

Oasis Landscape Sustainable Management project

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10538

Countries

Tunisia

Project Name

Oasis Landscape Sustainable Management project

Agencies

World Bank

Date received by PM

3/23/2020

Review completed by PM

4/13/2020

Program Manager

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

PIF

Part I – Project Information

Focal area elements

1. Is the project/program aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements in Table A, as defined by the GEF 7 Programming Directions?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

- The Table A and the result framework are not coherent.

- The table A mentions LD1.1 (SLM): \$936,073, LD2.5 (LDN): \$1,000,000, and BD1.1: \$803,653. The LD 1.1 objective supports the implementation of Sustainable Land Management (SLM), while the LD.2.2 objective supports the reinforcement of the institutional framework related to the Land Degradation Neutrality concept (institutional support, capacity building, monitoring, etc). We generally expect more resources for LD1.1 because of a mix of capacity building and investments on the ground and smaller amounts for LD.2.5 only with capacity building. In the proposed project, with an institutional component 1 at 622K\$, an investment component 2 at 1,791 K\$, and a M&E component 3 at 195K\$, we would expect a maximum of \$600,000 under LD2.5. Please, revise.

April 8, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

040620

Thank you. Table A revised accordingly

Indicative project/program description summary

2. Are the components in Table B and as described in the PIF sound, appropriate, and sufficiently clear to achieve the project/program objectives and the core indicators?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

- Justify the proposed activities in the result framework in regard to the incremental reasoning and the GEF7 LD and BD strategy (some activities below are not eligible).
- Explain if the proposed oasis certification system will mainstream BD aspects.

Component 1

Training modules on gender aspects of socioeconomic & environment (The use of renewable energy is not BD eligible).

Gendered public consultations for planning on Biodiversity, particularly on: zoning areas for natural preservation that enhance ecosystem services and water stewardship; and measures to protect biodiversity (Question: What is “for planning Biodiversity? The word “Biodiversity” is used 97 times and never described for the target geography. What ecosystem services? The same as for Biodiversity. The term used extensively but never described in relation to the target area and this project).

Component 2

- There is a long list of activities proposed under this component. You need to readjust these activities in view of the incremental reasoning and the GEF LD and BD objectives:

- Some activities are not eligible under LD (cleaning, treatment and wastewater reuse, inventory of landscapes features, support for genetic improvement of animal breeds). Other are unclear (inclusive conservation and food systems, selection of animal breeds).
- Same observation from a BD point of view: the following activities are not eligible under BD (page 34): Organic farming; Biodynamic agriculture; Treatment & reuse of wastewater; Water saving techniques; Optimal use of waste and livestock manure; Use of renewable energy sources and small-scale techniques to reduce water losses
- Please clarify the proposed interventions for the following: i) Habitat for migratory avian species and local species (Q. What about these habitats and for what species?; 2) Measures against genetic erosion of date palm trees and disappearance of cultivars (Q. What measures to be implemented?)
- Supporting women's organizations in micro-projects aimed at protecting soils, improving productivity, rationalizing processing, transportation and marketing of organic products and by-products that enhance ecosystem services (Q. What services and measures to protect soils and biodiversity? Q. What Biodiversity?)
- Supporting women's organizations in ecotourism micro-projects aimed at empowering women and offering them alternative and sustainable livelihoods. (Q. Please clarify the Biodiversity assets that will be offered for eco-tourism and how that economic activity will contribute to the conservation of Biodiversity of Global Significance and its sustainable use)

Component 3

Please, remove the mention of tracking tools in the project paper. GEF tracking tools were replaced by the GEF Core Indicators.

April 8, 2020

We thank the Agency for their efforts to respond to the comments. Based on elements added in the project paper and especially the budget (p.42) and the description of GEF financed activities (p89). Basically, we understand and agree on the main lines of use of the GEF resources blended to IBRD resources, but some coherence aspects need to be clarified and highlighted:

- The insert with the list of species include the Addax antelope, extinct in Tunisia, and other species present only because of reintroduction. It is not clear which species will be targeted.
- Section 18: Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) is mentioned for BD, but by definition CSA targets carbon gains and do not imply any benefit for BD and especially Global Important Biodiversity;
- The mention of renewable energy is a try to reduce the use of biomass. However, there is no demonstration that this will benefit to biodiversity, GEF senso, meaning a global important biodiversity. From a LD point of view, we can accept to a certain extent these activities if the demonstration is made that it will contribute to protect the vegetation cover and reduce erosion and land degradation. Please, clarify.

