

2.2.1. Integrated and gender-responsive land use and agro-silvopastoral sustainable management plans and practices in production systems	2.2.1.1: 2 maps produced to identify priority zones for restoration, degraded lands, and existing fenced areas,	No comprehensive, up-to-date maps of land degradation and fenced areas	Draft maps produced and validated with local stakeholders	Two high-resolution land use and degradation maps (one for Assaba, one for Trarza), developed using	GIS shapefiles and metadata package made available to MEDD and DREDD offices.	MEDD and local partners provide access to data and support field validation
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Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
developed/amended and applied in Assaba and Trarza, covering 61,000 ha considering all resource users, and consistent with Output 1.1.1 and Output 1.1.3.	through the use of Africa OPENDeal ² [2].			satellite imagery and field validation.	Mapping report summarizing methodology, classifications used, and priority areas identified for restoration.	
					MEDD, FAO	
					List of priority sites for restoration aligned with planned field activities.	
	2.2.1.2: 48 multi-stakeholder consultations conducted to support co-development of land use plans, ensuring at least 50% participation of women	No systematic consultation launched by MEDD/DREDD authorities for the establishment of AGLCs or other community-based organizations with a mandate for communal ecosystem management	24 consultations held	48 multi-stakeholder consultation session reports (4 per AGLC), including attendance sheets disaggregated by gender and sector.	Summary of local needs and priorities discussed, conflict resolution points, and co-developed planning principles.	Facilitation tools and participatory mapping outputs used during consultations (maps, drawings, SWOT matrices, etc.).
					Photo documentation and feedback forms from participants.	
					MEDD, FAO	MEDD provides legal mandates to community-based organizations (as proto-AGLCs) for eventual transfer of mandate to established AGLCs in targeted areas.
	2.2.1.3: 12 integrated, gender-responsive land use and management plans validated and applied across 60 villages (covering 61,000 ha of land to be restored)	Outdated or fragmented plans; lack of gender or forestry /agroforestry ecosystem focus	6 updated and validated plans (covering 30,000 ha)	12 updated and community-validated land use and ecosystem management plans (1 per AGLC), covering a total of 61,000 ha.	Validation workshop reports for each plan, including signatures or endorsement from local authorities, AGLCs, and stakeholders.	Local authorities and communities remain committed to plan application

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
					Printed and digital versions of plans submitted to local authorities, AGLCs, and MEDD/DREDD.	
					Evidence of application: implementation schedules, integration with community initiatives, or references in local governance planning.	
					Monitoring framework annexed to each plan (including gender-responsive and ecosystem indicators).	
2.2.2: Strengthening/establishment of self-managed and sustainable local institutions (such as ADCs, AGLCs, or other inclusive community groups) for the concerted management of agro-silvopastoral resources	2.2.2.1: 60 local communities mobilized (50% women) and involved in development of integrated land-use and agro-silvopastoral management plans, identification of restoration sites and species 2.2.2.2: Support/establish and structure 4-6 AGLCs, through a MEDD/DREDD accompanied process to ensure full ownership and participation from the communities.	Most villages have informal or inactive groups; limited inclusion of women/youth and weak legal status. Gender-transformative approaches rarely applied. Existing AGLCs are few, fragmented, and lack formal mandates; community ownership is limited in target areas.	60 villages mobilized; participatory needs assessments and gender analyses completed; 60 CBOs (at least 50% women in leadership) identified or formed. 4-6 AGLCs restructured or newly established; participatory governance and management training delivered; draft mandates prepared.	60 charters, statutes and operational guidelines developed and endorsed by the members, with delegated authority for integrated natural resource management delegated by MEDD. 4-6 AGLCs obtain official mandates for natural resource management transferred from Wali; inclusive governance structures (gender/youth quotas) operational; regular meetings and reporting in place.	MEDD, FAO CBO charters/statutes; minutes of endorsement meetings; MEDD delegation letters; gender analysis reports; attendance lists (sex-disaggregated). MEDD, FAO, Community Facilitators Official mandate documents; AGLC governance records; meeting minutes; training attendance sheets; Wali/MEDD correspondence. MEDD, DREDD, AGLCs	Communities are willing to participate; local leaders support inclusive processes; MEDD maintains commitment to devolving authority. Wali and local authorities support devolution; communities remain engaged; AGLCs maintain transparency and inclusivity.

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
	2.2.2.3: Train 2 400 members of community-based organizations (1 200 women and 1 200 men) on the management and monitoring of agro-silvo-pastoral resources.	Previous training limited in scope and reach; most CBO members lack formal training on sustainable management/monitoring.	1,200 individuals (50% women) trained; training modules adapted for local context and languages; peer-to-peer learning initiated.	2 400 individuals (of which 50% women) trained on management and monitoring of agro-silvopastoral resources. Training modules made available.	Training attendance lists (sex-disaggregated); pre/post training assessments; training materials; field monitoring reports; follow-up surveys. FAO, MEDD, Training Facilitators	Community members are available and motivated; training is accessible and adapted to literacy levels; follow-up support is provided.

Component 3: Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFP value chains strengthened to prevent land degradation and biodiversity loss

Outcome 3.1: Community livelihoods and local biodiversity are strengthened through nature positive Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFPs value chains.

3.1.1: Organizational and technical capacities of 48 community cooperatives enhanced to sustainably harvest, process, store, and market high quality Gum Arabic and selected priority NTFPs, including value added products (run in parallel with restoration sites).	3.1.1.1: Identify available NTFPs in targeted villages/communities and co-identify community-based organization and cooperative level interest in species to be utilized for restoration and value chain development project activities.	No comprehensive NTFP resource assessment exists in target areas	NTFP resource assessment report drafted	One NTFP resource assessment detailing production and market development opportunities and challenges covering all targeted villages.	Assessment report, stakeholder workshop records MEDD, FAO	Communities and cooperatives actively participate in data collection
-	3.1.1.2: 48 cooperatives strengthened in organizational, financial and management capacities (at least 50% women-led cooperatives)	<10 cooperatives have formal training in NTFP production/harvesting	24 cooperatives (900 individuals, 60% women) trained	48 cooperatives (1,500 individuals, 60% women) trained in sustainable NTFP practices 144 cooperative leaders/management persons trained on leadership, management and financial literacy.	Training attendance lists, pre/post assessments, session reports MEDD, FAO	Cooperatives remain operational and engaged
	3.1.1.3: Facilitate access to materials, equipment and related training for the harvest, storage, processing and marketing of NTFPs for	No centralized directory of NTFP technologies exists	Equipment directory created, 15 cooperatives equipped.	At least 30 cooperatives and multi-purpose building managers are trained and procured with identified	Procurement records, equipment distribution logs, with links to the cooperatives having been trained under 3.1.1.2. as prerequisite for	Local markets can supply required equipment

