

MID-TERM REVIEW

Project ID:	9586
Project Name:	Contributing to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Target Setting by Demonstrating the LDN Approach in the Upper Sakarya Basin for Scaling up at National Level
Countr(ies):	Türkiye
Implementing Agency:	FAO

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Contributing to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Target Setting by Demonstrating the LDN Approach in the Upper Sakarya Basin for Scaling up at National Level

Country

Türkiye

GEF ID

9586

Implementing Agency

FAO

Executing Entity

Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs (MFWA),
Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MFAL)

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

Objective

The project objective is to develop a model for LDN target setting, planning, and decision-making at national level and for demonstration in the Upper Sakarya basin.

B. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

1/25/2019

Agency Approval

5/2/2019

Implementation Start

8/15/2019

First Disbursement

8/29/2019

Expected MTR

MTR Submission

2/12/2026

Actual MTR

2/2/2023

Expected Completion

12/31/2025

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Main MTR Findings

Main findings:

11. Relevance – the project relevance is Highly Satisfactory. The project is broadly aligned with a raft of national policy and regulatory framework demonstrating consistency with the various strategies, programs and action plans promulgated by the Government of Turkey (GoT) relating to its commitments under the relevant international environmental conventions, as well as with the relevant national development plans adopted by the GoT.

12. The project is consistent with the UNCCD and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) contributing significantly to implementation of Türkiye's National Action Program on Combating Desertification (2006), the National Action Plan (NAP, 2015 - 2023), the National Climate Change Strategy (2010) and the Climate Change Action Plan 2011-2023 (2011).

13. The project is relevant to the GEF Focal Area LD-3: Reduce pressures on natural resources by managing competing land uses in broader landscapes and Program 4: Scaling up sustainable land management through the landscape approach.

14. The Project was aligned with FAO's Strategic Objectives (SOs) that provide the overall direction, goals and targets for the organization until 2018, specifically: SO2: Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner; and SO5: Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises. The project is also consistent with FAO's regional initiative 3 (RI3) on Sustainable use of natural resources, adaptation to climate change and disaster risk management. The project results remain consistent with FAO's current Strategic Framework⁶ (2022 – 2031) in the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs): PPA: Better Production, PPA: Better Environment and PPA: Better Life.

15. Effectiveness – the project is considered Satisfactory. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and necessary restrictions on movement and gatherings occurred at a crucial point in the implementation of the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) project resulting in unavoidable delays beyond the control of the PIU, Implementing Agency and project partners.

16. Outcome 1.1 (Satisfactory) is hard to assess due to the challenging SRF definition of the outcome. Outcome 1.1 will in all likelihood produce a set of good quality normative documents to support the “enabling environment”, however, it is less clear to what extent it will affect the informal aspects of the “enabling environment”, especially as the facilitation process is dependent upon the PIU which is an artefact of the project and therefore timebound⁷.

17. Outcome 2.1 (Highly Satisfactory) is achieved and producing high quality outputs in relation to the Decision Support System (DSS), due in large part to the project's willingness to be adaptive, the engagement of good national and international technical assistance, partnering 5 CEM is not represented at the provincial level. ⁶ <https://www.fao.org/3/cb7099en/cb7099en.pdf> ⁷ The MTR makes a specific recommendation to address this weakness (see section 6, Recommendations).

18. Outcome 2.2 (Satisfactory) is on track and will likely be achieved by the end of the project. A number of high-quality monitoring systems for various aspects of LD were developed prior to the project's start up as well as during the project's implementation. These are being successfully incorporated into the DSS.

19. Outcome 3.1 (Moderately Satisfactory) the project has made good progress post pandemic restrictions partnering with a very capable service provider to drive the field activities. However, the MTR has concerns that the outcome is not on track due to the impact of the pandemic restrictions which have disproportionately affected the field activities.

20. Outcome 3.2 (Satisfactory) The project has engaged well with stakeholders in the project area and has introduced a number of successful livelihood activities and is demonstrating a good approach which is transformative in the way that state agencies and non-state actors interact with each other. The targeted and transformational engagement of women in the project activities and benefits is contributing to this outcome's achievements. However, this outcome is at risk due to the delays resulting from the pandemic restrictions in the first half of the project.

