

MID-TERM REVIEW

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Support to the Orange-Senqu River Strategic Action Programme Implementation

Country

Regional, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa

GEF ID

9054

Implementing Agency

UNDP

Executing Entity

Government

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

Objective

Strengthening joint management capacity for the basin-wide IWRM implementation and demonstrating environmental and socioeconomic benefits of ecosystem-based approach to water resources management through the implementation of SAP priority actions in the Orange-Senqu River basin.

B. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

11/2/2018

Agency Approval

4/12/2019

Implementation Start

4/12/2019

First Disbursement

5/7/2019

Expected MTR

1/12/2022

MTR Submission

3/4/2025

Actual MTR

8/30/2022

Expected Completion

10/10/2025

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Main MTR Findings

The project was able to accomplish a few of the targeted activities and these could contribute towards creating environment for addressing the issues of the Orange-Senqu River and basin areas ecosystem. A key, enabler of these achievements has been the good progress made toward strengthening the collaboration between the Member States, through the program, for joint management of the basin. To address the river and water degradation problems, the project aimed to intervene in four areas: awareness generation/capacity enhancement, implementation of integrated river and wetland management, monitoring of river/ground water and economic incentives for local communities dependent on the river. The project was able to conduct the joint basin survey (JBS) involving Member States. To address the pollution problem of Mohokare river, a draft strategy is prepared as part of baseline assessment and it will be further discussed for broad stakeholder inputs for addressing complex pollution challenges on this river. The project has completed two solar-powered desalination plants in South-eastern part of Botswana. Botswana also piloted livelihood elements (horticulture and small livestock production to support local communities). The project conducted a baseline and situational assessment to identify and prioritise rehabilitation actions for the Orange-River Mouth. A formalized River mouth management plan is in place on the South African side but may need further revision. Similarly, interim integrated Transboundary Management Plan (for Namibia and South Africa) was developed in the past but never officially adopted and now the project is going to re-active it.

For knowledge management, the project hired an expert who will develop knowledge management programs. The project has supported participation in several global and regional knowledge sharing platforms and this provided opportunities for project staffs to share on project and also learn from others presentations.

The project was designed with provision for appropriate management arrangements. However, based on the interviews conducted in this exercise and using triangulation methods to verify, it was noted that in the initial phases, the project team faced with challenges generated by the mobility restrictions owing to COVID-19. The issue was addressed through alternative arrangements of conducting some of the activities virtually. The project has been underpinned by good science and a technical approach of good calibre and this helped to maintain technical standard of the interventions.

To make the outcomes and interventions sustainable, the project is discussing with the Governments of Lesotho and South Africa, NGOs, Private sector working in the area between Lesotho and South Africa on the Orange Senqu River on the possibility of establishing of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes and a draft report is ready for discussion among ORASECOM structures. The project has also initiated discussions with GIZ on the Lesotho Integrated Catchment Management Project (ICMP) funded by the Government of Lesotho, the Government of Germany and the EU to formulate a PES initiatives involving public and private sectors from these countries.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

At the project development phase, the project development team undertook extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders from national government bodies, non-government institutions, INGOs, local government bodies and academic institutions from all four states through a series of opinion polls, presentations, interviews, group discussions, site visits and workshops. These wide-ranging consultations were undertaken to ensure that stakeholders at all levels are aware of the project and its objectives and that they assist in the identification of threats to the Orange-Senqu River, the basin areas, and biodiversity in general. A thorough assessment of the relevance, experience, and capacity of implementing partners from each country and other stakeholders was also conducted. This assessment helped to utilise the strength of the implementing partners and also to develop capacity enhancement programs. The project design, determining criteria for potential sites, and site selection, were carried out with stakeholder participation.

The project was executed by ORASECOM and implemented in partnership with the MoE of each country. The other responsible parties by virtue of their mandates were: national departments of water, local NGOs, civil society organisations, various local governments, academic institutions, communities, and consultants.

C. Gender Equality

The gender aspect was given high priority from the project development phase. The Gender Inequality Index (GII), which analyses three critical elements that reflect gender inequalities (reproductive health, empowerment, and participation in the labour force), was used to measure gender-based inequalities. Based on the Human Development Report of 2013, these four countries exhibit a similar GII index but there is more diversity within each criteria (see ProDoc). The project document utilised challenges, related to water resource management in the Orange-Senqu River basin, identified for gender mainstreaming during consultative meetings with ORASECOM Member States that took place in August 2014. Gender mainstreaming was endorsed during the regional meeting in May 2014 by the ORASECOM Member States and included in the IWRM plan for ORASECOM. The strategy also included an implementation plan for strategic level gender interventions.

The UNDP-GEF project's gender mainstreaming efforts were guided by the ORASECOM Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and contributed to its implementation both at the basin and national levels. The Local Project Appraisal Committee meeting held on 13 July 2016 proposed, and approved, interventions for the UNDP-GEF project, which included gender mainstreaming and a clear set of indicators to track progress. The meetings helped to generate clarity and understanding on the importance of gender and the pivotal role that women play in the provision, management and safeguarding of water at a local, community and user level. However, knowledge regarding gender mainstreaming for transboundary water resources management practices through a transboundary, basin wide IWRM Plan needs to be strengthened.

The project also prepared a Gender Action Plan to contribute to the implementation of the ORASECOM Gender Mainstreaming Strategy through various project activities under all components. The enterprise that will be developed on the clearing of Prosopis (Outcome 4.1) is intended to empower women groups at the demonstration sites in Namibia. Outcome 2.2 has a policy component which deliberately promotes women empowerment at all stages of the demonstration project. The guidelines for the support of livelihood activities around the water desalination plants in Botswana have a clause to ensure that 60% of the beneficiaries will be women and youths. The project meetings always included gender considerations in order to generate greater participation from women and youths, and to provide them with an opportunity to present their own views. Involvement of women in project activities has also been helpful in community mobilisation to support the project, and helped lower the cost of construction for two desalination plants – through the provision of labour.

