

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	9671
Project Name:	Effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Qarun Protected Areas
Countr(ies):	Egypt
Implementing Agency:	UNEP

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Effective Management of Wadi El-Rayan and Qarun Protected Areas

Country

Egypt

GEF ID

9671

Implementing Agency

UNEP

Executing Entity

IUCN Regional Office for West Asia

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

MSP

PIR Submission

9/16/2025

Fiscal Year , PIR Number

FY 2025 , 6th PIR

Objective

To improve the management effectiveness of the Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun protected areas through community involvement and capacity building

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress

Satisfactory

Development Objective

Satisfactory

Overall risk

Low Risk

Project Financing

1,445,250.00

Cumulative Disbursement

1,206,371.00

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

12/14/2018

Agency Approval

12/14/2018

Implementation Start

6/20/2019

First Disbursement

9/26/2019

Expected MTR 1/31/2024	Actual MTR 10/1/2023
Expected Completion 12/31/2025	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

Rating towards outcomes: The rating for the progress of project implementation at the outcome level during the reporting period (July 2024 – June 2025) has been assessed as satisfactory, given the project's ability to continue implementing several key activities that have resulted in tangible outcomes. Notably, the management effectiveness of Lake Qarun and Wadi El Rayan Protected Areas (PAs) has improved, as reflected in the latest METT assessment covering implementation up to 2024. The overall scores have increased for both PAs: Wadi El Rayan PA (WRPA) from 72 to 75 points, and Lake Qarun PA (LQPA) from 62 to 69 points. These scores are expected to further improve based on ongoing activities, including the installation of updated signage in both reserves and the procurement of field survey and monitoring equipment. Beside the management plans for Lake Qarun, Jabal Qatrani and Wadi Al Hitan that were already developed, a restoration master plan was developed for Lake Qarun to address key threats affecting the lake. The project also developed a communication, education and awareness plan CEPA to enhance the awareness of local communities. This was coupled with training of the PAs staff on integrated management of protected areas, GIS, community engagement and several soft skills. Also, report on identification of Nature Based Solutions NBS in WRPA and LQPAs has been developed. Project activities also supported enforcement and patrolling efforts through the complete maintenance of vehicles and boats used in patrol operations as part of the law enforcement programme in Wadi El Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas. Along with the capacity building programme, this project has organised a comprehensive training for EEAA field staff, which included topics such as Microsoft Office, computer software/hardware maintenance, Photoshop cc2022, video editing, social media, and training on English language, levels one, two and three, after which the participants' performance was tested and certified. Additionally, two of the Protected Areas managers attended a conference organised by the IUCN ROWA and the Arab Regional Center for World Heritage ARC-WH on the "Natural and mixed world Heritage Sites in the Arab States: Listing implications and synergies with the IUCN's Green List.". The PA managers presented a case study and presentation of their site and gain a knowledge on how to make the synergies between the Green List and World Heritage requirements and criteria. A consultation workshop was conducted to update the management plan for Wadi El-Hitan site in accordance with the Green List Requirement, with a focus on enhancing gender mainstreaming and alignment with the Green List Standard. In addition, a training on the Green List gap assessment tool (IBEX Tool) was delivered for the both protected areas (Wadi El-Rayan & Qaroun) to assess their alignments with the Green List standard. On the other hand, to improve the efficiency of the CEPA implementation, the project conducted a training workshop to enhance the capacity of the rangers and PA's staff. The NCS team managing the Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas (PAs) is effectively implementing the Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA) plan.