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
	cooperatives and multi-purpose buildings of MEDD. ³ [3]			equipment and materials.	equipment distribution MEDD, FAO	
	3.1.1.6. 19 cooperatives structured and registered (at least 50% women-led cooperatives)	<20% of cooperatives formally registered	10 cooperatives registered	Training reports, with photo evidence, made available. 38 cooperatives registered (80% of target) 80% of supported cooperatives are registered, with official registration papers from relevant authority.	Registration certificates, government databases MEDD	Registration process is streamlined
3.1.2. NTFP market information system established and functional, in each wilaya	3.1.2.1: Train DREDD and community-based organization representatives to actively contribute to market information system on NTFP including Gum Arabic and selected NTFPS, including seasonal quantities and prices.	No widely recognized NTFP market information system used by target communities	4 training sessions held (2 per wilaya)	At least 90% of the supported cooperatives' leaders have benefited from the exchange visits facilitated by the project. Functional MIS with quarterly updates from all target areas	2 training sessions per wilaya (including DREDD and community-based organization representatives) on data collection and reporting into market information system. MEDD/DREDD/ADCs provide regular inputs to market information system on Gum Arabic and selected NTFPs (as evidenced through	DREDD commits staff to maintain system Communities are able and willing to supply data to the MIS in collaboration with DREDD and other local authorities

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
					the dissemination of this information on the system)	
					MIS data logs, user access reports	
	3.1.2.2. Conduct a rapid diagnostic of the existing market information system and reinforce based on the finding to improve access to market information by the NTFPs actors.	Existing MIS (if any) not evaluated for NTFP needs	Diagnostic report completed	MIS upgraded based on diagnostic recommendations	MEDD Diagnostic report, system upgrade records MEDD	Stakeholders provide honest feedback
3.1.3: 38 inclusive, participatory and gender-responsive business plans developed for the production and marketing of gum arabic and other NTFPs	3.1.3.1: Train 2-3 members each from 48 cooperatives to develop viable business plans, with a focus on cooperatives led by women and youth (targeting 60% women-led cooperatives, and 30% youth-led) ⁴ [4].	No prior business plan training for NTFP actors targeted	6 training sessions held	12 training sessions organized on business plan development	Training modules prepared and made available One training report per session, including photo evidence, made available.	Community engagement, and minimum literacy for participation in trainings
	3.1.3.2: Support 38 cooperatives to develop business plans targeted for implementation, with a focus on cooperatives led by women and youth (50% women-led; 30% youth-led)	No prior business plans developed by targeted cooperatives	6 training sessions held; 19 business plans developed	38 business plans developed (50% women-led, 30% youth-led)	Business plan documents, business pitch presentations MEDD	Cooperatives have market access for implementation
3.1.4: 19 NTFP cooperatives supported to access financing opportunities, with a focus on women and youth.	3.1.4.1: At least one new NTFP-specific financial product developed and implemented	No tailored financial products for NTFP value chains in targeted area	1 pilot credit product designed	At least one new NTFP-specific credit product developed, and documentation shared with financial institutions. One training module on	Credit product guidelines, lender agreements Training reports and modules made available	Financial institutions see NTFP profitability

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
				NTFP-specific credit product developed.	MEDD	
	3.1.4.2: At least 10 cooperatives receive credit through micro-finance institutions or value chain financing	0 cooperatives accessed formal financing	5 cooperatives secure loans	Two trainings of loan officers, with at least 40 beneficiaries, organized and training reports made available. At least 10 cooperatives receive credit through micro-finance	Loan agreements, contract copies MEDD	Interest rates remain affordable
				At least 2 commercial contracts are signed.		
Component 4: Knowledge Management and Learning						
Outcome 4.1: Knowledge exchange and learning enhanced through public-private partnerships and learning opportunities for NTFP stakeholders						
4.1.1: One public-private platform organized to support the exchange of innovations, research and traditional knowledge on best agro-silvo-pastoral practices and the promotion of gum arabic and other NTFPs	4.1.1.1: Creation and management of a public-private knowledge and dialogue platform on experiences and best-practices in best agro-silvo-pastoral and Gum Arabic and selected NTFP practices	No dedicated NTFP knowledge platform	Platform framework designed	4 platform events undertaken and 1 best practices report developed and made available.	Event reports, platform attendance analytics MEDD	Private sector engages actively
	4.1.1.2: Organization of 4 of exchange visits for 40 persons between stakeholders in the NTFP value chains, including DREDD officials, AGLCs, cooperatives, SMEs to identified good practice areas in agro-silvopastoral management and agroforestry (e.g. Guidimakha and Hodh El Gharbi), ensuring 50%	No cross-regional NTFP learning in targeted areas	2 visits conducted	4 exchange visit reports, with photos and documented lessons-learned provided, with direct input from the participants to the exchange visits.	Visit reports, participant feedback MEDD	Host sites share replicable models

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
	participation of women.					
Outcome 4.2: Good practices are identified and disseminated						
4.2.1: One Communication strategy developed to the different objectives and target audiences, with particular attention to local communities, women and young people	4.2.1.1: Development of an integrated and participatory communication strategy.	No integrated NTFP communication plan	Draft strategy reviewed	Strategy finalized in 3 languages (Arabic/French/local)	Strategy document, dissemination records	Local media partners collaborate
-	4.2.1.2: Production and distribution of information and awareness materials, in Arabic, French and local languages, as required.	Limited NTFP-focused materials exist that are widely disseminated and publicly accessible	10+ materials (posters, videos, guides) distributed and visible in different languages	20+ materials (posters, videos, guides) distributed and visible in different languages	MEDD Material inventory, media reach metrics MEDD	Communities value NTFP messaging
4.2.2: Guidelines on Gum Arabic and selected NTFP production and value chains, integrating a gender-responsive and nature-positive approach, as well as case studies of local successes produced and disseminated.	4.2.2.1: Collection and analysis of good practices in the production and development of NTFPs, published and available through the digital and physical resource centre.	No centralized NTFP practice repository	10 - 20 case studies documented	One report on collected good practices in the sustainable production and development of NTFPs made available	Case study library, download statistics MEDD	Communities consent to share data
-	4.2.2.2: Development of guidelines on good agro-silvopastoral practices for Gum Arabic and selected NTFP value chains.	No national guidelines for NTFP agro-silvopastoral practices	Draft guidelines circulated	One guideline on good agro-silvopastoral practices for Gum Arabic and selected NTFP value chains made available	Guideline endorsement certificates MEDD	Technical committees prioritize review
-	4.2.2.3: Dissemination of communication and knowledge materials to relevant stakeholders.	Limited NTFP-focused materials exist that are widely disseminated and publicly accessible	2 information sessions at wilaya level organized	3 information sessions (1 per wilaya and 1 in Nouakchott) organized, documented on Gum Arabic and NTFP related guidelines produced through project	Information session media coverage MEDD	Communities, beyond those targeted by project activities are interested and able to access information and awareness sessions
-	4.2.2.3: At least 3 information sessions organized and documented (1 per wilaya and 1 in Nouakchott) on Gum Arabic and NTFP-	Limited NTFP-focused materials exist that are widely disseminated and publicly accessible	1 information session completed	3 information sessions (1 in Nouakchott, 1 in each target wilaya) undertaken		Communities value NTFP and sustainable natural resource management messaging

