

# Strengthening Trans-boundary Cooperation for Improved Ecosystem Management and Restoration in the Senegal delta (Mauritania and Senegal)

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

9594

**Countries**

Regional (Mauritania, Senegal)

**Project Name**

Strengthening Trans-boundary Cooperation for Improved Ecosystem Management and Restoration in the Senegal delta (Mauritania and Senegal)

**Agencies**

IUCN

**Date received by PM**

5/29/2019

**Review completed by PM**

12/3/2020

**Program Manager**

Christian Severin

**Focal Area**

International Waters

**Project Type**

FSP

## PIF CEO Endorsement

### Project Design and Financing

**1. If there are any changes from that presented in the PIF, have justifications been provided?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
(6/18/2019)

The project is mainly in line with the PIF. A few comments and questions below:

- There are some inconsistencies between the project framework/endorsement request and the project document (prodoc). The prodoc e.g. shows the communications strategy as an output in component 1 (as per the PIF), while the endorsement document missed that. Please address.
- The ambition at PIF stage was to engage with the **city of St Louis** and with **private sector** to form partnerships and collaboration with the SDTBR to support the effective management of the TBR and raise financial support. The prodoc seems to indicate that this cannot proceed before the governance structures are in place which is noted, yet the ambition in this regards seems to have dropped entirely from the project (besides establishing a private sector advisory type group). Can some of this be brought back into the project ?
- We do not seem to see pilots/activities to address coastal fisheries in the prodoc which were anticipated at PIF stage (see also German Council member comments). Where did these go?

(10/10/2019) Comments addressed in agency response and discussed with agency.  
Cleared.

#### Response to Secretariat comments

- There are some inconsistencies between the project framework/endorsement request and the project document (prodoc). The prodoc e.g. shows the communications strategy as an output in component 1 (as per the PIF), while the endorsement document missed that. Please address.

Response: Addressed.

- The ambition at PIF stage was to engage with the city of St Louis and with private sector to form partnerships and collaboration with the SDTBR to support the effective management of the TBR and raise financial support. The prodoc seems to indicate that this cannot proceed before the governance structures are in place which is noted, yet the ambition in this regards seems to have dropped entirely from the project (besides establishing a private sector advisory type group). Can some of this be brought back into the project?

Response: As stated in the ProDoc, since the creation of the SDTBR in 2005 its governance bodies have operated on a punctual basis and without the benefit of a management plan. This project aims to first and foremost assure that the SDTBR governance bodies and management framework are fully operational.

During the stakeholder consultation process, meetings were held with the cabinet of the mayor of St. Louis. The vice mayor also accompanied the project development team on key site visits. The project framework as it was developed reflects the outcomes of these meetings. The city of St. Louis fully recognizes the important role of the SDTBR in the context of their broader natural resource management and development objectives. They also stressed the necessity of establishing a clear management framework for the SDTBR (i.e., a validated management plan) as a critical first step to more formal collaboration. The proposed project approach as regards the city of St. Louis is in line with the three-year timeframe of the project.

Meetings were also held with private sector stakeholders. The private sector expressed interest in engaging with the SDTBR, but is awaiting clear demonstration that the SDTBR will have the capacity to sustain such partnerships. The project includes a specific output (1.1.4) concerned with building mutually beneficial relationships between the SDTBR and the private sector that are in alignment with the management objectives of the reserve. The proposed approach also reflects the three-year timeframe of the project.

- We do not seem to see pilots/activities to address coastal fisheries in the prodoc which were anticipated at PIF stage (see also German Council member comments). Where did these go?

Response: The management of coastal fisheries in the waters of Senegal and Mauritania is recognized as an important natural resource management issue that affects the biodiversity of the SDTBR. There are numerous actors and initiatives focused on this issue within the area concerned by the SDTBR and beyond. During the project development process, a strategic decision was made to remove coastal fisheries from the project design as the time and resources required to achieve meaningful impacts as regards the sustainability of coastal fisheries - beyond what is already being achieved by other actors and numerous initiatives focused on this issue - is considerable and exceeds the scope of this project. Instead, it was agreed that the governance and management bodies of the SDTBR should support improved understanding on issues related to coastal fisheries and play a role of facilitation between different stakeholders concerned with this management issue. As part of the process to elaborate a management plan and subsequent adaptive management of the SDTBR, this issue will be revisited.

**2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
(6/18/2019)

The project structure aims to put in place a sustainable governance mechanism, formulate and implement management plans, support specific restoration initiatives and contribute to closing capacity, research and knowledge gaps.

1. Please strengthen the assessment and options outlined for an exit strategy for a post-project governance structure and finance of the SDTBR. Please strengthen in prodoc and indicate that a clear strategy will be formulated /be in place by MTR and progress towards it be reported both at MTR and Implementation completion.
2. While the needs for research and information for the management of the SDTBR is clear, please strengthen/make clear that the emphasis of the project grant is on governance and management of the SDTBR while the research aspects are supported as one way to support informed decisions. The funds allocated should be accordingly - please confirm/elaborate.
3. Please clearly indicate that at least 1 % of the grant funds will be allocated to participation in IW-Learn activities, including formulation of at least 2 experience notes, participation in IW global conferences and relevant regional and thematic meetings and activities and that a project website will be established.
4. The Results Framework (RF) needs to be enhanced. There are missing baselines, missing targets (e.g. on (# of households and/or a minimum avg. expected % of income increase) as well as output *indicators* that are relatively meaningless as they are neither indicating the scope nor impact of e.g. the on the ground/restoration interventions and

seem to mostly "count" areas of intervention, ditto for: number of research networks, or knowledge exchange activities. Further, please provide sex dis-aggregated indicators and targets where applicable (e.g. beneficiaries of communications products; number of transboundary beneficiaries for transboundary KM (both totals and by gender). Please enhance the RF.

5. Component 2.2 text mentions the establishment of a small grant mechanism to be established with local micro-credit/banking organisations, but there is no indication of a process to get to this nor is the small grants mechanism reflected in the RF.

5. On information management and data exchange (component 3): please be more specific on the purpose of data and information exchange it serves, what data and what time frames are envisioned. Is this already covered in existing data exchange protocols or do these need to be amended?

Could this build on existing exchanges within the framework of OMVS collaboration? How will cooperation be established with OMVS on information exchange and the long-term maintenance of databases and information in future ?