Rating towards outputs: The rating for the 2025 year's progress is satisfactory because the project was able to advance the work on different outputs and achieve considerable progress on the ground. Output 1.1.1: PA management frameworks of Wadi El-Rayan and Qarun PAs were developed, including participatory approaches and three management plans which were all delivered during the reporting period. Output 1.1.2: Field monitoring programs were developed and

implemented within Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas to assess the conservation status of key ecosystems, as well as threatened and important species. In addition, a restoration plan for Lake Qarun was developed. A partnership was established with BirdLife International to update the KBA's and fill the gaps in monitoring programmes (field surveys were taken place by the NCE, Birdlife International to have a rapid survey on the Flora, Fauna and Avi-fauna (Birds), also a National Coordination Technical Group, NCG under official establishment with the coordination with the EEAA). Output 2.1.1: Programmes for community participatory planning and involvement in PA Management developed, the three MP's and the community education and awareness plan were developed with active participatory approaches, in addition to a training and study tour for the PA staff to Jordan on integrated management of protected areas which included demonstration of community engagement and participatory planning. Also, the establishment of the Local Community Advisory Committee through an official endorsement letter by the EEAA CEO and a several meetings were conducted gathered all of these members from different stakeholders (The official letter will be linked to this report and uploaded in a separate file). On the other hand, the Educational Awareness Centre were successfully established beside the management building of Qaroun Protected area at Shakshouk village having a training hall that can be used by the PA management to gather the local community and provide them with an awareness session on the importance of the reserves. Output 2.1.2: Controls and monitoring programmes to conserve ecosystem services and reduce overharvesting by local communities within Wadi El-Rayan and Qarun PAs developed and implemented. An enforcement plan and surveillance plan was developed. Also, the project provided full maintenance to the vehicle (cars, boats and motorcycles) that are used for patrolling and surveillance and installed a 25KW off-grid solar power system to serve the visitor centre in Jabal Qatrani which is part of Lake Qarun Natural Reserve. To support the control and monitoring efforts for both PA's, the project co-finance partner (the Italian Egyptian Cooperation Project) support in developing an Environmental monitoring guide for Protected Areas in Egypt with an application to both PA's. The project is also in the process of purchasing field survey equipment, with completion planned by mid-August 2025. Overall risk rating: The overall risk rating for project implementation during the reporting period is assessed as Low, based on the following considerations: Delay in project initiation due to local security approval process: The Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) has issued the necessary security clearance for project implementation, enabling progress at both the outcome and output levels. As a result, many previously identified risks have been significantly reduced. Extension to Compensate Delays: To compensate for the delays caused by the wait for security clearance and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in line with the decisions of the Project Steering Committee (PSC), the project received its first no-cost extension (NCE), extending the technical closure date to 31 December 2024. Addressing Implementation Gaps: To address a minor gap in implementation caused by the temporary absence of the EEAA project focal point, high-level support was provided by the CEO of EEAA, including the appointment of a new focal point and resolution of related challenges. Second NCE and Implementation Timeline: Following the PSC meeting held in Cairo, Egypt, the committee members formally requested a further extension of the project implementation period to 31 December 2025. This extension aims to ensure the completion of all remaining activities, including the full operationalization of the Environmental and Educational Centre and the completion of landscaping works. The second NCE was agreed upon between the Implementing Agency (IA) and Executing Agency (EA), supported by an amended 2025 workplan and budget. Main Achievements: Output 1.1.1: PA management frameworks of Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs developed, including participatory approaches. Revised Activity 1.1.1.1. Develop, update and implement Protected Area Management Plans and conduct a desk review for Nature Based Solutions (Achieved in the previous reporting period) NbS report developed and submitted for EEAA. The report included a national and site-specific review of initiatives that has NBS standard elements and could develop into a full NBS. The project developed and updated the following management plans: The management plans were developed and

