GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

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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 Mauritania	GEF Project ID 11551
Country(ies) Mauritania	Type of Project FSP
GEF Agency(ies): FAO	GEF Agency ID
Executing Partner Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEV)	Executing Partner Type Government
GEF Focal Area (s) Land Degradation	Submission Date 3/20/2024
Project Sector (CCM Only)	

Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Climate Change Mitigation, Climate Change, Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use, Climate Change Adaptation, Livelihoods, Community-based adaptation, Ecosystem-based Adaptation, Biodiversity, Productive Landscapes, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Mainstreaming, Agriculture and agrobiodiversity, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Community-Based Natural Resource Management, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands, Income Generating Activities, Sustainable Forest, Ecosystem Approach, Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Livelihoods, Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Demonstrate innovative approache, Stakeholders, Communications, Awareness Raising, Behavior change, Beneficiaries, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Academia, Non-Governmental Organization, Local Communities, Private Sector, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Gender Equality, Gender results areas, Participation and leadership, Access to benefits and services, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Access and control over natural resources, Capacity Development, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender-sensitive indicators, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Women groups, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Learning, Adaptive management, Indicators to measure change, Theory of change, Knowledge Exchange, Knowledge Generation

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)	Total Co-financing

5,835,750.00	9,300,000.00
PPG Amount: (e) 150,000.00	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f) 14,250.00
PPG total amount: (e+f) 164,250.00	Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f) 6,000,000.00
Project Tags CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No	

Project 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. The explanation and justification of the project should be in section B "project description".(max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The expansion of the Sahara – caused by climate change and anthropogenic pressure – is increasing the competition for natural resources in Mauritania's southern wilayas, with severe implications for its agro-silvopastoral landscapes, within which Mauritania's 'Gum Arabic Belt' is located. The increasing pressure on limited resources is accelerating biodiversity loss, land degradation, and reduces livelihood opportunities of local communities, which are highly dependent on livestock rearing, crop production, and the sustainable exploitation of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), such as Gum Arabic. As the desert is expanding while agro-silvopastoralist landscapes are shrinking, sedentary farmers and transhumant pastoralist are increasingly confronted with conflicting interests on how to use forest, pasture and water resources.

To ensure sustainability and transformation, the project will (i.) build institutional and technical capacities to support integrated management of agro-silvopastoral landscapes. Furthermore, the project will (ii.) restore 80.000 hectares (ha) of forestry systems, rehabilitate 40.000 ha of pastureland (located within the 80.000 hectares of restored forests), and demarcate 300 kilometers (km) of livestock corridors (also located within the 80.000 hectares of restored forest), all in close cooperation with local communities and authorities. To support close collaboration between different resource user groups, the project also facilitates the set-up of self-managed community clubs, where complementary natural resource use can be discussed and decided upon. By strengthening Gum Arabic and other NTFPs value chains (iii), the project will incentivize the maintenance of (restored) forests and pastures, which play a crucial role in stabilizing biodiversity, preventing further land degradation, and providing livelihood opportunities.

The objective of this project is to combat land degradation through the restoration, and sustainable management and use of agro-silvopastoral landscapes and associated ecosystem services as well as goods. Restoring native landscapes and strengthening the valorization of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs is crucial for addressing land degradation, ensuring sustainable and diversified socio-economic livelihood opportunities for communities and generating biodiversity co-benefits. The targeted wilayas are Trarza, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Assaba, Hodh Gharbi and Hodh Chargui. Restoration activities will focus on Trarza, Gorgol, and Assaba, and final project locations will be selected with local authorities and communities and in complementarity to relevant existing initiatives.

Global environmental benefits derived under this project include: (i.) maintaining and improving the carbon sequestration potential of Mauritania's agro-silvopastoral landscapes and (ii.) halting land degradation, thus fighting desertification. By restoring the agro-silvopastoralist landscape, the project will support the preservation of Mauritania's unique biodiversity, which is a key co-benefit generated under this project. In addition, associated adaptation co-benefits include the enhanced resilience of ecosystems to climate change and the subsequent reduced socio-economic vulnerability of local communities to climate change and variability.

The project is expected to directly benefit 60,000 community members, across the target wilayas, with 50 percent women targeted to be direct beneficiaries. The seven target wilayas have a total population of approximately 2 million people. Restoration and community-driven activities are planned for the wilayas of Assaba, Gorgol, and Trarza, where 80.000 ha of agro-silvopastoral land will be rehabilitated, within which 40.000 ha will be under improved practices. All wilayas will benefit from improved land-use planning and governance. At the end of the project implementation (2030), the climate change mitigation potential is expected to increase to around 52 000 tCO2-e, and -313 000 tCO2-e 20 years after project implementation (2045) (FAO, NEXT analysis, April 2024). Fully recognizing the high proportion of transhumance communities, which often move across different wilayas, restoration activities under this GEF8 project are planned to geographically complement other projects such as the 'Support for the Implementation of the Great Green Wall (GGW) Project' (CMR1245), which focusses on restoring forest cover in the wilayas of Hodh Gharbi and Hodh Chargui.

Indicative Project Overview

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 goods, including Gum Arabic and other NTFPs

Project Components

Component 1: Creating an enabling environment for sustainable management of agro-silvopastoral landscapes.

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
500,000.00	863,128.00

Outcome:

Outcome 1.1: Integrated land-use planning is applied in target wilayas.

Outcome 1.2: DPREM/MEV staff at national- and wilaya-level systematically assess and manage land use.

Output:

Output 1.1.1: Integrated **and gender sensitive** land-use management policies and plans developed/amended for participating wilayas, considering all resource users.

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.**

Output 1.1.3: **Gender sensitive** forest ecosystem management plan developed on woody and grass-fodder species composition (including but not limited to: Jujube, Acacias, Balanites) across target wilayas for best results in terms of resilience to climate change, maintaining biodiversity integrity and productivity of agro-forestry systems (focus: Gum Arabic and NTFPs)

Output 1.2.1: Technological innovations are made available for assessing land use (e.g. drones, also to be used for seeding) and methods for collecting, storing, and processing land-use information provided, to local-level representatives of the Ministry of Environment (wilaya-level).

Output 1.2.2: Local-level representatives of the Ministry of Environment (wilaya-level) trained on integrated land-use management best practices in semi-arid climates and on equipment and methods procured under 1.2.1.

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

Component Type	Trust Fund
Investment	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
2,175,669.00	3,755,762.00

Outcome:

Outcome 2.1: Rehabilitated agro-silvopastoralist systems contribute to improved ecosystem integrity and avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation.

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

Output:

Output 2.1.1: 80.000 hectares (ha) reforested (in Trarza, Assaba, Gorgol) with Acacias and other relevant tree 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.

Output 2.1.2:
Forest seed centers in Kiffa **(Assaba),** Mederdra **(Trarza),** and Atar re-enforced, and quality seeds made available for forest restauration.

Output 2.1.3:
3 demonstration sites (Gorgol, Trarza, Assaba) set up to train local communities on **agro-forestry and** agro-silvopastoral best practices in semi-arid climates, with focus on food, Gum Arabic, and other NTFPs production, and sustainable silviculture management (following a **Farmer Field School** (FFS) model). The project will support the up-scaling of these improved practices to 20.000 ha of community-owned land, within the 80.000 ha of restored forest.

Output 2.1.4: 40.000 ha of pastureland restored and equipped with relevant infrastructure (e.g. watering points and fodder forests), within the total reforested areas.

Output 2.1.5: 300 km of livestock corridors negotiated across the target wilayas, demarcated, and effectively enriched with fodder species and co-managed by local communities and extension workers.

Output 2.2.1:
Facilitate the set-up of self-managed and sustainable community clubs, which include and are open to all resource users, men, and women, to discuss and agree on the best utilization of agrosilvopastoral resources, considering transhumance groups, sedentary farmers, and other NTFPs users. **These groups will receive training on the design of local agreements for equitable and sustainable resource use of the agrosilvopastoralist landscapes. The project aims for 50 percent of community club members to be women.**

Component 3: Gum Arabic and other NTFPs value chains strengthened to prevent land degradation and biodiversity loss

Component Type	Trust Fund
Investment	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
2,000,000.00	3,452,512.00

Outcome:

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

Output:

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

Output 3.1.2: Inclusive, participatory, and gender sensitive community cooperative business plans developed for Gum Arabic and other NTFPs production and marketing (run in parallel with restoration sites).

Output 3.1.3: Community cooperatives/ start-ups supported to access micro-finance opportunities (these can focus on NTFPs but will also be open for other groups e.g. pastoralist communities, with a. specific focus on supporting women and youth-led cooperatives). **The project targets 50 percent of the supported start-ups to be women and/ or youth led cooperatives.**

Component 4: Knowledge management & learning

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
250,000.00	531,564.00

Outcome:

Outcome 4.1: Knowledge exchange and learning opportunities are enhanced through public-private partnerships and leaning opportunities for young professionals.

Outcome 4.2:

Good practices are identified and disseminated.

Output:

Output 4.1.1: Public-private platform organized to support the exchange of innovation, research, and traditional knowledge on agro-silvopastoral best practices and Gum Arabic and other NTFPs valorization approaches.

Output 4.1.2: Young women and men from the communities supported to access training in integrated and participatory management of agro-silvopastoralist/ NTFPs value chains (internships in local, regional, national, and international institutions).

Output 4.2.1: Communication strategy tailored to various communication objectives and target audiences developed, with particular attention to local communities, women, and youth.

Output 4.2.2. Guidelines on gender-responsive, nature-positive NTFPs production and value chains, including success stories, developed, and disseminated.