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party)	Assumptions
	related guidelines produced through the project and disseminated.					
M&E Output 1: Continuous data collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination of results ⁵ [5]	5.1.1. 5 project Steering Committee meeting reports	No Project Steering Committee in place	First Annual Work Plan and Budget drafted at inception	3 regular PSC meetings have been held with appreciation of previous AWPB, results achieved and plans for the next year	PSC meeting reports available AWPB made available M&E Output 1: Continuous data collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination of results ⁶ [6]	MEDD and PSC partners meet on a regular and consistent basis; PMU is able to provide the necessary information, results, metrics to allow PSC to provide strategic guidance.
	5.1.2. Annual project implementation progress reports drafted and publicly accessible	No M&E plan yet available	A complete, validated gender-responsive, M&E plan, that integrates safeguards and GRM indicators, assigning roles and tools is used for operational and results monitoring of the project	M&E plan finalized and validated. Indicator matrix and monitoring data sheets. Upload of relevant data and information on MEDD SI database/webiste.	M&E plan made available with indicator matrix MEDD SI database provides updates on project activity and results progress, including through the use of methodologies provided in project activities MEDD, FAO	Annual project implementation progress reports drafted and publicly accessible; relevant indicators uploaded on MEDD SI website.
M&E Output 2: Mid-Term Evaluation report shared	5.2.1. One Mid-Term Review report made available	No evaluation exercise has yet been carried out.	Evaluation Terms of Reference validated	An independent mid-term evaluation is completed, with recommendations validated by stakeholders and incorporated into the following Annual Work Plan and Budget.	Mid-term evaluation report published. Adjustment roadmap included for PSC appreciation based	Logistical and organizational conditions allow the evaluation to be carried out on time, with effective stakeholder participation

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification (and responsible party) on recommendations.	Assumptions
M&E Output 3: Final Evaluation report shared	5.3.1. One Terminal Evaluation report made available	No evaluation exercise has yet been carried out.	Evaluation Terms of Reference validated	An independent final evaluation is completed, with recommendations validated by stakeholders and incorporated into the following Annual Work Plan and Budget.	MEDD, FAO Final Evaluation report published. MEDD, FAO MEDD, FAO	Logistical and organizational conditions allow the evaluation to be carried out on time, with effective stakeholder participation Sites are accessible and logistical conditions allow missions to take place. Field teams cooperate and facilitate visits. Data collected is reliable and recommendations can be acted upon. The M&E team has the power to independently initiate ad hoc missions.

ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
Activity 1. Hiring a team of national and international consultant to develop full project document (focus on: GEF project design; Non-Timber Forest Products value chain; Agro-ecology and land use; finance management; Economy, M&E, social safeguards; PPG coordination; Land use management; Agro-ecology and forestry; Value chain and agronomy) Gender and safeguards; GHG analysis: carbon calculation)	102,150.00	47,834.00	54,316.00

Activity 2. International and national travel costs for the team of international and national consultants to field sites in Mauritania	18,850.00	18,143.00	707.00
Activity 3. Inception and validation workshops, including local stakeholder consultations	29,000.00	4,243.00	24,757.00
Total	150,000.00	70,220.00	79,780.00

ANNEX E: PROJECT MAP AND COORDINATES

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Keur Macene	16.5539	-16.2252	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Tiguent	17.16796	-16.0440	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Rosso	16.5103	-15.798	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Tékane	16.5997	-15.344	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
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Mbalal	16.65484	-16.0098	
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Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Chemame	16.67813	-15.2942	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Kankossa	15.9415	-11.516	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Hamoud	15.57719	-11.5541	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Blajmil	15.91842	-11.1756	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

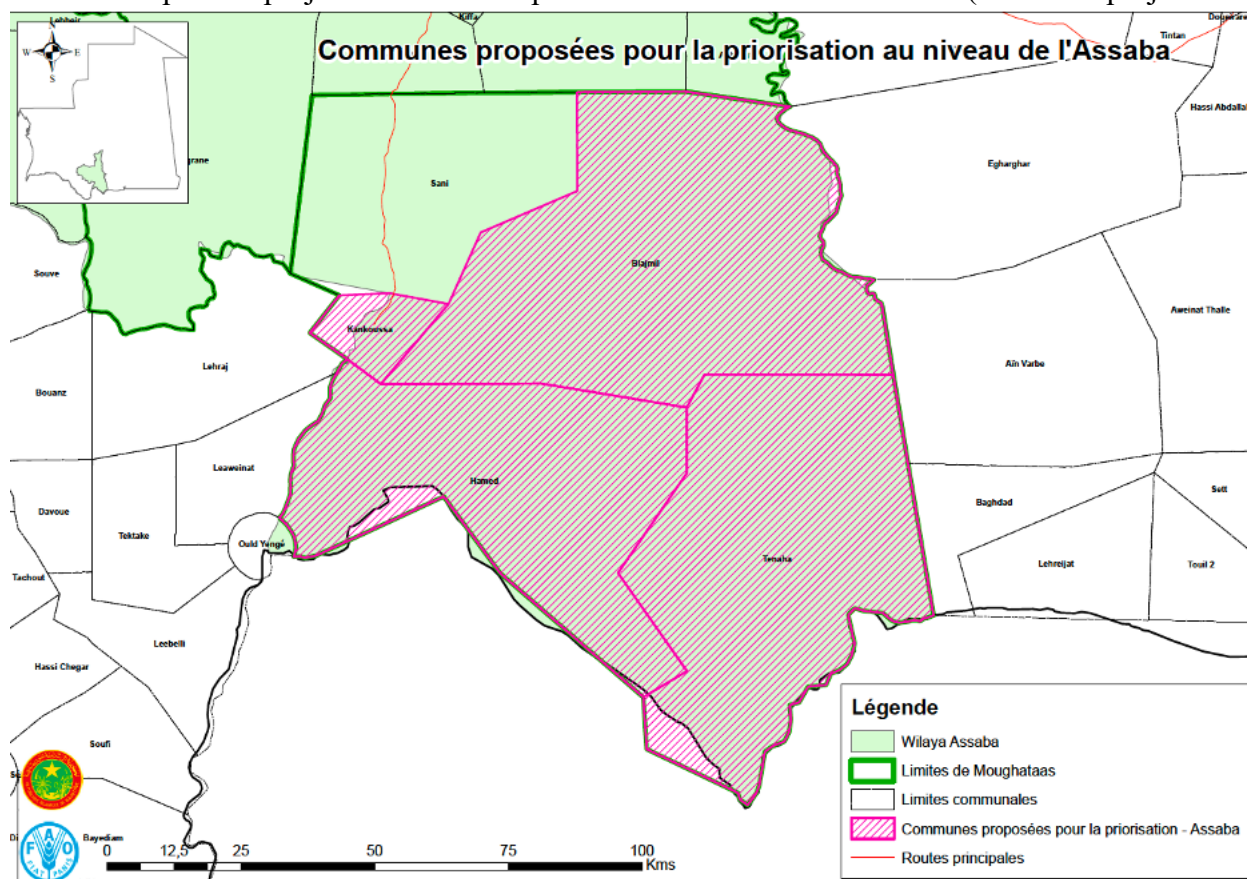
Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Tenaha	15.48913	-10.8669	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

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

The two maps with project locations are provided in the document section (Annex E: project location maps).