approved by the EEAA team, and the implementation will be on-going till the end of the project. Lake Qarun management plan. Jabal Qatrani management plan. Wadi Al Hitan management plan. Update the management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) for the Wadi El Rayan and Lake Qaroun Protect Areas to reflect the recent progress and activities of the project implementation covering the period till 2023 year. And the overall score for both reserves increased as below. WRPA: Increased from 67 points to 72 points. LQPA: Increased from 53 points to 62 points.(Achieved in the current reporting period)Update the management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) for the Wadi El Rayan and Lake Qaroun Protect Areas to reflect the recent progress and activities of the project implementation covering the 2024 year. And the overall score for both reserves increased as below. WRPA: Increased from 72 points to 75 points. LQPA: Increased from 62 points to 69 points.Under design finalisation of the following reports: Lake Qarun PA management plan. Jabal Qatrani site management plan. Wadi Al-Hitan management plan. Egypt NBS report. Lake Qarun restoration plan.Translation the following documents from English to Arabic language: A report on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for WRPA and LQPA and Egypt. A Communications, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan to coordinate the CEPA objectives, target audiences, methods of delivery, costs, and means for assessing effectiveness of CEPA activities.Activity 1.1.1.2: Develop Key Biodiversity Area classifications for WRPA and LQPA(Achieved in the current reporting period)Identification and assessment of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) within Qaroun and Wadi El Rayan Protected Areas were conducted in collaboration with Birdlife International – Africa and their Egyptian partner, Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE). Through this activity, we conducted rapid flora, fauna, and avifauna field surveys to ascertain the current situation within both reserves and perform a gap assessment identifying data required for the KBA assessment. These surveys supported the development of species conservation plan for the two Protected Areas by providing up-to-date records of species presence/absence during the survey period. Additionally, a national training workshop was organised for biodiversity experts and Egyptian Protected Area managers. This workshop trained participants on the Global Guidelines for the KBA assessment, including how to use them and fill out proposal forms. The activity also involved preparing a tentative list for a National Coordination Group (NCG). The NCG will support the KBA assessment for the two protected areas and nationally. Some workshop participants were nominated to the Technical and Scientific Committee established under Activity 1.1.1.8. Activity 1.1.1.3: Develop and implement habitat and species conservation plans(Achieved in the current reporting period)A species conservation plan for the Fennec Fox and the Dorcas Gazelle in both Wadi El Rayan and Lake Quarun Protected areas were successfully developed. Activity 1.1.1.4: Develop Lake Qarun ecosystem restoration master plan(Achieved in the previous reporting period)An ecosystem restoration plan for Lake Qarun was developed and submitted for the EEAA. The plan was approved by the EEAA, and it formed a basis for the development concept note aiming to restore the lake and ensure the project sustainability. Activity 1.1.1.5: Establish and implement best practice guidelines and manuals(Achieved in the previous reporting period)Achieved through the Italian Cooperation project, and further coordination with them and EEAA will be to identify complementary activities and avoid duplication.A desk revision and discussion of the best practice guidelines, and manuals are needed was conducted to identify priority guidelines and manuals to be developed. Under the Italian Cooperation project these manuals are already prepared, and this can consider as a deliverable (co-financing). This guideline is called “Environmental monitoring guide for Protected Areas in Egypt with an application to both wadi El Rayan and Lake Qaroun”.(Achieved in the current reporting period)Conduct a national training workshop on identifying and assess the Key Biodiversity Areas KBA’s Global Standard with the participation of the national experts from different expertise related to the biodiversity along with the managers of the protected areas in Egypt. This work will be coordinated with BirdLife International – Africa and their partner in Egypt, Nature Conservation Egypt, NCE. Date of the training between the 22nd till the 24th of July 2024.Activity 1.1.1.6: Conduct PA staff and community training to conserve biodiversity(Achieved in the previous reporting period) EEAA staff including Wadi El

