

Integrated Management of Protected Areas in the Arid Regions of Mauritania (IMPADRA)

Part I: Project Information

GEF ID

10586

Project Type

FSP

Type of Trust Fund

GET

CBIT/NGI

CBIT No

NGI No

Project Title

Integrated Management of Protected Areas in the Arid Regions of Mauritania (IMPADRA)

Countries

Mauritania

Agency(ies)

UNEP

Other Executing Partner(s)

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD)

Executing Partner Type

Government

GEF Focal Area

Biodiversity

Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Biomes, Desert, Species, Threatened Species, Mainstreaming, Tourism, Financial and Accounting, Conservation Finance, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Productive Landscapes, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Influencing models, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Demonstrate innovative approach, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Stakeholders, Indigenous Peoples, Type of Engagement, Information Dissemination, Consultation, Participation, Partnership, Communications, Education, Behavior change, Awareness Raising, Public Campaigns, Beneficiaries, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Non-Governmental Organization, Academia, Local Communities, Private Sector, Financial intermediaries and market facilitators, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender-sensitive indicators, Women groups, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender results areas, Access and control over natural resources, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Participation and leadership, Capacity Development, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Enabling Activities, Learning, Indicators to measure change, Theory of change, Adaptive management, Targeted Research, Innovation, Knowledge Generation, Knowledge Exchange, Large corporations, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, SMEs

Rio Markers**Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 0

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate Change Adaptation 1

Duration

48 In Months

Agency Fee(\$)

250,774.00

Submission Date

3/24/2021

A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
BD-1-1	GET	500,000.00	3,201,090.00
BD-2-7	GET	2,139,726.00	13,698,910.00
Total Project Cost (\$)		2,639,726.00	16,900,000.00

B. Indicative Project description summary

Project Objective

To enhance the conservation of key species in Mauritania through the creation and sustainable management of a new Protected Area in the arid Wilaya of Adrar.

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 1: Establishment of a new Protected Area (PA) in Adrar Wilaya	Technical Assistance	<p>Outcome 1: Improved conservation status through the creation and effective management of a terrestrial 200,000 ha PA in Adrar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new IUCN Category VI 200,000 ha terrestrial protected area established in Adrar (covering El Ghallâouiya KBA and newly designated KBA) increasing the national coverage of terrestrial protected areas -Population size of at least 4 animal species is known and increased by at least 10% during the life of the project [TBC during PPG] 	<p>1.1.1 Collection of detailed biodiversity data and technical support provided to MESD to enable the KBA assessment, designation and registration process of the entire new PA in line with current Global KBA criteria.</p> <p>1.1.2 Technical support and capacity development provided to MESD and other strategic partners to carry out scientific research and to prepare documentation for the creation of the PA in Adrar</p> <p>1.1.3 Land use plans to facilitate the identification and demarcation of priority areas for conservation in compliance with the gazetting process and for 50,000ha for sustainable land management in production systems in the surrounding landscape developed and under implementation.</p> <p>1.1.4 Enforcement and surveillance system strengthened in the new PA in Adrar through (i) a long-term monitoring and enforcement system in place and a platform for information sharing and intelligence gathering established between PA authority and the local</p>	GET	1,082,000.00	7,302,274.00

I communities and (ii) appropriate mechanisms and incentives in place to report illegal activities.

1.1.5 Established operational capacity at the new PA in Adrar through (i) a newly established Regional Office for the newly created PA with deployed and capacitated staff; (ii) an established long-term ecological monitoring system [\[1\]](#) for the protected and adjacent areas; and (iii) a board-approved management plan under implementation in the PA.