21. Outcome 4.1 (Highly Satisfactory) the LDN DSS application covers the whole country and is exceeding the target, it is extended to 17 FAO region countries. In Türkiye a Google Earth Engine (GEE) App has been incorporated which will make it very cost effective and reduces the chance of future obsolescence and redundancy. The achievement has been exceeded. However, the wider uptake and day to day use of the DSS still needs to be promoted by the project.

22. Outcome 4.2 presents challenges in evaluating their progress and achievement. It is more difficult to access because it includes elements of project management which do not provide a measure of impact as well as the activities under this outcome reinforcing outcome 4.1 (lessons learned and dissemination).

23. Efficiency – the efficiency in carrying out activities and producing outputs is rated Moderately Satisfactory despite the constraints imposed upon the project by the Covid-19 pandemic. The project intervention and the manner in which the project has been implemented (e.g. strong partnerships, high-quality technical assistance, utilisation of service providers, preparedness to be adaptable when faced with a change in circumstances, etc.) have been cost effective and efficient. Although the MTR speculates that had the PIU been in place during the inception phase a budget revision might have been possible in components 2 and 4 and changes to the SRF might have been made. There was no way to predict the impact of the pandemic on component 3 which has impacted on the delivery of results.

24. Impact - the MTR is not required to rate the impact. However, it is required to rate the project's progress towards achieving the project's development objective, the overall progress on implementation and provide an overall risk rating for the project.

25. Based on the Theory of Change and the "pathway position" of the project at mid-term, the MTR assesses the project to be broadly on target (Satisfactory) towards achieving the project objective.

26. The overall progress on implementation is Satisfactory based on the project's cost effective and efficient delivery of outputs and the way it has carried out activities. However, the project does have concerns that many of the field activities and associated outputs will need additional time due to delays incurred as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions in 2020/21. Therefore, the MTR rates the project's risk as High, but notes that this can be effectively mitigated by extending the project for a minimum of twelve months to encompass a whole agricultural season without making available additional financial and material resources.

28. Two barriers are identified: i. The time remaining to implement the field activities and promote the wide uptake and use of the DSS. ii. The development of the informal aspects of the enabling environment. The facilitation providing the impetus for the collaboration and collective action between the different state and non-state actors is in large part coming from the energy and drive of the FAO PIU. It is important that this focus, urgency and coalition building is transferred to all of the project partners and stakeholders who may have very different priorities and agendas, means of measuring success and planning processes, yet all addressing aspects of LD.

29. The most critical barrier being the remaining time available for the project. The remaining barriers are less critical and can be easily overcome by aggressively promoting the DSS amongst beneficiaries and focusing on developing the informal elements of the enabling environment.

30. Sustainability – the socio-political, financial, institutional and governance and environmental sustainability of the outputs, outcomes and objective are Likely. Factors affecting progress:

31. The design, as set out in the Project Document is broadly characterised as strengthening the enabling environment and human resource capacities at all levels (national, provincial and site[1]levels), developing a support tool to inform decision-making (the DSS) and allow a broad range of stakeholders to participate in decision-making. Interventions at the site level would introduce SLM approaches to farmers. A fourth outcome was essentially related to upscaling the results of the DSS to the national level and even the regional and global level.

32. Of particular importance was the Decision Support System (DSS) which although the Project Document provided a very detailed description, was largely conceptual in nature at the start of the project and needed to be developed without the benefit of a “blueprint”.

33. Overall, the design was satisfactory, however the strategic nature of the intervention was not well-translated into the project’s strategic results framework (SRF).

34. The project was originally intended to be an Operational Partner Implementation Modality (OPIM). However, when the project started a decision was made to change implementation to direct GEF Agency (FAO) implementation modality because of institutional changes that had taken place between the design phase and the project’s starting. This suggests that the project partners were not completely ready⁸ and it caused a 4 – 5 months delay in putting in place a Project Implementation Unit (PIU). However, once the PIU was in place project management has been very effective and efficient. The other factor affecting project performance has been the Covid-19 pandemic which occurred at a crucial point in the project’s cycle and has impacted on the project’s likelihood of achieving its outcomes, particularly in relation to component 3.