Rayan and Lake Qarun staff were given trainings and taken on a study tour on Integrated management of protected areas in Jordan. Organised a comprehensive training for EEAA field staff, which included topics such as Microsoft Office, computer software/hardware maintenance, Photoshop cc2022, video editing, social media, and training on the English language, levels one, two, and three, after which the participants' performance was tested and certified. Organised a specialised training on the use of the computer programs ArcGIS for EEAA field staff, which was done on location using the equipment and licensed programs that were previously provided through this project. Organised a specialised training on the use of the computer programs ArcGIS for EEAA field staff, which was done on location using the equipment and licensed programs that were previously provided through this project. Two of the Protected Areas managers attend the conference on the 24th till the 26th of January 2024 in Jordan organised by the IUCN ROWA and the Arab Regional Center for World Heritage ARC-WH on the "Natural and mixed World Heritage Sites in the Arab States: Listing implications and synergies with the IUCN's Green List.". The PA managers presented a case study and presentation of their site at the conference as well. Attendance of the project focal point and project representative in the Sixth steering committee meeting and first consultative workshop to update the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, NBSAP to represent the project and networking on the national scale for future opportunities. Attendance of the project focal point (Dr. Shaimaa Taha) for Wadi El-Rayan project in the CMS COP14 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan to present the country's progress towards this convention along with presenting the project work and achievements. This will support establishment of a synergies between the conservation action plan with the international priorities.(Achieved in the current reporting period) Workshop to Update the management plan for Wadi El-Hitan site based on the Green List Requirement along with the enhancing gender mainstreaming and alignment with the Green List Standard between the 20th till the 24th of October 2024. Training on the Green List gap assessment tool (IBEX Tool) was conducted for the two protected areas (Wadi El-Rayan & Qaroun) to measure their alignments with the Green List standard. From the 10th till the 13th of November 2024. Conduct a training workshop to enhance the capacity of the rangers and PA's staff and the NCS team managing the Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun Protected Areas (PAs) to implement the Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA) plan effectively. Dated 3rd till the 4th of December 2024. A planned a cleanup campaign and awareness session in the two protected area (Wadi ElRayan and Qaroun PA) over two days to enhance environmental awareness about the importance of protected areas and the need to maintain their cleanliness while foster community engagement by involving local communities, civil society organizations, tourism companies, and other stakeholders in conservation activities. On the other hand, introduce and promote new environmental initiatives and best practices, particularly in reducing harmful plastic use and promoting sustainable behaviour. The targeted number for each protected area up to 150 participants. Further training for the local community and the socioeconomic projects owners and workers and stakeholder will be conducted by RAED NGO. Planned to be in Mid-August based on the EEAA and PA management direction. Activity 1.1.1.7: Develop Green List nomination dossiers(Achieved in the previous reporting period) The project has initiated the process of the preparation for the IUCN's Green List nomination process, by preparing the documents and maps needed for the Green List application. Communication was initiated with the EEAA, and a workshop and training were done to prepare the EEAA staff (decision-makers and PA staff) for the Green List application process. Based on the previous SC meeting conducted we agree that we will support in renewing the certificate of Wadi al Hitan- Al Wadi El-Rayan protected area as it expired by the end of 2023.(Achieved in the current reporting period) Workshop to Update the management plan for Wadi El-Hitan site based on the Green List Requirement along with the enhancing gender mainstreaming and alignment with the Green List Standard between the 20th till the 24th of October 2024. Training on the Green List gap assessment tool (IBEX Tool) was conducted for the two protected areas (Wadi El-Rayan & Qaroun) to measure their alignments with the Green List standard. From the 10th till the 13th of November 2024. Ongoing work by IUCN and the EEAA

on the Management plan update and submission of the GL dossier on the IUCN COMPASS for review by the EGALs. Along with the preparation of a PANORAMA solution that shows a success story the Green Listed or the Site that are submitting for the GL has been working on and succeed in its implementation. A desk review of climate change impact assessment study was initiated for Wadi ElHitan Green List site as part of the relisting work for the certificate.

Activity 1.1.1.8: Establish and operate a Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee(Achieved in the current reporting period) Establishment of the Scientific & Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) following the official endorsement letter by the EEAA CEO, this committee will support the project, including expertise in PA management planning and management effectiveness, biological monitoring, compliance monitoring, and enforcement, etc. And is to provide the EEAA with recommendations and advice on the listing/delisting and status of species in Al-Fayoum Area. Conducted the 1st Technical and Scientific committee meeting after the official establishment by the EEAA CEO to present them the project achievements along with presenting the main role based on specific Terms of Reference. The meeting dated on the 23rd of October 2024.

Output 1.1.2: Field monitoring programs within Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs to assess the conservation status of key ecosystems and threatened and important species will be developed and implemented

Activity 1.1.2.1: Design and implement monitoring and reporting systems for threats and status of ecosystems and species.(Achieved in the previous reporting period) Implementing monitoring initiatives through the Italian cooperation. Also, based on the recent SC meeting, the EEAA Protected areas managers requested equipment for monitoring, and the procurement of priority equipment in in process.(Achieved in the current reporting period) The process of purchasing the field survey equipment's to support the monitoring activities in progress and its estimated compilation by the end of September 2025.