ANNEX F: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

Attach agency safeguard datasheet/assessment report(s), including ratings of risk types and overall project/program risk classification as well as any management plans or measures to address identified risks and impacts (as applicable).

Title

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ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE

Please upload the budget table here.

FAO Cost Categories	Unit	No. of units	Unit cost	GEF	Componen t 1	Componen t 2	Componen t 3	Componen t 4	M&E	PMC	GEF	RESPONSIB LE PARTY
					Total	Total	Total	Total				
5013 Consultants												
International Land Restoration expert(s)	Day	60	600	36,000.00	-	36,000	-	-	0	-	36,000	MEDD
International NTFP value chain expert	Day	60	600	36,000.00	10,800	-	25,200	-	0	-	36,000	MEDD
International micro-finance expert	Day	60	600	36,000.00	-	-	36,000	-	0	-	36,000	MEDD
Sub-total international Consultants				108,000	10,800	36,000	61,200	-	-	-	108,000	
National Technical Project Coordinator	Month	60	4,000	240,000.00	60,000	60,000	30,000	60,000	0	30,000	240,000	MEDD
Operations and Finance Expert	Month	60	2,500	150,000.00	-	-	-	-	0	150,000	150,000	MEDD
2 National consultants - site coordination and monitoring at wilaya level	Month	120	400	48,000.00	-	48,000	-	-	0	-	48,000	MEDD
National Land Restoration expert	Month	60	2,200	132,000.00	-	132,000	-	-	0	-	132,000	MEDD
National microfinance expert	Month	6	2,200	13,200.00	-	-	13,200	-	0	-	13,200	MEDD
National Non-Timber Forest Product value chains & business plan expert	Month	16	2,200	35,200.00	7,040	-	28,160	-	0	-	35,200	MEDD
National knowledge management expert	Month	30	500	15,000.00	-	-	-	15,000	0	-	15,000	MEDD
National GIS expert	Day	60	150	9,000.00	-	9,000	-	-	0	-	9,000	MEDD
M&E Officer	Month	60	850	51,000.00	-	-	-	22,750	28,250	-	51,000	MEDD
Gender and Safeguards Officer	Month	60	850	51,000.00	10,200	25,500	15,300	-	0	-	51,000	MEDD
Special topic resource persons for APFS	Day	25	150	3,750.00	-	3,750	-	-	0	-	3,750	ASD, ODPCL, Sud Conseil, AGEDPEM, Voix de l'Espoir, AU SECOURS, AEV, INTAJ, OMD.
Master Trainer for APFS	Day	90	250	22,500.00	-	22,500	-	-	0	-	22,500	ASD, ODPCL, Sud Conseil, AGEDPEM, Voix de l'Espoir, AU SECOURS, AEV, INTAJ, OMD.
Senior Master Trainer for APFS (x2)	Day	90	400	36,000.00	-	36,000	-	-	0	-	36,000	ASD, ODPCL, Sud Conseil, AGEDPEM, Voix de l'Espoir, AU SECOURS, AEV, INTAJ, OMD.
Sub-total national Consultants				806,650	77,240	336,750	86,660	97,750	28,250	180,000	806,650	
5013 Sub-total consultants				914,650	88,040	372,750	147,860	97,750	28,250	180,000	914,650	
5650 Contracts												
Radio broadcasts for Dimitra clubs	Lumpsu m	1	15,000	15,000.00	15,000	-	-	-	0	-	15,000	MEDD
Printing of APFS training manuals	Lumpsu m	1	5,000	5,000.00	-	5,000	-	-	0	-	5,000	MEDD
Participatory video production for APFS	Lumpsu m	1	10,000	10,000.00	-	10,000	-	-	0	-	10,000	MEDD

Develop national operational manual on integrated land-use and sustainable agro-silvopastoral management	Lumpsu m	1	20,000	20,000.0 0	20,000	-	-	-	0	-	20,000	MEDD
Contract with partner to develop national Gum Arabic and NTFP strategy, including quality standards	Lumpsu m	1	20,000	20,000.0 0	20,000	-	-	-	0	-	20,000	MEDD
Contract with partner to develop training modules on land assessment and monitoring with innovative technologies and methodologies	Lumpsu m	1	10,000	10,000.0 0	10,000	-	-	-	0	-	10,000	MEDD
Contract with partner to develop drone seeding training materials	Lumpsu m	1	10,000	10,000.0 0	10,000	-	-	-	0	-	10,000	MEDD
Contract with partner to develop training materials on gender-transformative approaches, ESS and PSEA	Lumpsu m	1	10,000	10,000.0 0	10,000	-	-	-	0	-	10,000	MEDD
Development of training materials/modules on Sustainable Landscape and Natural Resource Management, with a focus on Gum Arabic, selected NTFP species and agroforestry based horticulture, including restoration seed management	Lumpsu m	1	15,000	15,000.0 0	15,000	-	-	-	0	-	15,000	MEDD
Dune fixation (severely degraded lands) with drone seeding	Hectares	3000	10	30,000.0 0	-	30,000	-	-	0	-	30,000	MEDD
Fencing & human surveillance of fenced areas	Hectares	500	600	300,000. 00	-	300,000	-	-	0	-	300,000	MEDD
Reforestation of moderately degraded lands, drone seeding	Hectares	40000	11	440,000. 00	-	440,000	-	-	0	-	440,000	MEDD
Contract with communities for construction of half moons, stone bonds, and zais	Hectares	500	300	150,000. 00	-	150,000	-	-	0	-	150,000	MEDD
Workforce for plantation and surveillance of trees in fenced areas (total of 3 000 ha)	Trees	48000 0	0	96,000.0 0	-	96,000	-	-	0	-	96,000	MEDD
Reforestation of severely degraded lands through drone seeding	Hectares	14500	10	145,000. 00	-	145,000	-	-	0	-	145,000	MEDD
Small-scale water infrastructure (small water retention system, solar-powered pumps, drip irrigation) for selected APFS for intensive agroforestry systems	Lumpsu m	6	16,000	96,000.0 0	-	96,000	-	-	0	-	96,000	MEDD
Contract for feasibility/technical study on construction and operationalisation of community seed centres	Lumpsu m	1	15,000	15,000.0 0	-	15,000	-	-	0	-	15,000	MEDD
Construction of community seed centres	Lumpsu m	6	7,500	45,000.0 0	-	45,000	-	-	0	-	45,000	MEDD
Community level contracts for seed collection	Lumpsu m	6	2,500	15,000.0 0	-	15,000	-	-	0	-	15,000	MEDD