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
150,000.00	258,939.00

Outcome:

Outcome 5.1: Monitoring and evaluation of project impacts and results

Output:

5.1.1 Project monitoring and evaluation methods/ tools developed.

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
Component 1: Creating an enabling environment for sustainable management of agro-silvopastoral landscapes.	500,000.00	863,128.00
Component 2: Sustainable rehabilitation of agro-silvopastoral landscapes to preserve ecosystem integrity.	2,175,669.00	3,755,762.00
Component 3: Gum Arabic and other NTFPs value chains strengthened to prevent land degradation and biodiversity loss	2,000,000.00	3,452,512.00
Component 4: Knowledge management & learning	250,000.00	531,564.00
M&E	150,000.00	258,939.00
Subtotal	**5,075,669.00**	**8,861,905.00**
Project Management Cost	253,783.00	438,095.00
Total Project Cost ($)	**5,329,452.00**	**9,300,000.00**

Please provide justification

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly 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

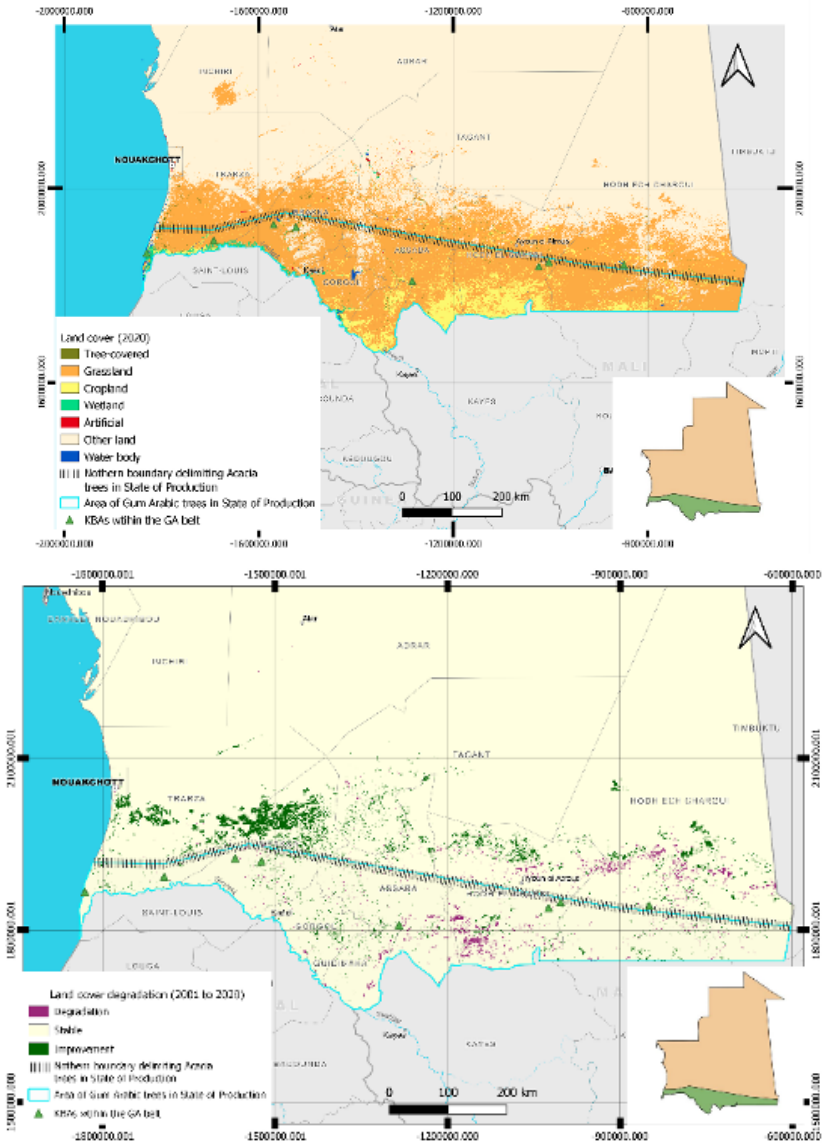
1. Mauritania is a Saharo-Sahelian country covering an area of 1,036,345 km² including 1,035,222 km² of land and another 1,123 km² covered by water[1], it is divided into 5 ecological areas namely: Saharan, western, and eastern Sahelian, river valley and the Maritime area covering a narrow strip along the Atlantic coast. Most of the country's agro-silvopastoral activities are within the Senegal river valley which contains 59% of the arable land and most of

the irrigable land. The wilayas of Trarza, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Assaba, Hodh Gharbi and Hodh Chargui, situated in in the Senegal river valley, are among the most southern wilayas of Mauritania. These wilayas, which are the project intervention areas, form Mauritania's Gum Arabic Belt, which stretches from the coast to the east along the Sahelian areas and river valley and creates a natural barrier against the Sahara Desert in the North. The Gum Arabic Belt is crucially important given its ecological role in maintaining ecosystem functionality and role as a natural barrier against desertification advances from the North. In addition, provided ecosystem services support socio-economic development and livelihoods of local communities derived from agriculture, pastoralism, fishing, and collection and valorization of nature-based products, including non-timber forest products (NTFPs), such as Gum Arabic.

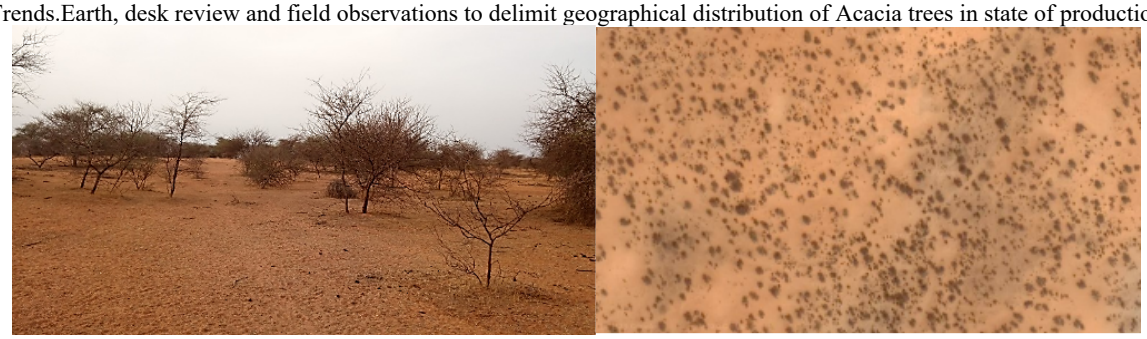
2. In 2022, the population of Mauritania was estimated to be 4,736,139 million, with a continuous population growth projected.[2] Around 10 per cent of Mauritania's population were classified as food insecure in 2022[3] and 31.8 per cent of Mauritania's total population was estimated to live below the national poverty line in 2019[4], of whom 70 per cent live in rural areas[5]. Approximately 50 per cent of the country's population live in rural areas. Despite an abundance of natural resources such as iron and petroleum, Mauritania's economy remains primarily based on agriculture, livestock, and fishing[6] and many of the rural poor are dependent on weak agriculture productivity and low and erratic rainfall patterns. Mauritania is also an exporting country of Gum Arabic, which is harvested from Acacia Seyal and Senegal trees. In spite of its potential for increased Gum Arabic – and NTFPs – production and export, Mauritania remains among the African countries classified as 'minor exporters', exporting below 500 tones annually (the combined exported volume of the African Gum Belt is estimated at 100.000 tones).[7] Notably, Mauritania was once the second largest exporter of Gum Arabic, with an annual average of 5,700 ton during the 1970s.[8] Today, the capacity of local communities for sustainable silviculture, harvesting and processing of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs is rather weak, which causes local communities to often cut down trees, for fuel wood or other alternative and short-term uses, with detrimental effects for ecosystem integrity.

3. Forest formations in Mauritania are dominated by Acacia species and provide crucial ecosystem services to the local population. Fuelwood covers about 50% of domestic energy needs, forest fodder species are essential for the survival of livestock, while sources of income derived from exploiting NTFPs such as Gum Arabic are vital for livelihoods[9]. In addition, Acacia Seyal and Senegal are multi-purpose trees and effective nitrogen fixing plants, with tremendous benefits to soil health and nearby (food) crop production, thus making them highly relevant in the context of sustainable agro-forestry systems[10] and local food security. Additionally, Mauritania's forests and the agro-silvopastoral landscapes they are embedded in are important carbon sinks, while also supporting a unique biodiversity.

4. Out of the country's 30 classified forests, 24 are in the Gum Arabic Belt including 15 forests along the Senegal River in the wilayas of Trarza, Brakna and Gorgol, and another 9 forests along the Karakoro tributary in Guidimakha. There are 2 national parks and 3 natural reserves in Mauritania, out of which the Diawling National Park, the natural reserve of Tilemsi, and the natural reserve of El Aguer are part of mosaics of landscapes within or in the vicinity of the Gum Arabic Belt. Both reserves host different Acacia species including the Gum Arabic producing Acacia Senegal and Acacia Seyal. Mauritania also counts 21 key biodiversity areas, out of which 9 are located within the Gum Arabic Belt area namely: Chott Boul and Diawling National Park (both are RAMSAR sites[11]), Rkiz, Aleg Lake, Mâl Lake, Kankossa, Sawana - Oum Lellé, Tâmourt Chlim and Gâat Mahmoûdé[12]. It is estimated that Mauritania has 141 060 km² of degraded land, representing about 13.6% of the total land area[13], which would benefit from targeted and sustainable integrated resource governance, planning and management.



Land cover (2020) and land cover degradation (2001-2020) in the Gum Arabic Belt. Source: Elaborated by FAO based on spatial data from Trends.Earth, desk review and field observations to delimit geographical distribution of Acacia trees in state of production



Satellite imagery and example of Acacia Forest formations visited at PIF Stage in the South-Western wilaya of Trarz

5. Drivers of land degradation and biodiversity loss are *i.a.* agriculture, pastoralism, and wood and charcoal production, which in turn are the main causes of deforestation and degradation of woodlands; it is estimated that approximately 56 per cent of the population is using wood and charcoal for cooking[14]. To date, no (or limited) integrated natural resource management planning and monitoring structures exist at wilaya level, to address and manage different natural resource users' interests, which however is increasingly important given the rising competition for natural resources. It is also in consequence to this that all of Mauritania's 30 classified forests are significantly degraded and traditional woodlands shrinking. Notably, the last national forestry inventory conducted dates to 1982 and covers only the southwest of the country. In 2000, FAO estimated that Mauritania's forest cover to account for 317 000 ha, within which Acacias are a

dominant species. The same study reported an estimated annual loss in total forest cover of approximately 9800 ha (2.7 per cent)[15].