- Water treatment and reuse of water do not enter into a GEF reasoning, and should be financed by IBRD.
- It is not clear if the oasis certification process will include BD aspects. Please, clarify.
- Invasive species are mentioned, but we do not know if activities are planned and which biodiversity aspects will be improved.

April 13, 2020

Thanks. The information related to the KBAs, the natural habitats, the two national parks, and the associated global important biodiversity helps. It is recommended later at CEO endorsement to improve the causal-effect reasoning to well understand which activities will be positive for which global important biodiversity. For instance, we take the point that climate smart agriculture has multiple benefits for soil, water, vegetation cover, yields, and then incomes for the local communities, but you did not say which Biodiversity of Global Importance will benefit from CSA.

We can take that the improvement of mixed landscapes of oases composed of traditional palm tree agroforestry parklands and wetlands is very important for migratory and breeding birds, including globally important bird species.

We understand that the oasis certification process is in application of the 2018-2035 NBSAP.

Please, take note that it is not the removal of Invasive and Alien Species which is eligible under BD1.1 on mainstreaming, but the removal of ANY bush encroachment that threatens the mixed landscapes of traditional palm trees and wetlands - these mixed landscapes in the KBAs being important for a global important biodiversity, notably migratory and breeding bird species. To be developed at CEO endorsement.

Cleared.

Agency Response

041620

Thank you. Project team noted all recommendations and will consider this information for adoption at the time of CEO endorsement.

041020

Thank you, please see our responses to the comments from April 8,2020 below:

- **Targeted species:** The project will contribute to protect all wild and agro-biodiversity (flora and fauna), also in order to avoid any biodiversity losses and to reduce habitats' degradation to ensure that oases will provide sustainable and healthy ecosystems services. The targeted species will be specifically identified at the inception phase of the project once SLM practices / improved management practices that benefit to biodiversity will be defined. But it's worth mentioning that the protection of reintroduced critically endangered species (according to IUCN red list classification) like Addax antelope is also most welcome to sustain investment. Moreover, the success of the Tunisian Addax antelope reintroduction programme, characterized by the establishment of a viable and successfully reproducing herd of about 45 animals at Bou Hedma National Park, allowed the reimplantation of the species in more typical Saharan habitats. Reintroductions in the wild are ongoing in Jbil National Park and Grand Erg Oriental (Sahara) which demonstrate the importance of this GEF7 project to support further this ongoing process to protect biodiversity in Southern Tunisia.

- **Climate Smart Agriculture:** CSA includes a huge range of technologies which, across different regions and agricultural systems can provide multiple benefits including food security (increasing crop yields and reducing yield variability), climate change adaptation and mitigation through carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, restoration of soil functioning ... <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3817e.pdf><http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3817e.pdf>

This has been also highlighted in 2014 by the GEF Secretariat (<https://www.thegef.org/news/climate-smart-agriculture-sustainably-feeding-world>):

“Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) presents an opportunity for the food security needs to be addressed in an integrated manner with mitigation and adaptation benefits,” Bakarr highlighted.

And such an opportunity would have benefits which stretch far beyond pure food production. Higher levels of **sustainability and more effective use of resources** will increase carbon absorption, improve the health of the land and soil, better manage watersheds and **preserve biodiversity in agricultural areas**.

- **Renewable energy:** renewable energy related activities will be done under IBRD financing. All references to renewable energy in the PCN related to GEF financing have been removed as well as in the separate Annex C about taxonomy.

- **Water treatment and reuse of water:** Agreed. All activities related to water treatment and reuse of water will be done under IBRD financing. Changes have been made accordingly.

- **Certification process:**

The project will catalyse the development of an oases product and by-product certification system, to benefit land users in the oases granted historical status under the project Outcome 1.1. The scheme will be developed and implemented in close co-operation and agreement with oases crop and livestock keepers, local and national governments, also with the private sector (supermarkets) / consumers in Tunisia's cities. The objective is to:

- * promote natural resource conservation and sustainable use, particularly maintaining the genetic diversity of oasis biological resources will involve a comprehensive inventory of agriculture, handicraft and ecotourism products and sub-products of Tunisian oasis landscapes);
- * consider environmental, economic and social factors - providing security to producers and guarantee the product quality for the consumers.