Technical support/assistance for establishment and structuring of community organizations for natural resource management (1 per village)	Lumpsum	1	30,000	30,000.00	-	30,000	-	-	0	-	30,000	MEDD
Technical assistance for establishment of at least 4 AGLCs	Lumpsum	4	5,000	20,000.00	-	20,000	-	-	0	-	20,000	MEDD
Two maps of existing fenced areas, moderately and severely degraded lands, existing NTFP species and identification of priority restoration areas and species	Lumpsum	2	10,000	20,000.00	-	20,000	-	-	0	-	20,000	MEDD
Contract with partner to develop NTFP resource assessment detailing production and market development opportunities and challenges	Lumpsum	1	10,000	10,000.00	-	-	10,000	-	0	-	10,000	MEDD
Directory of NTFP harvest, storage, processing technologies and equipment produced	Lumpsum	1	10,000	10,000.00	-	-	10,000	-	0	-	10,000	MEDD
Technical assistance to 19 NTFP actors in structuring, organization and registration of cooperatives/associations	Lumpsum	1	50,000	50,000.00	-	-	50,000	-	0	-	50,000	MEDD
Preparation of training materials for business plan development specific to Gum Arabic and selected NTFP species and agroforestry-based horticulture	Lumpsum	1	15,000	15,000.00	-	-	15,000	-	0	-	15,000	MEDD
Contract with partner for the development of at least 1 financial products, in collaboration with MFIs, for NTFP value chain actors	Lumpsum	1	20,000	20,000.00	-	-	20,000	-	0	-	20,000	MEDD
Training module developed on NTFP specific credit product developed targeted to micro-finance institutions	Lumpsum	1	15,000	15,000.00	-	-	15,000	-	0	-	15,000	MEDD
Business plan development technical assistance and support to 38 cooperatives	Lumpsum	1	75,000	75,000.00	-	-	75,000	-	0	-	75,000	MEDD
Development of NTFP monitoring and assessment tool for Gum Arabic and NTFP value chain actors and preparation of related training materials	Lumpsum	1	25,000	25,000.00	-	-	25,000	-	0	-	25,000	MEDD
NTFP market information system diagnostic study	Lumpsum	1	10,000	10,000.00	-	-	10,000	-	0	-	10,000	MEDD
Support to implementation of business plans through coaching and mentoring	Lumpsum	3	10,000	30,000.00	-	-	30,000	-	0	-	30,000	MEDD
Development of communication strategy	Lumpsum	1	10,000	10,000.00	-	-	-	10,000	0	-	10,000	MEDD
Information and awareness-raising sessions on KM materials	Event	3	7,500	22,500.00	-	-	-	22,500	0	-	22,500	MEDD

Development of guidelines on good agro-silvopastoral practices for Gum Arabic and selected NTFP value chains	Lumpsu m	1	15,000	15,000.00	-	-	-	15,000	0	-	15,000	MEDD
Development of toolkit of collected good practices in sustainable production and development of Gum Arabic and selected NTFPs	Lumpsu m	1	15,000	15,000.00	-	-	-	15,000	0	-	15,000	MEDD
Spot checks (2/year)	Spot check	10	3,500	35,000.00	-	-	-	-	35,000	-	35,000	FAO
Audits (1/year)	Audit	5	10,000	50,000.00	-	-	-	-	0	50,000	50,000	FAO
Terminal Report	Lumpsu m	1	7,000	7,000.00	-	-	-	-	7,000	-	7,000	FAO
Mid-Term Evaluation	Lumpsu m	1	35,000	35,000.00	-	-	-	-	35,000	-	35,000	FAO
Final Evaluation	Lumpsu m	1	56,000	56,000.00	-	-	-	-	56,000	-	56,000	FAO
5650 Sub-total Contracts				2,022,500	100,000	1,417,000	260,000	62,500	133,000	50,000	2,022,500	
5021 Travel												
Domestic travel	Lumpsu m	1	50,000	50,000.00	10,000	20,000	10,000	10,000	0	-	50,000	MEDD
Travel and DSA for drone seeding of moderately degraded lands	Lumpsu m	800	100	80,000.00	-	80,000	-	-	0	-	80,000	MEDD
Travel and DSA for drone seeding of severely degraded lands	Lumpsu m	320	100	32,000.00	-	32,000	-	-	0	-	32,000	MEDD
Travel and DSA for drone seeding of mobile dunes	Lumpsu m	60	100	6,000.00	-	6,000	-	-	0	-	6,000	MEDD
International travel	Lumpsu m	1	20,000	20,000.00	6,667	6,667	6,667	-	0	-	20,000	MEDD
5021 Sub-total travel				188,000	16,667	144,667	16,667	10,000	-	-	188,000	
5023 Training												
National workshop on national operational manual of integrated LUPs	Worksho p	2	7,500	15,000.00	15,000	-	-	-	0	-	15,000	MEDD
National workshops on national Gum Arabic and NTFP value chain strategy	Worksho p	2	7,500	15,000.00	15,000	-	-	-	0	-	15,000	MEDD
Training on use of natural resource assessment and land restoration technologies (eg. GIS/GPS etc...)	Worksho p	8	3,000	24,000.00	24,000	-	-	-	0	-	24,000	MEDD
Training on Sustainable landscape and natural resource management, with focus on Gum Arabic and selected NTFP species	Worksho p	8	3,000	24,000.00	24,000	-	-	-	0	-	24,000	MEDD
Training on restoration seed management for MEDD/DREDD and other partner institutions	Worksho p	8	3,000	24,000.00	24,000	-	-	-	0	-	24,000	MEDD
Training to community seed centres on restoration seed management and marketing (2x community seed centre)	Worksho p	12	3,500	42,000.00	-	42,000	-	-	0	-	42,000	MEDD
Training on gender-transformative approaches (eg. DIMITRA, ESS, PSEA etc...) of national and local authorities	Worksho p	4	3,000	12,000.00	12,000	-	-	-	0	-	12,000	ASD, ODPCL, Sud Conseil, AGEDPEM, Voix de l'Espoir, AU SECOURS, AEV, INTAJ, OMD.

