

# Integrated Conservation and Sustainable Development in Socotra Archipelago and Aden Wetlands, Yemen

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**  
11408  
**Countries**  
Yemen  
**Project Name**  
Integrated Conservation and Sustainable Development in Socotra Archipelago and Aden Wetlands, Yemen  
**Agencies**  
UNEP  
**Date received by PM**  
8/20/2025  
**Review completed by PM**

**Program Manager**  
Celine Augereau ep Coisy  
**Focal Area**  
Multi Focal Area  
**Project Type**  
FSP

PIF  
CEO

Part I - General Project Information

**1. a) Is the Project Information table correctly filled, including specifying adequate executing partners?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/08/2025

Cleared.

09/08/2025

Not cleared. Please verify consistency with the names given further in the project document in institutional executing partners (Ministry of Water and Environment or Environmental Protection Agency or Authority?). Correct consistently in the whole document.

Agency Response

1 October 2025

Thanks, corrected. The EPA is now consistently named across all the document as 'Environment Protection Authority'.

The EPA is hosted within the Ministry of Water and Environment (MOWE) of Yemen. This is now clarified in Table 1 (p. 3), Project Executing Entity, as: 'The Environment Protection Authority of the Ministry of Water and Environment'.

**b) Are the Rio Markers for CCM, CCA, BD and LD correctly selected, if applicable?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

09/08/2025

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

**2. Project Summary.**

**a) Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected outcomes?**

**b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project and is it within the max. of 250 words?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

11/04/2025

Cleared.

10/08/2025

Not cleared. Thanks for clearly writing the GEBs.

09/08/2025

No. Please, complete with the GEBs to be achieved.

## Agency Response

31 October 2025

Thanks, and the text of the project summary is further revised to expand description of GEB, while staying within the 250-words' limit.

**Also, see Table 3 (section B)** in the CEO endorsement document provides additional detail and an even more detailed table is provided in **Appendix 13** offering a summary of how the project interventions will generate global environmental benefits that would not have accrued without the GEF project.

1 October 2025

Thanks, added. The GEBs added in the summary, and text edited to stay within the 250 words limit, pp. 3-4.

**Table 3 (section B)** (p.21) in the CEO endorsement document provides additional detail and an even more detailed table is provided in **Appendix 13** (p.214 of Appendices and Attachments document) offering a summary of how the project interventions will generate global environmental benefits that would not have accrued without the GEF project.

### 3. Project Description Overview

- a) **Is the project objective statement concise, clear and measurable?**
- b) **Are the components, outcomes, and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?**
- c) **Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the project components and budgeted for?**
- d) **Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?**
- e) **Is the PMC equal to or below 10% (for MSP) or 5% (for FSP)? If above, is the justification acceptable?**

### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/08/2025

- d) Cleared.
- e) Cleared

09/08/2025

- a) Cleared.
- b) Cleared.
- c) Cleared
- d) Not cleared. Please adjust the amount.
- e) Not cleared. Please correct the amounts. Currently GEF financing contribution is 4,76 % and Co-financing contribution is 5,1%.

## Agency Response

1 October 2025

d) and e) Thanks, corrected. The amounts corrected in Table 2 (pp.5-6) with both GEF and co-financing PMC at 4,76%.

### **4. Project Outline**

#### **A. Project Rationale**

**a) Is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective and adequately addressed by the project design?**

**b) Have the role of stakeholders, incl. the private sector and local actors in the system been described and how they will contribute to GEBs and/or adaptation benefits and other project outcomes? Is the private sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?**

**c) If this is an NGI project, is there a description of how the project and its financial structure are addressing financial barriers?**

## Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/08/2025

a) Cleared.

b) Cleared.

09/08/2025

a) Not cleared. Please complete the description of the current situation regarding the global significance biodiversity, in particular for Aden area. Please explain which kind of globally importance biodiversity is targeted by the project in each different protected area. This can be provided by describing the situation in each landscapes in regards of the global situation: for example hotspot of BD, KBA, Global 200, Endemic Bird area, endemic plant area... Drivers of environmental degradation are well described. But please complete the description with better explain the fragility and conflict context in the landscapes targeted by the project. Provide an analysis of root causes, barriers, opportunities and related risks, with a comprehensive stakeholders identification and analysis. Explain how the conflict may affect conflict dynamics, identify the vulnerable groups. For such please use GEF guidance note in Fragile and conflict-affected situations (<https://www.thegef.org/documents/guidance-note-fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations>)

b) Not cleared. Please complete with a comprehensive analysis of relationships between stakeholders regarding conflict situation (see comment above). Explain how each will contribute to GEBs, including private sector. Precise how external expertise could be consulted or how ground work could be implemented in such conflict situation.

## Agency Response

1 October 2025

a)Thanks. On Global BD significance please see additional detail added as paragraphs 7, 8, 9 of Section A, starting with *“The project will support the conservation of globally significant biodiversity in two landscapes of Yemen...”* (pp.8-10).

In addition, further details are provided in **Annex E** (pp.78-94) in the globally recognised biodiversity values of the project target sites in Aden and Socotra, combined with maps, coordinates and other details for each target area.

Also, on the **fragility and conflict context**, please refer to the new Paragraphs 10-11-12-13 now added in the CEO document’s Section A briefly illustrating the current situation how the project will adopt and incorporate the GEF guidance on operating in fragile and conflict-affected situations (pp.9-10).

Please see also the new paragraphs added in Section A of the CEO endorsement document (ref. para starting with: *“In general, **stakeholders** in both Aden and Socotra are strongly affected by the ongoing **conflict**...”*) (p.12). Finally extensive information on project stakeholders is provided in the project document in **Appendix 5c Stakeholder Engagement Plan**, including **a comprehensive stakeholders identification and analysis** as well as **Appendixes 5a and 5b** including the Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan.

b)Thanks. See above on the new Paragraphs 10-11-12-13 now added in the CEO document’s Section A briefly illustrating the current situation in Yemen and in the project target areas, as well as clarifying how the project will adopt and incorporate the GEF guidance on operating in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

It is important to emphasise (as now clarified in the new para 11, Section A) that *“this GEF project will focus its operations only in two relatively safer and accessible areas (of Yemen), including the Aden Wetlands (and only at selected sites located in the safer proximity of the Aden city) and in the Socotra Archipelago, which is not directly affected by the conflict (but suffers indirect impacts of the war such as: receiving very limited financial support from the Central Government to conservation efforts, with foreign entities contributing to this situation and undertaking unregulated and unsustainable development activities).*

Therefore, relationships between stakeholders, in the project target areas, and especially in Socotra, are framed within a currently relatively safe and peaceful situation, albeit of course directly and indirectly affected by nearby conflicts and the country’s poverty levels. In the context of Aden, the project will deliberately operate only in selected zones that are currently considered to be safer and accessible, and it does not envisage engaging in areas with any significant conflict-related risk (should such scenario materialise, then the project would dis-engage and suspend activities until the situation is deemed safe again). The UN Environment Programme is in continuous contact with the Yemen UN Country Team and UNEP experts regularly conduct visits to government-controlled areas of Yemen to contribute to environmental conservation and humanitarian efforts. The project’s approach is also based on the assessment conducted during the PPG that included consultations with the local MOWE/EPA team and with ongoing UN projects in Yemen such GEF FAO project 11562 titled: *“Support the development of sustainable and resilient*

*livelihoods for rural Yemenis by mainstreaming climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and SLM across productive agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors?* currently active in Yemen and also operating with EPA/MOWE and entailing consultations with national and international experts in mainland Yemen and in Socotra.

## **5 B. Project Description**

**5.1 a) Is there a concise theory of change (narrative and an optional schematic) that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements are contributing to the objective, the identified causal pathways, the focus and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they provide a robust approach? Are underlying key assumptions listed?**

**b) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?**

**c) Are the project components (interventions and activities) described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?**

**d) Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Has the baseline scenario and/or associated baseline projects been described? Is the project incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)? Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified?**

**e) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the project at the national and local levels sufficiently described?**

**f) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives? Are items charged to the PMC reasonable according to the GEF guidelines?**

**g) How does the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and adaptive management needs and options (as applicable for this FSP/MSP)?**

**h) Are the relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) and their roles adequately described within the components?**

**i) Gender: Does the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities and have these been taken up in component design and description/s?**

**j) Are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?**

**k) Policy Coherence: Have any policies, regulations or subsidies been identified that could counteract the intended project outcomes and how will that be addressed?**

**l) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/08/2025

a) Cleared.

b) Cleared

c) Cleared

e) Cleared

g) Cleared. The project is based on a thorough risk analysis and the implementation of risk reduction measures. It is intended to develop a structuring political and institutional framework and to rely on solid consultation and support from local actors. Therefore, it should ensure the necessary resilience to changes and adaptation needs.

h) Cleared.

i) Under Communication, Learning and Knowledge, please ensure that lessons learned and best practices in implementing the gender-related aspects of the project, including gender

mainstreaming and addressing gender-based violence are captured and widely disseminated. This is particularly important in this project which is in FCV context.

k) Cleared. The project identifies different policies that could hinder the project (Land use planning, Agriculture, Energy development, IAS management..). It plans to strengthen the legal and regulatory framework as well as policy coherence, in terms of land-use planning, conservation policies, and promote stakeholders engagement, to address them.

l) Cleared. The project is designed to be transformative and innovative, by adopting an integrated landscape approach for BD conservation and by empowering local communities for community-based management. It also presents a solid gender approach by integrating women empowerment across all the components. The opportunities for scaling up are possible at national level in replication of management approaches, capacity building, lessons learnt from conservation efforts, IAS management...

09/09/2025

a) Not cleared. Please, provide a schematic ToC diagram readable. Currently the image is too big in the document to be readable. Please also complete the diagram with the effective conflict analysis (see comment above). Complete the current writing description with identifying the causal pathways and listing the different assumptions including elements regarding the conflict situation.

b) Not cleared. Please provide any analysis to show consistency and possible cooperation between management plan of the Unesco WHS and the GEF project.