6. The background information on the area, people, livelihood, history etc. is described well and in detail in the situation analysis and related sections (pgs 19 to 57). Yet the translation into the project design is not strong enough. The background e.g. clearly lays out issue of conflict between ethnic groups and land users (pastoralists vs farmers). i). How does the project design and restoration interventions address such tensions? ii) How does it assure that marginalized groups are included and benefit (e.g. specific groups in Mauritania are mentioned) ?

7. The stakeholder and baseline analysis combined provide a good picture of key actors, institutions and past and ongoing related initiatives. In comparison, the gap analysis (section 3.5.3. /pg 84) appears too general and generic. Please tighten this to strengthen the rationale for the proposed interventions and approach/supported alternative.

8. As mentioned before, the dropping of support to local small scale fisheries does seem to not align to the presented situation analysis with much of coastal small scale fisheries concentrated around St Louis.

**(10/10/2019)** Most comments addressed in agency response . Please address the following :

Project website: indeed no separate project website is needed but there should be a webpage under e.g. an SDTBR or local agency website. This will also be important to reach stakeholders e.g. from the city of St Louis, private sectors and communication channels. It will also be important to make the management plans available in

appropriate local languages on a website as well as accessible at relevant physical venues.

**(11/12/2019)** Comment insufficiently addressed. There is indeed no need for a fullfledged/independently hosted website, yet, KM/IW-Learn requirements (and grant allocation for IW learn related) in the IW focal area require that project information is available and as mentioned above seem important for this project. A webpage for the project could e.g. simply be added to the hosting government agencies website.

**(12/3/2019)** The response and confirmation in the review sheet that a project page reporting on the project and its progress will be included on both of the government websites. Please include reference to this in the project document as well.

**(7/9/2020)** Comment addressed. **Cleared.**

22nd of December 2020 (ceverin): Please address following comment: The CEO endorsement is still missing the METT score for the three protected areas under sub-indicator 1.2. Please add this when resubmitting.

27th of April 2021 (cseverin): Addressed.

#### Response to Secretariat comments

1. Please strengthen the assessment and options outlined for an exit strategy for a post-project governance structure and finance of the SDTBR. Please strengthen in prodoc and indicate that a clear strategy will be formulated /be in place by MTR and progress towards it be reported both at MTR and Implementation completion.

Response: Output 1.1.5 of the project is concerned with establishing a business plan and securing resources to support the post-project costs of the governance and management bodies of the reserve and the implementation of its management plan. Additional details on the need to report progress on this aspect of sustainability have been integrated into the Prodoc.

2. While the needs for research and information for the management of the SDTBR is clear, please strengthen/make clear that the emphasis of the project grant is on governance and management of the SDTBR while the research aspects are supported as one way to support informed decisions. The funds allocated should be accordingly - please confirm/elaborate.

Response: As reflected in the proportional allocation of resources, the project is primarily focused on governance and management of the SDTBR. Components one and two of the project, which are dedicated to governance of the SDTBR and integrated ecosystem management, collectively total \$2,639,722. Component 3 of the project, which is focused on knowledge acquisition, scientific cooperation and information sharing totals \$275,525. As stated in the Prodoc, any knowledge acquisition, scientific cooperation and information sharing supported by the project will be used to assure sustainability science is being applied to improve the management effectiveness of the SDTBR. Research and information are vital to inform the management objectives of the SDTBR and make well-informed decisions, as well as to advocate on behalf of the objectives of the SDTBR. It is also the basis for monitoring of different environmental parameters of the SDTBR, including the hydrological features, and indicators to assess the effectiveness of its interventions.

3. Please clearly indicate that at least 1 % of the grant funds will be allocated to participation in IW-Learn activities, including formulation of at least 2 experience notes, participation in IW global conferences and relevant regional and thematic meetings and activities and that a project website will be established.

Response: To confirm, the project budget includes the requested allocation of grant funds to participate in IW-Learn activities. The project also includes the formulation of experience notes and participation in IW conferences and meetings. Given the project timeframe and existing opportunities for communication and knowledge sharing, a project specific website will not be established.

4. The Results Framework (RF) needs to be enhanced. There are missing baselines, missing targets (e.g. on (# of households and/or a minimum avg. expected % of income increase) as well as output indicators that are relatively meaningless as they are neither indicating the scope nor impact of e.g. the on the ground/restoration interventions and seem to mostly "count" areas of intervention, ditto for: number of research networks, or knowledge exchange activities. Further, please provide sex dis-aggregated indicators and targets where applicable (e.g. beneficiaries of communications products; number of transboundary beneficiaries for transboundary KM (both totals and by gender). Please enhance the RF.

Response: Addressed.

5 (a). Component 2.2 text mentions the establishment of a small grant mechanism to be established with local micro-credit/banking organisations, but there is no indication of a process to get to this nor is the small grants mechanism reflected in the RF.

Response: The small grants mechanism has been added to the RF.

5 (b). On information management and data exchange (component 3): please be more specific on the purpose of data and information exchange it serves, what data and what time frames are envisioned. Is this already covered in existing data exchange protocols or do these need to be amended? Could this build on existing exchanges within the framework of OMVS collaboration? How will cooperation be established with OMVS on information exchange and the long-term maintenance of databases and information in future?

Response: The information management and data exchange proposed in the project relates specifically to data that will be used to inform the development of sound management strategies for the SDTBR and an adaptive management cycle. It will aim to strengthen the knowledge base for management effectiveness of the SDTBR water resources and related ecosystems and, as such, will comprise hydrologic, hydrogeologic, environmental, social and economic data pertaining to the context and objectives at the level of the SDTBR/Delta. The sources of this data will be multiple including existing data collected through other initiatives as well as data collected through research and monitoring supported by the project under Component 3. Priorities for data collection supported through the project will be determined through an assessment of knowledge gaps (Output 2.1.1). As detailed in the Prodoc, transdisciplinary research that considers the dynamic interactions between natural ecosystems and society will be given particular consideration. Basin-wide ecosystem approaches to balance competing water needs and sharing of benefits from water and related natural resources across borders and sectors over the long-term will also be a priority research area.

The time frame for data collection will be dependent on the types of data being collected and will be laid out in the SDTBR Monitoring and Research Master Plan. This plan will be developed in collaboration with the transboundary research network, which will include the OMVS; relevant ministerial bodies in charge of water management, the environment and sustainable development; the CSE; the universities of Nouakchott, Saint-Louis and Dakar; the research units of protected areas within the SDTBR (e.g, station biologique du Djoudj); and individual experts from the international scientific community.