This system will be developed to directly contribute to Tunisia's National Strategy and National Action Plans on Biodiversity 2018-2030 (see PCN under Component 1).

- **Invasive species:**

Various invasive species across the oases landscapes (including KBAs) threaten all sorts of native species and crops, they cause harm to the environment, economy, also livestock and human health. The project will prevent introductions (at the practical level and also through awareness raising) and control IASs in oases and across the wider landscape.

040620

thank you for your comments

Result Framework:

A column detailing Incremental Reasoning added to Annex E of PCN.

Certification system:

The certification system will support land uses in the historical oases to

- promote natural resource conservation and sustainable use, particularly maintaining the genetic diversity of oasis biological resources;
- consider environmental, economic and social factors - providing security to producers and guarantee the product quality for the consumers.

through a WAHA designed system akin to but simplified from existing schemes such as the Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade. Grassroots organizations of civil society (NGOs) will be particularly involved in awareness-raising on biodiversity and, to some extent, the valuation and conservation of certain biodiversity resources at the local level. (see details under Component 1 and Annex D).

Component 1

Biodiversity defined and detailed in PCN section II 1a 1), including Insert 2, Annex A Maps 2&3, Annex F.

Ecosystem services clarified in PCN II 1a 1).

Component 2

Activities adjusted / removed as requested.

Component 3

GEF tracking tools replaced by the GEF Core Indicators in the project paper.

Co-financing

3. Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines, with a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Addressed.

April 13, 2020

We take note that 80% of the cofinancing is oriented for local actions.

Agency Response

041620

Thank you

GEF Resource Availability

4. Is the proposed GEF financing in Table D (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

Agency Response

The STAR allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Yes

Agency Response

The focal area allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Yes

Agency Response

The LDCF under the principle of equitable access

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

Focal area set-aside?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

Impact Program Incentive?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

Project Preparation Grant

5. Is PPG requested in Table E within the allowable cap? Has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated? (not applicable to PFD)

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion No

Agency Response

Core indicators

6. Are the identified core indicators in Table F calculated using the methodology included in the correspondent Guidelines? (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

- The project reports on the core indicator 4.3 (sustainable land management), but an BD indicator is lacking: either 4.1 (areas under management for biodiversity), or 4.2 (national or international certification for BD). Please, check if the proposed label for oasis includes BD criteria, and report under 4.2 if appropriate, or use the indicator 4.1.

- It is difficult to consider 100% of the population of the selected landscapes as beneficiaries of the GEF investment (corresponding to \$3.48 per beneficiary). It is only the proportion of men and women who will directly be involved in the project who should be considered. Please, revise.

April 8, 2020

- Please, correct and check the coherence of information in the different documents: We understand that 25,000 ha, out of protected areas, will be under a better management for biodiversity and SLM. The indicator 4 (25,000 ha) should reflect the sum of 4.1 and 4.3. In the GEF annex, there is a double counting as 25,000 ha is mentioned under 4.1 and 4.3. We suggest maintaining a more important area under SLM, and propose a lesser value for 4.3, area under better for management for BD, corresponding to the areas of KBA where 1) planning instruments mainstreaming BD aspects will be developed, 2) palm date plantations will be improved, and 3) where benefit for a global important biodiversity will be demonstrated (wetland conditions for migratory and/or breeding birds).

The indicator 4.3 (areas under SLM) should reflect a higher value, corresponding to the areas under climate smart agriculture, water and soil conservation, no tillage, etc.

April 13, 2020

The project now focuses on 25,000 ha of areas, out of protected areas, under better management for Biodiversity (5,000 ha) and SLM (20,000 ha).

To be confirmed at CEO endorsement.

Agency Response

041620

Thank you, noted

041020

Thank you, please see our responses to the comments from April 8, 2020 below:

Documents checked, info clarified and aligned in Annex B, PCN and project paper:

4.1 (BD) now 5,000 ha: 1) planning instruments mainstreaming BD aspects will be developed;

2) date groves will be improved, including restoring lost agrobiodiversity, and 3) where benefit for a global important biodiversity will be demonstrated (wetland conditions for migratory and/or breeding birds).

4.3 (LD) now 20,000 ha (CSA, SWC, conservation agriculture / reduced tillage)

040620

- Team suggests the use of the 4.1 (areas under management for biodiversity).