The GEF ID 5347 project is considered as a "precursor" of the current project. Please provide a table with an analysis of how this GEF 5347 project can be complemented by the current one, using the Terminal Evaluation report.

c) Not cleared. Describe all activities to be implemented in the different components.

•Component 1:

- One of the assumptions is political will and regional stability. Could you describe mitigation measures to be implemented to ensure project stability and achievement of targets ?

- Please describe all activities to be implemented.

- Elaborate on how the stakeholders will be involved in decisions and in improvement of policy, regulatory and institutional framework

- Please explain how the governance system of Unesco WH property and the management plan will be articulated with the Aden and Socotra management plan and governance system to be implemented with the current project. Provide details on the feasible cooperation between those 2 areas and the Ramsar project.

•Component 2:

**2.1**

- Please describe the different activities to be implemented

- Elaborate on how the concertation with the different stakeholders will be implemented to develop a land-use zoning plan.

- Describe restoration activities and NBS to be implemented.

## 2.2

- Please elaborate on activities linked to the community centered approach to strengthen PAs management.

- Precise the activities dedicated to species conservation.

- Detail activities linked to stakeholders concertation to implement conservation program.

- Please precise the activities linked to upscaling management of IAS.

### •Component 3:

- Please detail all activities planned.

d) Cleared.

e) No. Please complete this part.

f) Cleared.

g) Not cleared. The response to this question is based on an assessment of risks and mitigation measures. Otherwise, the changes envisaged cannot take place..

h) Not cleared. Please complete with a description of each stakeholder, in particular institutional, industrial. Elaborate on their relationships in particular in the current conflict situation.

i) Not cleared. See other comments on positions of women in the current conflict and how the project needs special attention to mitigate potential risks for internally displaced population or gender-based violence. Describe in particular how women are targeted in the community management of natural areas (component 2), how they will be involved in decision-making.

Please provide a complete analysis of barriers for women. Describe dedicated budget, measurable targets, commitments that will express the gender-responsive design of the project.

The proposal commits to 'gender-balanced participation,' but does not yet specify minimum thresholds for women's leadership and decision-making authority in boards, committees, institutions, or Platform. Setting explicit quotas/targets, with safeguards for meaningful roles would ensure women place in natural resource governance.

j) Not cleared. There is currently no communication, learning or knowledge strategy. Please complete the project document.

k) No please provide an analysis of current policies in terms of energy, industry, agriculture, land-use that could undermine the project. Explain how those policies could counteract the project or provide bad subsidies.

l) The design of the project still need to be strengthened in order to offer guarantees of success.

## Agency Response

31 October 2025

Thanks, and additional text now added in **Appendix 5a (Gender Action Plan)**; in the project's communication, learning or knowledge strategy provided in **Appendix 13** and in the CEO document in **Section B** to clarify how the project will ensure that lessons learned and best

practices in implementing the gender-related aspects of the project, including gender mainstreaming and addressing gender-based violence are captured and widely disseminated. See below excerpts of the text Added:

- **In Appendix 5a (Gender Action Plan) under Monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the Gender Action Plan:** Lessons learned and best practices in implementing the gender-related aspects of the project, including gender mainstreaming and addressing gender-based violence will be captured and widely disseminated through reporting, dissemination and visibility activities, and communication channels of the project.
- **In Appendix 13, under 6. Learning process:** Lessons learned and best practices in implementing the gender-related aspects of the project, including gender mainstreaming and addressing gender-based violence will be captured and widely disseminated through reporting, dissemination and visibility activities, and communication channels of the project.
- **Added in the CEO document, Section B, ref. paragraphs starting with: "Communication, Learning and Knowledge Strategy:...":** Lessons learned and best practices in implementing the gender-related aspects of the project, including gender mainstreaming and addressing gender-based violence will be captured and widely disseminated through reporting, dissemination and visibility activities, and communication channels of the project.

1 October 2025

a) Thanks, added. Please find a new set of Theory of Change diagrams now provided in **Figures 1a to 1e**. **Figure 1a** presents a comprehensive bird's-eye view of the ToC, while **Figures 1b-1d** highlight three detailed cross-sections of the overall framework to facilitate easy reading. **Figure 1e** summarizes the underlying assumptions and provides the legend, pp. 17-21.

The TOC diagram is accompanied by a summary narrative of the main intervention logic, causal pathways, overarching assumptions (including ones referencing the conflict situation in Yemen) and risks aligned with Table 5 regarding the conflict analysis and associated mitigation measures.

Please also note this summary TOC narrative is complemented by a much more detailed TOC narrative, including causal pathways and assumptions, broken down at a much more granular level can also be found in **Appendix 13** as provided in our first submission.

b) Thanks. A simple table now added in **section B** of the CEO endorsement Document, summarising complementarities with projects 5347 (UNEP) and 1258 (UNEP), pp.25-26.

Detail on the same topic was also provided in **Appendix 13** under *"Coordination and other relevant initiatives*.

Noting however that project 1258 in Aden was concluded in the year 2010 and project 5347 in Socotra was concluded in Dec 2024, hence we had not considered them as "ongoing".

The Terminal Evaluation of the recently concluded project 5347 (UNEP) is being initiated at the time of writing hence the TE report is not yet available. However, the results of the project's MTE were considered during project design and project stakeholders were extensively consulted during the PPG to take stock of lessons emerged during the implementation of project 5347.

Finally, new text was added in Section B to clarify the project's alignment and cooperation with UNESCO/WHC/IUCN for the preservation of the Socotra WHS. See new paragraph starting with: *"Project Alignment with the World Heritage Committee Decisions and Recommendations:..."*.

c) Thanks, and a detailed (over 20 pages) description of workplan and all activities under each component is provided in **Appendix 8 to the project document** (pp. 173-199 of the Appendices

and Attachments document), addressing all questions listed. Additional information can also be found in the Appendix 5e detailing TORs for staff consultants and advisory bodies.

Only a short summary of project activities was provided in the CEO document, for reasons of space and page limits.

In the CEO document, Section B after the short description of comments, please see the new text added on political will and regional stability, stakeholders' involvement in decision making, and project synergy with UNESCO WHS and with the Ramsar Convention.

e) Thanks. Please see new text added in section B of the CEO document starting with *Anticipated Socioeconomic Benefits from the Project:...* (p.22) summarising the anticipated socioeconomic benefits of the project. Additional details can be found in the extended description of project activities provided in Appendix 8 to the project document.

g) Thanks. The description of conflict-related risks and the range of mitigation measures adopted by the project has been expanded to clarify this point. Please see new text on risks and mitigation measures within **Table 5** (pp.32-34) of the CEO document and in the TOC.

The key aspects of project design that will maximise resilience may be summarised as follows:

- Careful site selection in close consultation with local partners of MOWE/EPA focusing operations only in safer areas with minimal or no risk of conflict-related issues.
- Relying largely on national capacity and building that capacity along the way.
- Mobilizing regional or international capacity only when required and in full compliance with safety and security guidance by the UNDSS (UN Department of Safety and Security).
- Regularly consulting with the UN Country Team and UNDSS Team to adjust project operations accordingly.
- Building on the direct operational experience of two GEF projects in Yemen: the 5347 (UNEP, recently completed) and the 11562 (FAO, ongoing).

h) Thanks. Please refer to the extensive information on project stakeholders that is provided in the project document in **Appendix 5c Stakeholder Engagement Plan** (pp.89-103 of the Appendices and Attachments document), including **a comprehensive stakeholders identification and analysis** as well as *Appendixes 5a and 5b* including the Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan.

As stated above, please see also the new paragraphs added in Section A of the CEO endorsement document (ref. para starting with: *In general, stakeholders in both Aden and Socotra are strongly affected by the ongoing conflict...*), p.12.

I) Thanks and please refer to **Appendix 5** to the project document and especially **Appendix 5a (Gender Action Plan) and Appendix 5b (Gender Analysis)**, addressing these important aspects.

Please kindly refer to section A, paragraph starting with *Gender inequality in Yemen..?* (pp.10-11) outlining existing barriers for women engagement. As well as the new paragraphs in **Section B** right after component 4, starting with: *Gender considerations:...*

Also, the detailed description of project activities under each component, provided in **Appendix 8**, offers additional details on the role of women in each project activity, and particularly on how women are specifically targeted engaged in the community management of natural areas through their inclusion in PA governance, in line with local customs and traditions (see activities' description in **Appendix 8**, and specifically under activities 2.1.4, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3).

Please refer to Appendix 5e (TORs) and specifically to the **TORs for the Project Advisory Bodies** that include gender balance and inclusion considerations for the project Steering Committee, Technical Advisory Group and the National Wetland Platform.

j) Thanks. The project's communication, learning or knowledge strategy is now provided in **Appendix 13** and a new summary text was also inserted in the CEO document in **Section B**, ref. new paragraphs starting with: *Communication, Learning and Knowledge Strategy:...* (pp.24-25).

k) Thanks. Please see a new text added towards the end of Section A of the CEO endorsement document, ref. paragraph starting with: *Policy Challenges potentially undermining Nature Conservation and SLM in Aden and Socotra include:...*, pp.12-13.

l) Thanks. Please see our responses above, illustrating the project approach and strategy and mitigation measures to address identified risks including the current conflict situation.

As already stated above: the description of conflict-related risks and the range of mitigation measures adopted by the project has been expanded to clarify this point. Please see new text on risks and mitigation measures within **Table 5** (pp.32-34) of the CEO document and in the TOC (pp.17-21).

The key aspects of project design that will maximise resilience may be summarised as follows:

- Careful site selection in close consultation with local partners focusing operations only in safer areas with minimal or no risk of conflict-related issues.
- Relying largely on national capacity and building that capacity along the way.
- Mobilizing regional or international capacity only when required and in full compliance with safety and security guidance by the UNDSS (UN Department of Safety and Security).
- Regularly consulting with the UN Country and UNDSS Teams to adjust project operations accordingly.
- Building on the direct operational experience of two GEF projects in Yemen: the 5347 (UNEP, recently completed) and the 11562 (FAO, ongoing).