As detailed in the Prodoc, the information management system will be designed to complement and feed existing systems for information management at national levels and at the level of the Senegal River Basin within the framework of the OMVS. It will also take into consideration the existing protocols being applied as part of these frameworks. These protocols partially cover the needs of the SDTBR and will be amended by the project as needed. During the course of the project the UGT M&E and Knowledge Management Officer will work closely with the CST to progress these

activities. As members of the SDTBR governance bodies, the OMVS will be closely associated with the process to establish effective information management and data exchange for the SDTBR.

The maintenance of SDTBR databases will be considered in SDTBR management planning, as it is a critical component of the adaptive management cycle. Any costs to maintain these systems post-project will figure in the SDTBR's business planning (Output 1.1.5) and should be part of the project's exit strategy. This is key to assure sustainability.

7. The background information on the area, people, livelihood, history etc. is described well and in detail in the situation analysis and related sections (pgs 19 to 57). Yet the translation into the project design is not strong enough. The background e.g. clearly lays out issue of conflict between ethnic groups and land users (pastoralists vs farmers). i). How does the project design and restoration interventions address such tensions? ii) How does it assure that marginalized groups are included and benefit (e.g. specific groups in Mauritania are mentioned)?

Response: The project fully recognizes that competition for land is a serious issue within the SDTBR, a large multi-use system. This competition has been exacerbated by the expansion of agricultural activities, notably irrigated agriculture. This expansion is the result of a concerted effort and reflects national priorities as regards the development and intensification of the agricultural sector and food security. Among the impacts of these changes have been a disappearance of transhumant routes, reduced pastureland and prolonged concentrations of herds around permanent water points. At the same time, herd numbers have grown.

The project design aims to address these tensions via numerous means. Specifically, it is critical that the process to develop management strategies for the SDTBR considers carefully and creatively how conflicting use patterns can be managed. Establishing a functional SDTBR governance structure (Component 1) is an essential step in establishing a means for dialogue on these issues. It will also provide a critical framework to consider options and evaluate their impacts, including as necessary through applied research. The SDTBR will also provide a platform to engage stakeholders, build their understanding and advocate for the changes necessary to address the impacts of competition for land and resources.

The particular management strategies that are applied (e.g., restoration of pastureland, strengthening of regulatory frameworks, development of alternative livelihoods) under outcomes 2.1 and 2.2 will be dependent on opportunities, constraints and local conditions. Targeted assessments of social impacts (Activity 1.5) will be used to ensure the process to develop strategies involving the use of natural resources has involved relevant user groups. The assessments will consider existing conflicts between ethnic and land user groups, including pastoralists and farmers, to inform strategies that contribute to reducing tensions. They will also ensure that any strategies that involve restrictions of access or use rights are developed on a consensual basis and that the

impacts of these strategies on all users have been evaluated. Finally, under Activity 1.7, the project will establish a mechanism for grievance mediation and conflict resolution linked with the implementation of the SDTBR management plan.

As detailed in the Prodoc, the project has also been designed to reflect a commitment to helping build equitable and sustainable societies. Throughout the implementation of its three components, the project will progress this particular aim in multiple ways. First, the project will promote and facilitate the participation of women and marginalized groups in decision-making processes, including as regards the governance and management of the SDTBR. In accordance with the principles laid out in the national policies of both Mauritania and Senegal the project will assure the appropriate representation of women and marginalized groups in the governance and management bodies of the SDTBR under Activity 1.3.

The project will also assure strategies implemented under Component 2 take into consideration the gender division of labor; promote equitable access to and control of resources and benefits; and capitalize on opportunities to build on any existing equitable practices that promote the rights of women, youth and marginalized groups. The project will specifically work to build the ability of women and Haratine to implement adaptive strategies and diversify their livelihoods in production systems in which they are key contributors. These include various types of agriculture, non-timber forest product (NTFP) production and in some cases fisheries. In sites where associations or cooperatives have already been created, the project will work with these groups to build on existing capacity.

Targeted assessments of social impacts (Activity 1.5) will be used to inform the process of developing integrated ecosystem-based management and restoration strategies and the impacts of these strategies on different groups will be closely monitored. This will include monitoring of whether proposed interventions limit the rights or access of women, youth and marginalized groups and the development of mitigation measures as appropriate. It will also include monitoring to assure equitable benefit sharing with any income associated with project interventions. As described above, under Activity 1.7, the project will also establish a mechanism for grievance mediation and conflict resolution linked with the implementation of the SDTBR management plan.

Additionally, the Capacity Building Strategy and Action Plan (Output 1.2.1) will be based on an assessment that takes into consideration the gender division of labor and will explicit the whether the needs of needs of women, men, youth and marginalized groups separately. Specific training and other capacity building measures to implement plans elaborated under outputs 2.1.1 and 2.2.1 will be proposed for groups that are vulnerable to social and economic marginalization, making sure that the project's overall capacity building program maintains a gender balance. As such, specific targets have been set for these groups.

7. The stakeholder and baseline analysis combined provide a good picture of key actors, institutions and past and ongoing related initiatives. In comparison, the gap analysis (section 3.5.3. /pg 84) appears too general and generic. Please tighten this to strengthen the rationale for the proposed

interventions and approach/supported alternative.

Response: Addressed.

8. As mentioned before, the dropping of support to local small scale fisheries does seem to not align to the presented situation analysis with much of coastal small scale fisheries concentrated around St Louis.

Response: As detailed above, a strategic decision was made to remove coastal fisheries from the project design. This does not mean it is not recognized as an important natural resource management issue that affects the biodiversity of the SDTBR or that it will not be considered during the management planning process. This decision was made based on the fact that the time and resources required to achieve meaningful impacts as regards the sustainability of coastal fisheries - beyond what is already being achieved by other actors and numerous initiatives focused on this issue - is considerable and exceeds the scope of this project. Instead, it was agreed that the governance and management bodies of the SDTBR should support improved understanding on issues related to coastal fisheries and play a role of facilitation between different stakeholders concerned with this management issue. As part of an adaptive management approach, this issue will be revisited.

25/10/2019

This will be included in the ?communication? activities. However, no specific web site for the RBTDS is expected to be done and maintained.

20/11/2019

Executing agencies (respectively for Mauritania and Senegal) will provide information related to project advancement and updates on their respective web sites. This will be part of the implementing agreements to be signed with each of the agencies.

IUCN - June 25, 2020

Addressed. This has been specified in A.1.17 in the revised Project Document.

22 march 2021

METT scores have been now provided.