Proposed changes made in the GEF-7 WORLD BANK PCN STAGE/GEF DATA SHEET p. 18. As well as in paper doc. – GEF-7 core indicator 4.1. – Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity added.

- Team adjusted number of beneficiaries based on the amount provided by each funding source.

As the WB project will benefit to all the population, we can consider calculating a % for GEF funding according to the ratio between both financing:

Total = 63 495 828 USD = 786 000 beneficiaries (393 000 men / 393 000 women)

GEF investment = 2,739,726 USD = 4,3 % of total cost => 33 798 beneficiaries over total / 16 899 men and 16 899 women

WB investment = 60,756,102 USD = 95,7 % of total cost => 752 202 beneficiaries over total / 376 101 men and 376 101 women

Proposed changes made in the GEF-7 WORLD BANK PCN STAGE/GEF DATA SHEET and in the Core Indicators file. To be decided for changing in the table of core indicators.

Project/Program taxonomy

7. Is the project/ program properly tagged with the appropriate keywords as requested in Table G?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Yes

Agency Response

Part II – Project Justification

1. Has the project/program described the global environmental / adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers that need to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

A Theory of Change is also proposed.

Agency Response

2. Is the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects appropriately described?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

Agency Response

3. Does the proposed alternative scenario describe the expected outcomes and components of the project/program?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

Agency Response

4. Is the project/program aligned with focal area and/or Impact Program strategies?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

LD: See First Cell.

BD: It is not clear what the Globally Significant Biodiversity Benefits this project will deliver. There is a transcription of parts of the GEF-7 Programming Directions and the language of the Core Indicators, but no reference to the concrete BD benefits to be delivered by the project (pages 14-15).

- We suggest referring to the KBAs in the targeted regions (<http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/mapsearch>);
- If the project interventions are not connected to KBA, the GEF Agency needs to justify the sites in terms of BD value.

April 8, 2020

- We take note of the presence of KBAs in the targeted landscapes. Please, confirm that GEF activities will focus on these KBAs, as the whole project will intervene more broadly.
- We take note of a list of species of global importance included in these oasis (insert 1). However, the causal relationship is not clear. We do not know which species are targeted by the proposed mainstreaming activities financed by the GEF.
- Please, note that the Addax Antelope is considered as extinct in Tunisia and the Dama Gazelle is present in three protected areas after reintroduction for instance.
- Suggestions: the best options to justify the use of GEF BD resources are to 1) confirm the GEF resources will be used in KBAs, 2) concentrate the use of GEF resources for investments (component 2) and reduce budgets in the components 1 and 3 (institutions, capacity building, M&E), 3) focus on the maintenance/protection of wetlands and traditional date palm plantations (X ha in KBAs) for the benefits of globally threatened migratory and breeding birds (confirm baseline and numbers at CEO endorsement).
- If these requests are not feasible for any reason (data availability, time, etc), we recommend applying the marginal adjustment to transfer the BD resources to the LD focal area. It is obviously easier to develop such IBRD/GEF blended operation on integrated oasis management using the GEF LD strategies and specific objectives on SLM (1.1) and LDN (2.5).

April 13, 2020

Addressed from a LD point of view.

From a BD point of view, the GEF reasoning has been improved and we can find a list and maps of important Areas for a Global Important Biodiversity, including KBAs, IBAs, and national parks. We understand that the GEF activities will focus on these KBAs (and to produce practices and knowledge that will replicated under the IBRD cofinancing).

At CEO endorsement, this causal-effect relationships should be improved to well understand what kind of activities will benefit for which Global Important Biodiversity, and where.

Agency Response

041620

Thank you, noted. the causal-effect relationships will be improved to understand how and what activities will benefit to Globally Important Biodiversity, and including location.

41020

Thank you, please see our responses to the comments from April 8, 2020 below:

The GEF wild BD activities will indeed focus on KBAs, while the GEF agro BD, LD and wider WB activities will intervene across the entire oases landscape - GEF 7 guidance is that BD is "mainstreaming BD across all sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes". Also Aichi Targets include:
Strategic Goal C: To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity.
Strategic Goal D: To enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Mainstreaming will include raising awareness and ensuring protection of habitats in the KBAs in the overall project landscape - focusing on the maintenance/protection of wetlands and traditional biodiverse date palm plantations (5,000 ha in KBAs), particularly for the benefit of globally threatened migratory and breeding birds.