6. Climate change – increasing temperatures in combination with increasingly erratic precipitation patterns – and climate extremes such as droughts or heavy rainfall events are affecting Mauritania's agro-silvopastoral landscapes, food production, income opportunities and livelihoods. Mid-term and long-term scenarios under Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs) 2.6 and 8.5 indicate that warming trends across the country are further intensifying, with future precipitation patterns remaining unclear.[16] One key element to enhance the resilience to climate change and extreme events of Mauritania's ecosystems and livelihoods within its agro-silvopastoral landscapes is to preserve its native biodiversity in the face of climatic changes, through sustainable and nature positive solutions, including restoration of forests and pasture lands. Especially the restauration of Mauritania's forests with Acacias and other environmentally and socio-economically relevant tree species contain key socio-economic and biodiversity benefits, especially in the light of climate change and extreme events: native tree species, such as Acacias, with their vertical root, can reach lower water tables during drought periods, while facilitating the absorption of groundwater into soil structures, during heavy rainfall events. These capacities, among others, make the reforestation proposed under this project crucial for halting land degradation, while supporting ecosystem integrity. Without the preservation of key native tree species and promoting the sustainable use of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs, Mauritania is likely to witness further desertification, while increasingly losing its carbon sequestration potential. A detailed ExAct analysis for determining the carbon sequestration under this project will be run during the formulation of the project document.

7. To support regeneration of agro-forestry and agro-silvopastoral landscapes, the project will employ a combination of aerial seeding (with drones) in combination with direct seeding with communities (the latter in the context of agro-forestry systems). The aerial seeding and direct seeding will be complemented by assisted natural regeneration efforts. This combination of restoration approaches has been identified as most suitable in Mauritania as engaging the communities in direct seeding efforts where possible is supporting local ownership of the project, while also sensitizing local communities for the value of ecosystem services. However, as the potential for scaling up community-executed direct seeding in Mauritania's vast landscapes is limited, this GEF8 project will introduce aerial seeding through drones. In fact, the Mauritanian State has executed successful aerial seeding with airplanes in the past. As drones have successfully been used for large-scale restoration in other countries such as Somalia as well as other GGW countries, bringing this approach to Mauritania is very innovative for the country and will enable large-scale restoration of forestry systems. Sustainable restoration with key native (multipurpose) tree species is a crucial element of halting desertification and supporting the integrity of agro-silvopastoral landscapes. In collaboration with local communities, the project will support assisted natural regeneration, in support of trees and other key natural resources in the targeted agro-silvopastoral landscapes. To further enhance the success of the project, the private sector will be closely engaged during the PPG phase as well as project implementation: Under component 3, the private sector (exporting companies and other enterprises) will be involved across the value chain, collaborating with community cooperatives to ensure quality, and then supporting the development of the final product by providing added value to it. Private sector partners will further ensure the preparation of the finished product and endorse the role of the retailer. Most of these partners from the private sector are part of the Chamber of Commerce, industry, and agriculture from Mauritania. In addition, micro-finance institutions will be engaged to support community cooperatives and start-ups businesses. The detailed private sector entities will be identified during PPG stage.

8. The resource tenure situation in the target wilayas is complex and consists of different customary and statutory frameworks. These (at times overlapping) legal codes are not necessarily suited to tackle the situation of local land (and natural resource) management in Mauritania today. As a result, conflicts between different resource user groups (pastoralist, sedentary farmers, transhumance pastoralists, etc.) can arise at times[1]. This GEF8 project will address this potential for conflict while ensuring locally appropriate management of natural resources through the community-run clubs (output 2.2.1). Under this output, communities will be trained to establish suitable and location specific 'local agreements', developed through a participatory approach and designed to support the sustainable and equitable use of agro-silvopastoralist resources. As for the Gum Arabic (and other NTFPs) value

chains: producers are the first agents in NTFPs value chains. Their main function is to collect, pack, and deliver the product to a point of sale. In Mauritania, the task of collecting NTFPs, and especially Gum Arabic, is often executed by women and children. As for Gum Arabic: depending on the producers' skill and the tenure situation, the producer may also 'tab' the Acacia tree; in fact, the 'tabbing of the trees can increase the total harvest per tree by three times. Approximately 14 days after the 'tabbing' the tree produces harvestable Gum Arabic. However, before investing the time for 'tabbing' the producer needs to have the re-assurance that no other resource user would consume the Gum (for example, livestock feeds of Gum Arabic raisins when there are no alternative fodder sources) an issue that would be addressed under the community clubs (2.2.1). Problematically, many Gum Arabic (and other NTFPs) producers do not possess the skills and tools for tabbing (Acacias) or overall, sustainably managing trees and their resources.[2][2] In sum, tenure situations do vary between different locations, and are usually a combination of statutory and customary law. During the PPG phase, detailed tenure baselines (including for value chains), for the final project locations, will be identified and elaborated on. Based on this, activities under output 2.2.1 will be designed, to be of best location and community specific support.

[1] Regulating the Commons in Mauritania

[2] https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/suc2017d4_en.pdf

9. The SAWAP project provides lessons learned that are and will be considered under the GEF8 project, such as to avoid project site fragmentation for the *«mises en défens»*/restoration zones, nurseries, and direct seeding. In terms of complementarity, the GEF 8 project will broaden and scale up the type of interventions, such as using aerial seeding with drones and targeting other locations. Lessons learned from the FAO-GEF6 project (*Integrated ecosystem manamgent project for the sustainable human development in Mauritania*) highlight the importance of involving communities closely during the project preparation and implementation. This ensures project ownership and a successful exit strategy. The GEF 8 project will not only provide direct land restoration activities but also foster income-generating activities (such as enhanced capacities for harvesting and processing Gum Arabic/ NTFPs, livestock fodder, etc.) to ensure an integrated approach that supports the collaboration between different communities.

10. The objective of this project is to combat land degradation through the restoration, and sustainable management and use of agro-silvopastoral landscapes and ecosystem services and goods. Restoring native landscapes and strengthening the valorization of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs is crucial for addressing land degradation, ensuring sustainable and diversified socio-economic livelihood opportunities for communities and generating biodiversity co-benefits.

Problems to be addressed

11. Mauritania has an estimated 141 060 km² of degraded land representing about 13.6% of the total land area[17]. Land degradation is mainly driven by unsustainable land management practices. Due to the gradual disappearance of vegetation, arable land is increasingly exposed to erosion. Overgrazing, intensive agriculture, and cutting down of trees are accelerating the degradation of woodlands and hindering groundwater recharge. Observed and future trends suggest that recurrent droughts, water scarcity, competing land uses, and increases in population and livestock will continue disturbing the fragile agroecological equilibrium in Mauritania's agro-silvopastoralist landscape, thus affecting ecosystem functionality, habitats, livelihoods, and food security. With traditional forest areas shrinking, relatively high levels of poverty and vulnerability of local communities and transhumance who are dependent on forest areas for their income, directly or indirectly through livestock rearing, is increasing.

12. Without GEF support, deforestation, and degradation of Mauritania's key agro-silvopastoral landscapes will further threaten the ecological equilibriums of the fragile Saharo-Sahelian ecosystems, thus threatening their ecological functionality and disrupting the flow of critical ecosystem services which underpin socio-economic activities, livelihoods, and food security. It is highly unlikely that land use planning mechanisms, institutional capacities and technical capabilities to foster LDN-positive practices, and multi-stakeholders engagement processes that currently exist in the baseline scenario, will be able to catch up with the pace at which agro-ecological assets are being degraded, driven by an intensifying agriculture, increasing numbers of livestock beyond carrying capacity, as well as over-exploitation of timber and NTFPs.

13. Aforementioned trends will only accelerate considering the scenarios associated with future climate variability, population growth, conflicts in the Sahel, and limited environmental finance. The absence of structured value chains bringing together producers, regulators, and the private sector to add value to NTFPs and develop biodiversity-based products are impeding the development of incentives and a shift towards improved practices and sustainable solutions, which are required to sustainably maintain forests and the resources they provide.

14. To achieve transformational results, the project will strengthen capacities to support the adoption of a system approach, integrating agro-silvo and pastoral systems into a single production system under which synergies can be utilized and trade-offs reduced and/or avoided. To achieve this integrated system approach, the project focusses on the restoration of forests and pastures, while enhancing the livelihoods of local communities through the valorization of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs. These technical interventions will be accompanied through targeted enabling activities as well as knowledge management and learning. Mauritania's commitments to promote sustainable and inclusive growth and develop human capital are clearly articulated in its *Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity* (2016-2030). The Government is currently working towards mobilizing additional resources to support environmental sustainability across agro-silvopastoral landscapes as well as the Gum Arabic (and NTFPs) value chains. For this, the Government is developing key bilateral relations with other countries that are expected to mobilize additional resources. Implementing this GEF8 project resources in support of agro-silvopastoral livelihoods and ecosystems will greatly support the Government of Mauritania is mobilizing resources with additional partners in the present and future, which will be crucial for further upscaling the GEF8 project activities to other project locations.

