

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	10799
Project Name:	Regional Initiative for Water and Environment in the transboundary basin of the Mono River (RIWE-Mono)
Countr(ies):	Regional, Benin, Togo
Implementing Agency:	IUCN

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Regional Initiative for Water and Environment in the transboundary basin of the Mono River (RIWE-Mono)

Country

Regional, Benin, Togo

GEF ID

10799

Implementing Agency

IUCN

Executing Entity

Mono Basin Authority (MBA), Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS), Global Water Partnership West Africa (GWP-WA); National Focal Points (MEEM; MEHV)

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

PIR Submission

9/12/2026

Fiscal Year , PIR Number

FY 2026 , 1st PIR

Objective

To ensure the sustainable development and ecological resilience of the Mono River Basin ensured through the strengthening of the IWRM governance and capacity, participatory planning by communities and enhanced cooperation between Togo and Benin.

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress

Moderately Satisfactory

Development Objective

Moderately Satisfactory

Overall risk

Moderate Risk

Project Financing

5,450,000.00

Cumulative Disbursement

5,000,000.00

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

12/15/2023

Agency Approval

12/15/2023

Implementation Start 12/5/2024	First Disbursement 12/5/2024
Expected MTR 11/30/2026	Actual MTR
Expected Completion 11/30/2028	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

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

Component 1: Mono River Basin water resources, ecological and economic development assessment and planning (23%)

Outcome 1.1: The threats and potentials of the ecological and economic functions of the Mono basin are assessed and their management planned in an integrated and concerted manner

Output 1.1.1: A Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), including groundwater, is performed, published and agreed by the two countries

The project's second year was marked by the launch of the TDA development process for the Mono River Basin. The Mono River Basin Transboundary Technical Committee (TTC) comprising nineteen (19) members from Benin, Togo, and partner institutions is now operational. This body is responsible for overseeing the implementation of all national and transboundary activities related to the TDA development process, as well as the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and follow-up recommendations regarding the Mono River Basin TDA/SAP. The TTC's working modalities and roadmap have been adopted.

The main results achieved during this period are as follows:

- Operationalization of the Mono Basin TTC, including the holding of its first meeting

- Launch of the TDA preparation process for the Mono Basin

- 16 members of the Mono Basin TTC trained on the TDA/SAP preparation process

- 49 participants from sectoral ministries and civil society organizations (CSOs) in Togo and Benin trained on the TDA/SAP preparation process

The national and regional TDA reports, including the thematic reports, are being finalized and will need to be validated by both countries.

Output 1.1.2: A Strategic Action Plan (SAP) is developed

At this stage of reporting, several studies are underway as part of the TDA, covering areas such as climate change, the environment, socio-economic and gender analysis, water resource governance, and integrated hydrological modelling of the Mono River Basin. Databases detailing the state of resources and climate dynamics have been established for each country. In addition, a regional framework for the design and management of these databases has been defined and validated by Benin and Togo.

Outcome 1.2: Pilot Integrated interventions to enhance suitable use of the basin resources, economic development as well as environment protection and population adaptation and resilience to climate change

Output 1.2.1: Pilot activities on the integration of CC into IWRM, pollution control at source, co-management of transboundary protected areas, conservation of biodiversity of global interest, local community mobilization and knowledge management for IWRM in the Mono River Basin are conducted and lessons learned.

The aim of the pilot initiatives is to build community capacity for the sustainable management of aquatic ecosystems. To this end, they are designed to meet three objectives: (i) data collection and experience sharing; (ii) support for community engagement in IWRM and the preservation of natural ecosystems; and (iii) the provision of entry points and concrete strategies for other complementary projects.

Environmental and Social Management Systems (ESMS) aligned with IUCN standards have been developed for each of the five pilot initiatives.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) has been prepared based on stakeholder analysis, information gathered during the consultation phase, and the project framework.

The grievance redress mechanism for the RIWE-Mono project is also operational. Its purpose is to ensure that individuals or communities who fear or are experiencing negative project-related impacts are heard and assisted in a timely manner. Stakeholders, particularly local communities and CSOs, who believe they have suffered harm due to the executing entity's failure to adhere to IUCN ESMS principles, standards, or procedures, now know the procedure for filing a complaint and the process by which the various bodies will handle it.

For this reporting period, two pilot initiatives saw major progress:

Pilot initiative 1: Strengthening the capacities and skills of local communities and management personnel of Ramsar sites 736 (Togo) and 1017 (Benin) through information and training. A consortium of local CSOs has been recruited for implementation.

Pilot initiative 2: Restoration of degraded lands at the headwaters of the Mono River and within the 2,500-hectare forest zone. Two (2) local CSOs have been recruited to implement activities, one focusing on the restoration of degraded land within the 2,500-hectare forest zone, and the other on the restoration and protection of the spring and the sacred forest of Igbo-Dognin.