Component 2: Establishing financial sustainability mechanisms for sustainable and effective management of the PA	Technical Assistance	<p>Outcome 2: Financial sustainability mechanisms improve the management effectiveness of the PA in Adrar</p> <p>- 50,000 ha under sustainable land management in production systems in landscapes adjacent to the new PA <i>[TBC during PPG]</i></p> <p>- number of agreements signed with private sector actors to secure investments and promote eco and scientific tourism potential of the PA <i>[target TBD during PPG]</i>.</p> <p>- 1,775 households (50% women-headed) in the target Wilayas benefit from alternative income generating activities in line with biodiversity conservation targets <i>[TBC during PPG]</i></p>	<p>2.1.1 Financial mechanisms established and operational with necessary institutional capacity and processes in place for the financial sustainability of PA conservation.</p> <p>2.1.2 One national level PA platform established showcasing best PA management practices, eco-tourism potential, investment potential, and biodiversity status to be managed by the National Tourism Office of Mauritania</p> <p>2.1.3 Community-based biodiversity enterprises as alternative income-generating activities for local communities identified and supported in line with sustainable agricultural and livestock practices identified in the land use plan for the PA adjacent landscape.</p>	GET	982,025.00	7,841,882.00
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Component 3: Ensuring knowledge management and gender mainstreamin g	Technical Assistan ce	Outcome 3: Gender equality and knowledge management effectively support sustainability and inform up-scaling - number of tangible gender outcomes demonstrated through the implementation of the gender equality strategy [target TBD during PPG]. - number of Government and strategic partners adopt lessons to inform scaling up of biodiversity conservation in arid areas [target TBD during PPG].	3.1.1 Gender mainstreaming strategy and an action plan implemented across project components	GET	450,000.00	951,085.00	
			3.1.2 M&E plan implemented in a timely fashion to facilitate adaptive management and lesson learning				
			3.1.3 Communication strategy, including toolkits and radio programs, developed to raise awareness about biodiversity conservation				
			3.1.4 Knowledge management plan developed and implemented with lessons disseminated to relevant stakeholders to promote replication of the biodiversity conservation approaches in arid areas				
Sub Total (\$)					2,514,025.00	16,095,241.00	
Project Management Cost (PMC)							
					GET	125,701.00	804,759.00
Sub Total(\$)					125,701.00	804,759.00	
Total Project Cost(\$)					2,639,726.00	16,900,000.00	

C. Indicative sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Institute of Higher Education	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Association Mauritanie de la Conservation de la Nature	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Metereological National Office	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Private Sector	Mauritania Copper Mine Community Projects	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Private Sector	KINROSS TASIAST	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Private Sector	Project Agropole Maraicher of Benichab	Grant	Investment mobilized	500,000.00
Private Sector	Project Agropole Maraicher of Benichab	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Donor Agency	National Agency of the Great Green Wall – WBG funded	Grant	Investment mobilized	450,000.00
Donor Agency	National Agency of the Great Green Wall - WBG funded	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	450,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Commune Ouadane	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Birdlife International	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Donor Agency	World Bank	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,000,000.00
Donor Agency	European Union	Grant	Investment mobilized	6,000,000.00
			Total Project Cost(\$)	16,900,000.00

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

Investments mobilized were mainly identified through collaborative initiatives from donor agencies such as the World Bank and the European Union's European Development Fund (EDF) and Government agencies' projects and initiatives where the costs were budgeted for (other than recurrent costs). Co-financing investments from private sector companies were derived from the amounts committed to community land management and community-based livelihood programs in the project target communes. Co-financing investments from Civil Society Organisations and Research Institute were calculated based on the estimated level of financial compensation that would be offered based on the amount of time that these organizations will spend to offer technical and expert support to the project. The government, through the National Unit for Environmental Observation and Arid Zones (CNOEZA) has consulted with the mentioned Private Sector entities with a view to mobilizing additional resources to support the implementation of the project. Some of the resources constitute part of the companies' contribution to land restoration in the form of corporate social responsibility in communities where their production chains and operations take place. Specifics on the projects and company pledges will be confirmed at the PPG stage. The Pan African Agency of the Great Green Wall is headquartered in Nouakchott. Each member state in the Sahel has a national level GGW Agency with a portfolio of activities towards the broader vision and objectives of the GGW. Similarly, CNOEZA has been in consultation with the Mauritanian National Agency for the Great Green Wall for synergies, additional resource support, and technical input that will be rendered in part through the Agency's national-level activities. The Agency's activities are centered on improving the living conditions and the resilience of local communities to climate change, desertification, and drought by strengthening the productivity of natural resources and ecosystems as part of achieving food security. The relevant letter will be secured at PPG.

D. Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
UNEP	GET	Mauritania	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	2,639,726	250,774	2,890,500.00
Total GEF Resources(\$)					2,639,726.00	250,774.00	2,890,500.00

E. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)
PPG Required **true**

PPG Amount (\$)				PPG Agency Fee (\$)			
100,000				9,500			
Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
UNEP	GET	Mauritania	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	100,000	9,500	109,500.00
Total Project Costs(\$)					100,000.00	9,500.00	109,500.00


Core Indicators

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
200,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
200,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
El Ghallâouiya Protected Area		Protected Landscape/Seascape	200,000.00			

Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)		Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)		Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
50000.00		0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)		Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

50,000.00

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes that meets national or international third party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations (hectares)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Please upload document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title	Submitted
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Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	1,000			
Male	1,000			
Total	2000	0	0	0

Provide additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used, and other focal area specifics (i.e., Aichi targets in BD) including justification where core indicator targets are not provided

At PIF stage, the estimation of the core indicator 11 is based on the population dynamics in Adrar Wilaya which is estimated at 62,658 . During initial stakeholder consultations, it was estimated that 16% of the population in Adrar would be concentrated in the proposed project area [to be confirmed at PPG and likely to increase considerably during PPG after adequate consultations can be undertaken]. Women constitute ~49.8% of the population in Mauritania. Under the BD FA, the project will improve the conservation status through the creation and effective management of a terrestrial protected area in Adrar Wilaya – covering a total area of 200,000 ha and through sustainable land management in production systems in 50,000 ha adjacent to the new PA. The process of land use planning in those areas adjacent to the PA will be an important step to ensure that land and other resource use is appropriately situated to maximize land productivity without compromising the ability of biodiversity conservation around the PA. Thus, land use planning will be principal route of the proposed project's biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors, consistent with BD -1-1. The project will therefore support the implementation of sustainable natural resource management practices, and conservation and management measures, in selected other use zones within and around the proposed protected area. The project will contribute to meeting Targets 5, 6 and 7 under Strategic Goal B ('Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use'); Targets 11 and 12 under Strategic Goal C ('Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity'); and Targets 14 and 15 under Strategic Goal D ('Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services'), of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets) for the 2011-2020 period.

Part II. Project Justification

1a. Project Description

1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania (Mauritania or IRM hereafter) is situated in the Sahel, a region grappling with acute development problems and serious humanitarian difficulties. Human development in the region is among the lowest in the world. Over the years, repeated food and nutrition crises caused by environmental hazards and climate change (environmental degradation, drought, floods, etc.), poorly functioning markets, low agricultural productivity, poverty, weaknesses in governance and conflicts have severely compromised the ability of people, particularly rural communities to withstand repeated and increasingly frequent shocks.[1] Administratively, Mauritania is divided into 15 Wilayas which are further sub-divided into 15 Moughataas and 218 communes. Each Wilaya is under the administrative authority of a Wali while Moughataas are administered by Hakems. Communes are under the administrative authority of Mayors.

The climate in Mauritania is arid in the north and semi-arid in the south. There are five ecological zones: west Sahel, east Sahel, Sahara, Senegal River valley and coastal zones. The mean annual rainfall increases gradually from <50 mm in northern Mauritania to around 400 mm in southern Mauritania. The average annual temperatures between 21 and 31 °C in the littoral and inland, respectively, and the hot and dusty winds (harmattan) render most of the country an apparent barren desert. However, the orography (from 0 to 892 m) and the geographical position close to the sea, the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa, make Mauritania an authentic biogeographical crossroad, with an exceptional diversity of landscapes and, consequently, of fauna and flora. The mountains of Adrar Atar, Tagant, Assaba and Affolé constitute barriers to the mere clouds coming from the Atlantic, holding the air humidity. Also, Mauritania is located in the transition zone between the desert and the savannah, in the extreme south-western Sahara, with a meridional gradient of rainfall increase: from 6 mm in the north of the country to 519 mm in the south.