**3. Is the financing adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objective?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

(6/18/2019)

The project finance is meant to address key gaps and is complementing other finance and initiatives. It is adequate to establish the SDTBR governance and initial set of activities. Cleared.

**(10/10/2019)**

While the overall finance is cleared, please note following on budget/procurement and address:

In the procurement plan (last Tab of the excel spreadsheet), please confirm that and how the following budget lines are justified (a rough overview suffices !):

- Please review USD 36 K costs for gas and 21 K for insurance for the car/truck over three years. This seems very high.

- Increase transparency by clarifying that e.g. it possibly means to say 27 people budgeted for workshop not 27 regional workshops (?). Unless there are really 27 ! regional workshops anticipated (?). Same for 156 field visits and 116 national meetings in the 36 months of project duration. Thank you for making more clear what is meant.

**(11/12/2019)** Please revisit the procurement plan and revisit/confirm both unit costs in upper part of spreadsheet (lots of equipment for a small project/project management unit and 3 year project, incl 2 cars, 7 computers, 6 GPS, 4 projectors, and \$2000,- for USB/storage) and also, please see that in lower part of spreadsheet operating costs the (lumpsums per month) times 36 months (project duration) end up in the total. Right now that does not seem obvious.

**(12/3/2019)** Thank you for clarifying the procurement plan. **Cleared.**

The purchase of vehicles is agreed in this case as the biosphere reserve has no financial means/budget yet from the governments and is just being established while the need for a vehicle in each side of the border/in each country in this remote region is essential to reach the reserve and protect the areas.

22nd of December 2020 (cseverin): Please address following comment: Please present a budget in such form that makes it possible for the reader to understand what is charged to which source of financing (important to note that if project staff is charged to project

components, TORs that describe the contribution of the project staff to the respective project component is required). Further, please note that the current attached budget includes vehicles and other associated costs (driver ? gas ? insurance ? maintenance) , which are costs that are to be covered by co-financing, vis a vis the GEF guidelines.

27th of April 2021 (cseverin): No, please upload the complete budget to the document section of the portal. The current budget attached to the submission, does not allow the reader to determine what is intended to be covered by M&E, PMC and the project?s components. The basic principle is that costs associated with the execution of the projects (project?s staff, utilities, etc.) are meant to be covered by both the Project Management Cost ?the GEF portion and the co-financing portion.

For any additional clarification, please refer to section two in the Guidelines.

[https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF\\_Guidelines\\_Project\\_Program\\_Cycle\\_Policy\\_20200731.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_Guidelines_Project_Program_Cycle_Policy_20200731.pdf)

13th of May 2021 (cseverin): Addressed.

#### Response to Secretariat comments

25/10/2019

- We have re-estimated and found that the gas could be USD 20,000. The 16,000 USD will be re-allocated to the purchase of vehicles, as the current budget is not relevant according to other projects we are running.

- In April 2019 the GEF project on wetland wetlands in Mauritania which provided for the purchase of vehicle bids received from suppliers were above 30000 USD estimated by the project. The lowest bid was \$ 37,000 for the 2018 series. We estimate that the \$ 16,000 saved on fuel could be used for the purchase of vehicles.

National and regional meetings & workshops reflect the important coordination / consultation process required to strengthen the institutional and governance framework of the RBT and actually involve the various stakeholders in each key activity. Regional workshop may have been a bit overestimated, which may not be very practical as their organization is time and resource consuming. To optimize resources, we have merged some of these regional workshops (1 workshops covering now several related activities) and reallocated the budget to the investments for site restoration activities.

20/11/2019

We have checked the budget and the items included are needed. There are two sub-project coordination units, one for each country represented in the Senegal Delta Biosphere reserve. The area is very large and this explains why the project coordination team needs these equipment.

Rows 47-53 in the procurement plan (app. 7) consolidated the items described in column B (internet credit, office maintenance, etc...) from the lines with the same description in app. 6-2. If one checks these items lines in app 6-2 and sum them up, these will add to these lines in app.7 procurement plan.

- 22 march 2021 IUCN

The budget is presented as any other budget we have presented. We would need some clarifications over a call on what you require since this budget follows the same template than all our projects. At this stage, it is also not going to be possible to modify the budget, which went under substantial review at the country level.

TORs of positions have been attached.

Vehicles are essential to the implementation of this project. This project is about providing the capacity to the biosphere reserve to manage the site. As outlined in the project documentation, this has not been able to materialize in the past years. The project is seen as seed funding for establishing the institutional and financial sustainability of the biosphere reserve. Vehicles are critical to its successful

implementation, in particular in the context of a transboundary project. Since GEF guidelines do not explicitly preclude vehicles from the project grant, we are asking for this item to be maintained.

IUCN 6 May 2021

The budget has been revised and uploaded dated 6 may 2021. It has a spreadsheet names GEF Budget and Procurement plan. which has been copied in the portal. It shows how PMC and M&E bugget are funded.

**4. Does the project take into account potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, and describes sufficient risk response measures? (e.g., measures to enhance climate resilience)**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
(6/18/2019)

Overall, yes, there is a detailed risk analysis . Two items to address/comment on:

1. Management of water flows and coordination with OMVS - or lack thereof - is indicated as a risk and it is indicated that OMVS will therefore be part of the management structure of the SDTBR (A 1.3 - which is on pg 92 - 93).

Checking that section in the prodoc it seems that OMVS is not mentioned (e.g. would it not be part or at least an observers of the PSC ? ). Please comment and address.

2. Climate risks are substantial both in terms of inland flow variations in future and coastal erosion and flooding. This should be addressed in the project design more clearly.

**(10/10/2019)** Comments addressed in agency response and discussed with agency. Cleared.

**(7/9/2020)** Please include a section in the risk matrix (section 4.4.) on how the project will take account of threats to staff and remote communities given the current Corona Virus situation.

(7/17/2020) Comment addressed. Cleared.

#### Response to Secretariat comments

1. Management of water flows and coordination with OMVS - or lack thereof - is indicated as a risk and it is indicated that OMVS will therefore be part of the management structure of the SDTBR (A 1.3 - which is on pg 92 - 93). Checking that section in the prodoc it seems that OMVS is not mentioned (e.g. would it not be part or at least an observers of the PSC?). Please comment and address.

Response: As detailed under Activity 1.3, the OMVS will be a member of the CTO. The lack of mention of the OMVS within the Steering Committee (SC) in Section 5.1 was an oversight that has been addressed.

2. Climate risks are substantial both in terms of inland flow variations in future and coastal erosion and flooding. This should be addressed in the project design more clearly.