#### **5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project**

- a) Are the institutional arrangements, including potential executing partners, outlined on regional, national/local levels and a rationale provided? Has an organogram and/or funds flow diagram been included?**
- b) Comment on proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception). Is GEF in support of the request?**
- c) Is there a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed projects/programs (such as government and/or other bilateral/multilateral supported initiatives in the project area, e.g.).**

#### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

11/04/2025

a) Cleared.

10/08/2025

a) Not cleared. Please provide in the portal document the diagram of funds flow with arrows, and the figure of project organization.

c) Cleared

09/09/2025

a) Not cleared. Please correct the information table to precise executing partners if it is EPA and RSCN. Currently it is written The Ministry of Water and Environment in collaboration with RSCN. Please verify consistency within the names given in the document (Environmental Protection Agency or Authority?).

Please provide a funds flow diagram.

b) The agency does not request for execution role.

c) Please provide a table describing complementarities between the current project and the following projects: GEF ID 5347 and 1258. If possible provide a map to show the eventual overlaps.

## Agency Response

31 October 2025

a) Thanks, and the **Funds Flow Diagram** and the Project Organization Diagram are now copied into the main CEO portal document.

These items are also included in **Appendix 7** of the project document (implementation arrangement and coordination).

1 October 2025

a) Thanks. Executing partners now clarified in Table 1 (project information table, p.3) and a new **Funds Flow Diagram** is now included in **Appendix 7** (pp. 171-172 of the Appendices and Attachments document) of the project document (implementation arrangement and coordination).

b) Yes, correct.

c) Thanks. A simple table now added in **section B** of the CEO endorsement Document, summarising complementarities with projects 5347 and 1258, pp. 25-26.

Detail on the same topic was also provided in **Appendix 13** (p.214 of the Appendices and Attachments document) under *Coordination and other relevant initiatives?*

Noting however that project **1258 in Aden was concluded in the year 2010** and project **5347 in Socotra was concluded in Dec 2024**, hence we had not considered them as ?ongoing?.

### 5.3 Core indicators

a) **Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology and adhering to the overarching principles included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01)?**

b) **Are the project's targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators and additional listed outcome indicators) /adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?**

**Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?**

## Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

11/21/2025

Cleared.

11/04/2025

Not cleared. Please complete this information in the Core indicators table in the dedicated place. The agency has responded ?target METT Scores increases at CEO are provided under BD1.2 and BD 2.2 core indicators in the main CEO document in Table 3: Global Environmental

Benefits and GEF Core Indicators (Including Comparison with PIF).? Please include them in the core indicator table under CI. 1.2 and 2.2.

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF) ⓘ	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) ⓘ	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR) ⓘ	Total Ha (Achieved at TE) ⓘ	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)
Detwah Lagoon	555542725	Others	580.00	0.00				
Firmhin	903138	Others	1,570.00	1,602.00				
Homhil	903138	Others	2,023.00	2,622.00				

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF) ⓘ	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) ⓘ	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR) ⓘ	Total Ha (Achieved at TE) ⓘ	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)
Abalhin	903138	Others		246.00				
DiHamri	903138	Others	288.00	266.00				
Rosh	903138	Others	470.00	622.00				

10/08/2025

Under 1.2 and 2.2 core indicators, please provide the METT score for the listed protected areas.

09/12/2025

a) Cleared.

b) Cleared.

## Agency Response

20 November 2025

Thanks. Please see Appendix 12: GEF-8 Core Indicators Worksheet, for all the METT information. METT scores have been added in the Portal. The scores are as follows:

METT scores (Baseline at CEO Endorsement):

Terrestrial PAs

Homhil: 48

Firmhin: 31

Skand: 29

Marine PAs:

Abalhin: 31

Roosh: 48

Di Hamri: 60

METT scores to be achieved at MTR (10% increase):

Terrestrial PAs

Homhil: 52.8

Firmhin: 33.1

Skand: 31.9

Marine PAs

Abalhin: 33.1

Roosh: 52.8

Di Hamri: 66

METT scores to be achieved at TE (20% increase):

Terrestrial PAs

Homhil: 57.6

Firmhin: 37.2

Skand: 34.8

Marine PAs

Abalhin: 37.2

Roosh: 57.6

Di Hamri: 72

31 October 2025

Thanks, and target METT Scores increases at CEO are provided under BD1.2 and BD 2.2 core indicators in the main CEO document in **Table 3: Global Environmental Benefits and GEF Core Indicators** (Including Comparison with PIF).?

#### 5.4 Risks

**a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category? Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? Is there any omission?**

**b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?**

**c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately assessed and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

11/04/2025

Cleared.

10/08/2025

We note that UNEP attached the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) and stakeholder engagement plan, and an overall ESS risk is classified as Moderate.

However, SRIF said "Through the participatory approaches, the indigenous peoples will be informed of the scope and nature of the activities proposed, potential impacts of the activities proposed, ensuring continued access to natural resources, identifying equivalent replacement resources (or as a last resort considering compensation) and identifying alternative livelihoods." At the CEO Endorsement stage, the project needs to inform "the scope and nature of the activities proposed, potential impacts of the activities proposed" to Indigenous Peoples and ensure Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) from Indigenous Peoples.

Please ensure informing "the scope and nature of the activities proposed, potential impacts of the activities proposed" to Indigenous Peoples and ensuring Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) from Indigenous Peoples at CEO Endorsement stage.

a)b) Cleared

09/12/2025

a) Not cleared. Yemen is one of the countries listed as in conflict on the WBG [FY26 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations](#). Please provide further elaborate conflict-sensitive assessment and analysis, and strategy and mitigation plan coordinating with UN security team. The strategy and mitigation plan should be integrated into the project design with clear budget. It is also important to have a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan of the project.

Yemen remains divided between de facto authorities with competing institutions, currencies, and security actors. Projects face risks of interference, access denials, and shifting 'red lines,' requiring stop-go operational criteria, careful neutrality, and multiple authorizations to move people and goods across front lines. In Socotra, conflict-related geopolitical competition and governance vacuums complicate integrated conservation and development; around Aden's wetlands, conflict-era institutional erosion, pollution, and rising coastal hazards (storm surge, sea-level rise) heighten security and environmental risk. These factors should shape how an Integrated Conservation and Sustainable Development project must be designed and delivered.

Particularly, the Output 2.1.3. aim to implement an integrated land-use spatial (zoning) plan and an inclusive and community-led Aden Wetlands Landscape Management Plan developed and implemented with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders. The project needs special attention to mitigate potential risks for internally displaced population, gender-based violence, children and elders, and other vulnerable population in the area.

b) Not cleared. See comment above. It is not clear what are overall conflict-related risks and strategy to mitigate these risks. If any conflict assessment or analysis have been done, please provide the information.

c) Not cleared. See comment above.

## Agency Response

31 October 2025

c)

Thanks. During the PPG phase the project preparation team conducted extensive stakeholder consultations at all project sites, including consultations with local community groups (See documentation provided in Appendix 5a, 5b, 5c and 5d).

As part of this process, the PPG team also carefully reviewed the potential presence and status of any Indigenous Peoples in Socotra, being cognizant of the fact that *IF Indigenous Peoples are to be found in the areas, then Standard 6 screening would have to be filled in and a full FPIC would need to be included in the consultation process.*

Consistently with national legislation, with previous GEF, UNEP and UNDP practice applied with the same target population and geographical areas, with a review of GEF and UN criteria for IP recognition, the Socotra population continues to be classified as local communities and traditional resource users, who will continue to benefit from inclusive, participatory, and gender-responsive engagement processes. This ensures full compliance with GEF and UNEP Environmental and Social Safeguards, thus not triggering the application of specific IP policy.

### **Rationale for Non-Classification of the People of Socotra as Indigenous Peoples under globally recognized criteria and UNEP/GEF Policy:**

The classification of the people of Socotra as *indigenous peoples (IPs)* under the UNEP/GEF safeguard framework is not applicable, based on a combination of legal, sociocultural, and international definitional criteria, as well as established project precedent in the country.

1. **National Legal Context:** The laws of the Republic of Yemen do not recognize any distinct category of *indigenous peoples* within its national legal or administrative framework. All citizens, including those residing in the Socotra Archipelago, are regarded as equal members of the Yemeni population, governed by the same constitutional, civil, and environmental rights. Consequently, there is no legal or institutional basis for applying the Indigenous Peoples Policy in this context.
2. **Self-Identification and Sociocultural Characteristics:** The people of Socotra identify themselves as local communities of Yemen, sharing the national identity, language (Arabic), religion (Islam), and social norms of the broader Yemeni society. While they possess a distinct cultural heritage and local traditions, including the local Socotri language, these characteristics are consistent with those of *traditional or local communities* as recognized in many GEF/UNEP projects, rather than with groups that meet the criteria for IPs under the UN framework. Moreover, consultations and previous socio-economic assessments confirm that Socotris do not self-identify as Indigenous Peoples, nor do they express claims to separate status or governance structures based on indigenous identity.
3. **Alignment with UN Definition of Indigenous Peoples:** According to the UN Working Definition of Indigenous Peoples (Cobo and UNDRIP frameworks), IPs are generally characterized by:
  - o Historical continuity with pre-colonial societies.
  - o Distinct social, economic, or political systems from dominant groups.
  - o Non-dominant status within society.
  - o Determination to preserve, develop, and transmit distinct territories and cultural identity.

The Socotra population does not align with these criteria. Socotra's inhabitants are fully integrated into the national political and administrative system, participate in local governance under national law, and do not maintain separate or autonomous socio-political systems.

4. **Project Precedent and Institutional Consistency:** In previous GEF and UN projects implemented in Socotra (starting with the first UNDP/GEF Socotra Biodiversity Conservation Project (1997-2001), and throughout all subsequent UN and GEF projects implemented in Socotra up to and including the latest GEF-UNEP project (ID 5347, concluded in Dec 2024)) the population was consistently treated as local communities under standard community participation and benefit-sharing frameworks, without invoking the IP safeguard or the *Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)* requirement. This long-standing institutional precedent supports the continued application of the same categorization.