35. The actual management arrangements work well and may have contributed to the DSS being widely adopted in 17 other countries and across other FAO regions. However, it does raise a concern about continuity once the GEF-financed project ends. The PIU plays an active role in facilitating partnerships and communication between partners and stakeholders which is a 8 This is supported by the fact that the FAO had already carried out financial due diligence on the planned Execution Agency. critical aspect of the enabling environment and the MTR questions whether this will continue without the focus of the project and PIU in place.

36. Work planning is realistic and effective, during the pandemic the PIU and project partners were able to switch to remote means to continue those activities transferable to the internet, however, component 3 did suffer setbacks due to the necessity for field work and group activities.

37. Risk management is good. The MTR has raised the risk rating of the project to High in relation to component 3 and the field activities because of the need to complete at least one agricultural season. However, the MTR is quick to stress that this risk can be effectively mitigated by agreeing a project extension for at least one year.

38. Project oversight is satisfactory by both FAO and responsible high-level Partners. The Steering Committee (SC) meets once a year and has high-level representation. The MTR notes that there is an absence of non-state membership on the SC and recommends that the PIU attends SC meetings in a non-executive capacity and this is clearly indicated in the minutes of meetings.

39. Financial management is good and there has been an effective and sufficient delivery of co financing commitments. There is a budget surplus in component 2 largely due to the Government of Türkiye carrying out activities related to establishing LD monitoring systems prior to the project’s start-up. Budget execution at

December 2022 is US\$ 1,084,000, approximately 45% and co-financing is US\$ 16,851,214 exceeding the US\$ 13,600,000 committed in the Project Document.

40. Project partnerships effective and stakeholder engagement is high, notwithstanding the MTR's comments on the role of the PIU as a facilitator and the absence of non-state participation in the SC.

41. Project monitoring and evaluation at design had a number of weaknesses in the expression of the objective, outcomes and indicators in the logical hierarchy of the SRF. During the inception phase no actions were taken to improve the quality of the SRF. As a result, there is a heavy and confusing M&E burden on the PIU. It is difficult to assess progress towards results because the outcomes are expressed as outputs and in some cases, activities. Furthermore, the use of output indicators which essentially belong in the work plan and not the SRF, make reporting repetitive across a range of outcomes and it is recommended that the project reviews the SRF and rationalises it to better reflect the projects progress towards its objective and reduce the M&E reporting burden on the PIU.

42. Despite the shortcomings in the SRF the reporting has been diligent, timely and realistic in its assessment of performance and impact and the MTR is broadly in agreement with assessments in the PPRs and PIRs. Progress, challenges and outcomes of stakeholder engagement:

43. The original stakeholder engagement plan was based upon an OPIM modal. Stakeholder engagement is complex because the project is working at a highly technical level in relation to the DSS and at a broader and more inclusive level with direct support to farmers. As stated, stakeholder engagement is high, largely due to the PIU as a catalyst. However, it does appear that this culture of inclusiveness is being internalised within the agencies through their interactions with the project and this could prove transformative and act as a multiplier. There is a lack of civil society representation on the SC.

44. The Environmental and Social Safeguards assessment accompanying the Project Document (the Project Risk Certification (PRC)⁹) did not identify gender as a critical risk and likely overestimated the environmental (protected areas) risks. However, the MTR is confident that 9 PRC, June 23 2017 the project recognises the gender related risks and is addressing them through the LDN gender strategy. Progress on gender-responsive measures, indicators and intermediate results:

45. As noted, the Project Document had a strong gender analysis which was integrated into the project's overall strategy due to the inclusion of a gender team from the FAO CO during the design phase. However, this was not followed through to the SRF and indicators. There are no gender indicators at the outcome level (objective-level indicators per se are absent). The MTR bases its assessment on gender-responsive measures using the output indicators and an assessment of the inclusion of women in project activities as well as the overall actual project approach and working practices. There are a number of specific women-targeted interventions, the project is currently producing a gender report and strategy related to LDN and this has raised awareness of the role and position of women in the agricultural sector as well as highlighting the disparities, inequalities and inefficiencies as a result of gender inequality. Working with women's groups and expanding the activities to include process interventions (e.g. support with empowerment and involvement in establishing cooperatives, etc.) will likely increase the impact. However, this is not reflected in the SRF and gender markers should be included as outcome and objective-level indicators in any revision of the SRF. Knowledge activities/products and lessons learned:

46. Communications and knowledge management were mostly addressed through component 4 although the two indicators for this outcome Indicator 10: M&E system is in place Indicator 11: Lessons learned disseminated) are not able to be assessed because they relate to project operational performance and not the impact.