Activity 1.1.2.2: Develop and implement a compliance monitoring and enforcement system(Achieved in the previous reporting period) A patrolling and law enforcement plan was developed, comprehensive maintenance of vehicles, boats and cars used for patrolling was conducted, uniforms for patrolling staff to have a unified identity

Activity 1.1.2.3: Establish and facilitate a PA biodiversity information management unit(Achieved in the previous reporting period) Hardware and GIS and remote sensing software were secured for the information management unit. High accuracy Satellite imagery was purchased to the dynamic parts of the protected area. A comprehensive development needs assessment for the information management unit was conducted, including hardware, software and training needs, in addition to developing an organisational structure for the unit. The project procured all needed software and hardware that were identified as a priority to establish the unit, and the staff are now being provided with extensive comprehensive GIS training. Hardware like High tech computers/ workstations, servers and internet infra structure was procured. Advanced ESRI GIS licenses and remote sensing software licenses were procured for the unit. Organising a specialised training on the use of the computer programs ArcGIS for EEAA field staff, which was done on location using the equipment and licensed programs that were previously provided through this project. Along with a Comprehensive GIS training.

Output 2.1.1: Programmes for community participatory planning and involvement in PA management developed and implemented at the targeted PA sites.

Activity 2.1.1.1: Develop and implement a Communications, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) plan(Achieved in the previous reporting period) A Communication, education and public awareness plan CEPA was developed by the project in coordination with CEDARE and with a wide public participation of local communities in AlFayoum area. Now the CEPA Plan was developed and approved.(Achieved in the current reporting period) Prepared several visibility materials for the project to be distributed in the events and official opening for the Educational and Environmental centre. The materials as follow: 3D models for both protected areas. 3D pop-up brochures highlighting the important information about the protected areas and its location. Desert scarf, water bottle, notebook and pin, tote bags. Currently, IUCN and the EEAA working to celebrate the World Environmental day in one of the protected areas through celebration of the announcement of the initiative of EEAA to start preparing the GeoPark dossier for AlFayoum protected areas. Conducting a cleanup campaign