D. Knowledge Management

The institutional capacity review of ORASECOM identified communication as a weakness of the commission. Hence this project has activities to strengthen the communication capacity of ORASECOM. Component 1 (Outcome 1.5) is to have activities to contribute to enhancing transboundary basin planning and joint management of the basin. M&E and the adaptive management process is strongly linked to the development of good communication channels that will permit feedback from stakeholders and mechanisms to react to this feedback. The outcome of this component will contribute to addressing barrier 1, and also cut across the other barriers – since improved communication and knowledge management will support all aspects of improved resource management. Similarly, the M&E and adaptive management processes are strongly linked to the development of good communication channels that will permit feedback from

stakeholders and mechanisms to react to this feedback. Already (after recommendations of institutional review), the ORASECOM Secretariat has recruited a communication expert. For the communication program, the project has allocated US\$250,000.

The project also hired a communications and knowledge management expert who started work on the 1 st of August 2019. Moreover, the project started to deliver on implementation strategy, specifically through revision of the ORASECOM website. The project also made a presentation on the project outcomes and outputs in the knowledge sharing webinars. The project also supported the ORASECOM delegation in attending the 2019 World Water Week in Stockholm from the 25th to the 30th of August 2019 – where ORASECOM featured in sessions. The project coordinator participated in the 5 th Targeted Regional Workshop for GEF IW Projects and Partners in Africa that was held in Gaborone, Botswana from the 27th to the 30th of May 2019 – where lessons and experiences were shared in Integrated Water Resources Management. The project has also established video conferencing facilities at the Secretariat to enable continuity in communication and contact between the Secretariat and delegations – especially crucial during the height the Covid-19 pandemic. Further, this helped ensure the convening of virtual meetings as required. The project also facilitated the production of promotional materials (T-shirts, brochures and banners) for the World Wetlands Day in Namibia for February 2020.

III. Core Indicators

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female			0	
Male				
Total	0	0	0	0

IV: Co Financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Anticipated at CEO(\$)	Materialized at MTR(\$)
Recipient Country Government	Government of Botswana	In-kind			2042000
Recipient Country Government	Government of Lesotho	In-kind			76210343
Recipient Country Government	Government of Namibia	In-kind			18917001
Recipient Country Government	ORASECOM	In-kind			1752798
Donor Agency	GIZ	In-kind			6672000

Total Co-financing		0.00	105,594,142.00
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Comments

Committed co-financing by the governments and other organisations was US\$364,474,492, which creates a co-financing ratio of 3:97 (donor: govts & other organisations), which is a very good ratio in terms of good practice. Governments' in-kind contribution covered the cost of the project office rooms; contribution to ORASECOM Secretariat; support for participation in ORASECOM programmes (surveys, data analysis, reporting, planning etc.); water supply and socioeconomic development; water (ecosystem) quality monitoring at the national and transboundary levels; investments into infrastructure for water quality monitoring such as hydrometric stations; water use planning; water allocation; pollution control at national and transboundary level; overall water resources and catchment management (management of wetlands; addressing land degradation including invasive species; cost of electricity, telecommunications; government staff salaries and costs of the time contribution by the PS and his team and chair of the PSC and technical support; transport to travel to and around the project sites, etc. The exact figure of governments' and other organisations' in-kind contribution was not available (except for Lesotho and GIZ). GIZ support was dedicated to integrated catchment management in Lesotho which included activities like rehabilitation of degraded rangelands; updating and harmonising relevant policies and legislation for ensuring effective management of catchment areas; sustainable financing mechanisms to support catchment management; skills and knowledge transfer and; awareness and behaviour change and catchment monitoring. In collaboration with ORASECOM, GIZ supported documentation for upscaling of good practices from transboundary IWRM flagships on ecosystem-based and nexus approaches, generation of awareness-raising and behaviour change activities, regional learning and exchange and private sector investment.

V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
		Medium/Moderate	

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

The UNDP environment and social safeguard requirements were strictly adhered to during the development of this project. At the design phase, the project assessed environmental and social issues and threats to natural resources – including river and rangelands biodiversity and the impact of unsustainable water use practices and livelihoods in the project area. In accordance with the UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure, the project is categorised as moderate risk and it is not expected to have any major adverse environmental or social impacts. It has given priority to the social norms that were considered while identifying activities and implementation modalities. Based on the information from these assessments, programs were developed to address threats to biodiversity, agriculture, and livelihoods. Similarly, it was identified that one of the main causes of threat to the river and basin areas was the poor local economy, high dependency on the river, and unsustainable use of river water and ground water. To address these problems the project developed sustainable water use practices, decreasing water use by industries, decreasing pollution, addressing invasive species, conserving biodiversity, and providing economic incentives to poor

communities – with a focus on women and youth. Moreover, the project also created a provision for the participation of local communities in the project activities to make sure that the project results would be sustainable. The activities ensured that no harm comes to any local, social and cultural values. Similarly, conservation efforts will improve the environment of the area and also safeguard water and livelihoods.

The project aimed to achieve improved water resources management in the transboundary OrangeSenqu River basin using the ecosystem-based approach. With the intention being that the project interventions will result in improved ecosystems in the targeted areas by reducing risks to environmental sustainability (Principle 3 of SESP). The project made efforts to mainstream gender, and empower women and girls across all interventions and for that the project implemented the ORASECOM Gender Mainstreaming Strategy which contributed to improved gender equality and women’s empowerment (Principle 2 of SESP).

VI. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category

M and E Document

Title

MTR South Africa (GEF 9054 / UNDP 5506)