47. That said, the project has a high visibility and communications are very good. It has produced a number of good quality knowledge products (Monitoring of LDN Indicators and LDN DSS, June 2021; etc.) and there has been considerable training and awareness events.

48. National and FAO support (and enthusiasm) has been very effective in promoting the DSS at both the regional level and in other FAO regions through the UNCCD as evidenced by the adoption of the DSS in 17 other countries in which FAO is involved. 6 th February 2023 earthquake in southern and central Türkiye and western Syria:

49. On the 6th February 2023 an earthquake of magnitude Mw 7.8 occurred in southern and central Türkiye and western Syria. The initial earthquake was followed by subsequent and significant earthquakes and 2,100 aftershocks. The area affected extends to 350,000 km², affecting an estimated 14 million people (approximately 16% of Türkiye's population and the UN estimates 1.5 million people are homeless as a result of the destruction).

50. The MTR recognises the enormity of this natural disaster, its dreadful human impact, the destruction of infrastructure, disruption of services and the sheer magnitude of the necessary recovery efforts including the human costs which cannot be overstated.

51. Projects, invariably, are the sum of their human resources. Therefore, it is inevitable that the 6th February earthquake will have a profound impact on the project even though the epicentre and most of its structural devastation was not within the project area. The MTR therefore takes note of this and recognises that: • It will be necessary to direct government resources towards the recovery effort for a considerable time to come. This will affect the level of national partner contributions including co-financing and national partner's activities during the remainder of the project. • Naturally, the motivation and commitment to the project's outcomes and objective will be secondary to the earthquake recovery efforts. The human impact of the earthquake will have touched everyone working within the project, at a very tragic and sometimes personal level. Therefore, it is important that the external expectations of the project should be tempered by compassion. • Natural disasters such as the recent earthquake will create challenges (displacement of people, interruption of natural processes, increased dependency on vulnerable resources, etc.) that will need to be tackled from a LDN perspective and approach and it might be reasonable for the project to provide technical and intellectual resources to meeting these challenges.

Conclusions: 52. Conclusion 1 (relevance): The LDN project aims and objectives are closely aligned with the existing policy and planning framework and contributes to national, regional, Convention, FAO and GEF objectives. The DSS which has been developed under the project has broad applications in monitoring and evaluating LD at different spatial and institutional scales. It is adaptable for different data sets and M&E protocols such that it appears to have a universality and is already being adopted by other countries and in other regions and should inform the target setting process.

53. Conclusion 2 (Progress towards outcomes): The LDN project is an important project and at the point of the MTR is found to be satisfactory. It is performing well and some components are largely on track (the DSS has been achieved to high standard and upscaled to the national level already) despite having encountered delays at the start and the constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, these restrictions have not equally impacted the components. While the technical (DSS) and the enabling environment components are likely to be completed by the close of the project (August 2023), the field base component and outcomes will be incomplete and will benefit from additional time because these activities required field visits and face to face consultations with project partners and stakeholders. A situation which was severely impeded due to the pandemic restrictions.

54. The DSS is technically highly regarded and has already been adopted in 17 other countries in other FAO regions.

55. Field activities are showing early signs of success and are broadly and enthusiastically supported by stakeholders. However, it is important to stress that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions has been felt most in outcome 3 because of the need to have field-based activities and face to face meetings.

56. The informal aspects of the enabling environment are only partially addressed in the project strategy and a tool or exercise to support these informal networks, coalitions, etc., necessary for collaborative governance to address the collective action challenge of LD would strengthen the strategy.