in the two protected area (Wadi ElRayan and Qaroun PA) over two days to enhance environmental awareness about the importance of protected areas and the need to maintain their cleanliness while foster community engagement by involving local communities, civil society organizations, tourism companies, and other stakeholders in conservation activities. On the other hand, introduce and promote new environmental initiatives and best practices, particularly in reducing harmful plastic use and promoting sustainable behaviour. Activity 2.1.1.2: Establish and operate a community environmental education center (Achieved in the previous reporting period) An expert assessment of the land adjacent to the management building on Lake Qaroun Protected Area, to solve the soil salinity problem and prepare the land for planting and construction and provide the landscaping work for the space. Report have been finalised, and recommendations were provided which led to a successful completion of the implementation of the land solution to be ready for the establishment of the educational centre. (Achieved in the current reporting period) The Establishment and furnishing of an environmental educational centre in the land adjacent to the management building in the Lake Qaroun Protected Area in Shakshouk. This centre will be used by the Protected Area (PA) authorities and the local communities to showcase their environmental work and activities. (Related to activities under Activity 2.1.1.3). The renovation work and furnishings of the management building for Lake Qaroun Protected area were completed successfully and handled to the PA Management. Now, the management building fully operated and renovated. Start the contracting process of the Landscaping work in the established Educational and Environmental Centre in the land adjacent to Qaroun Protected Area in Shakshouk – Al-Fayoum. Activity 2.1.1.3: Establish and facilitate a Community Advisory Committee (Achieved in the current reporting period) Successful establishment of a local community advisory committee – Wadi El Rayan & Qaroun protected area through an official endorsement letter from the EEAA CEO. The committee will provide guidance on a wide range of issues affecting PA management and the protection of species and their habitats. Conduct the 1st local community advisory committee meeting – Wadi El Rayan & Qaroun protected area following the official endorsement letter from the EEAA CEO. The committee will guide on a wide range of issues affecting PA management and the protection of species and their habitats. Date of the meeting 7th of July 2024. Conducted the 2nd local community advisory committee meeting – Wadi El Rayan & Qaroun protected area, in which the NGO's in Fayoum presented their work to the committee members and what they have done in these two reserves so far. The next meeting the governmental bodies and members in the committee will present their work as well and the PA's/ project will present what they have do so far with the implementation. Date of the meeting 8th of August 2024. Conduct the 3rd Local Community Advisory Committee meeting to present for them the recent work on the establishment of the Educational and Awareness Centre on the ground and how they will support its operation and support the surrounding community. Activity 2.1.1.4: Support community-based eco-tourism infrastructure developments, services, product development and product sales (Achieved in the previous reporting period) The project has identified the scope of the eco-tourism infrastructure development in wadi El Rayan and Lake Qarun. A sub-contract was awarded to a national NGO to implement these plans. The project has already installed a 25KW solar power system to serve the Jabal Qatrani site which is part of Lake Qarun. Based on the recent SC meeting, several discussions points were agreed on for more improvement on the infrastructure for the eco-tourism as follow (Completing solar energy cells to raise the efficiency of solar energy production capacity within the targeted areas and linking them to the government grid., Establishing pergolas to support eco-tourism activities in the two reserves and Enhancing the functionality of restroom facilities in the visitor areas of Wadi El-Rayan and the administrative building of Qarun Reserve, with the objective of providing improved services to visitors. Noting that this will be subjected to the allocated budget and cost for maintenance. (Achieved in the current reporting period) The upgrade of the post signs in Wadi ElRayan, Wadi ElHitan GL site and Qaroun protected areas is in progress and all of them were re/designed and planned by the end of August to be fully printed, installed in the sites of the protected areas. PAs and EEAA field staff at Wadi El Rayan and lake

Qarun were supplied with uniforms to enhance their image, visibility and function in enforcement, surveillance, eco-guiding. Output 2.1.2: Controls and monitoring programmes to conserve ecosystem services and reduce overharvesting by local communities within Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qarun PAs developed and implemented. Activity 2.1.2.1: Develop and implement resource-use protocols and agreements. (Achieved in the previous reporting period) A desk revision and discussion of the needed best practice guidelines, and manuals was conducted to identify priority guidelines and manuals to be developed. Under the Italian Cooperation project, these manuals are already prepared and could be consider as a deliverable (co-financing). This guideline is called “Environmental monitoring guide for Protected Areas in Egypt with an application to both wadi el Rayan and Lake Qaroun”. (Achieved in the current reporting period) Establishment of a local community advisory committee for Wadi El Rayan & Qaroun protected area through an official endorsement letter from the EEAA CEO. Activity 2.1.2.2: Establish a resource user permit system (Achieved in the previous reporting period) Developing of the patrolling plan led to the significantly enhanced the resource use in the protected area and became more sustainable enhancing the surveillance capacity of the team, enhanced awareness, increase of the site visitors, and measurements of water quality in Lake Qarun. Establishment of an information management unit for the PAs, through conducting a needs assessment and procurement of GIS software and data to enable remotes sensing and GIS analysis. Additional Activity 2.1.2.3: Developing best practice demonstration sites. Extended activity: Develop and implement site Management Plan for Qatrani (Achieved in the previous reporting period).