**Conclusion (NOTE: this text is now also included in Section B of the CEO document):** In view of the national legal framework, self-identification of the Socotra people, lack of alignment with the UN's and GEF IP-recognition criteria, and established GEF and UN precedents, it is concluded that the Socotra communities do not fall under the category of Indigenous Peoples. Accordingly, the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) requirement does not apply, and engagement with Socotra communities should proceed under the standard stakeholder participation and community consultation provisions of the UNEP/GEF safeguard policy.

1 October 2025

a) Thanks. Please see our responses above, illustrating the project approach and strategy and mitigation measures to address identified risks including the current conflict situation, as developed during the PPG phase in close consultation with national partners. The project implementation approach also takes stock of the direct experience of the recently concluded GEF-UNEP project 5347 and of the ongoing GEF-FAO project 11562 that were both consulted and participated in the PPG process.

As already stated above: the description of conflict-related risks and the range of mitigation measures adopted by the project has now been expanded to clarify this point. Please see new text

on risks and mitigation measures within **Table 5** (pp. 32-34) of the CEO document and in the TOC (pp. 17-21).

The key aspects of project design that will maximise resilience may be summarised as follows:

- Careful site selection in close consultation with local partners ? focusing operations only in safer areas with minimal or no risk of conflict-related issues
- Relying largely on national capacity and building that capacity along the way.
- Mobilizing regional or international capacity only when required and in full compliance with safety and security guidance by the UNDSS (UN Department of Safety and Security)
- Regularly consulting with the UN Country and UNDSS Teams to adjust project operations accordingly
- Building on the direct operational experience of two GEF projects in Yemen: the 5347 (UNEP, recently completed) and the 11562 (FAO, ongoing)

As stated above, please also refer to the extensive information on **project stakeholders** that is provided in the project document in *Appendix 5c Stakeholder Engagement Plan*, including a **comprehensive stakeholders identification and analysis** as well as *Appendixes 5a and 5b* including the Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan.

As stated above, please see also the new paragraphs added in **Section A** of the CEO endorsement document to further elaborate on conflict-related issues (ref. para starting with: *?In general, stakeholders in both Aden and Socotra are strongly affected by the ongoing conflict...?*).

b) and c) Thanks. Please refer to our responses provided above on this important aspect.

**5.5 For NGI Only: Is there a justification of the financial structure and of the use of financial instrument with concessionality levels?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

**6 C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies and Country/Regional Priorities**

**6.1 a) Is the project adequately aligned with Focal Area objectives, and/or the LDCF/SCCF strategy?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

09/12/2025

Cleared.

Agency Response

**6.2 Is the project alignment/coherent with country and regional priorities, policies, strategies and plans (including those related to the MEAs and to relevant sectors).**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

09/12/2025

The situation regarding the conflict may affect the alignment with national policies.

## Agency Response

1 October 2025

Thanks. Please refer to our responses provided above on this important aspect.

**6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?**

## Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

11/04/2025

Cleared.

10/08/2025

Not cleared. Please provide in the project document in the portal the GBF targets to which the project will contribute, in the dedicated paragraph. C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES. Please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how.

09/12/2025

Not cleared. Please complete the project document with a table explaining to which targets it plans to contribute and how the project plans to achieve it.

## Agency Response

31 October 2025

Thanks, and the GBF targets contribution table is now also placed into the main CEO document under *C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES*.

Also, please refer to *Tables 3 and Table 6 (section B) and Appendix 13* of the CEO endorsement document, providing detail on GBF targets, NBSAP targets and GEF Core Indicators supported by the project.

1 October 2025

Thanks, and the table provided in **Appendix 13** to the project document, under sub-section: *Contribution to the GBF Targets ? detailed?* **is now moved up into the CEO endorsement document in Section B**, offering a summary of which GBF targets the project will contribute to, and how this will be achieved.

Also, please refer to **Table 3 (section B)** of the CEO endorsement document that provides detail on GEF Core Indicators supported by the project.

## **7 D. Policy Requirements**

### **7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?**

## Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

11/21/2025

Cleared

11/04/2025

Not cleared. The answer to question "Will there be private sector engagement in the project?" has been provided but please complete to the next one:

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

**Will there be private sector engagement in the project?**

Yes

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

10/08/2025

Not cleared. Please complete in the project document in the portal the answer to this question "Private Sector Will there be private sector engagement in the project? And if so, has its role been described and justified in section B project description?"

09/12/2025

Please complete the Private sector request, and describe its role in Project description.

Agency Response

20 November 2025

Thanks and confirming that the reply to the second question is: ?YES?.

In the Portal, the reply ?Yes? is not for both questions.

Private sector is briefly discussed in page 12 (Section A) and now also in section B of the CEO document (ref. page 30: new paragraph added right after the description of project activities, which are also expanded in Appendix 8 - detailed project workplan). The new short paragraph in section B provides some more details and examples of local private sector engagement. It is copied below for easy reference:

*?**Private Sector engagement:** As outlined above in Section A, also the **private sector** holds potential to contribute positively and will be engaged locally throughout project activities. For*

*example, in Socotra, ecotourism and community-based tourism initiatives can generate sustainable income and contribute to conservation objectives - if adequately regulated. Hence local private ecotourism operators will be engaged in project activities such as community-based PA management, IAS management, tree regeneration and sea turtle conservation programmes. In Aden, local small-scale private sector actors will be engaged in sustainable agriculture, fisheries, and wetland restoration through local enterprises that could create jobs and help buffer environmental risks such as through the creation of as mangrove nurseries, nature-based handicrafts production or local eco-tourism ventures.?*

Also, the role of the private sector is mentioned several times in the document appendixes and specifically in the detailed description of project activities (Appendix 8), results framework, and TORs.

31 October 2025

Thanks, and the answer is YES the role of private sector in the project is mentioned **sections A and B** of the main CEO document as well as in **Appendix 5**.

1 October 2025

Thanks. The private sector was engaged a stakeholder in the project consultation processes and was consulted; please see more information in the stakeholder plan, Annex 5, (pp. 89-102 of the Appendices and Attachments document). This project does not envisage a NGI.

#### **7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

09/12/2025

Yes cleared.

Agency Response

#### **7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

11/04/2025

Cleared

10/08/2025

We note that stakeholder engagement plan has been developed based on consultations with various stakeholders. However, it is not clear whether Indigenous Peoples or Indigenous Peoples groups were consulted during PPG. If not, please ensure stakeholder engagement plan to be developed based on consultations and engagement with Indigenous Peoples or Indigenous Peoples groups.?

09/12/2025

Yes cleared.

Agency Response

31 October 2025

Thanks, and please see above in our reply to 5.4 (c) explaining that there are no Indigenous Peoples in the project target areas.

**7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/08/2025

Cleared

09/12/2025

Not cleared. Please complete.

Agency Response

1 October 2025

Thanks. Please kindly refer to **Annex F** (Environmental and Social Safeguards documents including rating) (pp. 95-103) of the CEO endorsement document, containing the applicable safeguards documents.

**8 Annexes**

**Annex A: Financing Tables**

**8.1 GEF Financing Table and Focal Area Elements: Is the proposed GEF financing (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):  
STAR allocation?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

09/12/2025

Cleared.

Agency Response

**Focal Area allocation?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

09/12/2025

Cleared.

Agency Response

**LDCF under the principle of equitable access?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response  
**SCCF A (SIDS)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response  
**SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response  
**Focal Area Set Aside?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response  
**8.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG)**  
**a) Is the use of PPG attached in Annex: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG) properly itemized according to the guidelines?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/1/2025

Cleared.

11/21/2025

Not cleared. Still there is no detail on National and international consultants in the PPG report. Please include the brief explanation provided in the review sheet directly in this table.

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

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

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GET/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
International Consultants	130,000.00	73,360.00	56,640.00
National Consultants	8,250.00	8,250.00	0.00
Travels in the project area	10,000.00	3,227.00	6,773.00
Meetings and Stakeholders consultations at national, regional and local levels	1,750.00	1,750.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>150,000.00</b>	<b>86,587.00</b>	<b>63,413.00</b>

11/04/2025

Not cleared. Please address the comment for utilization of PPG. Please refer to GEF guidelines and correct:

- Sub-contracts, officies supplies and communications are not eligible.
- Per Diem must be included in travel costs. Please explain and justify travel expenses in the project area and for international travel.
- Please provide detail on National and international consultants.
- Please harmonize the description of PPG cost items with the GEF budgeting guidelines. If there are costs for which no funds are budgeted (e.g., International Consultants), those lines should be deleted.

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

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

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GET/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
International Consultants	0.00	0.00	0.00
National Consultants	20,000.00	0.00	20,000.00
Travels in the project area	8,000.00	0.00	8,000.00
International travel	6,000.00	0.00	6,000.00
Per diems	8,000.00	0.00	8,000.00
Sub-contracts (for commercial purposes)	90,000.00	60,138.00	29,862.00
Meetings and Stakeholders consultations at national, regional and local levels	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00
Bank Charges	0.00	0.00	0.00
Offices supplies	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00
Communications	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>150,000.00</b>	<b>60,138.00</b>	<b>89,862.00</b>

10/08/2025

Not cleared. Please refer to GEF guidelines and correct:

- Sub-contracts, officies supplies and communications are not eligible.
- Per Diem must be included in travel costs. Please explain and justify travel expenses in the project area and for international travel.
- Please provide detail on National and international consultants.
- Please harmonize the description of PPG cost items with the GEF budgeting guidelines. If there are costs for which no funds are budgeted (e.g., International Consultants), those lines should be deleted.

12/09/2025

a) No. Please complete.