57. Conclusion 3 (efficiency): The project strategy (enabling environment, DSS, LDN related field activities and knowledge management) represents a cost-effective strategy for achieving the objective. Project activities have been implemented with a high degree of efficiency and project partnerships and a broad coalition amongst partners creates a degree of efficiency in the project's implementation. Despite a hiatus between project design/ CEO signature and the project start-up, the GoT still went ahead with developing various monitoring systems for elements of LD which were to be carried out under component 2. The projects willingness to identify and engage with high quality national and international technical assistance alongside the way in which the project partners have been prepared to work with the technical assistance has greatly facilitated the development of the DSS and the elements of the LD monitoring systems (e.g. SOC, etc.). The use of an experienced service provider to work with agencies and communities in the delivery of services to farmers and communities in the body of component 3 has been very effective. Monitoring, reporting, statutory project meetings, and financial management, etc., have been executed in a timely and efficient manner.

58. Component 2 currently has a surplus due to the pre-project development of a number of the elements of the LD monitoring system.

59. Components 3 and 4 show a below expected burn rate attributable to the pandemic restrictions (component 3) and the switch in implementation modality which appears to have lowered the project management expenditure. There is also a multiplier in these figures due to a beneficial exchange rate which is also likely to appear as an underspend.

60. The MTR also speculates that, had the PIU been in place at this time, these revisions might have taken place.

61. Conclusion 4 (sustainability): There is strong political support as well as from civil society because LD is a real and present issue. The DSS has sufficient political capital behind it as a nationally developed system being adopted internationally. The approach taken by the project including the strong gender equality and sensitivity support to women in the agricultural sector suggest sustainability in this sphere.

62. The GoT has already shown a willingness to invest in LDN and the co-financing has been forthcoming. The utility of the DSS and the livelihood benefits from the field activities and the introduction of SLM and LDN agriculture have real economic benefits.

63. DSS and the development of the GEE App suggests that, given adequate training, institutions and agencies will utilize the DSS to good effect in their planning and operational processes. The DSS, for the same reasons, is socially inclusive providing a good platform for civil society access and inclusion, adding to the good governance aspects of transparency and accountability. The DSS is also broadly liked and admired by technical and academic institutions.

64. There are no significant risks to environmental sustainability.

65. Conclusion 5 (factors affecting progress – design and strategy): The rationale behind the project was well-founded and very relevant at a number of levels including the national and regional level and is well

supported by the policy framework. It is also closely aligned with the broader UNCCD objectives and the FAO global programme, country and thematic objectives.

66. The project design provided a reasonable and effective strategy in order to achieve the objective. That is, components addressing the enabling environment, the technical challenges of developing a DSS, rolling out LDN-orientated approaches to agriculture and land management at the project (demonstration) site and sharing and promoting the experience as well as promoting the broad uptake of the DSS to inform decision-making at multiple levels and across multiple LDN actors.

67. Conclusion 6 (factors affecting progress – DSS): The development of the DSS, despite the very precise instructions in the Project Document, was still conceptual in many ways at the start-up of the project. That is, a DSS was still untried and untested and would require a highly technical and adaptive approach in developing the system so that it was fit for function (i.e. it would be technically functional, cost-effective, adaptable, accessible across a broad constituency of end users, adaptable for different stakeholder interests and will not become obsolete).

68. Conclusion 7 (factors affecting progress – management arrangements): The project was originally designed with the intention of an OPIM implementation. However, this was changed during the inception phase to a direct implementation modality with an FAO CO PIU. This appears to have caused a delay in implementation of approximately 4 – 5 months in putting in place a PIU. The direct implementation modality works well, it is likely that it has also facilitated the upscaling of the DSS to other countries and regions. However, the MTR has concerns that the role that the PIU performs with regard facilitation, promoting participation, building collaborative networks, etc., may not be sustained following the closure of the project.

69. Conclusion 8 (project implementation): The delays experienced during the start-up phase and resulting from the change in implementation modality resulted in the PIU only being established four to five months after the project's official start-up date and after the inception phase, workshop and report was produced. Since the PIU was installed project management has been efficient and cost-effective in achieving the outputs with a high rate timeliness and effective implementation of activities. This has included establishing a good rapport and communications with project partners and stakeholders and a close monitoring and realistic evaluation of project progress and performance. This is more remarkable given the functional weaknesses in the project's M&E framework, the SRF, which were not addressed during the inception phase and workshop.