Mauritania has a population of 4.6 million (increasing at faster annual rate of 2.67%[2]), a low GDP/capita (US\$ 1,219 in 2018), and remains one the most water deficit countries. It only has ~ 0.5% of the total land surface considered arable. The country has a historically variable growth rate (GDP annual growth is $\pm 3.67\%$ in 2018). A combination of both natural and anthropogenic factors account for about 60% of land surface classified as either severely or very severely degraded. Mauritania is arguably the driest and most exposed country in the Sahel desertified zone. These phenomena have contributed to land degradation and loss of biodiversity where trees, shrubs and herbaceous vegetation are cleared for agricultural purposes, by bushfires and overexploitation of natural resources[3]; exposing soils to water erosion and especially aeolian erosion. These phenomena are manifested in the fragility of ecosystems (characterized by insufficient, irregular and poor rainfall distribution); sedentarization; and more rapid exploitation of resources compared to the rate of regeneration. The environmental challenges in Mauritania are exacerbated by poor environmental governance – with an Environmental Performance Index of 39.24 in 2018, the country ranks 165 out of 179.

Besides mining and fisheries, Mauritania is not endowed with directly exploitable natural resources. Desertification and environmental degradation are threatening arable land (45% of the total surface), including the Sahelian oasis ecosystems. The oasis ecosystems in the country are the life-support system of agricultural and pastoral activities that dominate rural economies. The pressures on the oases' ecosystems have compromised their functional ability to secure soil productivity and soil formation, and providing agricultural land, rangeland, fuel wood and critical habitats for a large variety of vegetation and wildlife species. Agriculture provides more than 60% of the population with jobs and income and rural activities occupy more than 55% of the active population and provide almost 17% of national GDP per year[4], with livestock (cattle, camels, sheep, goats) representing 80% of this figure. Only 11.5% of the area under agricultural production is irrigated. The downward trend in rainfall, demographic dynamics and land pressure, among others, have accelerated the rate at which the degradation of natural resources and particularly that of soil fertility is happening in the country. Most notably, agricultural production covers only 40% of the food needs of the Mauritanian people. Formerly classified as the second largest producer of gum arabic (*Acacia Senegal*) in the world, Mauritania now produces 500 tons annually, down markedly from 5,700 tons produced annually in the late 1960s/early 1970s. The production of dates has become a highly valued economic activity for the country (in oasis areas, agriculture is essentially based on the date palm with over 200 palm cultivars counted).

Forest cover has decreased at an average annual rate of around 2.7% over the last 10 years. In the Senegal River Valley, many classified forests have gradually disappeared or seen their areas reduced due to drought and agricultural pressures. More and more of these areas are being given up to the development of hydro-agricultural schemes. A strategy for restoring protected forests has been developed however its action plan has not been implemented. Out of a total land area of 1,046,303km², 6,508 km² or 0.62% are protected. Mauritania has two national parks: The Banc d'Arguin National Park (BANP) and the Diawling National Park, and three nature reserves: Tilemsi, El Aguer and Guelb er Richat.