### Agency Response





1 December 2025

The details are added in Annex D as follows:

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

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

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GET/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)			
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed	
International Consultants (1.PPG coordinator and quality assurance; 2.PPG team leader with expertise in BD, PA Management, Wetland consultant, Project Design; 3.PA Management, Community Engagement Expert; 4. Environment and Community Engagement Expert; 5.Gender Mainstreaming, Social and Environmental Safeguards Expert. In addition, the EA has engaged: 6.GIS team (1 senior, 2 juniors) to produce the maps of the project areas; 7.Technical Support to the PPG from a team of 3 experts: A-Protected areas management; B-Wetland restorations and management; C-Community engagement).	130,000.00	73,360.00	56,640.00	 
National Consultants (Contracts of local consultants to collect relevant data and information in Socotra Archipelago and Aden Wetlands and participate in the local meetings in Socotra. Four consultants in Socotra Island: 1.Mr. Abdul Wahab Sa'ad, team leader; 2.Mr. Sheikah Mubarak, gender specialist in the island; 3.Mr. Salem Hawash: Assistant in Haribo Directorate; 4.Mr. Mazen Hasiba: Assistant in Qalansyeh Directorate. Two consultant in Aden: 1.Faisal al Th'Alabi, Team leader; 2.Sarah Turkey, Gender Specialist in Aden)..	8,250.00	8,250.00	0.00	 

Travels in the project area (The EA (RSCN) representative conducted one (1) International travel to the Project sites to organize stakeholder consultation meetings in Socotra and Aden on 4th to 15th November 2025 (total 3,227 USD actual costs including travel costs and periderms). In addition, the per diems are foreseen for several stakeholders' representatives to participate in the final validation session and consultation regarding the activities both in Socotra and Aden within the project).	10,000.00	3,227.00	6,773.00		
Meetings and Stakeholders consultations at national, regional and local levels (Total 55 meetings in Socotra have been organized: 50 bilateral (individual) and 5 group stakeholders' consultations. Total 15 meeting in Aden have been organized: 12 bilateral (individual) and 3 group stakeholders' consultations).	1,750.00	1,750.00	0.00		
<b>Total</b>	<b>150,000.00</b>	<b>86,587.00</b>	<b>63,413.00</b>		

20 November 2025

The PPG Expenditure table (Annex D) has been updated (see pp. 79-80 of the CEO Endorsement main document); the explanations for each PPG budget line have been provided.

Regarding the sub-contract, originally the total amount from the "Sub-contracts" budget line 2301 was dedicated to a team of International Consultants for the development of the CEO Endorsement package, including annexes, appendices and attachments. The following thematic international consultants have been hired to deliver the tasks:

- ? PPG Coordinator and Quality Assurance;
- ? PPG Team Leader with expertise in BD, PA Management, Wetland Cons., Project Design;
- ? PA Management, Community Engagement expert;
- ? Environment and Community engagement expert;
- ? Gender Mainstreaming, Social and Environmental Safeguards expert.

In addition, the EA has engaged:

- ? GIS team (1 senior, 2 juniors) to produce the maps of the project areas;
- ? 3 technical experts to support PPG elaboration:
  - o Protected areas management;
  - o Wetland restorations and management;
  - o Community engagement.

As recommended, the total amount for all international consultants involved is now moved to the 1201 budget line "International Consultants".

31 October 2025

Thanks, and new GEF budget table is revised accordingly as follows:

- Appropriate categories now adopted in the new GEF budget table.
- Per diem now mentioned and included in the new budget in GEF format and explanation on travel costs added in the budget notes, stating: *Travel and per diem costs for project team and consultants between Amman, Aden and Socotra, including travel and per diems. The estimation of local and international travel costs is based on the project having activities in three very distinct and separate locations that are thousands of miles apart: Aden, Socotra and Amman. The extensive experience gained during the successful implementation of prior GEF projects in the same areas shows how travel costs are generally high for several reasons (a) they imply frequent air travel on the limited national and regional flights that are few and far between, having often high costs with no alternative options available, (b) flights can be unpredictable and are frequently cancelled or re-scheduled without prior notice, sometimes requiring adjustment to travel costs for the project team who can get unwillingly 'stuck' for several days out of their duty station, and (c) project meetings such as the PSC or TAG or technical training workshops often have to be arranged and hosted by the RSCN in Jordan, as international consultants are often not allowed to travel into Yemen due to security reasons.*
- Thanks. Budget line ?detailed description? included as well as new and more detailed ?budget notes? added in the new budget in GEF format.

In addition, please note the **detailed Terms of Reference for all National and International consultants provided in Appendix 5e**

- Thanks, the revised PPG budget is provided in Annex D, p.79.

1 October 2025

Thanks. Information now inserted, Annex D, p.77.

### 8.3 Source of Funds

**Does the sources of funds table match with the amounts in the OFP's LOE?**

**Note: the table only captures sources of funds from the country's STAR allocation**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

09/12/2025

Cleared.

### Agency Response

**8.4 Confirmed co-financing for the project, by name and type: Are the amounts, sources, and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?**

**e.g. Have letters of co-finance been submitted, correctly classified as investment mobilized or in-kind/recurring expenditures? If investment mobilized: is there an explanation below the table to describe the nature of co-finance? If letters are not in English, is a translation provided?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

09/12/2025

Cleared

Agency Response

**Annex B: Endorsements**

**8.5 a) If ? and only if - this is a global or regional project for which not all country-based interventions were known at PIF stage and, therefore, not all LOEs provided:**

**Has the project been endorsed by the GEF OFP/s of all GEF eligible participating countries and has the OFP name and position been checked against the GEF database at the time of submission?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

**b) Are the OFP endorsement letters uploaded to the GEF Portal (compiled as a single document, if applicable)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

09/12/2025

Cleared.

Agency Response

**c) Do the letters follow the correct format and are the endorsed amounts consistent with the amounts included in the Portal?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

09/12/2025

Cleared

Agency Response

**Annex C: Project Results Framework**

**8.6 a) Have the GEF core indicators been included?**

**b) Have SMART indicators been used; are means of verification well thought out; do the targets correspond/are appropriate in view of total project financing (too high? Too low?)**

**c) Are all relevant indicators sex disaggregated?**

**d) Is the Project Results Framework included in the Project Document pasted in the Template?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/1/2025

Cleared.

11/21/2025

b) Comment not addressed. In the RMF we still have this value **114056**. Please correct.

GEF Core Indicator 6.5: Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the sector of Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (direct)	Baseline and targets estimated at project design stage, using the Ex-ACT tool	<b>After project end:</b>  114,056 metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e
---	---	---

11/04/2025

b) Not cleared

In CI table:

### Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)
<b>Expected metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (direct)</b>	0	114065
<b>Expected metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (indirect)</b>	0	0

In table 3:

GEF Core Indicator GHG 6.5: Carbon Sequestered, or emissions avoided in the sector of Agriculture, Forestry, and other Land Use (indirect)	-114,065 metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e
--	---

In results framework:

GEF Core Indicator 6.5: Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the sector of Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (direct)	Baseline and targets estimated at project design stage, using the Ex-ACT tool	<b>After project end:</b>  114,056 metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e
---	---	---

10/08/2025

b) Not cleared. Please correct.

In the table of CI we have :

**Expected metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (direct)**

In the result framework

GEF Core Indicator 6.5: Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the sector of Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (direct)	Baseline and targets estimated at project design stage, using the Ex-ANTE tool	After project ended: 114,056 metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e
---	--	--

09/12/2025

a) Cleared.

b) No please, complete.

Correct CI 6 in the results framework table to be consistent with the CI table.

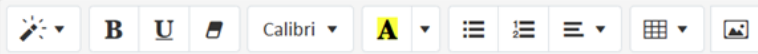
Agency Response

1 December 2025

The value (114,065) is corrected in the table, as follows:

## ANNEX C: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

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

							
		project inception					
	GEF Core Indicator 6.5: Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the sector of	Baseline and targets estimated at project design stage, using the Ex-ACT tool	<b>After project end:</b> 114,065 metric tons of CO2e	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above

20 November 2025

Thanks. Updated. The correct value (**114,065**) is consistent across all three tables (i.e. Table 3, pp.22; Table 4, p.33; Annex C, p.51).

31 October 2025

Thanks, and the CI6 value is now consistent between Table 3, Table 4, and the Results Framework.

1 October 2025

Thanks. CI6 now consistent between Results Framework table and CI table (Table 4, p.31).

### Annex E: Project map and coordinates

**8.7 Have geographic coordinates of project locations been entered in the dedicated table? Are relevant illustrative maps included?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/08/2025

Cleared.

09/12/2025

Not cleared. Currently coordinates are provided but the maps are not readable in the portal or in the CEO ER in .pdf document. Please fix those formatting issues.

Agency Response

1 October 2025

Thanks, and (a) the Annex E with the same maps is now also uploaded as separate PDF file that should hopefully be better readable than in the main PDF document, and (b) the location map for target areas in Socotra is also uploaded as a separate stand-alone file.

Please let us know if this works and if not, then suggesting that our respective technical teams can liaise bilaterally to address this technical issue.

**Annex G: GEF Budget template**

**8.8 a) Is the GEF budget template attached and appropriately filled out incl. items such as the executing partner for each budget line?**

**b) Are the activities / expenditures reasonably and accurately charged to the three identified sources (Components, M&E and PMC)?**

**c) Are TORs for key project staff funded by GEF grant and/or co-finance attached?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/1/2025

b) Cleared.

11/21/2025

b) Please update the last version of Budget in the portal. Currently it is the one of 31st October.

- Office equipment and furniture and Office supplies should be charged 100% to PMC but not to the project component. Please revise the budget.