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

Challenges: Local Vendor allocation, and high cost because of the remoteness of the PAs. Fluctuation of the currency exchange between Egyptian pound and USD which result a higher price for everything purchased in Egypt. Communication; internet and phone coverage in Fayoum area. The simplicity of the rural areas surrounding/containing protected areas resulting in absence of taken-as-default technology. Following the Steering Committee meeting, the committee requested an official project extension to extend the project duration for one year (till the end of December 2025, technical implementation), the process for extension take up to three months and during this time, the majority of these planned activities were shifted.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder participation includes government, NGOs and academic organizations, and communities and businesses. The roles and responsibilities of these stakeholders in project implementation are described as follows:

Government: This includes:

- Egyptian Environmental Affair Agency (EEAA): responsible for coordination with other line ministries and in developing project activities.
- Nature Conservation Sector (NCS): responsible for designing project activities related to policy and regulatory changes.
- Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, Ministry of Water Resources & Irrigation, Tourism Department: responsible to ensure activities align with national priorities and investments and to offer best management practices for conservation and pollution prevention.
- Fayoum Governor and Governorate: responsible for approving the protocols and instruments developed under the project and to provide guidance on the development of best management practices, protocols and regulations.
- Water and Environmental Police and Security Department: responsible for providing technical information and experience in compliance enforcement and monitoring.
- NGOs and Academic Organizations: These include:
 - Academic institutions: to assist in project design and implementation through research.
 - IUCN ROWA: to implement activities and coordinate with project partners.

- UN Environment Programme: to ensure synergies between biodiversity related MEAs and SDGs at both national and PA's levels and to enhance capacity building.
- Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE): to support the two PAs in building the capacities of park management in Earth Observation (EO), modelling and in data exploitation.
- Nature Conservation Egypt: to provide advice on approaches to conservation.
- Fayoum Environmental Centre: to develop skills of community (women & youth) through training and environmental awareness.
- Message (Resala): to engage youth.
- RAED NGO: To support delivering awareness and educational material, and support developing the environmental educational centre
- Local communities and resources users, private businesses and secondary stakeholders: These stakeholders are considered important users of natural resources and are considered key partners in finding solutions to issues such as irrigation, runoff, pollution, grazing and others.

From year 2024 to 2025, the project management team was able to engage stakeholders in many important activities, including the following:

- The official establishment of the Technical and Scientific committee following the CEO endorsement that contains experts and researchers from different organisations including universities to support the PA management
- The official establishment of the local community advisory committee – Wadi El Rayan & Qaroun protected area following the CEO endorsement through. The committee will provide guidance on a wide range of issues affecting PA management and the protection of species and their habitats. Several meetings were conducted, and they present their work.
- Conducting a steering committee meeting for the Project was held in Egypt on the 15th of December 2024 to review the workplan, agree on future priorities and discuss the potential of other complementary funding opportunities and more specific, the exit strategy after the project closure through the initiatives related to the Nature-based Solutions and the ecosystem restoration. All the members of the SC from the above-mentioned organisations were invited.
- Moving towards the process of the official establishment of the KBA National Coordination Group, NCG which will contain experts from different stakeholders and research Centres to support in the assessment for both reserves and doing the work for other protected areas in Egypt as well.
- One of the key message or lesson learned from the PA managers that the after the establishment of the local community advisory committee enhance the communication and coordination with their members from the governmental bodies and local community.
- Conducting a cleanup campaign in the two protected areas (Wadi ElRayan and Qaroun PA) over two days to enhance environmental awareness about the importance of protected areas and the need to maintain their cleanliness while fostering community engagement by involving local communities, civil society organisations, tourism companies, and other stakeholders in conservation activities. On the other hand, introduce and promote new environmental initiatives and best practices, particularly in reducing harmful plastic use and promoting sustainable behaviour.
- Currently, we are working on plan to celebrate the World Environmental day in one of the protected areas through the celebration of the announcement of the initiative of EEAA to start preparing the GeoPark dossier for AlFayoum protected areas.

D. Gender Equality

The project is ensuring gender mainstreaming in all of the project activities. The project targets interventions to tackle issues concerning women and indicators to monitor and track women participation in project activities. The project increased women participation in forums such as the Local Community Advisory Committee and Scientific & Technical Advisory Committee.

Gender marking is measuring the following data:

- The number of women and men among the full-time project staff. (Project manager is a female, project assistant for the first two years was a female).
- The number of women and men that are members of the steering committee. (The EEAA GEF deputy focal point and the new EEAA project focal point for the project, both on the steering committee).
- Chair for the EEAA Engineering committee is female who's responsible for the supervision of the renovation work for the Qaroun PA management building and the establishment of the Environmental and Educational centre.
- Women participants in the established committees as follow:
- Local Community Advisory Committee: (8Female /20Male).
- Technical and Scientific committee: (6Female /17Male).
- EEAA Engineering committee is female (2Females /3Males).
- The number of women engaging with the project activities (sum from meetings and workshop participation) equal 16 participant.