15. **Key Barriers and Enablers**

Limited enabling environment and capacities for integrated land use management	Gaps in the existing frameworks supporting integrated land use governance, planning and management, especially at wilaya-level, as well as limited technical capacities of extension officers and knowledge of best tree species composition for reforestation and best biodiversity stabilizing effects are key obstacles for the integrated landscape planning and management in Mauritania's agro-silvopastoralist landscapes. There is no integrated national strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of NTFPs including Gum Arabic, with little engagement of the private sector.
Limited capacities for restoration of agro-silvopastoralist landscapes	Planning and implementation of SLM interventions remains weak. Restoration interventions (i.e., reforestation of gum-producing Acacia trees, assisted natural regeneration, re-establishment of native grassland landscapes, sowing/seeding, etc.) are hardly successful at a large spatial scale in the absence of appropriate technologies (e.g. drones), lack of seedbanks, limited and ill-equipped nurseries, and inadequate monitoring. Extension services and local communities are mostly focused on traditional agro-silvopastoral interventions and are not familiar with agro-forestry approaches that help to stabilize crop production by retaining or increasing available nutrients in soil, water and plants; improving microclimates; restoring or stimulating beneficial biota for soil health, pollination or pest control; and increasing or protecting biological diversity and habitat; and enhancing connectivity and health of ecosystems.
Limited capacities to sustainably utilize NTFPs products	Acacia trees have been protected to some extent due to their pastoral value, which is widely known among pastoralists, but very little is known about its economic value among local communities. There is no detailed mapping of the value chain actors, production areas, routes through which flows of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs harvests are channeled and statistics about volumes, quality, and exports. This gap will be elaborated on during the PPG phase, to inform the design of the project document. NTFPs producers have little capacity, and fragile livelihoods and do not benefit from incentives to use good collection practices and add value locally by developing NTFPs products used in the local agri-food, cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries. Cooperative structures are weak or non-existent. (Women) producers of NTFPs are faced with limited access to micro-finance.
Inadequate KM&L mechanisms	The lack of recent and reliable data combined with the absence of holistic and accurate monitoring mechanisms of the agro-silvopastoral landscapes is a key obstacle hindering the establishment of specific baselines against which future progress can be measured (see recommendation in the TE of SAWAP project "Lack of baseline data on tree canopy coverage in target landscapes"). It is crucial to have up-to-date and reliable data to inform decision-making and enable investments in integrated landscape management

	interventions, while also enabling accurate measurement of progress achieved, impact assessment, knowledge generation and extraction of lessons learned and good practices. Similarly, there is a need to design and operationalize fit-for-purpose knowledge management, while also providing training opportunities for youth and women on sustainable and integrated resource management and valorization of NTFPs.

16. To overcome these barriers, the project will (i.) strengthen Government capacities to support and guide on best management practices for semi-arid agro-silvopastoral systems and associated ecosystem services and goods such as Gum Arabic and other NTFPs (ii.) enhance the capacities of the Government and local communities to maintain and co-manage the restored forests, pastures and corridors, (iii.) strengthen local cooperative structures for valorizing Gum Arabic and other NTFPs, applying sustainable silviculture approaches and best practices for harvesting, processing, and marketing NTFPs. The project will further build capacities to monitor land use and strengthen knowledge management and learning opportunities. Final activities will be implemented by using a gender-responsive, community-based, and inclusive approach. By strengthening value chains to sustainably use and add value to Gum Arabic and other NTFPs, the project will halt land degradation, generate biodiversity co-benefits, and bring together local communities, regulators, and the private sector. Inclusive approaches, greater capacities, and more resilient livelihoods will lay solid foundations for sustainability, scalability, and replicability across the wider Gum Arabic Belt.

17. **Stakeholders and beneficiaries**

a. The project is expected to bring together a wide spectrum of stakeholders using participatory consultations and inclusive approaches during project design and implementation to sustainably transform the current practices along the agro-silvopastoral landscapes within Mauritania's Gum Arabic Belt and deliver SLM benefits together with co-benefits related to gender equality, livelihoods, biodiversity, and food security. Key stakeholders to this project include government authorities, CSO's, local communities, and the private sector.

b. Project interventions will adopt a holistic Gum Arabic Belt approach working together with all local communities and transhumant pastoralists (including women, youth, persons with specific needs), government entities (Ministries in charge of environment, agriculture, livestock, water resources, interior and decentralization, social affairs, children and family and other state agencies in charge of the Great Green Wall and renewable energies). The local communities will be engaged through direct participation during the PPG phase (and project inception phase), to help refine the outputs (and activities) of this GEF8 project. In addition, they will also guide on the best possible use of natural resources in the individual project locations (as per stakeholder composition in the individual locations and through the community clubs under 2.2.1). They are engaged, together with local authorities, in restoration activities for agro-forestry systems and pastures. They will be trained to sustainably preserve and maintain the project results through the capacity development provided during implementation. They will also be closely engaged – through workshop and surveying – for guiding the strategic frameworks to be designed under component 1.

c. The Ministry of Environment (MEV/DEPREM) will be the Executing Agency. Project interventions will be executed through the Ministry's structures including the Directorate for the Protection and Restoration of Species and Environments (DEPREM), the Regional Directorates for Environment and Sustainable Development (DREDD), in cooperation with the National Great Green Wall Agency (ANGMV). Government counterparts will guide the project design and implementation, especially through the wilaya-based authorities of the MEV. Authorities will further guide activities of the project with regard to political and legal considerations. The government will support the smooth implementation of all components.

d. The private sector will be engaged to identify and facilitate better access to markets for small-holder Gum Arabic and other NTFPs producers. In addition, the private sector will also be engaged to guide on improved valorization of NTFPs, for international trade (and other NTFPs). For example, the private sector (especially exporting companies) will be consulted for the national strategy for the Gum Arabic value chain (1.1.2). During the PPG phase, additional collaboration with the private sector will be identified.

18. **Baseline initiatives and investments**

a. The GEF project will be implemented in Mauritania's Gum Arabic Belt, it will support territorial planning using an integrated landscape management approach encompassing the mosaics of agro-silvopastoral landscapes to restore and maintain the functionality of fragile Saharo-Sahelian ecosystems while supporting livelihoods using gender-responsive, youth-centric, and inclusive approaches. GEF-supported interventions will be implemented in the wilayas of Trarza, Gorgol, and Assaba, with best practices replicated in the wilayas of Brakna, Guidimakha, Hodh El Gharbi and Hodh El Chergui.

b. The project is consistent with the MEV/DEPREM/DREDDs Action Plans and is in line with the following strategies and initiatives: The vision for the future, entitled 'The Mauritania we want in 2030'; The 2020 President Priority Program which identified Reforestation and Green Job Creation as one of the 6 priority areas of the Government's recovery plan to the COVID 19 crisis; The Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity 2016-2030 / SCAPP; The National Environment and Sustainable Development Strategy/SNEDD 2017-2030; The National Reforestation Strategy 2021-2030; The National Agricultural Development Plan / PNDA 2015-2025; and The National Gender Institutionalization Strategy (SNIG).

c. Other baseline initiatives that will inform project design and implementation include Mauritania's ongoing first Environmental Performance Review by UNECE. Lessons learned from GEF projects intervening in the Gum Arabic Belt or pursuing synergetic objectives will inform the design of this GEF8 project proposal, including GEF ID 5792 PSG-Sustainable Landscape Management Project under SAWAP. Close collaboration will be established with the ongoing GEF/LDCF projects implemented by FAO in the southern wilayas to maximize synergies and economies of scale (GEF ID 10176 and 9294). Synergies will be developed with ongoing/forthcoming GEF initiatives aiming to strengthen environmental governance, and restore and promote improved practices using integrated landscapes management while supporting livelihoods and gender equality, these include:

- GEF ID 11128 - Integrated Natural Resource Management of wetlands (PGIRN/3ZH)
- GEF ID 11000 - Great Green Wall Climate Change Adaptation Regional Support Project
- FAO-GCF - Scaling-Up Resilience in Africa's Great Green Wall (SURAGGWA)

d. This GEF8 project is a complementary activity to existing initiatives. For example, the SAWAP project is also implemented in Trarza and Gorgol. However, the project sites of SAWAP and the GEF 8 will be different and complement each other, allowing to cover larger geographical areas. The final locations will be decided with communities and local authorities, during the PPG stage.

_ftnref1
[1] https://reporting.unccd.int/api/country/MRT/report/official/pdf/
[2] https://data.worldbank.org/country/mauritania
[3] https://reliefweb.int/report/mauritania/mauritania-food-insecurity-dref-operation-final-report-ndeg-mdrma013
[4] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=MR
[5] https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/07/06/gum-arabic-supports-green-growth-in-mauritania
[6] https://futures.issafrica.org/geographic/countries/mauritania/#economics
[7] https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/suc2017d4_en.pdf
[8] MEV. Study of the Acacia Senegal and Acacia Seyal sector for the production of gum arabic. Nouakchott, 2014.
[9] https://www.fao.org/3/cb0142fr/cb0142fr.pdf
[10] https://www.aciar.gov.au/sites/default/files/legacy/node/619/mn115part1.pdf
[11] https://rsis.ramsar.org/ris-search/?f[0]=regionCountry_en_ss%3AMauritania
[12] https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/kba-data
[13] https://reporting.unccd.int/api/country/MRT/report/official/pdf/
[14] https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2015/IRENA_RRA_Mauritania_EN_2015.pdf
[15] https://www.fao.org/forestry/country/57478/en/mrt/
[16] https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/mauritania
[17] https://reporting.unccd.int/api/country/MRT/report/official/pdf/

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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 PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Theory of Change (ToC) and causal pathways

1. The ToC explains how the project will be on track to achieving its objective and addressing key barriers to implement an integrated landscape management approach to rehabilitate the agro-silvopastoral landscape mosaics and enhance livelihoods in Mauritania's Gum Arabic Belt, in line with the country's ambition to build on the nexus between ecological functionality and socio-economic development to accelerate green growth and transition into a greener and resilient economy.

2. The objective of the project is to restore and sustainably manage Mauritania's agro-silvopastoralist landscape in the wilayas of Trarza, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Assaba, Hodh Gharbi and Hodh Chargui. The key intervention point for halting land degradation and biodiversity loss is the sustainable rehabilitation of forestry systems and pasture lands, through the strengthening of NTFPs value chain and the adoption of sustainable agro-forestry practices, for crop production. The project will ensure inclusive and participatory community engagement, which will be crucial for the long-term maintenance of this intervention. The agro-silvopastoralist landscapes in Mauritania present a unique ecosystem and act as natural barrier against the spreading desertification from the north. Stabilizing this unique and fragile ecosystem and the services it provides is crucial for future food security and livelihood opportunities.