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Budget Distribution by project component/outcome						Project Total	Re	
		Comp. 1	Comp. 2		Comp. 3	Sub-Total components 1-3	Comp. 4			Comp. 5
		Policy	Conservation	M&E & PMC	M&E					
	<b>Non-expendable equipment</b>	0								
Goods	computers	5,000	2,000	3,000	5,000	15,000			15,000	
	communication equipment	5,000	1,000	4,000	5,000	15,000			15,000	
	vehicles (1) - Socotra (contribution to purchase or long-term rental)			40,000		40,000			40,000	
	Motorbikes (2) for sea turtle nesting monitoring (Socotra 2.2.5)			10,000		10,000			10,000	
	turtle monitoring equipment (Socotra 2.2.5)			5,000		5,000			5,000	
	tree nurseries equipment (Socotra 2.2.4)			33,000		33,000			33,000	
	PA climate impact monitoring equipment (Socotra 2.2.1)			15,400		15,400			15,400	
	Upgrading of IAS quarantine facilities in Socotra (Socotra 2.2.6)			60,000		60,000			60,000	
	Office equipment and furniture	10,000		20,000		30,000			30,000	
	<b>sub-total</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>190,400</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>223,400</b>	-	-	<b>223,400</b>	
Office Supplies	<b>Expendable equipment</b>									
	office supplies	12,516	1,000	2,599		16,115			16,115	
	<b>sub-total</b>	<b>12,516</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>2,599</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,115</b>	-	-	<b>16,115</b>	

- Vehicles: Please separate the proposed purchase of vehicles and motorbikes into a Vehicle category:

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Budget Distribution by project component/outcome						Project Total	Re	
		Comp. 1	Comp. 2		Comp. 3	Sub-Total components 1-3	Comp. 4			Comp. 5
		Policy	Conservation	M&E & PMC	M&E					
	<b>Non-expendable equipment</b>	0								
Goods	computers	5,000	2,000	3,000	5,000	15,000			15,000	
	communication equipment	5,000	1,000	4,000	5,000	15,000			15,000	
	vehicles (1) - Socotra (contribution to purchase or long-term rental)			40,000		40,000			40,000	
	Motorbikes (2) for sea turtle nesting monitoring (Socotra 2.2.5)			10,000		10,000			10,000	
	turtle monitoring equipment (Socotra 2.2.5)			5,000		5,000			5,000	
	tree nurseries equipment (Socotra 2.2.4)			33,000		33,000			33,000	
	PA climate impact monitoring equipment (Socotra 2.2.1)			15,400		15,400			15,400	
	Upgrading of IAS quarantine facilities in Socotra (Socotra 2.2.6)			60,000		60,000			60,000	
	Office equipment and furniture	10,000		20,000		30,000			30,000	
	<b>sub-total</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>190,400</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>223,400</b>	-	-	<b>223,400</b>	

- TORs: Cleared.

11/04/2025

a) Cleared.

b)

- Formatting: cleared.

- M&E budget: cleared.

Vehicles: Not cleared. In Annex 11, we understand that vehicles are provided by rental or buying by co-financing and partners.

4201	vehicle (1) - Aden (purchase or long-term rental)	40,000	1 4WD vehicle, Aden, all components	Y1	local procurement or long-term rental
4202	vehicles (2) - Socotra (purchase or long-term rental)	80,000	2 4WD vehicles, Socotra. All components	Y1	local procurement or long-term rental
4203	two motorbikes for sea turtle nesting monitoring (Socotra 2.2.5)	10,000	two motorbikes for sea turtle nesting monitoring, Socotra, <u>ouput</u> 2.2.5	Y1	local procurement or long-term rental

- Please explain what is included in 61 000 + 103 000 USD for vehicles. This cost seems excessive.

Other operating costs	<b>Operation and maintenance of equipment</b>								
	vehicle operations and <u>maint</u> - Aden	30,000	15,000		16,000	61,000		61,000	RSCN



	vehicle operations and <u>maint</u> - Socotra	32,000		55,000	16,000	103,000		103,000	RSCN
	repairs for EPA <u>socotra</u> labs & facilities			20,000		20,000		20,000	RSCN
	motorbikes for turtle nesting monitoring - Socotra			10,000		10,000		10,000	RSCN
	<b>sub-total</b>	<b>62,000</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>85,000</b>	<b>32,000</b>	<b>194,000</b>		<b>194,000</b>	

- Budget for staff: cleared

- TOR: not cleared. The comments regarding the large PMU and potential for overlap between roles have not been addressed in the resubmission. The TORs provided by the Agency in Appendix 5 show many project management tasks ? such as supervision of consultants, preparing TORs, quality control of outputs, and review of project reporting ? that the Agency miscategorizes as technical component tasks.

- Please review TORs for the International Project Manager, International Technical Officer, Site Manager-Socotra, Technical Officer-Socotra, Site Manager-Aden, Technical Officer-Aden

and National EPA/MOWE Liaison Officer ? Aden and Socotra, to ensure the proper categorization of tasks as falling under the PMC budget or the component budget. For the avoidance of doubt, it would be useful to identify which specific outputs these personnel will lead or make significant technical contributions towards their delivery. If the perceived redundancy with all these roles is in part motivated by the FCS situation in Yemen, positions must be merged or eliminated. The TORs include one for a ?National Project Coordinator (EPA-Yemen, based in Aden) (BL 1105)? that does not appear in the Budget Table - it may have been a copy-paste from another project. Please remove this TOR from the Appendix.

10/08/2025

a) Not cleared. Sundry: considering that line is empty, please remove from the table.

b) Not cleared

Please submit a budget table in the appropriate GEF format (MS Word or Excel) ? also remove the columns ?Years? because that reduces the space for providing information in the column ?Detailed description?, which currently each budget line lacks. Please do not paste a screenshot into a document. Please also ensure the budget table contains the ?Responsible Entity? column to identify which of the two EAs or the Agency will be responsible for those funds. 2 agencies are noted and even if only RSCN will be the EA for all budget line, please keep that column.

Consultants ? Individual is \$1,368,000, representing 31% of the GEF Financing. However, there is little to no information about what each consultancy entails. Per the above comment, there must be a column namely ?Detailed Description? where it is expected the Agency explains the purpose of each budget line. Please amend.

Please note that the use of GEF funds to purchase vehicles is strongly discouraged. Such costs are normally expected to be borne by the co-financed portion of PMC. The majority of the vehicle cost is financed by GEF project component resources, and only a small minority from in-kind co-financing. Please explore ways to fund vehicle procurement through the co-financed portion of PMC. If exceptionally authorized, the PM must explicitly provide the approval in the review sheet or in the comments section.

Please address the M&E budget, which is nearly 10% and recommended to be reduced and aligned with GEF portfolio standards of 5% for projects up to \$5M (this also applies for the Project Description Overview Table).

The Agency has proposed that project personnel will account for \$2.34M out of a total project cost of \$4.42M (53%). Most GEF projects typically dedicate less than 1/3 of funds toward project personnel roles. Please reduce this proportion of funds budgeted for staff.

The costs related to PMC need review and revision. The budget implies at least three levels of project management ? one Project Manager, one Project Coordinator, and two site managers ? with each PMU staffer also bearing responsibility to deliver project components. The TORs for these positions contain significant overlap.

- Please reduce project management roles as much as possible, keeping in mind the best practice of housing PMU staff as close to the project as possible, and avoiding duplicative tasks between PMU roles.

- Please recall that for any PMU position that will also have responsibility to execute project components, those responsibilities should be clear from the TOR. All four project management roles (Project Manager, Project Coordinator, and two site managers) are budgeted against PMC, M&E, and project component budget. However, these TORs do not appear to contain M&E or component-specific tasks. Please review the TORs for these positions, remove

duplicative tasks and positions, and clarify what duties fall under PMC and what are relevant for the project component budget.

- Please ensure all 'Administrative Support' roles are budgeted against PMC, and not spread equally across the project component, M&E and PMC budgets, as is currently the case.

- Please explain or remove the duplicative positions under 'Administrative Support' if the budget calls for both an Accountant and an Admin & Logistics staff in Amman, Aden, and Socotra, totaling 6 FTEs. Please also ensure that any 'Administrative Support' role is budgeted against the PMC and not any other component.

- The M&E Officer is budgeted against all three project components, the PMC and M&E budget lines. Because there is no TOR for the M&E Officer, it is not possible to evaluate what role, if any, this position will have in project management or the components. Please request the Agency to revise the budget for this role and only apply it against the M&E component.

- The activity 'Presenting Project Outcomes in International Fora' (\$20,000) is unusual because if referred to results, these can only be presented at after completion. Similarly, the activity 'Other M&E costs (baseline and repeat surveys)' (\$59,000) is unusual considering that the baseline should have been determined during the preparation phase. Please revise.

09/12/2025

a) Not cleared. Please provide a table indicating executing partner for each budget line.

b) Not cleared.

- Equipment/Miscellaneous component/Vehicles: Please clarify the use of this budget lines as the description does not explain what kind of equipment or vehicle is under consideration. Please note that the GEF strongly discourages the use of GEF funds to purchase vehicles. Any request to use GEF funding to purchase project vehicles must be justified by the exceptional specific circumstances of the project, as typically such costs are recovered in the co-financing portion.

- Sundry: please provide description

- Hospitality and entertainment: considering that lines are empty, please remove from the table.

c) Yes, cleared.

## Agency Response

1 December 2025

Please note the following changes per the comments have been done:

- Both line items called 'Office equipment and furniture' and 'Office supplies' have been moved to PMC and removed from project components.
  - To make this reallocation possible and not to exceed the PMC ceiling, we have slightly reduced the PMC amounts for the part-time International Project Manager and both site managers for Aden and Socotra, respectively, the difference was factored into Component 2 in Outcomes 2.1 and 2.2 so that everything balanced out.
- ? Budget for turtle monitoring equipment (2.2.5) was increased to \$16,115.
- ? Nursery equipment (2.2.4) was increased to \$43,000.

- ? These changes on the GEF budget template were cascaded to the other budget excel files for example: UNEP template, budget notes, procurement plan etc.
- ? Changes were then ported over to both the CEO Endorsement main document and to the Appendices.