Component 2: Institutional and technical capacity strengthening (30%)

Outcome 2.1: The technical and institutional capacities of the MBA and key partners are strengthened to enable actions for water and soil conservation, and restoration and protection of Mono basin ecosystems

Output 2.1.1: Capacity building and training of MBA Executive Directorate and main stakeholders in IWRM regulation, management of Protected Areas as well as the animation of the CLE

A methodological guide for developing and implementing the Mono River Basin Water Charter has been prepared, together with a concept note on the same subject. This practical guide is essential for structuring the development process, avoiding common pitfalls, and uniting all local stakeholders around shared objectives. Both documents were validated during a regional workshop attended by twenty-five (25) participants representing sectoral ministries, civil society organizations (CSOs), and technical partners from both countries.

The national coordination offices for the RIWE-Mono project are operational. Each coordination unit comprises a National Coordinator, an Administrative and Financial Assistant, and a driver. The Benin National Coordination Unit is based at the Ministry of Energy, Water, and Mines, while the Togo National Coordination Unit is based at the Ministry of Territorial Planning, Urban Planning, and Housing (responsible for Water and Sanitation). In addition, two 4x4 all-terrain vehicles (one for each national coordination unit) and IT equipment (laptops, printers, etc.) have been provided to these units to facilitate their deployment in the field.

To address natural resource management issues in the Mono Basin sustainably, the project is currently supporting the strengthening of the participatory framework for implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) at the local level. This involves establishing five local water management bodies within the Togolese section of the basin and equipping them with the tools needed for their operations, stakeholder engagement, and the fulfilment of their mandates. Potential sites for these bodies were selected by the basin's stakeholders, and in-depth assessments of management issues and resource usage covering both natural resources and water were conducted for each site. Implementation is now proceeding with the organization of stakeholders to select representatives for the local water management bodies, ahead of their official establishment by the end of September 2026 at the latest. Meanwhile, in the Benin section of the Mono Basin, four local water committees (CLE) (Djètoè, Toho, Togbadji, and Partago) have been selected to update their action plans. The goal is to make them fully functional and operational in line with their respective mandates, thereby supporting the sustainable management of natural resources, including water, throughout the basin. It is worth noting that CLEs are essential to ensuring sustainable and equitable water management at the local level: they foster local dialogue, prevent conflicts over usage (agriculture, consumption, industry), protect resource quality, and adapt national policies to on-the-ground realities for the purposes of activity monitoring.

Output 2.1.2: MBA's capacity to mobilize financial resources is strengthened, specifically through the upgrading of fiduciary, environmental safeguard and gender equality policy documents

The MBA's administrative and financial management manual is currently being revised with support from RIWE-Mono. This document will clearly define the rules and procedures governing the institution, helping to ensure transparency and asset security while optimizing performance and facilitating decision-making.

To strengthen its network and operational capacity, the MBA is engaged in preparatory activities for the first edition of the West Africa Regional Water Forum (FREAO), scheduled to take place in Côte d'Ivoire in September 2026. The MBA is also actively involved in discussions on hydro-diplomacy as a tool for advancing cooperation in water resource management, grounded in the principle that conflict of any kind is always less beneficial to the parties involved than a resource-sharing agreement.

Developing countries often struggle to access environmental funding due to a lack of the technical capacity needed to negotiate and design projects capable of securing biodiversity and climate finance despite the significant environmental challenges they face. To address this issue, an initial training session on environmental project formulation, focused specifically on the Global Environment Facility (GEF), was organized, bringing together fifty-six (56) participants from sectoral ministries, GEF focal points, the Technical Committee of Experts, the POSC/Mono, and municipalities. The training gave participants a better understanding of environmental funding requirements and the process for formulating projects eligible for GEF support.

Output 2.1.3: Institutional and technical capacities of CSOs/CBOs operating in the Mono Basin are increased for better engagement in transboundary management of shared resources

The Mono Basin Civil Society Organizations Platform (POSC-Mono) is a cross-border network comprising associations and NGOs from Benin and Togo. It serves as a mechanism for consultation and dialogue to support the ABM in the sustainable management of water resources and ecosystems. To ensure the platform's long-term viability, the RIWE-Mono project supported an institutional diagnostic analysis of POSC-Mono, as well as the development of a capacity-building plan for its member organizations. A total of thirty-six (36) representatives from member organizations participated in validating these strategic documents.