Response: The project recognizes these risks and the fact that the elaboration of management strategies for the SDTBR will require systematic consideration of numerous factors, including among others: climatic and anthropogenic drivers of change and trends within the lower Senegal River Delta. Under Activity 1.4, climate scenario modeling and vulnerability scenario planning exercises will be used to better understand the potential impacts of different SDTBR management options. Project stakeholders, including the OMVS and other projects that are already working to manage some of these risks in parts of the SDTBR, will be engaged to contribute to these exercises. The project will work to assure decision-makers and other stakeholders, including the public, are able to contribute to this process and remain well informed on the results of this work (Activity 1.10), including how different SDTBR management strategies could affect the vulnerability of local communities and ecosystems. The management plan of the SDTBR will take into consideration the results of these exercises. Recognizing that addressing the long-term climate risks associated with inland flow variation, coastal erosion and flooding are beyond the scope of the project and the SDTBR, the governance and management bodies of the SDTBR will also work to assure they are coordinating with much larger-scale initiatives working to mitigate these risks in the area of the SDTBR/Delta.

The implementation is will be coordinated with complimentary initiatives that support the objectives of the SDTBR.

**IUCN 17 July 2020**

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A section on risks related to COVID 19 has been added

**5. Is co-financing confirmed and evidence provided?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
(6/18/2019)

1. The co-finance has dropped significantly (total amount and number of contributors). Please explain if additional efforts are on the way to secure co-finance.
2. There is no co-finance from Mauritania. Please provide a letter of support.

**(10/10/2019)**

Comment 1 addressed.

Comment 2: Please assure that letters of co-finance are accompanied by an informal/agency translation to english and list the co-finance amount as well as what the co-finance consists of.

**(11/12/2019) Please address comment 2 of 10/10/2019.** Please in that note that letters of co-finance should provide detail on what the co-finance is made up off (see e.g. incl. government letters).

**(12/3/2019)** Thank you for providing the translation of the co-finance letters. The letters are in line with GEF policy (as confirmed with GEF PPO). In future instances though, please specify components of the co-finance so that you can monitor agreed in-kind contributions (e.g. focal point staff time or office space etc.). **Cleared.**

Response to Secretariat comments

1. The co-finance has dropped significantly (total amount and number of contributors). Please explain if additional efforts are on the way to secure co-finance.

Response: Co-finance expected from Senegal was entirely secured by the time of the first submission whilst efforts were being made to confirm co-finance from Mauritania where presidential race was taking place at that time.

2. There is no co-finance from Mauritania. Please provide a letter of support.

Response: Co-finance from Mauritania and letter of support is available and integrated in the request for CEO Endorsement.

25/10/2019

Comment 2: We have the translated letters. They are attached to this resubmission.

20/11/2019

All co-financing letters have been submitted in the portal.

#### **6. Are relevant tracking tools completed?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
(6/18/2019)

The IW tracking tool is attached.

In terms of GEF core indicators: Please note that the total for indicator 3 (i.e. sum of sub-indicators) differs in the CEO endorsement portal submission and its attached worksheet. Please check which one is correct.

Could you please also indicate (for illustration/estimate only) the percentage of the SDTBR being restored given that the total ha of land restored (indicator 3) by itself is ha 1.125 million ?

(10/10/2019)

- Please do not triple count the area of the reserve: it seems to be counted within indicators/subindicators 1, 3, and 4.

Please see following link/guidance to aid you in deciding which indicators and sub-indicators to report against:

[https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Results\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Results_Guidelines.pdf)

**(11/12/2019)** Thanks for revising. Please attach the core indicator worksheet to the re-submission to aid which areas were counted under which indicator. Table F only makes

that easy in the portal for sub-indicators 1 where the names of the protected areas are given.

**(12/3/2019)** Thanks for submitting the worksheet, but please make sure the figures in the worksheet are the same as in the portal. For the Portal, please note that the sub-indicator areas under indicator 1 do not seem to add quite to the total of indicator 1. Please revise for consistency.

**(7/9/2020)** Figures are now matching between the worksheet and the portal entry of core indicators. **Cleared.**

#### Response to Secretariat comments

- In terms of GEF core indicators: Please note that the total for indicator 3 (i.e. sum of sub-indicators) differs in the CEO endorsement portal submission and its attached worksheet. Please check which one is correct.

Response: Addressed

- Could you please also indicate (for illustration/estimate only) the percentage of the SDTBR being restored given that the total ha of land restored (indicator 3) by itself is ha 1.125 million?

Response: As detailed in the Prodoc, the project estimates that the entirety of the SDTBR will be under (562,470 hectares) will be under improved integrated water resource management. 58,440 hectares of wetlands are also anticipated to be under improved protection. Approximately 2,000 to 5,000 hectares will benefit from restored habitat, including wetlands.

25/10/2019

It was indeed triple counted. It has been revised to have the PA counted in indicator #1 and the other parts of the RBT counted in indicator #4. The overall area is therefore counted once overall.

20/11/2019

The core indicators worksheet is resubmitted

IUCN - June 25, 2020

Addressed. Figures are matching now between the portal and the core indicators worksheet.

**7. Only for Non-Grant Instrument: Has a reflow calendar been presented?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Response to Secretariat comments N/A. No comments.

**8. Is the project coordinated with other related initiatives and national/regional plans in the country or in the region?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
(6/18/2019)

not entirely. See earlier comments on:

1. Quite weak/general gap analysis.
2. Unclear scope and mechanism for coordination with OMVS.
3. Also, unclear link and/or coordination with the GEF 6 cities IAP in Senegal.

(10/10/2019) Comments have been addressed. Cleared

Response to Secretariat comments

1. Quite weak/general gap analysis.

Response: Addressed

2. Unclear scope and mechanism for coordination with OMVS.

Response: Addressed

3. Also, unclear link and/or coordination with the GEF 6 cities IAP in Senegal.

Response: The aforementioned project has been added to the baseline analysis and gaps (Section 3.5.2).

**9. Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

(6/18/2019) yes, included in the project.

**(10/10/2019)**

1. While there is a budgeted M\$E plan, it is noted that the independent audit experts for the MTR and TR (activity 3.9 USD \$ 29,800.- ) are being hired by the implementing agency/IUCN. (page 138 of the prodoc)

According to GEF guidelines, implementing agencies are not to perform executing functions, i.e. cannot spend/procure using project grant funds. IAs spending is restricted to the agency fee. In this specific line item case, there could be merit for the hiring by IUCN/the IA of independent auditors. Yet, as project grant funds (and not the agency fee) are intended to be used, IUCN would need to request an exception and confirmation by the OFPs for this specific line item (see GEF guidelines on separation of implementing and executing functions).