3. The focus of the forestry restoration will be on native (gum producing) Acacias. However, to support biodiversity stability, restauration activities will also include other relevant and multi-purpose tree species such as native Jujube and Balanites – both of which also produce relevant and marketable NTFPs. During the project preparation stage, communities will be engaged to identify most suitable NTFPs and will be capacitated in silviculture management and the production, processing, and marketing of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs, as identified by them.

4. For the sustainable management of the agro-silvopastoral landscapes and forests, all resource user groups will be considered, including transhumance pastoralist, sedentary farmers, and others. The project will address this by taking an integrated approach towards these different groups, meeting their needs, and bringing them together for identifying agreeable solutions for the use of local resources.

5. Through its five components, the project will support four causal pathways (i.) integrated land use management, (ii.) climate resilient rehabilitation of landscapes and demonstration of agro-forestry systems in semi-arid climates, (iii.) sustainable harvesting and marketing of NTFPs to maintain restored landscapes, and (iv.) improved learning and knowledge exchange.

6. Under **Component 1**, the project will enhance the institutional and management frameworks for integrated resource management at wilaya-level (1.1.1). The focus on integrated land use management (through policies and plans at wilaya -level) – through which the project will sustainably coordinate the increasing competition for limited natural resources among different user groups – will be complemented by the design of a national strategy for the valorization of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs (1.1.2). This national strategy will identify concrete pathways for strengthening opportunities for smallholder producers and cooperatives to stabilize livelihood opportunities derived from NTFPs. To ensure technically sound reforestation under component 2, this project will produce a forest ecosystem management plan, which will provide guidance on ideal tree species composition for best possible ecosystem and biodiversity stability and producing marketable NTFPs (1.1.3). Under output 1.2.1, the project will capacitate wilaya-based extension workers to monitor land-use and execute direct seeding, by using drones. Best methods for collecting, processing, and storing land use data will be identified and established. Required training to operate procured drones and on best practices for sustainable and integrated land use management in semi-arid climates will be provided under output 1.2.2.1. To note, the strategic frameworks under component 1 will benefit from the participatory engagement of communities as the project will organize workshops and surveying exercises with local communities to collect their feedback, concerns, and needs for such frameworks. Related meetings are planned to also be attended by local authorities to facilitate discussions and mutual understanding about natural resource use in the project locations, and best strategies for

sustainable resource use. The collected information from these workshops and surveys will be considered in the strategic planning.

7. Under **component 2**, native forests are rehabilitated to improve ecosystem integrity and halt land degradation (outcome 2.1). To achieve this component, the project will reforest 80.000 ha of degraded forests. This reforestation scale will be possible by using innovative technologies (such as drones), in combination with direct seeding executed by local communities. Reforestation efforts will be focused on the wilayas of Assaba, Gorgol and Trarza and final sites will be selected in close collaboration with local communities (2.1.1). To ensure long-term sustainability of forest rehabilitation and agro-forestry uptake in Mauritania, this project will strengthen the newly established seed centers in Kiffa, Mederdra, and Atar (2.1.2) and establish three demonstration sites for best agro-silvopastoral and silviculture practices, in support of climate resilient production of food crops and NTFPs, including products derived from Balanites, Jujube, and Acacias (2.1.3). To complement and ensure integrated land use management on the ground, the project will restore (and equip) 40.000 ha of pasture lands (2.1.4) and, in close cooperation with local communities, negotiate and demarcate 300 km of livestock corridors (2.1.5). To support cooperation and alignment between different user groups, the project, under outcome 2.2, will set-up self-managed community clubs, where resource use related matters can be addressed and solved in an inclusive participatory and sustainable way, including men, women, and youth (2.2.1).The existing territorial governance arrangements will be mapped out during the PPG phase and will inform/ be considered in outputs and 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 (as well as 1.1.1 and 1.1.3). The community clubs (2.2.1) will also consider the present arrangements while providing space for discussing and proposing local resource use arrangements that are sustainable with regard to the future. To note, KBAs (Key Biodiversity Areas) and PAs (Protected Areas) will be considered in the land use and forest ecosystem management plans to be developed under this project. As pointed out by the GEF reviewer, most KBA assessments in Mauritania date back to 2001. During the PPG phase, the project designer will commission a small study on their status and relevance, regarding this GEF8 project. Based on the results of this assessment, and feedback from the local communities and administration, this GEF8 project will integrate these KBAs and PAs as project locations, for on-the-ground activities. The focus would be to closely engage with communities as well as Government authorities from the Ministry of Environment, to sustainably maintain and utilize natural resources in the KBAs, while restoring PAs where required.

8. Component 3 will strengthen NTFPs value chains, to support local livelihoods while providing incentives to protect local ecosystems and biodiversity. For this, the project will also develop the organizational and technical capacity of cooperatives sustainably harvest, process, store, and market high quality NTFPs, including value added products (3.1.1), while also supporting the development of inclusive, participatory, and gender sensitive community cooperative business plans (3.1.2). To further strengthen community cooperatives, access to micro-finance will be facilitated, with a specific focus on women-led cooperatives for *i.a.* NTFPs production and marketing (3.1.3). The project will support smallholders in accessing micro-finance resources, which are available through, for example, the Government entity CDD (Caisse des Dépôts et de Développement), which provides micro-finance for rural stakeholders, to support sustainable use of the agro-silvopastoral landscape. During the PPG phase, additional micro-finance opportunities will be identified, focusing on the private sector, such as Gum Arabic and NTFP exporting companies. To complement the incentivization of maintaining forests through the strengthened valorization of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs, the project will also equip local tree nurseries (3.1.4) and provide local communities with energy efficient cooking stoves (3.1.5).

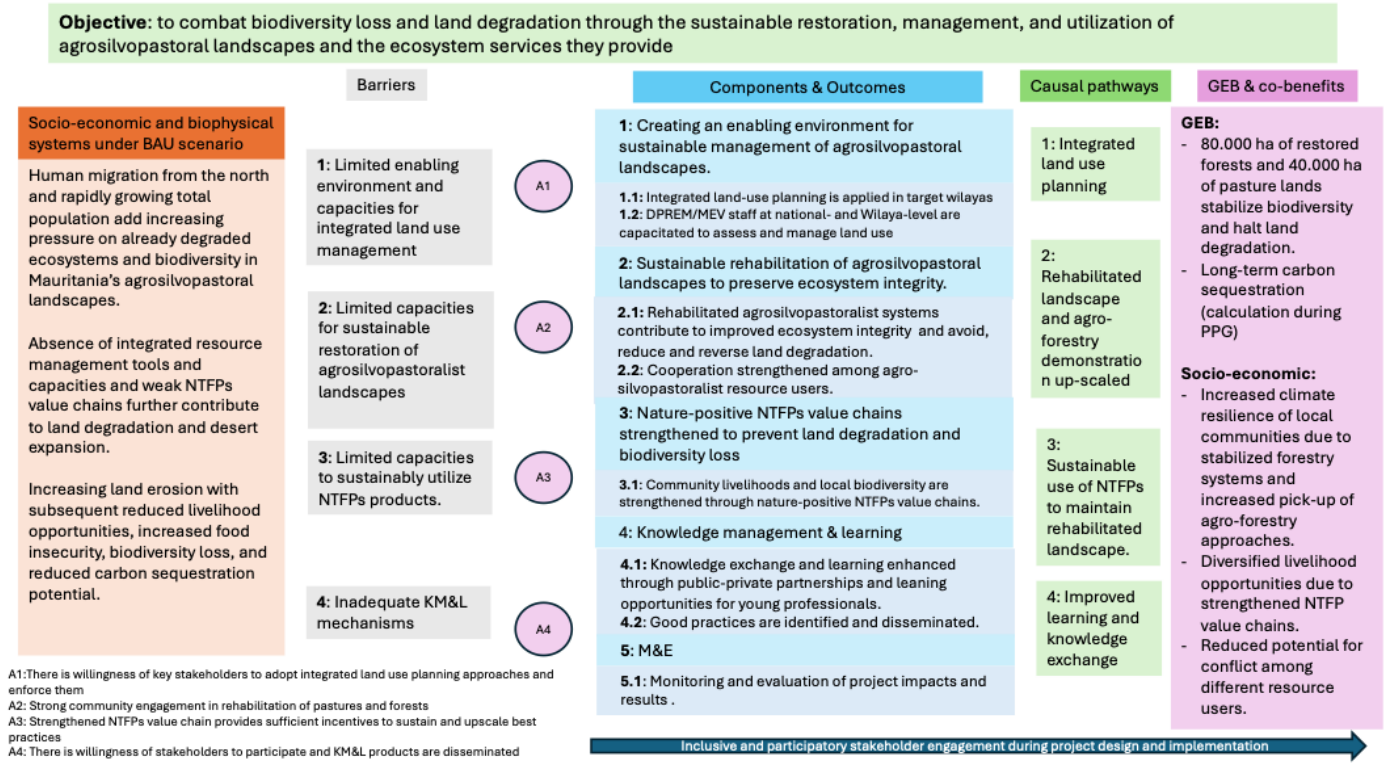
9. Under **Component 4**, knowledge exchange and learning opportunities will be facilitated by organizing a private-public platform for NTFPs to support the exchange of innovation, research, and traditional knowledge on agro-silvopastoral best practices and Gum Arabic and other NTFPs valorization approaches (4.1.1) and supporting young men and women from local communities to access training opportunities in integrated and participatory management of agro-silvopastoralist/ NTFPs value chains (4.1.2). In addition, the project will produce and disseminate a communication strategy tailored to various communication objectives and target audiences, with particular attention to local communities, women, and youth (4.2.1) and guidelines on gender-responsive, socio-economic, and environmentally sustainable NTFPs production and value chains, including success stories.

10. Under **Component 5**, a project monitoring and evaluation system will be developed to inform project evaluations (Output 5.1.1).