Information on Addax antelope and the Dama gazelle as well as Ostrich corrected in Insert 2.

Oasis biodiversity are important in Tunisia and the Government requested to address some of these issues in the project. Based on a call conversation with Tunisia GEF focal point on April 9, Tunisia has already used USD2 million for marginal adjustment under.

040620

KBAs referred to the 4 governorates:
Governorate of Tozeur, Kebili and Gabes:
- Chott El Jerid
Governorate of Kebili:
- National Park of Jbil

Governorate of Gafsa:

- Steppes of Gafsa
- Garaet Douza
- National Park of Bouhedma

Governorate of Gabes:

- Sebkhet Ennoual
- Sebkhet Sidi Mansour

See Maps 2 and 3 in the in the GEF-7 WORLD BANK PCN STAGE/GEF DATA SHEET.

New text in PCN II 1a 1), Insert 2 and Annex F provide details of the vulnerable national and globally important BD (agro and wild respectively) which project actions will address (reinforced by the certification system)

5. Is the incremental / additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes, but the Global Environment Benefits in terms of BD are not demonstrated yet.

April 8, 2020

- We take note of the presence of KBAs in the targeted landscapes. Please, confirm that GEF activities will focus on these KBAs, as the whole project will intervene more broadly.

- We take note of a list of species of global importance included in these oasis (insert 1). However, the causal relationship is not clear. We do not know which species are targeted by the proposed mainstreaming activities financed by the GEF.

April 13, 2020

At CEO endorsement, this causal-effect relationships should be improved to well understand what kind of activities will benefit for which Global Important Biodiversity, and where.

Agency Response

041620

Thank you, noted

41020

Thank you, please see our responses to the comments from April 8, 2020 below:

PCN and project paper revised to clarify that GEF wild BD activities will focus on KBAs.

Project activities in the KBAs and oases landscapes will protect and restore the area of wetland and diverse date palm grove habitats suitable for the globally important birds [nine species of global conservation concern have been recorded, of which four breed: *Oxyura leucocephala* (VU), *Marmaronetta angustirostris* (VU), *Falco naumanni* (VU) and *Larus audouinii* (CD). Of the other five species, *Crex crex* (VU) was recorded historically in very small numbers, mainly on spring passage, but also in autumn, and *Circus macrourus* (NT) is a regular passage migrant, while *Aythya nyroca* (VU) is a regular passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers and for which there is also a breeding record; there are historical records of *Numenius tenuirostris* (CR) and *Tetrax tetrax* (NT)] mentioned under 1a. 1). Local communities will benefit from project catalysed awareness raising activities on the importance of the KBAs, oases and wider oases landscapes in global, national and local BD conservation.

The project will also support land users to maintain / enhance the valuable agrobiodiversity of their crop / livestock systems.

040620

As above - New text in PCN II 1a 1), Insert 2 and Annex F provide details of the vulnerable national and globally important BD (agro and wild respectively) which project actions will address (reinforced by the certification system).

6. Are the project's/program's indicative targeted contributions to global environmental benefits (measured through core indicators) reasonable and achievable? Or for adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes.

See the section on indicators.

April 8, 2020

- Please, check the coherence of information in the GEF annex and other documents (indicator 4 = 4.1 + 4.3 = 25,000 ha). There is either an error or a double counting.

April 13, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

41020

Thank you, please see our responses to the comments from April 8, 2020 below:

Changes have been done in PCN, Annex B and project paper

4.1 (BD) now 5,000 ha: 1) planning instruments mainstreaming BD aspects will be developed;

2) palm date plantations will be improved, including restoring lost agrobiodiversity, and 3) where benefit for a global important biodiversity will be demonstrated (wetland conditions for migratory and/or breeding birds).

4.3 (LD) now 20,000 ha (CSA, SWC, conservation agriculture / reduced tillage)

040620

thank you, addressed as described above

7. Is there potential for innovation, sustainability and scaling up in this project?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

Agency Response

Project/Program Map and Coordinates

Is there a preliminary geo-reference to the project's/program's intended location?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Map available.

Please, provide geographical coordinates for targeted KBAs.

April 13, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

041020

Geographical coordinates for targeted KBAs have been added to Annex A, under Map 2.