70. Conclusion 9 (M&E and project SRF): The good design characteristics in the Project Document were not transferred across to the project's SRF in terms of a logical hierarchy of activities, inputs/outputs, outcomes and an objective. This makes it challenging for the project and any review process to determine the critical causal pathways from intervention through to the long-term impacts as well as identifying the key drivers shaping the system. The project will benefit greatly from revising the elements of the SRF within its scope. That is; objective-level indicators (including a capacity development scorecard index measure) should be added, output indicators should be rationalised and either included in the annual work planning or elevated to the level of outcome (there are too few outcome indicators), the outputs should rationalised (coalesced) and reduced in number.

71. Conclusion 10 (stakeholder engagement): The project is working well in terms of inclusiveness and participation of partners and stakeholders. However, the PIU is, naturally given the broad cross-section of partners and stakeholders, the catalyst behind this and the MTR has concerns that these developments and benefits which are leading towards increased intersectoral communication, greater participation and inclusive approaches to problem solving may not be fully embedded within the key actors in the project by the time the project ends.

72. The PIU should attend the SC in a non-executive role and this should be clearly articulated in the SC minutes of meetings.

73. Conclusion 11 (overall performance and outlook): The early project delays would still have allowed the project to be completed on time. However, the unavoidable and necessary constraints resulting from the pandemic restrictions do not allow important transformations in the enabling environment (the embedding of informal networks, collaborative governance across sector interests, etc.) and the implementation and scaling up of field activities over the period of an agricultural season to be completed satisfactorily by the scheduled close of the project in August 2023.

74. Notwithstanding the challenges of evaluating progress towards outcomes as a result of the weak project SRF the MTR finds that progress is satisfactory. Several outcomes have been largely achieved (e.g. the DSS and upscaling to the national level, replication to other regions) to a highly satisfactory level with evidence of upscaling at a national level and replication at a regional and global level already evident.

75. However, those outcomes related to field activities, although judged to be of high quality are behind schedule due to the pandemic. Without additional time, this poses a significant risk to the project achieving its objectives.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

Project partnerships & stakeholder engagement

Notwithstanding the change in execution modality, stakeholder participation has been high. The stakeholder situation is complex and hierarchal with central state, provincial and district institutions as well as non-state actors and academic and technical institutions, local communities and individual farmers.

The CEM were closely involved during the project's design phase resulting in a good fit between project activities and national expectations, although this is less so with the OGM and all the forestry activities are undertaken using co-financing.

High-level stakeholders (governmental) from the central, provincial and district levels are represented on the project SC which meets annually. Stakeholder engagement is high, despite the impacts of the pandemic restrictions. In particular, the approach taken by the project to engage a service provider (the Lead farmer Association), which was already well-established with operational procedures, working practices and experience and to use the FFS approach has been very successful, allowing the project's activities at the site-level to proceed much faster than anticipated following the lifting of the pandemic restrictions.

During the pandemic, the project took every possible measure to continue stakeholder engagement developing "virtual presence", however, there is only so much that can be done before the limitations of stakeholder internet accessibility constrain project activities, although this was less pronounced with technocratic and agency stakeholders with which the project was able to continue a more effective engagement and online training exercises.

The Project Document identified a very wide group of stakeholders including a number of private sector actors. However, during implementation it emerges that the main focus of non[1]state involvement has been farmers, agricultural associations, women groups and cooperatives.

C. Gender Equality

The MTR identifies two cross-cutting issues in the LDN project: gender and participation. Although gender was not identified in the Project Document's risk rating, nor the accompanying PRC, the Project Document has a comprehensive and high-quality assessment of the gender issues related to agriculture in the project area identifying some of the inequalities and disparities between men and women in the agricultural sector, in particular, their low participation in decision-making and inequalities as a consequence. It sets out a number of important project interventions as well as proposing gender specific and transformational activities and indicators in particular: increasing women's income, making a (women's) profession (e.g. targeting women to encourage women producers' associations, establishing women as professional agricultural producers, etc.) and training. While there are strong activities directed to achieve this within the project, it is not reflected in the project's SRF indicators at the outcome and objective levels.