11. The assumptions based on which the project will be on track to achieve its expected results are the following:

A1: There is willingness of key stakeholders to adopt integrated land use planning policies and management approaches and enforce them.
A2: Strong community engagement in rehabilitation of pastures and forests.
A3: Strengthened NTFPs value chain provides sufficient incentives to sustain and upscale best practices.
A4: There is willingness of stakeholders to participate, and knowledge products are disseminated.

ToC Diagram



Incremental cost reasoning

The project will intervene in tandem with baseline initiatives to support ongoing efforts and foster coordination to deliver GEBs, to do so GEF resources will be used as follows:

15. Component 1 will address barrier #1. GEF incremental finance under this component will catalyze multi-stakeholders' coordination, update the national strategy for NTFPs, while boosting institutional and technical capacities to adopt innovative tools, such as drones, to support integrated landscape monitoring and management.

16. Component 2 will address barrier #2. Under this component, GEF co-financing will build on complementary baseline initiatives to restore and promote sustainable agro-forestry systems to reverse or reduce the degradation of native tree species formations and sustainably use the agro-silvopastoral landscapes of Mauritania. In addition, GEF finance will be used to restore pasture lands and livestock corridors, as only an integrated resource management approach, which considers all users, can be sustainable in the long run.

17. Component 3 will address barrier #3. Under this component, GEF resources will build on the results from previous investments (including SAWAP project) and seek synergies with ongoing baseline initiatives to support the development of the NTFPs value chain and community livelihoods. Specifically, GEF investments will support GA value chain development by organizing value chain actors, support value addition to develop marketable NTFPs and enhance access to local market, with special emphasis and tailored support provided to

women-led cooperatives and youth-led start-ups including through solar-powered and water-efficient alternative livelihoods.

18. Component 4 will address barrier #4. Under this component, GEF co-financing will support the systemization of knowledge generation and dissemination, as well as peer-to-peer learning mechanisms using gender-responsive and community-based approaches.

19. Without the GEF8 finance, the government would still be working on different activities such as protections against bushfires and reforestation campaigns. However, the government lacks financing to scale up these activities and has limited technical capacity to implement these more efficiently. Therefore, enhancing strategic frameworks, expanding the restoration of agro-silvopastoral landscapes, and strengthening Gum and other NTFPs value chains, while supporting targeted learning on sustainable management and use of agro-silvopastoral resources through GEF finance is crucial for achieving sustainable impacts at scale.

20. Government co-financing based on recurrent expenditures will support pastures protection against bushfires, rehabilitation of degraded land through dune fixation and soil conservation, aerial seeding, and support to sustainable alternatives to wood fuels, while public investments focus on integrated ecosystem management through protection and restoration of remarkable sites identified. Other sources of co-financing include contributions from the Private Sector, CSOs and Municipalities. Details will be confirmed and updated during the PPG phase.

21. Global Environmental Benefits: the project will restore 80.000 hectares of woodlands and 40.000 ha of pasture lands (located within the 80.000 ha of restored forests), in complementarity with the Government and local communities. At the end of the project implementation (2030), the climate change mitigation potential is expected to increase to around 52 000 tCO2-e, and -313 000 tCO2-e 20 years after project implementation (2045) (FAO, NEXT analysis, April 2024). Co-benefits will reach 60,000 direct project beneficiaries including women, 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.

22. This GEF8 project will complement other projects (under implementation, implemented, planned) as the final geographical locations targeted under this GEF8 project will complement other initiatives and build on lessons learned from other projects.

Gender considerations

23. Mauritania has a low equality in Gender Development Index measuring gaps in achievements between women and men in health, education, and command over economic resources[1]. Gender equality is a key priority for the project which aims to global environmental benefits together with co-benefits related to gender equality, in line with the country's National Gender Institutionalization Strategy (SNIG) and efforts to achieve SDG5. The project's ToC considers the empowerment of women and youth to enhance their representativity in decision-making processes and the adoption of gender-sensitive budgeting to ensure that a fair share of project financing benefits women, youth, and people with specific as a key assumption for the project to be able to achieve its results.

24. The project will directly benefit 30,000 women, its results will be monitored using a gender-responsive results framework and monitoring system using gender-disaggregated indicators. Special emphasis and tailored support will be provided throughout the project to empower women and youth groups to organize in cooperatives and access micro-finance opportunities for NTFPs production and marketing (3.1.3), participate in training programmes on integrated and participatory management of agro-silvopastoralist/ NTFPs value chains (internships in local, regional, national, and international institutions) (4.1.2). Finally, the communication strategy of the project will be developed with particular attention to women and youth (4.2.1) and guidelines on gender-responsive, sustainable Gum Arabic and NTFPs production and value chains, including success stories, developed, and disseminated (4.2.2).

25. A detailed gender strategy and action plan will be developed during the PPG phase to uncover the underlying gender dynamics hindering women and girls, as well as people with specific needs from equally benefiting from

project interventions, and lay out a clear road map for empowering women and youth including through the use of gender-sensitive budgeting to proactively support and benefit from the project's transformational approach to rehabilitating the mosaics of agro-silvopastoral landscapes along the Gum Arabic Belt. The Gender Action Plan (GAP) will clearly report, budget and monitor policies, plans, and strategies, as described in the LF, from a gender-sensitive perspective.

26. Gender dynamics and social norms will be further examined in the gender analysis that will be conducted during the PPG phase. The gender analysis will also investigate intersectionality to understand how different forms of discrimination may hinder certain social groups from fully benefiting from project interventions, by considering women and girls from different social groups being impacted by various systems of inequality based on factors such as gender, age, class, location, and income. Given that women represent more than half of the country's population, women and girls including those with disability, will be at the core of project focus to ensure they have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities to benefit from project interventions. The project through its interventions in the target Wilayas, Mougataas, and Communes within the Gum Arabic Belt, will support national efforts to mainstream gender considerations into land-use planning and development processes. The project will directly contribute to enhancing the participation of women and youth into decision-making and strengthening their livelihoods (special attention will be given to women – and youth – participation throughout all activities, and women will be encouraged to take leading roles in the community clubs, output 2.2.1).

Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Role
Government	The Ministry of Environment (MEV/DEPREM) will be the Executing Agency. Project interventions will be executed through the Ministry's affiliated structures. The Directorates for the Protection and Restoration of Species and Environments (DEPREM) will be leading Components 1 and 4, to enhance cross-sectoral coordination with institutional and international partners, including Ministries in charge of Environment, Agriculture, Livestock, Water resources, Commerce, Interior and Decentralization (wilayas), Social Affairs, Children and Family and other State agencies in charge of the Great Green Wall and Renewable Energies), as well as international donors and technical partners. The Regional Directorates for Environment (DREDD) will be co-leading components 1, 2 and 3 to implement the integrated landscape management plans in the wilayas of Trarza, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha and Assaba, in cooperation with local communities and CSO networks, elected bodies in target municipalities, and private sector entities along the NTFPs value chain. The National Great Green Wall Agency (ANGMV) will support Components 2 and 4 including restoration efforts and the dissemination of knowledge and replication of best practices.
CSOs, Local Communities	Will co-design and co-lead restoration interventions by supporting reforestation and the setting-up and operation of demonstration sites from agro-silvopastoral practices; the development of Gum Arabic and other NTFPs products.
Private sector	Under component 3, the private sector (exporting companies and other enterprises) will be involved across the value chain, collaborating with community cooperatives to ensure quality, and then supporting the development of the final product by providing added value to it. Private sector partners will further ensure the preparation of the finished product and endorse the role of the retailer. Most of these partners from the private sector are part of the Chamber of Commerce, industry, and agriculture from Mauritania. In addition, microfinance institutions will be engaged to support community cooperatives and start-ups businesses. The detailed private sector entities will be identified during PPG stage.
GEF Agency	As the GEF Implementing Agency (IA) for the project, FAO holds responsibility for achieving results and will provide management services and technical support to the project cycle in line with FAO-GEF policies.

Innovation

27. The project will use the following innovations in line with the precursor role of GEF financing to catalyze disruptive innovation to deliver GEBs and socio-economic benefits using gender-responsive and inclusive approaches. The following innovations will be used by the project:

- Use of science-based geospatial tools to support integrated territorial planning and informed decision-making, including through the use of the Hand in Hand Initiative[1], the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring Registry (FERM)[2], and Aerial drone topographical mapping as well as drone-based arial seeding.

- Use of scientific Research and Development tools to locally valorize NTFPs and develop products for the local market including for instance products used in the agri-food and cosmetics industries.

- Use of solar-powered and water-efficient systems: Water availability is a key challenge to rehabilitating the agro-silvopastoral landscapes along the Gum Arabic Belt, there is a huge potential for the use of bundled tech and non-tech innovations such as agrivoltaic systems to support unreliable energy and water supplies, especially in rural Mauritania through the use of solar pumping systems and improved stoves, water harvesting and water-use optimization including intelligent drip irrigation systems using smart monitoring censors, and drought tolerant seed varieties. This will translate into greater success rates for producing and sustaining tree plants in project-supported nurseries and reforestation areas, and higher yields, which will in return enhance food security, reduce fuelwood and water consumption and strengthen livelihoods.

[1] https://www.fao.org/hand-in-hand/en
[2] https://ferm.fao.org/

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

If so, please describe that role here. 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

The project will work in synergies with the following ongoing initiatives and projects:

28. MEV/DEPREM/DREDDs Action Plans with interventions related to pastures protection against bushfires, rehabilitation of degraded land through dune fixation and soil conservation, aerial seeding, promotion of sustainable alternatives to wood fuels, and protection and restoration of remarkable sites.

29. FAO-GEF project (ID 10176): "Integrated ecosystem management project for the sustainable human development in Mauritania "which aims to increase sustainable human development through the restoration of ecosystem services and an integrated ecosystem management approach in three southern Mauritania landscapes namely El Atf, Triangle de l'Espoir and the Great Green Wall. Synergies will be harnessed with interventions under component 1 to support integrated land-use planning, under component 2 to support landscape restoration, under component 3 to support income generation and under component 4 to support knowledge dissemination and upscaling.