Training on gender-transformative approaches (eg. DIMITRA, ESS, PSEA etc...) at community-level	Workshop	48	1,000	48,000.00	48,000					-	48,000	ASD, ODPCL, Sud Conseil, AGEDPEM, Voix de l'Espoir, AU SECOURS, AEV, INTAJ, OMD.
Training on monitoring systems aligned with Collect Earth, for integrated reporting for national AFOLU sector	Workshop	4	3,000	12,000.00	12,000	-		-	0	-	12,000	MEDD
Community consultations for integrated land-use and agro-silvopastoral plans development and validation (12 ecosystems along future AGLC zoning; 4 consultations per AGLC ecosystem)	Meeting	48	1,500	72,000.00	-	72,000		-	0	-	72,000	MEDD
Community consultations for AGLC establishment (6 consultations to cover the 10 steps from GIZ approach)	Meeting	24	1,500	36,000.00	-	36,000	-	-	0	-	36,000	MEDD
Community-consultations for restoration site and species identification (4 consultations per AGLC identified ecosystem)	Meeting	48	1,500	72,000.00	-	72,000		-	0	-	72,000	MEDD
APFS training cycle, including facilitation fees, per diem of trainers and venue and logistics	Lumpsum	24	8,000	192,000.00	-	192,000	-	-	0	-	192,000	ASD, ODPCL, Sud Conseil, AGEDPEM, Voix de l'Espoir, AU SECOURS, AEV, INTAJ, OMD.
Awareness-raising on integrated and sustainable Gum Arabic and selected NTFP management and agroforestry	Lumpsum	60	500	30,000.00	-	30,000	-	-	0	-	30,000	MEDD
Community-based organization training on management and monitoring of agro-silvopastoral ecosystems, with a focus on Gum Arabic and NTFPs selected for Component 3	Workshop	48	1,500	72,000.00	-	72,000	-	-	0	-	72,000	MEDD
Training of NTFP value chain actors on monitoring and assessment tool for NTFP resources	Training	6	1,500	9,000.00	-	-	9,000	-	0	-	9,000	MEDD
Training on sustainable production, harvesting and storage of Gum Arabic and selected NTFP species including the use of the Gum Arabic and NTFP monitoring and assessment tool (2 persons per cooperative, targeting 48 cooperatives; 30 persons per session)	Training	24	3,500	84,000.00	-	-	84,000	-	0	-	84,000	MEDD
Training of selected cooperatives on leadership, management and financial literacy (2 persons from each targeted cooperative; 30 persons per session)	Workshop	24	3,500	84,000.00	-	-	84,000	-	0	-	84,000	MEDD

Training of cooperatives on use of identified technologies, tools and equipment for Gum Arabic and selected NTFP harvesting, storage and processing	Workshop	48	3,500	168,000.00	-	-	168,000	-	0	-	168,000	MEDD
Local artisan training for fabrication and repair of harvesting and processing equipment for Gum Arabic and selected NTFP products (including equipment for training purposes)	Workshop	4	7,500	30,000.00	-	-	30,000	-	0	-	30,000	MEDD
Training through exchange sessions for NTFP processing and marketing for cooperatives and NTFP value chain actors	Lumpsu	1	37,350	37,350.00	-	-	37,350	-	0	-	37,350	MEDD
Training for Savings & Loan Associations at community-level	Training	48	1,500	72,000.00	-	-	72,000	-	0	-	72,000	MEDD
Training on revolving funds at community-level	Training	48	1,500	72,000.00	-	-	72,000	-	0	-	72,000	MEDD
Training on DREDD and Community-based organization contribution to market information system	Training	4	3,000	12,000.00	-	-	12,000	-	0	-	12,000	MEDD
Training for cooperatives on business plan development (5 day training - 1-2 persons per cooperative)	Training	6	7,500	45,000.00	-	-	45,000	-	0	-	45,000	MEDD
Training of loan officers in identified micro-finance institutions of Gum Arabic and selected NTFP specific financial products	Training	4	7,500	30,000.00	-	-	30,000	-	0	-	30,000	MEDD
B2B meetings to facilitate business plan and value-chain financing for viable NTFP value chain actors	Meeting	16	5,000	80,000.00	-	-	80,000	-	0	-	80,000	MEDD
Trade fairs including international, regional and national buyers	Trade fair	6	10,000	60,000.00	-	-	60,000	-	0	-	60,000	MEDD
Public-private knowledge management platform events on experiences and best practices in agro-silvopastoral management for Gum Arabic and selected NTFPS	Knowledge platform	4	5,000	20,000.00	-	-	-	20,000	0	-	20,000	MEDD
Training through exchange sessions for integrated agro-silvopastoral management and agro-forestry based horticulture practices	Exchange visit	4	6,500	26,000.00	-	-	-	26,000	0	-	26,000	MEDD
Project Inception Workshop	Workshop	1	1,500	1,500.00	-	-	-	1,500	-	-	1,500	MEDD
Workshop to validate MEL plan	Workshop	1	1,500	1,500.00	-	-	-	1,500	-	-	1,500	MEDD
Training of MEDD/DREDD and partner institutions on MEL plan and data collection	Training	5	1,500	7,500.00	-	-	-	7,500	-	-	7,500	MEDD
PSC meetings	Lumpsu	5	1,500	7,500.00	-	-	-	7,500	-	-	7,500	MEDD
5023 Sub-total training				1,537,350	174,000	516,000	783,350	64,000	-	-	1,537,350	
5024 Expendable procurement												
APFS training materials and supplies	APFS	24	200	4,800.00	-	4,800	-	-	0	-	4,800	MEDD

Purchase of seedlings (400 acacia trees per ha) for fenced areas totalling 3 000 ha	Seedlings	48000	0	96,000.00	-	96,000	-	-	0	-	96,000	MEDD
Nursery materials (bags, compost, shade nets, watering cans etc...)	Lumpsum	24	200	4,800.00	-	4,800	-	-	0	-	4,800	MEDD
Basic planting tools (after completion of APFS trainings)	Kit	600	50	30,000.00	-	30,000	-	-	0	-	30,000	MEDD
Purchase of high quality seeds for agroforestry based horticulture systems within APFS	Lumpsum	24	100	2,400.00	-	2,400	-	-	0	-	2,400	MEDD
Purchase of restoration seeds for severely degraded lands rehabilitated through construction of half-moons, stone bonds, zais etc...	Lumpsum per ha	240	10	2,400.00	-	2,400	-	-	0	-	2,400	MEDD
Communication material (printing, video production, including translations etc.)	Lumpsum	1	40,419	40,419.00	18,189	6,063	4,042	12,126	0	-	40,419	MEDD
Stationery & small material for AGLC establishment	Lumpsum	48	200	9,600.00	-	9,600	-	-	0	-	9,600	MEDD
Field kits	Lumpsum	1	1,750	1,750.00	-	1,750	-	-	0	-	1,750	MEDD
5024 Sub-total expendable procurement				192,169	18,189	157,813	4,042	12,126	-	-	192,169	
6100 Non-expendable procurement												
Seeding drones	Unit	3	20,000	60,000.00	60,000	-	-	-	0	-	60,000	MEDD
Land surveillance technologies (eg. GIS technologies)	Lumpsum	1	6,000	6,000.00	6,000	-	-	-	0	-	6,000	MEDD
Solar radios for Dimitra clubs	Lumpsum	1	20,500	20,500.00	20,500	-	-	-	0	-	20,500	MEDD
Inputs & equipment for Gum Arabic and NTFP harvesting, storage and processing for cooperatives, esp. women for those trained on their use (1 lumpsum per wilaya)	Lumpsum	2	160,000	320,000.00	-	-	320,000	-	0	-	320,000	MEDD
Motorbikes (to facilitate site monitoring and community engagement; 3 motorbikes per wilaya; assuming a replacement required in Year 4)	Motorbike	6	2,000	12,000.00	-	6,000	6,000	-	0	-	12,000	MEDD
IT equipment for PMU	Lumpsum	1	10,000	10,000.00	-	-	-	-	0	10,000	10,000	MEDD
6100 Sub-total non-expendable procurement				428,500	86,500	6,000	326,000	-	-	10,000	428,500	
5028 GOE budget												
Telecommunications	lumpsum	1	13,783	13,783.00	-	-	-	-	0	13,783	13,783	MEDD
Drone maintenance (including battery replacement, spare parts, solar charging stations)	Annual	5	5,000	25,000.00	-	25,000	-	-	0	-	25,000	MEDD
Motorbike fuel & maintenance	Annual	5	1,500	7,500.00	-	5,000	2,500	-	0	-	7,500	MEDD
6300 Sub-total GOE budget				46,283	-	30,000	2,500	-	-	13,783	46,283	
TOTAL				5,329,452	483,395	2,644,230	1,540,419	246,376	161,250	253,783	5,329,452	