In addition, 22 representatives from the CLEs and ACCBs in the Beninese section of the Mono Basin were trained in the principles and implementation approaches of IWRM. Specifically, this involved:

Community-based Biodiversity Conservation Areas (ACCB): Bouche du Roy, the Ouidah coastal lagoon, the Tannou crocodile pond, the Gbada Channel, the Togbin-Adouanko mangrove forest, Vodounto, the Naglanou forest, the Lake Toho wetlands, and the Adjame pond

Local Water Committees (CLE): Djetoe, Toho, Togbadji, Doukonta, Wozodhati, Corridor, Djifri, and Partago

Outcome 2.2 Improved governance and cooperative framework of the Mono basin to support water-related challenges and transboundary flooding risk reduction

Output 2.2.1: The statutory bodies of the MBA are established and operational

The Council of Ministers and the Technical Committee of Experts are statutory bodies of the MBA, alongside the MBA Executive Directorate. In March 2026, the RIWE-Mono project supported the organization of a meeting of the Technical Committee of Experts (TCE) members. A total of 26 people participated in the 8th TCE meeting, and 42 people took part in the 8th session of the Council of Ministers. Key resolutions included the approval of the MBA's new logo developed with support from the RIWE-Mono project and the formal handover of vehicles to the RIWE-Mono national coordination units.

In accordance with the Convention establishing the MBA, the Stakeholder Forum for basin development serves as an advisory body that facilitates the involvement of all stakeholders in the sustainable management of the Mono Basin. The RIWE-Mono project supported the drafting of the Stakeholder Forum's statutes and internal regulations. These foundational statutory documents define the body's role, functioning, and composition. Consultations will be organized to review and consolidate the documents prior to their approval by the Council of Ministers.

Component 3 -Knowledge Management, Monitoring and Evaluation and Communication (36%)

Outcome 3.1: Project implementation is improved

Output 3.1.1: A project monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system is developed and implemented

During the reporting period, a baseline study of the Mono River Basin was conducted. This work provided key insights into the current state of the basin's ecosystem, as well as essential indicators for assessing the project's impact across various sectors including water resource management, biodiversity conservation, and the resilience of riparian communities. The study served as the foundation for designing the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) mechanism, based on the framework outlined in the project document, guidelines from IUCN and GEF, and established best practices.

The MEL plan for the RIWE-Mono project was developed and validated by stakeholders during a regional workshop attended by approximately forty participants. The document outlines the implementation structure within the MBA and defines the roles and responsibilities of the various actors involved. The plan also aims to strengthen the ABM's organizational capacity in monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

A gender strategy was developed and approved by stakeholders in the Mono River Basin. This strategy aims to foster a culture of inclusion and equality within the basin, ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities to participate and thrive. The document identifies discriminatory practices to be avoided through the integrated, equitable, and collaborative management of water resources and the environment.

Output 3.1.2: Stakeholders in the Mono Basin IWRM innovation system are trained and supported to tailor capacity building actions in response to specific needs and thus achieve greater impacts

Thirty (30) community outreach workers and eco-guards in Benin, and twenty-two (22) in Togo, were trained in information and awareness-raising techniques, as well as the principles of implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), for the sustainable management of the Mono Biosphere Reserve. These workshops helped identify the support needs of community-managed area associations regarding the sustainable management of natural resources in the Mono Basin. In addition, local workshops to share key takeaways from the initial sessions with other association members are scheduled for July and August, in accordance with the roadmaps developed during the national workshops. To enable local authorities to fully and effectively play their part in embedding IWRM within the basin, 29 municipal executive teams from the Mono Basin (12 in Benin and 17 in Togo), received training on IWRM principles and the importance of incorporating them into planning documents and local development activities. These municipal executives committed to integrating IWRM into their local development plans, allocating the necessary budget, and facilitating its implementation.

In addition, the RIWE-Mono project supported the development of a detailed information guide on IWRM in the Mono Basin. This guide was designed to meet the needs of the diverse range of stakeholders involved in water resource management within the basin. It aims to: (i) provide all basin stakeholders with a reliable, comprehensive, and up-to-date source of information on the Mono River Basin; (ii) share best practices in water resource management developed within the basin; (iii) provide trainers, facilitators, and program managers with an educational tool tailored to the basin's diverse audiences to build IWRM capacity among institutional and community stakeholders; and (iv) foster a shared culture of IWRM among stakeholders from the two riparian countries.

Outcome 3.2: Project stakeholders are informed and engaged

Output 3.2.1: An MBA communication strategy with a communication plan for the ERI project is developed

The communication strategy and action plan have been developed and validated by stakeholders. This strategic document ensures transparency, facilitates rapid decision-making, and enables the anticipation of conflicts, thereby maximizing the chances of achieving project results on schedule.