New subcategory created for vehicles with the \$50,000 reallocated from non-expendable equipment to this newly created subcategory per screenshot:

		31,000	16,500	16,500	31,000	131,000	-	-	131,000		
		<b>Non-expendable equipment</b>									
		5,000	2,000	3,000	5,000	15,000			15,000	RSCN	
		5,000	1,000	4,000	5,000	15,000			15,000	RSCN	
				5,000		5,000			5,000	RSCN	
				33,000		33,000			33,000	RSCN	
				15,400		15,400			15,400	RSCN	
				60,000		60,000			60,000	RSCN	
		10,000		20,000		30,000			30,000	RSCN	
		<b>Vehicles</b>									
				40,000		40,000			40,000	RSCN	
				10,000		10,000			10,000	RSCN	
		20,000	3,000	140,400	10,000	173,400	-	-	223,400		

20 November 2025

Thanks. The budget has been revisited, and corrections made in Appendix 11 (Procurement Plan): *the purchase of only one vehicle is foreseen.*

Regarding the rental costs, it is important to emphasize that, in addition to the purchase of one (1) vehicle for the needs of the project, the project teams in Socotra and Aden will also rely on renting transportation during the 5-year period and maintaining vehicles (both, purchased from the project budget and as an in-kind contribution). The project sites are spread throughout the Socotra Archipelago and the Aden Wetlands, where transportation is essential for the fieldwork. Additional justification is now included in Appendix 11 (and pasted below) to explain the rationale for the total 164,000 USD allocation for local transportation costs:

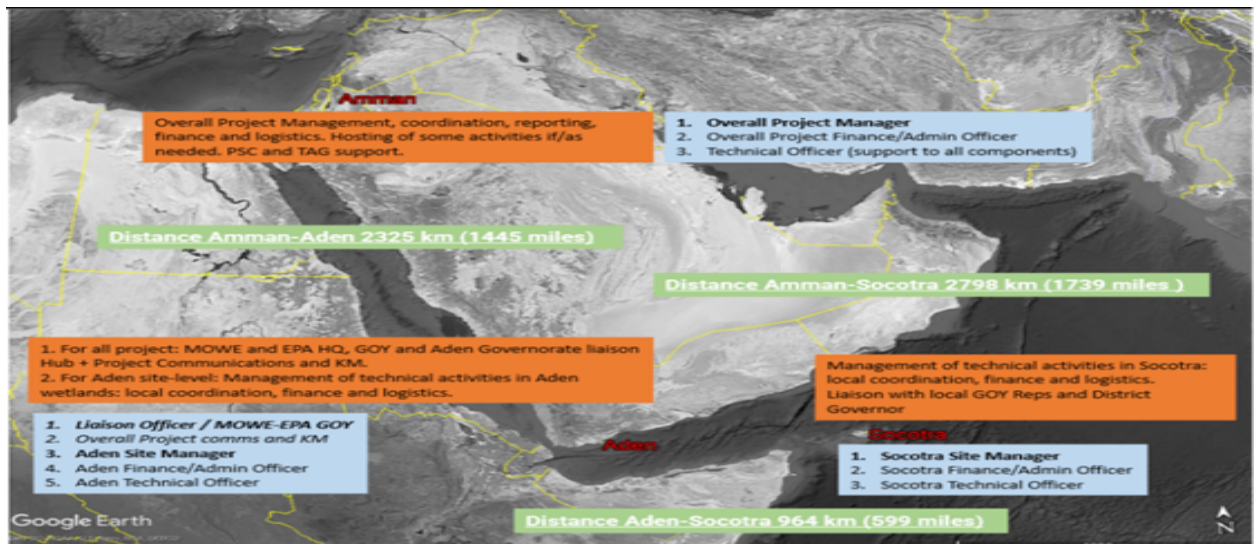
The operational costs for transportation to support the work of local teams in Aden and in Socotra are based on the estimated number of days when local transport will be required, over the five-year project duration. This was discussed and socialized with field teams of EPA in both Socotra and Aden, and with the RSCN and other local partners, based on their recent and current operational field experience, estimated operational needs, and current local market prices. A table summarizing the rationale and workings underlying the budget allocations for operational costs related to local transport is provided below (total value was rounded up to 164,000 USD). Please note that the volume and complexity of work in Socotra is much greater (almost three times greater) than what is anticipated in Aden:

Rationale and workings for estimating vehicle costs							
Project Location	number of vehicles	daily rental cost (USD)	estimated days of car use per year	years (project duration)	total cost (USD)	avg days per week of car use	avg annual operational costs
Aden / rental	1	70	177	5	61,950	3.4	12,390
Socotra / rental	1	80	177	5	70,800	3.4	14,160
Socotra / operating costs of project vehicle	1	35	177	5	30,975	3.4	6,195
				<b>total</b>	<b>163,725</b>		
Underlying assumptions							
days in year	days in a week	weeks in a year	working days in a week	working days in a year	% time of car usage in Aden	% time of car usage in Socotra	
365	7	52	6	313	57%	57%	

Based on the above, the allocated budget of 164,000 USD for a five-year period appears reasonable and adequately justified, assuming that local market prices for rentals and other costs (eg fuel and maintenance) will not rise too significantly over the project duration.

Regarding the ToRs: Apologies as some TORs may have been erroneously repeated in our earlier submission, thus generating confusion. However: several additional steps were taken to help further clarify the project team structure and roles. These are designed to adequately cover work at different levels and in multiple and very distant locations involving different local teams and stakeholders. To remove any appearance of overlap or redundancy:

- A map with the location and roles of each part of the project team is now provided **at the outset of Appendix 5 (TORs)**



- A table listing all project team in the locations with color coding is also now provided **at the outset of Appendix 5 (TORs)**

Overview Project Team and their locations	
no.	Title
<b>Amman - all project</b>	
1	International Project Manager (IPM) - part-time
2	Technical Officer - part-time (Jordan/Yemen)
3	Admin and Logistics Officer - Amman - part time
<b>Aden - all project</b>	
4	National EPA-MOWE Liaison Officer
5	Communications specialist - covers Aden/Socotra
<b>Aden - site-level work</b>	
6	Site Manager - Aden
7	Technical Officer - Aden
8	Admin and Logistics Officer - Aden - full time
<b>Socotra - site-level work</b>	
9	Site Manager - Socotra
10	Technical Officer - Socotra
11	Admin and Logistics Officer - Socotra - full time

- A functional diagram summarizing the same Team structure is also now provided at the outset of Appendix 5 (TORs)



And,

- The TORs for all technical and managerial positions were reviewed and where needed TOR were revised to address the comments and avoid any appearance of ?mis-categorization? of technical vs managerial functions. This was done in Appendix 5e (TORs) as well as in the budget notes and in text of the procurement plan (Appendix 11).

In addition to the information above, the TORs for all technical and managerial positions were reviewed and where needed TOR were revised to address the comments and avoid any appearance of ?mis-categorization? of technical vs managerial functions. This was done in Appendix 5e (TORs) as well as in the budget notes and in text of the procurement plan (Appendix 11). Revisions included adding reference to specific technical components that are

listed under each TOR clarifying which specific technical outputs these personnel will lead or make significant technical contributions towards their delivery.

The 'national project coordinator..' was a remnant from our earlier submissions and is now deleted.

31 October 2025

- a) Thanks. The sundry budget line is not included in the new GEF-format budget table
- b) Thanks. New budget table in GEF format inserted in Annex G to the CEO document (in Word)

Yearly budgets columns now removed from the new budget table in GEF format provided in Annex G to the CEO document (in Word)

Budget line 'detailed description' included as well as new and more detailed 'budget notes' added in Annex G to the CEO document (in Word)

Done and budget is now pasted as a word table in Annex G to the CEO document (in Word).

Done and 'Responsible Entity' column included in the new budget table in GEF format provided in Annex G to the CEO document (in Word)

Budget lines' 'detailed description' column is provided as well as new and more detailed 'budget notes' added in the new budget table in GEF format inserted in Annex G to the CEO document.

In addition, please note the **detailed Terms of Reference for all National and International consultants provided in Appendix 5e**

Based on the GEGF Secretariat's request, the budget allocation for transportation was re-discussed with project partners and was revised as follows:

- (a) the original request for three vehicles (2 in Socotra and 1 in Aden) was removed from the budget
- (b) partners will instead purchase only one essential 4WD vehicle for Socotra and will rent locally any other transportation that is essential for project operations in both Socotra and Aden, where the local EPA branches do not have sufficient capacity to support the project otherwise.

Please also kindly refer to the detailed explanations provided with regards to vehicle procurement, in the procurement plan (**Appendix 11**) and pasted below:

*The EPA team in Socotra has suffered major losses of equipment and damage to its office premises during the recent occupation of the island by foreign military forces. Eg the EPA premises in Socotra have only recently been received back from the occupying foreign Armed Forces, after being occupied for several years, resulting in a quasi-total loss of equipment including the precious Herbaria, marine labs and specimens, etc (which were built after years of investment, including GEF investments). Currently, very limited Central Government funding is flowing to support EPA operations in Socotra (a situation that applies to most Government bodies at present), however the EPA staff contingent and local partners are able and willing to provide all possible support to the project using whatever remaining equipment*

*and facilities they can provide. The vehicles of the recently completed GEF project 5347 were handed over to the EPA but they are now in very poor conditions due to long term operations in the rough terrain of Socotra.*

*Unfortunately, in the present dire circumstances the EPA is not able to provide dedicated vehicles that are absolutely essential to support all project operations and especially ensuring regular stakeholder consultations at the site level in remote protected areas that can only be reached by 4WD and on foot, as well as activities implemented in all parts of the vast island (approx. 3,665 sqkm). Therefore the project budget makes provisions for either (a) procuring one new or second-hand 4WD vehicle to be dedicated full-time to project operations in Socotra, and rent locally for all additional project operational requirements, or (b) should the procurement of a suitable 4WD vehicles not be feasible at the time of project initiation (e.g. due to procurement constraints related to the ongoing conflict), then the option of renting 4WD vehicles locally is also envisaged using the same budget allocation.*

The project M&E budget is now revised and down to 5% as requested.

The allocation for project personnel is now reduced to a total of \$1,392,295 (31%)

Please refer to (a) the Project Organization Diagram provided in Section B, clarifying that there are **only two levels of management**: Amman and Aden + Socotra (b) To avoid any misunderstanding, the position that was formerly named 'coordinator..' is now re-named: 'National EPA/MOWE Liaison Officer' to clarify that this is NOT a third level of management but an important high-level liaison position with EPA and National Government partners.