Stakeholders

Does the PIF/PFD include indicative information on Stakeholders engagement to date? If not, is the justification provided appropriate? Does the PIF/PFD include information about the proposed means of future engagement?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

The detail of consultations is provided. Elements for future engagement are also provided, building on lessons from a recently closed GEF5 project.

Agency Response

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Is the articulation of gender context and indicative information on the importance and need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, adequate?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

Agency Response

Private Sector Engagement

Is the case made for private sector engagement consistent with the proposed approach?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

Agency Response

Risks

Does the project/program consider potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved or may be resulting from project/program implementation, and propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Please provide the overall project risk classification.

A preliminary list of risks is available. At CEO endorsement, please check the GEF's updated Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards (SD/PL/03).

April 8, 2020

Environmental Risk Rating: Based on the current project paper and the outputs of the ESMF, the Project is classified as Moderate Risk.

Project social risks are deemed moderate.

Agency Response

041020

Thank you for your comment.

The risk assessment for the WB parent loan is submitted, since the GEF grant will be blended with the WB loan under the same PDO.

At the CEO endorsement Project risks are going to be re-evaluated by the WB ESF team, and updated ratings will provide up to date information.

040620

Thank you for your comment.

The risk assessment for the WB parent loan is submitted, since the GEF grant will be blended with the WB loan under the same PDO

At the CEO endorsement project team will consider the GEF policy on environmental and social safeguards, to the extent possible within the existing WB safeguard system

Coordination

Is the institutional arrangement for project/program coordination including management, monitoring and evaluation outlined? Is there a description of possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project/program area?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

Agency Response

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project/program cited alignment with any of the recipient country's national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

NAP under UNCCD and LDN targets + NBSAP 2018-2036

Agency Response

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed "knowledge management (KM) approach" in line with GEF requirements to foster learning and sharing from relevant projects/programs, initiatives and evaluations; and contribute to the project's/program's overall impact and sustainability?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

Agency Response

Part III – Country Endorsements

Has the project/program been endorsed by the country's GEF Operational Focal Point and has the name and position been checked against the GEF data base?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

Agency Response

Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects

Does the project provide sufficient detail in Annex A (indicative termsheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table in Annex B to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. After reading the questionnaire in Annex C, is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

NA

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

Is the PIF/PFD recommended for technical clearance? Is the PPG (if requested) being recommended for clearance?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

The PIF cannot be recommended yet. Please, address the comments above.

April 8, 2020

Thanks for the responses. There are still comments to address. Please, see above.

April 13, 2020

The technical points have been addressed . However, please address the following items in the portal. Upon receipt of a revised package, the PIF will be recommended for clearance.

1. The submission date is missing;
2. The Executing Partner is missing;
3. On Stakeholder Engagement: Please provide a description of the consultations that took place during the project identification phase, as stated in the PIF with Civil Society Organizations and Private Sector Entities. Please note that the Policy on Stakeholder Engagement (effective date July 1, 2018), requires that at PIF stage : ‘Agencies provide a description of any consultations conducted during project development...’.

Last, we discussed about the targets under the different indicators, including the number of beneficiaries. We agreed to keep a conservative way and maintain the existing targets for this blended operation. First, it is indeed very difficult at this stage to make the distinction between areas under SLM and under management for Biodiversity. Second, the option to consider the restoration or grazing areas has not been considered either, taking benefit from lessons from past GEF/WB projects and partners (IFAD). Third, it is difficult to propose an average cost for oasis restoration, as the transaction costs, especially for the social and governance changes are high. Targets will be confirmed at CEO endorsement stage.

April 17, 2020

The comment #3 was not addressed: please, revise information in the Part II, section 2 on stakeholders.

April 17, 2020

The PIF is recommended for technical clearance.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Additional recommendations to be considered by Agency at the time of CEO endorsement/approval.

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

- Improve the causal-effect reasoning to well justify which activities will benefit to which biodiversity of international importance, and where;
- Confirm the core indicators;

- Confirm the risk assessment, the mitigation measures, and the safeguards.

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review		
Additional Review (as necessary)		

PIF Recommendation to CEO

Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval

Cover Memo

Context

With a new Constitution, a democratically elected government, and the presidential election in October 2019, there is a wind of change in Tunisia with great hope for a more equal and inclusive society. This project will feed the ambitious decentralization process to reinvigorate new energy and ideas by empowering local actors, including on natural resource management.