2. Further: please confirm that IUCN is not performing any other executing functions in the project (e.g. incl. does not procure personel or any goods/services using project grant funds or use any project grant funds for IUCN staff time). Page 129 of the prodoc is unclear in its formulations: e.g.

i.) .... IUCN is the implementing agency for the project. IUCN will support the DPN and DAPL to ensure execution of administrative and financial matters and will assist in key technical and scientific issues. Its role will also be to consolidate results, directly facilitate workshops and the convening of key stakeholders (...) ...

ii.) IUCN will monitor and evaluate project performance ,<<please clarify that this means the implementing agency due diligence, not project level M&E>>

iii.) The project management unit (PMU) *will be established with the help of the implementing agency* ...

Please confirm that there is no cross-over of IA and EA functions and no EA functions being handled by IUCN. Please include a simple funds flow diagram.

**(11/12/2019) The comments need to be addressed; please discuss with us at GEFSEC.** According to GEF policies and guidelines implementing and executing agency functions have to be separated unless there are exceptional circumstances. GEFSEC would have to approve such AND - if approved - OFP letters need to be obtained spelling out what specific executing functions are to be taken by the

implementing agency (we will send reference to the GEF policy & guidelines and exact wording via email for easy reference).

**(12/3/2019)** We discussed - and the GEF Manager Programs approved - for IUCN to hire the MTR and TE consultants as this will reduce possible conflicts of interest (see email filed under the project portal documents). Please specify this and clarify in the prodoc that other than that IUCN is not carrying out executing functions. Please obtain OFP letters requesting IUCN to hire the MTR and TE consultants (please have these letters be specific including the budgeted amount (which is of course an *indicative* budget figure).

**(7/9/2020)** To note: the GEF manager had previously agreed for this specific project that IUCN - if needed - would be able to perform executing functions in this project to support the bi-national biosphere reserve to be established. We note that the countries now decided to already in the preformative stage of the bi-national offices take full leadership in the execution of the project (incl. the hiring of MTR and TE consultants after review and no-objections by IUCN in the procurement process steps). This strong ownership of the countries at this stage is signaling their intent to move the establishment of the biosphere reserve forward and is well noted. **Cleared.**

#### Response to Secretariat comments

25/10/2019

1. This is still to be confirmed through the implementing agreement to be signed between IUCN and the Executing Agency. If it happens that this is officially requested by the executing agency, it will be included in the implementing agreement.

We confirm that any request for IUCN to execute part of the project will be requested officially by the executing agency.

20/12/2019

We confirm that Implementing and Executing functions are separated. The PMU for this project will be appointed under the Biosphere Reserve under the auspices of the Governments of Mauritania and Senegal respectively. IUCN will provide oversight and supervision functions as per the duties of an implementing agency. As discussed for

other projects, IUCN will procure the consultants for mid-term evaluation and terminal evaluation in order ensure independence and there are no conflicts of interests. As for all our projects, this will be done by liaising closely with the national executing agency(ies).

IUCN - June 25, 2020

The institutional set-up has been extensively discussed between IUCN and the countries. Hence the time it took for resubmission. It is now agreed the project will be fully executed by the two countries, with IUCN playing only its role of Implementing Agency. This has been reflected in section 5 of the revised ProDoc. Therefore, and in line with GEF Guidelines, MTR and TE will be hired by the Executing Entity after the whole procurement process, including validation of TORs and shortlists will have received no-objection from IUCN as the partner agency. This will ensure that best competencies are considered and hired for undertaking these critical assignments to the project cycle.

**10. Does the project have descriptions of a knowledge management plan?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
(6/18/2019) Yes, addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments  
**Agency Responses**

**11. Has the Agency adequately responded to comments at the PIF stage from:**

GEFSEC

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
(6/18/2019) Please see comment re. STAP comments below.

(10/10/2019) GEF PIF stage and STAP comments have been responded to.

Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

STAP

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
(6/18/2019)

Comments that need *stronger articulation* across STAP and GEFSEC comments:

- OMVS coordination
- Collaboration with city of St Louis
- Private sector engagement and finance/support for SDTBR management
- How the project addresses competition for land, e.g. between herders and pastoralists ?  
(see STAP comment)?
- Approach outlined to get to financial (or at least 5 year - as mentioned) sustainability of SDTBR is yet unclear and too vague and seem to rely on tentative ways to raise funds. What is a solid process to assess needs e.g. the process to define what is core budget (based on core functions/staffing needs); what is current and envisioned ramping up of country contributions?; what IS the strategy to fill the gap or a process and time to get there?

**(10/10/2018)** Comments have been addressed in the resubmission and responses to STAP comments included in Annex B of the endorsement request. Cleared.

**(12/3/2019)** Annex B has been submitted as a separate word document. Please include the title "Annex B of endorsement request" in the title and in some shape in the file name to make this obvious. Thank you.

**(7/9/2020)** Addressed. Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

- OMVS coordination

Response: See responses above.

- Collaboration with city of St Louis

Response: See responses above.

- Private sector engagement and finance/support for SDTBR management

Response: See responses above.

- How the project addresses competition for land, e.g. between herders and pastoralists? (see STAP comment)?

Response: See responses above.

- Approach outlined to get to financial (or at least 5 year - as mentioned) sustainability of SDTBR is yet unclear and too vague and seem to rely on tentative ways to raise funds. What is a solid process to assess needs e.g. the process to define what is core budget (based on core functions/staffing needs); what is current and envisioned ramping up of country contributions?; what IS the strategy to fill the gap or a process and time to get there?

Response: Under Output 1.1.5 the project will develop a business plan for the SDTBR to support the post-project costs of the governance and management bodies of the reserve and the implementation of its management plan. This planning process will be based on an assessment of needs and will consider multiple means of generating revenue including State financing and income generation as well as partnerships with potential funders and more sustainable financing mechanisms (e.g., payment for ecosystem services such as water provisioning).

IUCN - June 25, 2020

Addressed and resubmitted in the portal

GEF Council

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
(6/18/2019)

Please respond to comments by German council member.

**(10/10/2018)** Please add the responses to the Council comments within Annex B. Thank you.

**(11/12/2019)** Thanks for addressing below. Please include this in the revised annex B and include in the resubmission.