Please refer also to the **detailed Terms of Reference for the project team and for all National and International consultants provided in Appendix 5e** that were edited to clarify that there is no overlap in the various positions that are based in three very distinct and distant locations (Amman, Aden and Socotra) with responsibility to manage very distinct sets of activities.

Please see our response above on management roles that are reduced to the essential given the three distant geographical locations and the different technical scope of project activities at each location. No duplication of tasks is present.

*With regards to the best practice of housing the PMU staff as close to the project as possible:* the project operational and managerial set-up takes stock of recent operational experience of GEF project 5347 in the same areas, and is designed to:

(a) consider the great distance, very different operational context and diverse technical scope of activities in Socotra and in Aden, as well as the important regional role played by the RSCN in and from Jordan

(b) mitigate the risks enshrined in the current safety, security and operational context of Yemen. That means that travel, field operations and access to one or more parts of Yemen by international experts, including eg trainers, technical advisors, PSC and TAG members etc. may be periodically constrained or sometimes impossible. Hence in such situations most activities involving international expertise can still be effectively managed from Jordan and e.g. workshops/meetings can be hosted by the RSCN in Jordan, as Yemeni staff can easily travel in the region and within Yemen.

(c) the same applies to the suboptimal financial services, banking options and administrative facilities available in Yemen, which can hamper project operations ? hence hosting of the main PMU in Jordan where banking and operational support facilities are optimal provides an efficient arrangement that can support and complement the limited facilities in Yemen (especially in Socotra).

Hence the importance of having the project technical and financial management unit hosted in Amman, with frequent travel to the two project locations in Aden and Socotra.

Of course, should the operational context in Yemen significantly improve during the project's lifetime, then due consideration will be given to shifting the main PMU location close to the action.

Thanks, well noted and all staff TORs were edited accordingly to enhance clarity and remove any apparent duplication on each position's responsibilities with regards to technical as well as managerial tasks, including tasks related to M&E.

It is most important to consider that the technical scope of activities in Aden and in Socotra is quite different.

Please refer to the detailed Terms of Reference for the project team provided in **Appendix 5e**

This is now done, all admin-logistics positions are budgeted under PMC only, and this is visible in the new budget template in GEF format provided in **Annex G**

These positions have been merged and reduced in number, so they are now only **3**. And as outlined above, all admin-logistics positions are budgeted under PMC, and this is visible in the new budget template in GEF format provided in **Annex G**

Please refer to the TORs for the project Technical Officers (**Appendix 5e**), that clearly include M&E tasks, (Component 4) combined with other technical and management support tasks. This is a deliberate choice to improve cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

*This activity ?Presenting Project Outcomes in International Fora?* is not deemed unusual when considering the special situation of the Socotra Archipelago and of the Aden Wetlands. The GEF and UN have supported BD conservation in Socotra Archipelago since the year 1997 and in Aden since 2006, resulting in the creation of the first PA in Yemen (year 2000), the first UNESCO MAB Reserve and the first UNESCO World Heritage Site in the country, through innovative community-based and BD research approaches that are considered a model in the Arab Region. These efforts are suffering major losses and damage during the recent and ongoing conflict in Yemen. Therefore, as experienced by all prior GEF projects in the past 28 years, project advocacy and sharing of experiences emerging from the historic conservation efforts and ongoing conflict, and those that will emerge from this new GEF new project, it is anticipated that the project will (a) continue to generate important lessons to be shared regionally and globally, (b) continue to need advocacy and awareness raising to attract international support, and (c) continue to attract regional and international attention and requests for information and know-how sharing from neighbouring countries and global partners such as the CBD Convention, Ramsar Convention, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, UNCCD, The UN Decade on Restoration, etc. Hence, based on prior experience and on projected needs assessed during the PPG in consultations with project partners and key stakeholders, it is kindly suggested that this limited budget allocation is retained.

As clearly spelled out in the project Results Framework (**Annex C**), some baseline surveys were simply not possible during the PPG's allocated period (June-August 2025), as travel to field locations was not possible due to the ongoing regional conflict in Ghaza involving Israel, Iran, Lebanon and Yemen. Travel in the region at that time was not possible for the PPG technical team and therefore selected baseline surveys were conducted through local partners while others that are important to establish a project baseline were deferred to the project initiation period.

All such surveys will then have to be repeated at mid-term and project end as part of the project M&E framework. Therefore, it is kindly suggested to keep this budget allocation as removing it would hinder the effectiveness of entire project's M&E framework.

1 October 2025

- a) Thanks. Clarifying that the Executing Partner for all budget lines is the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), hence no additional table was deemed necessary as all details are provided in project budget table.
- b) Thanks and on Equipment/Miscellaneous component/vehicles: please find additional information, rationale and justification now in **Appendix 11** (pp.202-210 of the Appendices and Attachments document) to the project document (procurement plan), provided as a table located after the procurement plan table and called: *Additional Explanatory note on the rationale for the procurement of vehicles*.

As suggested, the budget lines for Sundry, Hospitality and Entertainment were all removed as not used for this project.

**Annex H: NGI Relevant Annexes**

**8.9 a) Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to assess the following criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments.**

**b) Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments.**

**c) Is the Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

**RESPONSE:08/12/2025**

**RESPONSE FOR COMMENTS MADE BY UK AND GERMANY - UNDER THE GEFSEC Recommendation SECTION:**

The comments have been addressed under Annex I - of the CEO Endorsement.

**Additional Annexes**

**9. GEFSEC DECISION**

**9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation**

**Is the project recommended for approval**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/1/2025

While all comments provided on Nov 26th were addressed, we detected one issue that requires the Agency's action before clearance: the comments provided by UK and Germany are not responded in Annex I - Responses to Project's reviews. We sincerely apologize for this oversight, but without this being addressed, we can't clear the project. So please, include those responses in the CEO Endorsement Request - Annex I.

11/21/2025

The project is not yet ready. Please address the last comments. Still the CEO Approval Request Portal view has sections with green shadow ? considering that this is the document circulated to Council for review, please present a clean version with the resubmission.

n/a	Abihin	12.598296	54.333076	246		Costal – Marine Protected Area	Ecotourism, sea turtle conservation
			<b>Sub-total Socotra</b>	<b>8,272</b>	<b>4,159</b> (2,167 M and 1,992 F)		
			Marine PAs	1,134			
			Terrestrial PAs	6,536			
			Wetland (Ramsar site)	602			
<b>Aden</b>							
n/a	Al Heswah	12.83746	44.94451	185		Wetland Protected Area	Ecotourism, local livelihoods
n/a	Al-Mimlah	12.84880	45.01529	943		Wetland Protected Area	Ecotourism, local livelihoods
n/a	Buharat Al Baga'a	12.82228	45.01983	110.11		Wetland Protected Area	Ecotourism, local livelihoods
			<b>Sub-total Aden Wetlands</b>	<b>1238.11</b>	<b>876</b> (335 M and 541 F)		
			<b>totals</b>	<b>9,510.11</b>			

#### Overview of the Biodiversity Importance of the Socotra Archipelago and the Aden Wetlands

##### Biodiversity of Yemen

Yemen's biodiversity is of remarkable global importance, spanning both terrestrial and marine ecosystems that support unique species and ecological processes. On land, the country's varied topography, from coastal plains and wadis to mountain ranges, hosts a mosaic of habitats, many of which are home to endemic and regionally significant species of plants, reptiles, birds, and invertebrates. These terrestrial systems provide essential ecosystem services, including soil stabilization, water regulation, and resources for rural livelihoods, while also functioning as critical stopover and breeding grounds for migratory birds moving along the African-Eurasian flyway.

Marine ecosystems along Yemen's coasts are equally vital, encompassing coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves, lagoons, and extensive mudflats. These habitats sustain high levels of biodiversity, including reef-building corals, coastal and pelagic fish, marine mammals, and threatened turtle species, many of which are of international conservation concern. They also serve as crucial nursery grounds that maintain regional fisheries and provide resilience against climate change impacts such as sea-level rise and warming seas.

##### Socotra Archipelago – project Target Area

The Socotra Archipelago holds exceptional global biodiversity importance, both for its terrestrial ecosystems and for its surrounding marine environments. Its value derives from a unique combination of isolation, evolutionary history, and ecological integrity, which have together produced an extraordinary degree of endemism and diversity.

In terms of terrestrial diversity, Socotra is among the world's top ten islands in terms of botanical conservation importance. Roughly 37% of its 825 recorded plant species are endemic, including iconic species such as the dragon's blood tree (*Dracaena cinnabari*) and the cucumber tree (*Dendrosicyos socotranus*). Entire genera, such as *Dirachma* and *Dendrosicyos*, occur nowhere else. This endemism extends to fauna: 27 of 30 terrestrial reptile species are unique to the archipelago, making it one of the richest reptile assemblages of any island group. Similarly, six bird species are endemic, and the islands host 22 Important Bird Areas recognized globally for conservation. Invertebrates, too, show striking patterns: studies of woodlice, for example, recorded a 73% endemism rate, far surpassing neighbouring regions.

11/04/2025

The project is not yet ready. Still The CEO Approval Request Portal view has sections with green shadow ? considering that this is the document circulated to Council for review, please present a clean version with the resubmission.

10/08/2025

The project is not yet ready and need to be revised. Please address the comments. The CEO Approval Request Portal view has several sections with green shadow. Considering that this is the document circulated to Council for review, please present a clean version with the resubmission.

09/12/2025

The project is not ready yet. Some formatting issues (pictures, maps, tables) need to be fixed before going further in the review. Please try to fix them and ask for IT help if needed.

**9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency during the inception and implementation phase**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

**9.3 Review Dates**

	<b>CEO Approval</b>	<b>Response to Secretariat comments</b>
<b>First Review</b>	<b>9/12/2025</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>10/8/2025</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>11/4/2025</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>11/26/2025</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>12/1/2025</b>	