30. FAO-GEF project (ID 9294). "Enhancing the resilience of agriculture and livestock producers through improved watershed management and development of environmentally positive value chains in South East Mauritania" which aims to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable rural populations by improving watershed-level planning of natural resources and implementing innovative, climate-resilient livelihood options within four South-East Mauritania Wilayas, namely Tagant, Hodh el Gharbi, Assaba and Tektaké-Dafort Guidimakha. Synergies will be harnessed with interventions under Component 1 to support participatory governance schemes, under Component 2 to support landscape restoration, and under Component 3 promote sustainable use of Gum Arabic and NTFPs. Component 4 will support knowledge dissemination.

31. IUCN-GEF project (ID 11128) - Integrated Natural Resource Management of three Wetlands landscapes, two of which is located on the route of the Great Green Wall in Mauritania (Male, Djelliwar, and Karakoro (PGIRN/3ZH), under the Ecosystem Restoration IP. Synergies will be maximized with regard to interventions related to restoration, improved practices, alternative livelihoods, and knowledge management in the overlapping landscapes.

32. IFAD-GEF project (ID 11000) - Great Green Wall Climate Change Adaptation Regional Support Project which aims to improve access to best practices, foster innovation and digital transformation and facilitate cross-learning across Great Green Wall countries for enhanced sustainability and resilience to climate change impacts. Synergies will be established under component 4 to foster cooperation across the Sahel and GGW countries.

33. FAO-GCF - Scaling-Up Resilience in Africa's Great Green Wall (SURAGGWA) which aims to tackle land restoration, climate change and sustainable livelihoods in 8 Sahelian countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal. Synergies will be harnessed to scale up successful restoration practices, support value-chain development and strengthen institutional governance of the Great Green Wall.

34. Synergies will be developed with other ongoing initiatives aiming to strengthen environmental governance and restore and promote improved practices using integrated landscapes management, while supporting livelihoods and gender equality, including interventions of the National Agency of the Great Green Wall; FAO TCP projects supporting the Arabic Gum sector in Mauritania; and other Natural Resources Management Program financed by international donors.

Core Indicators

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	0	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			

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)

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 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	313000	0	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)	0	0	0	0

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_2e (direct)	313,000			
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting	2025			
Duration of accounting	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_2e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (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)

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			
Male	30,000			
Total	**60,000**	**0**	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)

1. Core Indicator 3: Area of land and ecosystems under restoration (hectare) – Identified by total hectares of overlapping forests and pasture areas under restauration (80.000 ha), including 80.000 hectares of restored native forests (Sub-indicator 3.2: Area of forest and forest land under restoration) and 40.000 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. NB: the 40.000 ha restored pastures are located within the 80.000 ha of restored forests. Restoration interventions include assisted natural regeneration, re-establishment of native grassland landscapes, aerial sowing/seeding and direct seeding with local communities to restore forest cover. The baseline of degradation (and final applied method of restoration) varies across the 80.000 ha that are targeted for restoration. Currently, the project plans with 2.1 USD million in support of component 2 (this equates to approximately 26 USD/ hectare). The cost per hectare of the different restoration methods depends on the level of degradation, which will be fully identified during PPG stage, for the different project locations. Averaging out the cost for the different restoration approaches, results in approximately 25-400 USD/ hectare, with lower costs associated with less eroded landscapes and innovative approaches such as aerial seeding. It must be noted that the final composition of restoration methods applied will be decided together with local authorities and communities during the PPG stage. The estimates provided above are informed by data generated under the

FAO GEF6 project as well as national expert estimation. To note, as aerial seeding with drones is an innovative approach in Mauritania, the final and exact cost needs to be determined during the PPG phase for this restoration method, and the total number of hectares covered under the project will be potentially adjusted.

2. Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectare) – Estimated at 20,000 ha to be sustainably managed through agreements with local communities using improved agro-silvopastoral practices suitable for semi-arid climates and in support of crop and NTFPs production (sub-indicator 4.3: Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems). These 20.000 ha are located within the 80.000 ha of restored forests.

3. 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 52 000 tCO2-e, and -313 000 tCO2-e 20 years after project implementation (2045) (FAO, NEXT analysis, April 2024).

4. Core Indicator 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (Count) – 60,000 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 women, 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

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Moderate	Current climate variability is threatening the fragile natural equilibriums in the Gum Arabic Belt, mid-to long-term climate projections (2050-2100) show a significant temperature increase between 2°C under the RCP 4.5 scenario and 6°C under the RCP 8.5 scenario. Projections of annual precipitation remain uncertain, while precipitations in southern Mauritania are projected to decrease under the RCP 4.5 scenario (- 5% to - 20%), projections under the RCP 8.5 scenario suggest that precipitations will slightly increase compared to the 1986 – 2005 baseline. Both scenarios indicate significant temperature increase, more erratic rainfall patterns, a shorter rainy season with less frequent and more intense rainfall thus increasing the risk for drought-induced degradation of land cover and forests formations (especially at seed and seedling stage) and reduced availability of feed, and a higher likelihood for conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, water insecurity during dry spells for both human needs and livestock. 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 through the use of

		drought-resistant seed varieties and innovations such as solar-powered and water-efficient productive systems to support restoration, improved practices and livelihoods.
Environmental and Social	Low	The environmental and social risks related to this GEF8 project are considered low. To mitigate any potential social risks that could occur during project implementation, the project will be implemented in line with FAO's Framework for Environmental and Social Management. It will undertake a detailed stakeholder assessment and gender analysis to develop a stakeholder engagement plan, a gender action plan as well as a Grievance Redress mechanism to address any social risks. The project will also educate project beneficiaries on how to report on any misconduct or misbehaviour by project management staff, through official channels. Finally, targeted activities - such as the community clubs under component 2 - will also support social cohesion among different communities.
Political and Governance	Moderate	Government turnovers (with the upcoming presidential election in summer 2024), 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.
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Moderate	Risks related to the Integrated Landscape Management Plans and the National Strategy for the valorization of NFTP including 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 integration of ILMPs into decentralized policy-making and planning frameworks.
Technological		N/A
Financial and Business Model		N/A
EXECUTION		
Capacity	Substantial	There is little institutional and technical capacity to deliver project results giving the disconnect between national and regional aspirations and field achievements. The project will assess gaps and strengthen technical and institutional capacities to use appropriate tools and approaches to deliver GEBs and socio-economic co-benefits.
Fiduciary	Moderate	The project will be executed by the MEV. The Ministry is currently executing the FAO-GEF project (ID 9294) "enhancing the resilience of agro-pastoralists and southeastern Mauritania". The risk associated with

		managing GEF funds by MEV was assessed as Moderate. The institutional arrangements, the composition of PSC and PMU and OPIM QA mechanisms will be further defined during the PPG phase. NB: FAO's OPIM modality serves as a contractual tool to allow for direct implementation by the OP (Operational Partner), which would be MEV (previous MEDD) in the case of Mauritania. However, in support of the OP, FAO provides technical backstopping and technical support to the OP.
Stakeholder	Low	Local communities and agro-pastoralists not consulted during the initial project design may exhibit low levels of ownership a little awareness about the importance of project interventions. The project will develop a detailed and budgeted stakeholder engagement plan during the PPG, and engage all project stakeholders to strengthen ownership and raise awareness about the positive impact of project results on agro-silvopastoral resources and local livelihoods.
Other	Substantial	Security risks: The Sahel is witnessing various instability challenges; spillover effects could pose security threats to neighboring Sahelian countries. Project interventions will be first carried out in 5 target wilayas spanning the gum Arabic Belt and then replicated in the remaining eastern Wilayas.
Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	

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

Describe 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.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this.

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. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

1. The project is in line with the Land Degradation Focal Area of the GEF8 Programming Directions, more specifically its objective LD-1: Avoid and reduce land degradation through sustainable land management (SLM) and LD-2: Reverse land degradation through landscape restoration. By rehabilitating native agro-silvopastoral landscapes, the project will support considerable biodiversity co-benefits.

2. The project is aligned with Mauritania's National Action Programme (NAP) under the UNCCD and its priority interventions domains related to, capacity building, regulatory frameworks and institutional coherence, scientific research and funding for the rehabilitation of degraded lands and the improvement of agro-silvopastoral practices. The project is expected to contribute to the Kunming-Montreal GBF more specifically: Target 1 through project interventions related to improved planning capacities (outputs 1.2.1, 1.2.2) and participatory and community-based integrated landscape management (outputs 1.1.1, 2.2.1, 3.1.2); Target 2 through project interventions related to 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 through project interventions related to the sustainable use of biodiversity and adoption of BD-friendly practices (outputs 2.1.3, 3.1.2); Target 20 through

project interventions related to 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); and Target 23 through project interventions related to providing women with equal opportunities (outputs 2.2.1, 3.1.3, 4.1.2, 4.2.).

3. The project is aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015-2030, and supports SDGs 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 15; as well as Mauritania's NDC targets related to climate-smart agriculture, land restoration, resilience of livelihoods, vulnerable populations, and ecosystems.

4. In 2002, Mauritania has established its voluntary Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets with the ambition to achieve LDN by 2030. This GEF8 PIF is contributing towards achieving this target and complements other LDN initiatives that are also underway in Mauritania.

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

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

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

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

Yes

Were the following stakeholders consulted during project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Yes

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector: Yes

Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations

1. Consultations were conducted with various stakeholders at national regional and local levels as summarized in the below table. A national expert will be hired during the PPG to undertake a socio-economic analysis based on a throughout des review of findings from household surveys to be conducted in the targeted landscapes.