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Please explain any aspects of the budget as needed here

ANNEX I: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS

From GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF.

Annex I: Responses to Project Reviews

Comments by GEF STAP:

1. The project description details the problem, and the context influencing it. Deforestation and degradation as a result of unsustainable land use (e.g. intensive agriculture combined with overgrazing), and unsustainable extraction of wood and charcoal, are thoroughly articulated as the drivers of biodiversity loss, and land degradation, in the target sites. The effects of climate change on land and water resources are also described as influencing significantly livelihoods and the agrosilvopastoral systems the project will target. The project rationale usefully describes the socioeconomic traits of the land uses and communities in the project sites. This description includes details about conflicts in land tenure between transhumance pastoralists and farmers, providing 2 contexts to component 1 on creating an enabling environment for sustainable agro-silvopastoral systems.
2. Moreover, the rationale starts to narrate observed and future trends and the necessary restoration responses, such as restoring forests and pastures, to enhance resilience. STAP appreciates this effort and encourages the project proponents to continue engaging with key stakeholders to explore uncertain futures and complex outcomes during the project design. This exploration may lead to alternative responses beyond those initially proposed in the theory of change, potentially requiring revisions to the theory of change.
3. The project would benefit from a more comprehensive analysis of the assumptions associated with each pathway outcome, particularly in detailing how the currently defined four assumptions influence the cause-effect relationship in each pathway. While the four components collectively support the project objective, more attention is required to assumptions related to changes in values and norms, which are often difficult to achieve.

4. In component 4, on knowledge management, STAP welcomes knowledge exchange and training opportunities on non-timber forest products to support the exchange of ideas and innovation. In addition to these efforts, the project proponents are encouraged to rely on component 4 as an opportunity for collecting and managing knowledge in relation to the learning and adaptive management needs of the project. STAP also advises that designing this component reflects the substantial risks (pg 25) identified in relation to capacity building, including the relatively low literacy rates of targeted beneficiaries. STAP also recommends engaging with local universities and colleges to co-design KM&L processes, including
5. In component 4, on knowledge management, STAP welcomes knowledge exchange and training opportunities on non-timber forest products to support the exchange of ideas and innovation. In addition to these efforts, the project proponents are encouraged to rely on component 4 as an opportunity for collecting and managing knowledge in relation to the learning and adaptive management needs of the project. STAP also advises that designing this component reflects the substantial risks (pg 25) identified in relation to capacity building, including the relatively low literacy rates of targeted beneficiaries. STAP also recommends engaging with local universities and colleges to co-design KM&L processes, including training on the use of drones, suited to the socio-cultural and political context of the project area. Below, STAP further describes its advice.

STAP recommends addressing the following points during the project design:

6. STAP is pleased with the project proponents' simple narrative of present and future trends and how they are likely to impact agro-silvopastoral systems and livelihoods. STAP recommends exploring these trends further with key stakeholders during the project design, specifying the opportunities and challenges (key barriers and risks highlighted in the PIF) to achieving the intended outcomes. Project proponents are encouraged to add to the theory of change (figure and description) the alternative pathways that may be needed as result of these explorations. For example, future trends in climate and market changes (associated strongly with component 3 on value chains) may lessen livelihood opportunities from nontimber forest products or agro-forestry systems, forcing targeted communities to shift to alternative livelihood options, including migrating. STAP recommends its advice on future narratives as a resource for strategizing how to build resilience through the project.

à Thank you, the comment is well noted. Clear CC observations and projections are provided in the baseline sections and during the field mission the project design team has discussed CC impacts with local communities (as well as other drivers of change). Observations shared were dependent on location and usually focused on more recent weather patterns (not 30-year intervals). As in short-term observations, communities at times indicated an increase in participation. However, looking at FAO's CC risk screening and latest available models (WE5E), the south of Mauritania is becoming increasingly warmer (over time, and sudden onsets such as extreme temperatures), in combination with increasingly erratic precipitation. Observations and projections indicate that any intervention that addresses land degradation in Mauritania must focus on improving the quality of soil/ cover of soil, to i.a. increase its water retention capacity. This

is why this project is focusing on large-scale restoration of forests structures, pastures and relevant agro-ecological farming practices. All of these will contribute to addressing actual and potential CC risks and thereby stabilize livelihoods.

7. Tied to resilience through the project is the need to think about interactions between key drivers, for example climate and conflict – both of which are relevant to Mauritania and listed as part of the risk table. STAP recommends embedding these risks throughout the project logic and considering response options. The risk table is necessary for those risks that may occur during project implementation – not risks that are more certain, such as climate and conflict.

à Thank you. Kindly note that the project logic, and especially practical interventions on the ground, are designed to address CC risks and prevent further impacts, thereby halting land degradation. Stabilized/restored (Acacia) forests provide key environmental services such as improving soil health, increased water retention capacity, shading, reducing wind speed, providing key nutrients to the soil and thus to nearby crop production, while avoiding further erosion. Kindly note that conflict is a very limited issue in the wilayas of Trarza and Assaba. The only potential conflict that could arise (between farmers and transhumance pastoralists) are addressed through activities related to i.a. the AGLC set-up and Dimitria clubs.