**(12/3/2019)** Again, please include the responses to Council comments in Annex B (same file as the responses to STAP comments)

**(7/9/2020)** Comment addressed. Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

20/11/2019

Addressed. The comments above have been added to Annex B, which is now resubmitted.

IUCN ? June 25, 2020

Addressed. The responses to the Council comments are in the Annex B that has been upload in the portal.

| <b>Comments</b>  | <b>IUCN response</b>   |
|--|--|
| <p>In addition, we thought it could be interesting for you to get in touch with the WACA team :<br/>Dahlia Lotayef <a href="mailto:dlotayef@worldbank.org">dlotayef@worldbank.org</a> and<br/>Gayatri Kanungo <a href="mailto:gkanungo@worldbank.org">gkanungo@worldbank.org</a> in particular with regards to the work planned on Saint-Louis, the coastline.</p>   | <p>IUCN Senegal is hosting the WACA (West Africa Coastal Areas Management Programme) regional coordination team in the Dakar Office. The WACA programme is funded by the World Bank. A collaboration is being developed with the Senegal WACA team in order to build synergies during the implementation of the SDTBR project.</p>   |
| <p>The project documents should incorporate the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) as well as the FAO-Voluntary Guidelines on Small Scale Fisheries (VGSSF) in their component 2 project design.</p> <p>A strong collaboration with the Commission Sous-R?gionale des P?ches (CSRP) about any coastal fisheries intervention in this transboundary context is advised.</p> | <p>IUCN has also established strong relationships with the CSRP that resulted in developing and implementing projects :<br/>Renforcement des Capacit?s R?gionales de Gestion des P?ches en Afrique de l'Ouest (RECARGAO) and R?seau des Aires Marines Prot?g?es de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (RAMPAO) to foster integration of national policies on fisheries and marine protected areas management. This experience will be useful to build partnerships with the SDTBR during the implementation phase.</p> |
| <p>The project design should be prepared to also enable investments into cold-chains and higher value processing as well as marketing for fisheries products where feasible.</p> <p>The project should actively seek for more synergies with other interventions to identify alternative livelihoods for local fishing communities.</p>  | <p>This has been taken on board during the project preparation, in particular under the component on livelihoods. The WACA Senegal chapter gives a good opportunity to address these issues and build synergies as well as with interventions from other donors such as the MAVA Foundation, which is very active on these matters in the coastal areas impacted by the project.</p>   |

Convention Secretariat

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Response to Secretariat comments

**Recommendation**

**12. Is CEO endorsement recommended?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

(6/18/2019) Not yet. Please address comments above.

Please also assure that

- PPG resources spent are reported on (does not seem to show in the GEF portal);
- The map is attached in the Portal endorsement submission (not only within the project document);
- Details/questions in the Portal submission with regard to stakeholder involvement are answered. Thanks for already providing text in the fields below that.

Please address comments and resubmit in the next weeks to keep a momentum and move to implementation.

**(10/10/2019)**

Please address the remaining comments and especially address questions on implementing/executing function separation with GEFSEC before re-submission.

Please also fill out all the sections in the Portal and do not just make reference to the prodoc (as has been done for some of the sections). Thank you.

**(11/12/2019)** Please address the remaining previous comments including the comment on separation of implementing/executing functions and request to fill out all sections in the portal.

**(12/3/2019)**

- Please complete all sections of the Portal submission (i.e. provide text/narrative) and not merely refer to the prodoc in many sections, including Annexes (you may submit Annexes as attachments/separate files if clearly labeled).
- Please address remaining comments (incl comments to be addressed in the prodoc and resubmit a revised version).

**(7/9/2020)** Previous comments have been addressed.

Please include a section in the risk matrix/risk section on how the project will address the COVID-19 situation, including potential risks to staff and remote communities (see comment/question 4 in the review sheet). Thank you.

**(7/17/2020)** Comments have been addressed and the project is recommended for technical clearance for endorsement.

**(8/17/2020) Please address these additional comments:**

1. **Output 2.1.1.** ? appears twice in table B. To be corrected please.
2. **Missing METT score:** Please for **sub-indicator 1.2.** (improved mgmt. of protected areas) provide the baseline value for METT score at CEO endorsement. This is missing.
3. **Mava Foundation co-finance** ? to be changed to ?other? and not ?donor agency?.
4. **MTR/TE versus audits costs:** please review the M&E table and revise it and the budget as appropriate: Please note that Midterm and Terminal Evaluations are correctly charged to M&E budget, but financial audits are to be charged to the PMC. The M&E table mentions *audits* ? please review if this is what is meant or in fact references the midterm and terminal *evaluations*. If indeed audits, then please charge audit costs to PMC.
5. **PMC and staff budget:** We note that (i) the salaries for the project coordinator and the admin and finance officer are *correctly* charged to PMC (see below). However, some project staff is charged to the project?s components (see below). Please (i) provide TORs for staff charged to components and (ii) charge the staff time that is involved in

project coordination and management - fully or partially ? to PMC in line with said TORs.

| Activity 1.8                                    |  |  |  |  |  | 94,920 | CI    | 34,440 | 30,240 | 30,240 | 94,920 |        |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| National deputy coordinator (monthly allowance) |  |  |  |  |  | 72     | 1,000 | 72,000 | 24,000 | 24,000 | 24,000 | 72,000 |

  