It should be noted that at the time of the project's development the GEF and GEF Agencies were reviewing and improving social and environmental screening procedures and implementation commitments. As part of this process FAO included a gender expert in drafting the Project Document and has continued to provide backstopping to gender aspects of the project from the Country Office.

The FAO PIU has already stimulated a broad participation of stakeholders which by association, appears to be adopted by project partners and is changing the interactions between state and non-state actors in the project area according to the feedback from key informant interviews

D. Knowledge Management

Communications, visibility, knowledge management & knowledge products

This has been hard to assess because of the weaknesses in the SRF indicators. Based on a subjective evaluation the MTR is satisfied with the progress and performance of the project in communication and knowledge management. However, this is not possible to measure using the SRF indicators.

The project set out the following strategy: general aspects that were mostly to be implemented by the PIU and promote the project at every opportunity, basic visibility in the field including sign boards, operational publications, and materials, supplies and equipment, printed publications including brochures, leaflets and project publications, website, webpages and social network pages including partnership links and project objective, outcomes and outputs, audio-visuals including a film for distribution, television and internet and informational films and programmes, and public events including press releases and media events.

Communications and knowledge management were mostly addressed through component 4 although the two indicators for this outcome are not able to be assessed because they relate to project operational performance and not the impact.

That said, the project has a high visibility and communications are very good. It has produced a number of good quality knowledge products (Monitoring of LDN Indicators and LDN DSS, June 2021; etc.) and the has been considerable training and awareness events.

National and FAO support (and enthusiasm) has been very effective in promoting the DSS at both the regional level and in other FAO regions through the UNCCD as evidenced by the adoption of the DSS in 17 other countries in which FAO is involved.

However, the visibility of the DSS, although widely supported by national agendas and enthusiastically supported by many technicians, still needs to be vigorously promoted both nationally and at the district level., in part due to the earlier pandemic restrictions.

III. Core Indicators

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

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	14000	39388	576409

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

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

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

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

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

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

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	14,000.00	39,388.00	576,409.00

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

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

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

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

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 5 Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (excluding protected areas)

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

Indicator 5.1 Fisheries under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

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

Type/name of the third-party certification

Indicator 5.2 Large Marine Ecosystems with reduced pollution and hypoxia

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

LME at PIF	LME at CEO Endorsement	LME at MTR	LME at TE

Indicator 5.3 Marine OECMs supported

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

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)		74000	3065414	3065414
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				

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 CO₂e (direct)		74000	3,065,414	3,065,414
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting		2022	2022	2022
Duration of accounting		4	4	

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 CO₂e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

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

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

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

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

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female		925	609	1,040
Male		1,000	635	1,147
Total	0	1,925	1244	2,187

IV: Co Financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Anticipated at CEO(\$)	Materialized at MTR(\$)
Recipient Country Government	MAF	In-kind		6,400,000.00	10,400,620.00
Recipient Country Government	MAF	Grant		6,800,000.00	3,932,797.00
GEF Agency	FAO	In-kind		150,000.00	29,796.00
GEF Agency	FAO	Grant		250,000.00	227,632.00
Recipient Country Government		In-kind			
Recipient Country Government	MAF (General Directorate of Agricultural Reform)	In-kind			1,641,051.00
Recipient Country Government	MAF (General Directorate of Agricultural Researches and Policies)	In-kind			876,746.00

Total Co-financing		13,600,000.00	2,517,797.00
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Comments

V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
		Low	

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

The Environmental and Social Safeguards assessment accompanying the Project Document (the Project Risk Certification (PRC)^[1]) did not identify gender as a critical risk and likely overestimated the environmental (protected areas) risks. However, the MTR is confident that the project recognizes the gender related risks and is addressing them through the LDN gender strategy

^[1] PRC, June 23 2017

VI. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Prefix	Title
M and E Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	GEF9586_MTR_Türkiye_FAO_REU