Output 3.2.2: Targeted communication materials (Web site, podcasts, learning videos, flyers, etc.) are developed and disseminated in appropriate channels

The MBA now has an official logo that serves as the cornerstone of its visual identity. This enables the institution to be instantly recognized, fosters trust and unites its audience around a shared image. The logo embodies the organization's core purpose, allowing the public, partners, and member institutions to identify it at a glance.

The RIWE-Mono project also supported the development of the MBA's graphic charter. This ensures consistency across all communication materials including documents, the website, social media, and signage thereby guaranteeing immediate recognition and a professional brand image that inspires public confidence. All MBA materials now adhere to the graphic charter and feature the institution's official logo.

In addition, the RIWE-Mono project's activities have been covered and disseminated across various media platforms:

8 TV and podcast reports

12 radio reports

12 print media reports

20 social media posts (Facebook, X, LinkedIn) and online media features

The project has also produced a range of visibility materials bearing its name, including 96 pens and notepads, 115 satchels, and 250 p

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

Delays in consultant recruitment processes

The process of recruiting consultants generally takes much longer than anticipated at the level of the project's executing agencies. This is compounded by delays on the part of consultants in submitting expected deliverables, leading to significant delays in activity implementation. IUCN is making efforts to facilitate the swift processing of requests from the MBA, OSS, and GWP-WA.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

Local governments
This category includes regional representatives of government for key thematic areas, as well as administrative authorities of the project's target and implementation sites who will benefit from the project. Their engagement included: - Participation in the project's regional steering committee meetings, including the review and approval of the annual work plan and budget, and the assessment of project implementation by the executing agencies - Participation in all activities related to consultations, capacity building, pilot initiatives, and the TDA/SAP process - Review and validation of the strategic framework and operational procedures of the Transboundary Technical Committee for the Mono River Basin No difficulties were encountered regarding their engagement.
Civil society organisations
This category includes POSC-Mono, as well as women's and youth associations. Their engagement included: - Participation in all project activities related to consultations, capacity building, and the TDA/SAP process - Selection for the implementation of Pilot Initiatives 1 and 2
Local communities (disaggregate where relevant)
This category includes the Association for the Conservation and Promotion of Community Biodiversity Conservation Areas (ACCB), Local Water Committees (CLE), and vulnerable groups, including but not limited to women and youth. Their engagement included: - Serving as beneficiaries of project investments - Being consulted as part of the TDA/SAP process
Indigenous Peoples
N/A
Private sector
N/A
Other relevant stakeholders as identified in the projects' stakeholder mapping and analysis
N/A

D. Gender Equality

Does this project specifically target woman or girls as direct beneficiaries?

Yes, the project targets women as one of the primary beneficiaries.

In case a gender analysis was not undertaken during project preparation (PPG), has it been carried out in this reporting period? If yes, what were the main findings? If an analysis during project design had been undertaken, but further updates have been carried out during the reporting period, please indicate this below. Please also report on additional site level gender analyses if they were undertaken during this reporting period.

A gender analysis was conducted during the PPG phase.
A gender strategy was developed during the project implementation phase. This strategy outlines sex-disaggregated indicators and the approach for engaging women in the project.

Please describe progress in implementing the Gender Action Plan (GAP); you could also add the GAP in form of a GAP progress report as annex. Please also specify results achieved during this reporting period through implementing gender-responsive measures.

Results reported can include site level results working with local communities and municipal/ regional organizations as well as work to integrate gender considerations into national policies, strategies and planning. Please explain how the results reported addressed the different needs of men or women, improved norms, values and power structures, and/or contributed to transforming or challenging gender inequalities and discrimination.

The dashboard for tracking progress on the implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) is still under development. It will be presented in the next PIR.

Please report on gender-responsive indicators and gender-disaggregated targets as established in the results framework of the project

There are included in the GAP. As site-based activities have not yet commenced and on ground actions are yet to be implemented.

E. Knowledge Management

Does the project have a knowledge management strategy? How does the project collect, document and share good practices? Please list relevant good practices from this year that can be learned and shared from the project.

Yes, the developed monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan enables the collection of the data needed to document best practices. The data collection process is underway.

The best practices are still being documented.

Does the project have a communication strategy? Please provide a brief overview of the communications successes and challenges this year.

Yes, the RIWE-Mono project's communication strategy ensures message consistency, improves the structuring of communication and visibility materials, and enhances the project's visibility.

Thanks to this strategy, communication regarding the project is more structured and targeted. Project activities are regularly showcased across various communication platforms, including television, radio, print and online media, and social media.

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT

Result Framework

Components and Cost	
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	
Financial Management	
Implementation Schedule	There is a delay to the implementation schedule. Key stakeholders need to agree on adjusting timelines
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

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category
M and E Document

Title
GEF PIR26_IUCN_RIWE-Mono_Benin-Togo_2025-2026