| Details  |  | unit          | no. of units | cost per unit | TOTAL BUDGET |     | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | TOTAL   |
|--|--|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-----|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| <b>Project Management Costs</b>  |  |               |              |               | 145,762      | T   | 52,474 | 46,644 | 46,644 | 145,762 |
| <i>Outcome 4.1 Project is effectively and efficiently managed</i>      |  |               |              |               |              |     |        |        |        |         |
| <i>Output 4.1.1 Project management team established and functional</i> |  |               |              |               |              |     |        |        |        |         |
| <b>Activity 4.1 Appoint the project management unit</b>                |  |               |              |               | 125,532      | FMC | 41,844 | 41,844 | 41,844 | 125,532 |
| Coordinator (gross salary including social security)                   |  | per month     | 36           | 2,150         | 77,400       |     | 25,800 | 25,800 | 25,800 | 77,400  |
| Administrative and finance officer (gross salary inclu)                |  | per month     | 36           | 1,337         | 48,132       |     | 16,044 | 16,044 | 16,044 | 48,132  |
| <b>Total Activity 4.1</b>  |  |               |              |               | 125,532      |     | 41,844 | 41,844 | 41,844 | 125,532 |
| <b>Activity 4.2 Procure office equipment</b>                           |  |               |              |               | 20,230       | FMC | 10,630 | 4,800  | 4,800  | 20,230  |
| Laptop computer  |  | per unit      | 1            | 1,000         | 1,000        |     | 1,000  | 0      | 0      | 1,000   |
| Desktop computer   |  | per unit      | 1            | 1,000         | 1,000        |     | 1,000  | 0      | 0      | 1,000   |
| Software   |  | per unit      | 6            | 100           | 600          |     | 800    | 0      | 0      | 600     |
| Printer  |  | per unit      | 1            | 850           | 850          |     | 850    | 0      | 0      | 850     |
| Portable Hard drive / USB memory stick                                 |  | per unit      | 5            | 96            | 480          |     | 480    | 0      | 0      | 480     |
| Power stabilizer / Uninterruptible power supply                        |  | per unit      | 2            | 175           | 350          |     | 350    | 0      | 0      | 350     |
| Projector  |  | per unit      | 1            | 750           | 750          |     | 750    | 0      | 0      | 750     |
| Camera   |  | per unit      | 2            | 200           | 400          |     | 400    | 0      | 0      | 400     |
| GPS  |  | per unit      | 1            | 300           | 300          |     | 300    | 0      | 0      | 300     |
| Office supplies  |  | mp sum per mo | 72           | 100           | 7,200        |     | 2,400  | 2,400  | 2,400  | 7,200   |
| Internet modem   |  | per unit      | 1            | 100           | 100          |     | 100    | 0      | 0      | 100     |
| Internet credit  |  | mp sum per mo | 72           | 50            | 3,600        |     | 1,200  | 1,200  | 1,200  | 3,600   |
| Phone credit   |  | mp sum per mo | 72           | 50            | 3,600        |     | 1,200  | 1,200  | 1,200  | 3,600   |
| <b>Total Activity 4.2</b>  |  |               |              |               | 20,230       |     | 10,630 | 4,800  | 4,800  | 20,230  |
| <b>TOTAL Project management cost</b>                                   |  |               |              |               | 145,762      |     | 52,474 | 46,644 | 46,644 | 145,762 |

Please do not hesitate to ask any clarifications on the above. We would be happy to discuss and advice on these revisions.

3rd of December 2020 (cseverin): Above points addressed and hence project is recommended for CEO Endorsement.

18th of December 2020 (cseverin): No, Please address the two outstanding issues identified in above reviewsheet.

28th of April 2021 (cseverin): No, Please address comments in the reviewsheet.

13th of May 2021 (cseverin): Yes, CEO Endorsement is being recommended.

#### Response to Secretariat comments

- The PPG report has been provided in this resubmission
- The map is attached as a separate document
- Details on stakeholders involvement have been provided as per the portal questions.

IUCN - June 25, 2020

Addressed

IUCN - 17 September 2020

1. Addressed
2. The Senegal Delta Biosphere Reserve does not have a METT score. This will be done at the earliest stage at the project implementation.
3. Addressed (see TC version and change in portal)
4. Addressed. Audit is in the PMC (revised budget submitted).
5. ToRs are attached and it is confirmed that these staff ToRs are only related to the components, which they are assigned to.

**Review Dates**

|   | <b>Secretariat comment at CEO<br/>Endorsement Request</b> | <b>Response to<br/>Secretariat<br/>comments</b> |
|---|---|---|
| <b>First Review</b>                         | <b>6/18/2019</b>  |   |
| <b>Additional Review<br/>(as necessary)</b> | <b>10/10/2019</b>   |   |
| <b>Additional Review<br/>(as necessary)</b> | <b>11/12/2019</b>   |   |
| <b>Additional Review<br/>(as necessary)</b> | <b>12/3/2019</b>  |   |
| <b>Additional Review<br/>(as necessary)</b> | <b>7/9/2020</b>   |   |

**CEO Recommendation**

**Brief Reasoning for CEO Recommendations**

**Background.** The establishment of the Senegal Delta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (SDTBR) is the result of a long history of cooperation between Senegal and Mauritania for the management of Djoudj National Park (Senegal), Diawling National Park (Mauritania) and their surrounding highly diverse ecosystems. Designated in 2005, the SDTBR covers 641,768 hectares of the Senegal River Delta and encompasses a set of core protected areas, along with buffer and transition zones. It was established as a means to integrate environmental, social and economic considerations while reconciling biodiversity conservation with the sustainable use of natural resources over the long-term. As a transboundary initiative, it was also created to foster dialogue and the application of scientifically sound means to conserve ecosystems across national boundaries.

**The project.** The project's goal is to support improved governance, socio-economic development and ecosystem management in the Senegal Delta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (SDTBR). The project is structured in three components: (1.) strengthening the governance of the Senegal Delta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve; (2.) integrated ecosystem-based management and restoration in the lower Senegal delta; and (3.) scientific cooperation, knowledge acquisition and sharing, and ecosystem monitoring and evaluation. The project will simultaneously work with stakeholders to design and implement interventions to restore ecosystems, improve the sustainability of resource use and advance sustainable income generating initiatives. These interventions will directly address priority environmental problems affecting the ecosystems of the Senegal River Delta and contribute to assuring that critical ecosystems and key habitats of the SDTBR are restored and managed sustainably to protect water resources, forests and fisheries, and enhance ecosystem services. The interventions will also increase the resilience of local ecosystems and communities and provide important co-benefits for biodiversity and contribute to core indicators 1 (33600 ha) and 4 (510870 ha).

**Innovation, Sustainability and Scaling-up.** The project has been designed in careful consideration of the national priorities of Mauritania and Senegal, and the findings of the most recent Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) for the Senegal River Basin. The project directly responds to priority measures laid out in the 2017-2037 Strategic Action Program (SAP) of the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (*Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du fleuve S?n?gal* - OMVS) and the strategic actions outlined in the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) Strategy for 2015 to 2025. The project will therefore contribute to the global environmental benefits by improving water-food-ecosystems security and conjunctive management of surface and groundwater in one of the most important transboundary rivers of West Africa. The project will be executed by the Ministries of Environment and Sustainable Development of Senegal and Mauritania (respectively MEDD-SN and MEDD-MR).

COVID-19. The project team will make sure to anticipate as much as possible the consequences linked to the operations of the project due to the effects of the pandemic and the restrictions this may imply. Specific monitoring of the situation linked to the evolution of the pandemic will be done and reviewed during yearly supervision missions

and reviews in order to ensure appropriate measures are taken and applied to mitigate effects on the project advancement and ensuring security of staff and communities involved.