- Institutional Stakeholders

Institution	Title	Methodology	Date
DEPREM/MEV	Director	Working sessions in Nouakchott during the PIF design mission	June 12th, 2023
PMU "SAWAP/ Sustainable Landscape Management"	Coordinator	Working sessions in Nouakchott with members of the PMU of the GEF/WB project "SAWAP/ Sustainable Landscape Management" closed on January 21st, 2021	June 12th, 2023

DREDD / Regional Delegation of the MEV for the Wilaya of TRARZA	Head	Meeting with the Regional Director of MEV/DREDD for the Wilaya of TRARZA in Rosso	June 14th, 2023
DREDD / Regional Delegation of the MEV for the Wilaya of TRARZA	Inspector	Meeting during a visit to the regional nursery of MEV/DREDD for the Wilaya of TRARZA in Rosso	June 14th, 2023
GEF SGP	Coordinator	Working session in Rosso	June 14th, 2023
Mohamed Selme (MEV)	Directeur de la Protection et la Restauration des Espèces et des Milieux	Review final log frame	March 2024

- Local Communities and value chain actors

Site	Type of Stakeholders met	Methodology	Date
Boer Toress	Pastoralist / Collector of GA	On-Site meeting during a field visit to the SAWAP site of Boer Toress / Wilaya of TRARZA	June 13th, 2023
Rosso	Trader of GA	On-Site meeting during a field visit to the local commercial Market in Rosso	June 14th, 2023
Oum El Koura	17 members from the community (7 women, including the President of the Women's Union)	On-Site meeting during a field visit to the SAWAP site in the locality of Oum El Koura / Wilaya of TRARZA	June 14th, 2023

- In addition to the consultations conducted with the stakeholders listed above, site visits were also conducted to different landscapes along the gum Arabic Belt in Mauritania namely:

Site	Observations	Date
Boer Toress	These enclosed sites of the SAWAP project show improvements in land cover and community-based land management practices.	June 13th, 2023
Tiguematine		June 13th, 2023
Oum El Koura		June 14th, 2023

(Please upload to the portal documents tab any stakeholder engagement plan or assessments that have been done during the PIF development phase.)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

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

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program and any measures to address such risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex D).

Yes

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Low			

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Project Description (Section B)

Yes

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Indicative 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)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount ($)

150000

PPG Agency Fee ($)

14250

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

Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Co-financing($)
LD-1	GET	2,664,726.00	4650000
LD-2	GET	2,664,726.00	4650000
Total Project Cost		**5,329,452.00**	**9,300,000.00**

Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
Recipient Country Government	MEV	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4000000

Recipient Country Government	MEV	Public Investment	Investment mobilized	3500000
Private Sector	Private producers, cooperatives and SMEs	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	700000
Civil Society Organization	Local associations and community-based organizations	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500000
Others	Municipalities	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	600000
Total Co-financing				**9,300,000.00**

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

Co-financing from MEV/DEPRM is based on the interventions included in the regional action plans for the DREDDs covering the southern Gum Arabic Wilayas of Trarza, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Assaba, Hodh Gharbi, and Hodh Chargui. Recurrent expenditures from the operating budget include interventions related to pastures protection against bushfires, rehabilitation of degraded land through dune fixation and soil conservation, aerial seeding, and promoting sustainable alternatives to wood fuels. Public Investments from the Investment budget include interventions focused on integrated ecosystem management through the protection and restoration of remarkable sites identified. The estimated Government co-financing will be subject to fiscal budget availability. Other sources of co-financing are 1/ Private Sector: through private producers of Gum Arabic, including associations of producers, cooperatives, and SMEs involved in the Gum Arabic trade; 2/ CSOs: through local associations and community-based organizations operating along the Gum Arabic Belt and; 3/ Municipalities: through recurrent expenditures along the Gum Arabic Belt. All co-financing details will be confirmed and updated during the PPG phase.

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

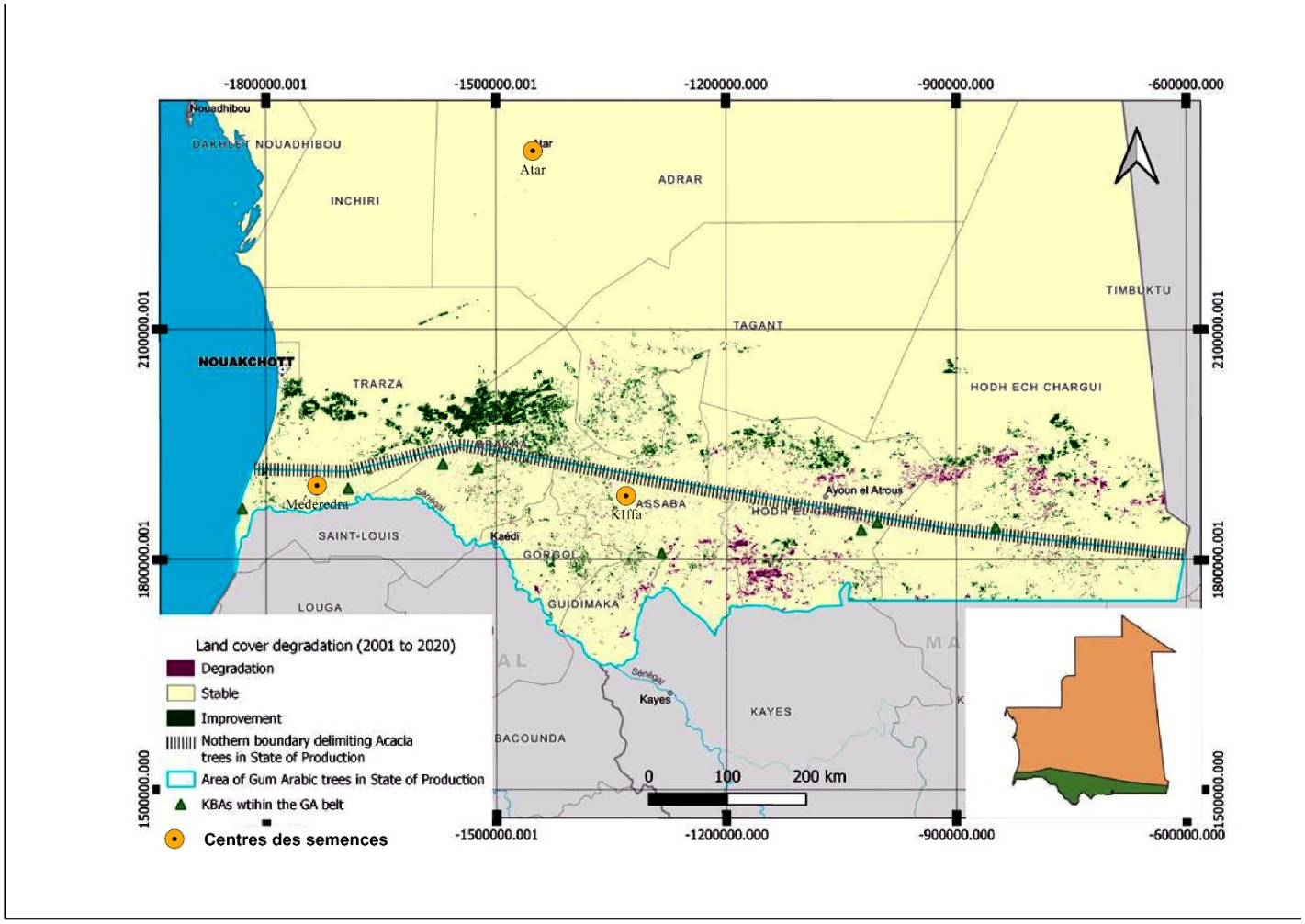
GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	Jeffrey Griffin	3/20/2024		+39 06 570 55680	faogef@fao.org

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

Name	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Layla Aly Kamara	Ms	MEV	2/13/2023
Layla lay kamara	Ms	MEV	4/22/2024

ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION

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



ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

(PIF level) Attach agency safeguard screen form including rating of risk types and overall risk rating.

Title
ESS Mauritania

ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

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

ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Influencing models			
	X Transform policy and regulatory environments		
	X Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making		

	X Convene multi-stakeholder alliances		
	X Demonstrate innovative approaches		
	Deploy innovative financial instruments		
Stakeholders			
	Indigenous Peoples		
	X Beneficiaries		
	X Local Communities		
	X Civil Society		
		X Community Based Organization	
		X Non-Governmental Organization	
		X Academia	
	X Type of Engagement		
		XInformation Dissemination	
		XPartnership	
		XConsultation	
		X Participation	
	X Communications		
		X Awareness Raising	
		Behavior Change	
	X Private Sector		
		X Individual entreprenours	
Capacity, Knowledge and Research			
	X Capacity Development		
	X Knowledge Generation and Exchange		
	X Learning		
		X Theory of Change	
		X Adaptive Management	
		X Indicators to Measure Change	
	X Innovation		
	X Knowledge and Learning		
		X Knowledge Management	
		X Capacity Development	
		X Learning	
	Stakeholder Engagement Plan		
Gender Equality			
	X Gender Mainstreaming		
		X Beneficiaries	
		X Women groups	
		X Sex-disaggregated indicators	
		X Gender-sensitive indicators	
	X Gender results areas		
		X Access and control over natural resources	
		X Participation and leadership	
		X Access to benefits and services	
		X Capacity development	
		X Awareness raising	
		X Knowledge generation	
Focal Areas/Theme			
	Integrated Programs		
	X Biodiversity		
		X Mainstreaming	
			X Agriculture & agrobiodiversity
		Protected Areas and Landscapes	
			X Productive landscapes
		Biomes	Tropical Rain Forest
		Financial and Accounting	

			Payment for Ecosystem Services
			Conservation Finance
	X Land Degradation		
		X Sustainable Land Management	
			X Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands
			XEcosystem Approach
			XCommunity-Based NRM
			X Sustainable Livelihoods
			X Income Generating Activities
			X Sustainable Agriculture
			X Sustainable Forest/Woodland Management
	X Climate Change		
		X Climate Change Adaptation	
			X Ecosystem-based Adaptation
			Mainstreaming Adaptation
			Innovation
			X Community-based Adaptation
			X Livelihoods
		X Climate Change Mitigation	
			X Agriculture, Forestry, and other Land Use
		Climate Finance (Rio Markers)	Climate Change Mitigation 1 Climate Change Adaptation 1 Biodiversity - 1 Land degradation 2