The proposed GEF project aims to extend the results and success of previous WB/GEF projects to all oases of the country in the governates of Gabes, Gafsa, Kebili and Tozeur. These projects, as the Oasis Ecosystems and Livelihoods Project in Tunisia, GEFID 5266, and the Ecotourism and Conservation of Desert Biodiversity Project, GEFID 4035, both closed in 2019, provided sound, holistic and sustainable production, creation

of jobs especially for women and the youth, new markets (ecotourism), for the local communities, while reducing pressure on a fragile nature – landscapes and species (<https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P132157?lang=en>).

Other lessons will be learned from the regional projects, as the GEF MENA Desert Ecosystem and Livelihood Knowledge Sharing and Coordination Project (GEFID 5186) and the GEF FAO regional project Adaptive Management and Monitoring of the Maghreb's Oases Systems, GEFID 5798.

Theory of change

The three synergistic components will contribute to overcoming the root and direct causes of oasis degradation, including the barriers identified to SLM and biodiversity conservation in the oases of Tunisia. The ToC puts all the components of the oasis landscape at the same level of importance and then applies participatory, good environmental and economic governance to the identified problems to ensure sustainable and integrated oases landscapes management.

Project

The project aims to create new dynamics that enhance oasis ecosystem functions and services, protect their heritage, while improving job creation, incomes of the beneficiaries and diversification of the rural economy through the promotion of agricultural, craft and ecotourism products.

The project is designed around the three following components to: 1) Improve the environmental and economic management of oasis landscapes (introducing a certification system for oasis and sub-products, strengthening gender equality, an integrated territorial planning approach mainstreaming LDN and BD, training and awareness for implementation); 2) Promote gender-responsive sustainable investment in oasis landscapes (restoring the functions and resilience of oasis ecosystems at the nexus of land, water, biodiversity, supporting agricultural and artisanal value chains and sustainable ecotourism; 3) Gender-responsive Project Coordination and Management (adaptive management and learning to replicate and upscale good SLM practices, including a Gender Action Plan).

Global Environment Benefits

The Global Environment Benefits include 25,000 ha of areas, out of protected areas, under better managed for SLM and biodiversity, notably near the Bouhedma National Park (also a Biosphere Reserve), the Jbil National Park, and traditional oasis landscapes in selected KBAs. Production landscape better management will also produce carbon benefits, estimated over a 20-year period, at 617,703t of CO₂e.

Nearly 800,000 beneficiaries are targeted by the whole approach in 29 communes representing 126 oasis communities. The GEF activities will focus on SLM with smallholder farmers and BD related activities in Key-Biodiversity Areas and Important Birds Areas for the benefit of 33,798 people with a balanced gender and a significant proportion of young people.

GEF Strategy

The project is developed under the LD objectives 1.1 on SLM and 2.5 on LDN, as well as the BD 1.1 objective on mainstreaming. From a BD perspective, the project will contribute to a local decision mechanism incorporating biodiversity issues to optimize development without undermining or degrading biodiversity (integrated planning, certification, natural heritage...); support and restore traditional oasis landscapes in selected KBAs and Important Bird Areas, mixing palm trees and wetlands, for the benefits of global important biodiversity and agrobiodiversity, improve production practices to be more biodiversity-positive, and diversify economic activities including ecotourism based.

Country Priorities

The project was conceived as an application of the NAP under UNCCD, the recent LDN targets, as well as the recently approved National Strategy and National Action Plans on Biodiversity 2018-2030.

It is good to know that it is the government of Tunisia who insisted to add GEF resources on the top of \$50 million of IBRD on oases to mainstream biodiversity aspects and promote Sustainable Land Management in the context of LDN.

Innovation, sustainability & scaling up

Innovation: The project design is innovative, proposing a vision of transformative change across the oases of Gabes, Gafsa, Kebili and Tozeur govenates, based on multiple aspects of mainstreaming (certification, local planning, protection of wild- and agro-biodiversity, local and indigenous knowledge and traditional practices, SLWM, LDN, and CSA).

Sustainability: The project sustainability is based on the empowerment of local communities (capacity building, awareness, anchorage in local decision mechanisms, KM).

Replication & Scaling up: knowledge and lessons from the GEF (\$2.7 million) will be shared and incorporated into the \$50 million IBRD loan through a strong KM system at local, national, and regional levels.