Through the updating process of the Green List Application for Wadi El-Hitan GL site, we conduct a session for both the PA managers and the local community advisory committee on how to mainstream the gender aspects in the PA managements and work. Currently, the management plan for Wadi ElHitan Green List site, is under update to include the gender perspective section according to the GL Standard.

E. Knowledge Management

Knowledge activities and products	Capturing and sharing knowledge and lessons learned will constitute an important element of the project and an essential way to ensure sustainability and replicability of project achievements. The following reports and knowledge products were developed during the reporting period: • A report on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for WRPA and LQPA and Egypt (<i>translated to Arabic language as well</i>). • A Communications, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan to coordinate the CEPA objectives, target audiences, methods of delivery, costs, and means for assessing effectiveness of CEPA activities. (<i>translated to Arabic language as well</i>).
	• Lake Qarun PA management plan. <i>Under final design layout phase.</i> • Jabal Qatrani site management plan. <i>Under final design layout phase.</i> • Wadi Al-Hitan management plan. <i>Under final design layout phase.</i> • Lake Qarun restoration plan. <i>Under final design layout phase.</i> • Visitor guide for Wadi El Rayan Protected area in both English and Arabic. Currently, under finalisation. • KBA assessment for both Protected areas according to the new Global KBA standard that are ready for under submission process on the World Database for Key Biodiversity Areas WDKBA after it's got Review/ confirmation by KBA secretariat. • Rapid field surveys report for Fauna, Flora and Avi-Fauna under the KBA assessment work. • Species conservation action plan for the Dorcas gazelle and Fennec fox. Plan under review and finalisation process. • Assessment was conducted for the two protected areas (Wadi El-Rayan & Qaroun) on the Green List gap assessment tool (IBEX Tool) to measure their alignments with the Green List standard. This will support the PA to identify the gaps needs to work on and how they can start records their important information in a systematic way. <i>Also, we are in the process of preparing the following reports:</i> • Renewal of the certificate of declaring Wadi Al-Hitan protected area as a Green List site, and considering introducing new areas such as Jabal Qatrani region, through an initial assessment that clarifies the criteria and indicators that must be worked on to support the declaration of the site within the Green List in the long term. This will be done on IUCN Green List Compass. • Finalisation of the KBA package (proposals) for the assessment of the Wadi El-Rayan and Lake Qaroun KBA to be submitted to the KBA Partnership for validation. • The species conservation planning for the Fennec Fox and the Dorcas Gazelle in both Wadi El Rayan and Lake Quarun Protected areas. The final version was shared with the EEAA.
Main learning during the period	Message 1: The official establishment of the Local Community Advisory Committee significantly enhanced trust and transparency by creating a direct, efficient channel for dialogue between government representatives and community stakeholders. Protected area managers say: <i>"The committee enhances communication and coordination between the protected area, governmental bodies, and the local community through a direct channel available anytime – something that was not efficient in the past."</i> Message 2: The success of the National Key Biodiversity Area training led the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) to adopt the establishment of a National Coordination Group (NCG). This group will identify and assess new sites across Egypt, extending impact beyond the project scope. The EEAA is now formally establishing the NCG, with preparatory meetings underway. The Project Focal Point highlighted: <i>"This training was successful. Participants were highly active and eager to support."</i>

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	
Financial Management	
Implementation Schedule	
Executing Entity	
Executing Entity Category	
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	
Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Lake Qarun PA	29.45979	30.59148	

Location Description:

Lake Qarun PA

Activity Description:

PA management effectiveness

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Wadi El Rayan	29.15	30.41667	

Location Description:

Wadi El Rayan

Activity Description:

PA management

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	9671-PIR-UNEP-2025-Egypt Wadi El Rayan project