8. STAP notes the four assumptions listed in the theory of change are related to changes in mindsets. STAP recommends detailing these changes (e.g., targeting values, norms, power dynamics), and how the project proposes to monitor them. Addressing mindset issues is a powerful way to leverage change, although they are harder to achieve. Related to mindset changes is also gender equity. The proposal raises several issues relevant to gender equity towards the end. STAP recommends embedding, as relevant, gender equity throughout the project logic as opposed to addressing it separately. The theory of change should also accommodate alternative pathways that could enable prompt responses to the substantial security risks highlighted in the PIF, thus avoiding jeopardizing outputs and outcomes.

à Thank you. The subject of addressing gender has thoroughly been addressed by the project design team, and strengthening female participation is a key element in the project ToC. Kindly note that there are no substantial security risks in the wilayas addressed under the prodoc (Assaba and Trarza). The only risk for conflict (between different natural resource stakeholders) is addressed in the project logic (by promoting inclusive and extensive consultations and inputs into decision making). Furthermore, the inclusion and exclusion targeting criteria for the identification of specific restoration sites aims to avoid areas with known conflicts, and the participatory based approach aims to prevent and mitigate any potential for conflict during project implementation.

9. The proposal argues that forest restoration (tree planting of Acacias, and other tree native species) will strengthen coping strategies of the affected communities, farmers, and transhumance pastoralists to risks, including climate. As aforementioned, STAP strongly encourages a detailed description of the social aspects

(sociocultural, socioeconomic) of the targeted recipients when thinking through the relationships between variables in a socioecological system. For example, increasing small-water infrastructures in Africa's drylands, (listed as an innovation in this proposal) has shown to enable a change in transhumance pastoralists whose coping mechanisms has been to migrate during drought periods. Forest restoration could also have unintended consequences on the sociocultural fabric of transhumance pastoralists, and on the ecology, which is necessary to consider across the interventions. In addition, research is emerging that tree planting in Africa's drylands may lead to increased warming due to albedo changes. Careful attention to cause and effect relationships in the theory of change should be articulated further throughout the proposal to avoid unintended consequences in the short and long-term.

à Thank you. The prodoc includes detailed description of relevant socio-cultural and socioeconomic considerations, with focus on Trarza and Assaba, please see section B and C, and the section on socio-economic development potential in the prodoc. As learned during the project design mission, introducing small water infrastructure could have led to conflict in communities in terms of access. The project opted for introducing zaï pits to support water capture of agricultural systems. In addition, the GEF8 activity partners closely with the PRAPS project, which focuses on equipping livestock corridors in the target wilayas. Forest restoration methods will be decided upon and implemented in collaboration with all community members, including transhumance pastoralists, the MEDD ensures inclusive implementation of project activities. The impact on the albedo effect would be offset by achieving liveable conditions through forest formations, for local communities and livestock (see forest microclimates and other environmental services). Restoring forest formations and pastures, in combination with strengthened enabling frameworks and improved livelihood opportunities is crucial for halting land degradation. Scientific evidence shows that most if not all (agro) forestry restoration efforts in the Sahel will lead to decreased warming and drying of annual crops and pasture grown in between the trees.

10. STAP appreciates the descriptions of the baseline projects. When designing the project, describe how this initiative plans to leverage knowledge and learning from these past or ongoing projects. Where relevant use these descriptions to strengthen the project rationale.

à The GEF8 liaised closely with relevant projects such as PRAPS and GIZ-funded initiatives in Guidimakha (with focus on AGLC and how to ensure project sustainability). Most importantly, the lessons learned from the Mauritania GEF6 project (planned to close in July 2025) have been closely considered, please see the relevant section on lessons learned in the prodoc.

11. STAP recommends that component 4 on knowledge management link closely with monitoring and learning stemming from validating key assumptions, which include positive outcomes from innovations listed on page 21. This process will generate learning that can inform adaptive management. STAP suggests a desktop literature review to identify best knowledge transfer and learning practices for areas characterized by low literacy rates (e.g. see Chengalur-Smith, I., Potnis, D., & Mishra, G. (2021). Developing voice-based information sharing services to bridge the information divide in marginalized communities: A study of farmers using IBM's spoken web in rural India. International Journal of Information Management, 57,

102283. Local Universities could become partners in the training local-level representatives of the Ministry of Environment (wilaya-level) on the use of drones and other technological innovations (output 1.2.1)

à Thank you, this aspect of project design has been closely discussed with national consultants recruited under this project, as well as with MEDD counterparts, and communities. In terms of supporting knowledge transfer for marginalized communities, this project will support local community members to physically visit successful AGLC structures in Guidimakha and learn directly from those communities that already benefit from strengthened resource management. In addition, the online platform 'Hassad' will be strengthened to ensure easy access for community members with limited literacy, to NTFP market information.

12. Comments by national GEF members:

Comment by Luyi Cheng, Advisor, U.S. State Department of State, UNITED STATES, Council, made on 7/12/2024

- Comment: The United States would like to see more clarification on how the project will address the overgrazing and livestock issues raised given pastoralists' dependency on grazing land.

à FAO answer: This comment is well noted. The project design team has addressed these comments by closely collaborating with PRAPS while also ensuring integrated stakeholder integration and design of management plans, in close collaboration with all resource users, including pastoralists.

Comment by Annette Windmeisser, GEF Council Member, Head of Division on Climate Finance, BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), GERMANY, Council, made on 6/28/2024

- Comment: Germany approves the PIF in the work programme but requests that the following comments are considered:

Germany requests that the following requirements are taken into account during the design of the final project proposal: Germany recommends including in the full proposal existing local AGLC (Association de gestion locale collective des ressources naturelles), an approach by the government (Ministry of Environment) and local population supported by German bilateral cooperation, existing in the project area (output 2.2.1).

→ FAO answer: this is well noted. The project design team closely consulted the GIZ initiative that focuses on the set-up of AGLCs and has included the lessons learned in the project design.

- Comment: As there is lack of data of the state of land, the full proposal should include collaboration with local universities, to collect and produce relevant data and make it available to decision makers on local, sub-national and national level (Output 1.2.1).

→ FAO answer: thank you. The project will produce relevant data and maps (e.g. under component 2 and facilitate knowledge exchange by learning opportunities (i.a. local community members will be supported to visit successful AGLC structures, supported by GIZ, in Guidimakha.

- To ensure effectiveness, we recommend including a gender-responsive participatory value chain analysis for gum Arabic and NTFPs, along with market analysis and development for such products (local markets) or support for export.

à FAO answer: Thank you. This role of women in the NTFP value chain (focus GA) has been assessed and captured in the GAP. Information on GA export potential has been provided in the prodoc, information on AIPG standard (international GA standard) is being clarified in the prodoc. This standard will guide handling/CD for GA value chains under this project.

Comment by Yibin Xiang, Convention Secretariat, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) made on 3/25/2024

- Comment: Regarding C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES Very much appreciate the mapping with the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF). If possible, please regroup the links as primary links and secondary links, so that the KM-GBF targets funding can be better tracked.

à FAO answer: As this project is now focused on LD, the project design team did not restructure the biodiversity related information in-depth.