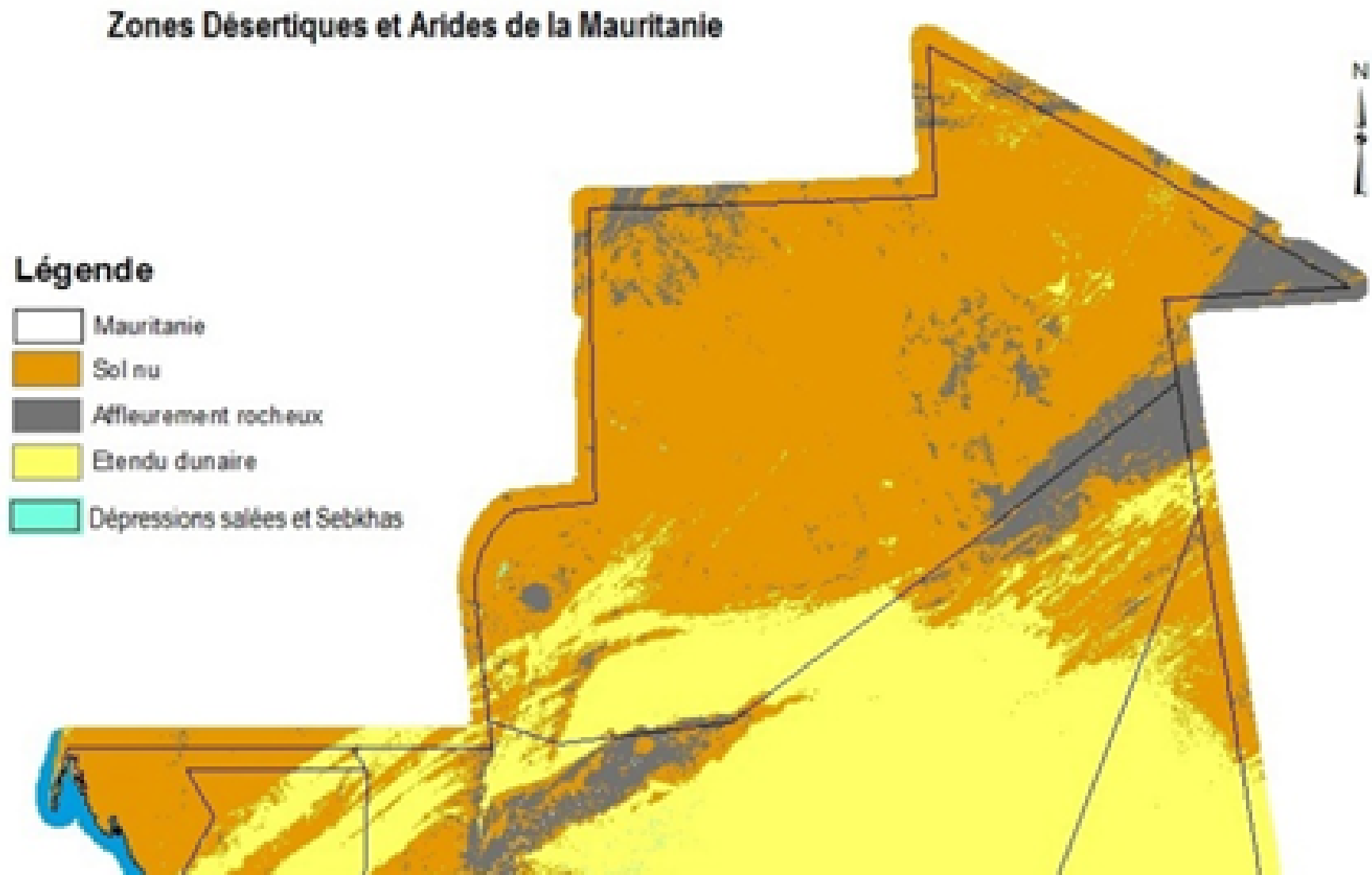
At the core of the environmental and socio-economic challenges in Mauritania is in part the protection of the remaining limited natural resources from further degradation and then using the same resources to generate more environmental benefits while reducing the socio-economic vulnerability context of the local people. In addressing these intertwined complex socio-economic and environmental challenges, this project is proposed in Adrar Wilaya. This Wilaya is part of the arid zones of Mauritania (see Figure 1), affected by the lowest investment levels of the country. Embedded and supported by the dictum that 'aridity is not sterility,' Adrar Wilaya remains an important landscape for pastoral as well as food crop producing rural communities. Additionally, the Wilaya is also a home to some of the endemic animal species that are of national and global importance. The Wilaya also has oases that define and shape economies for the survival of rural populations.

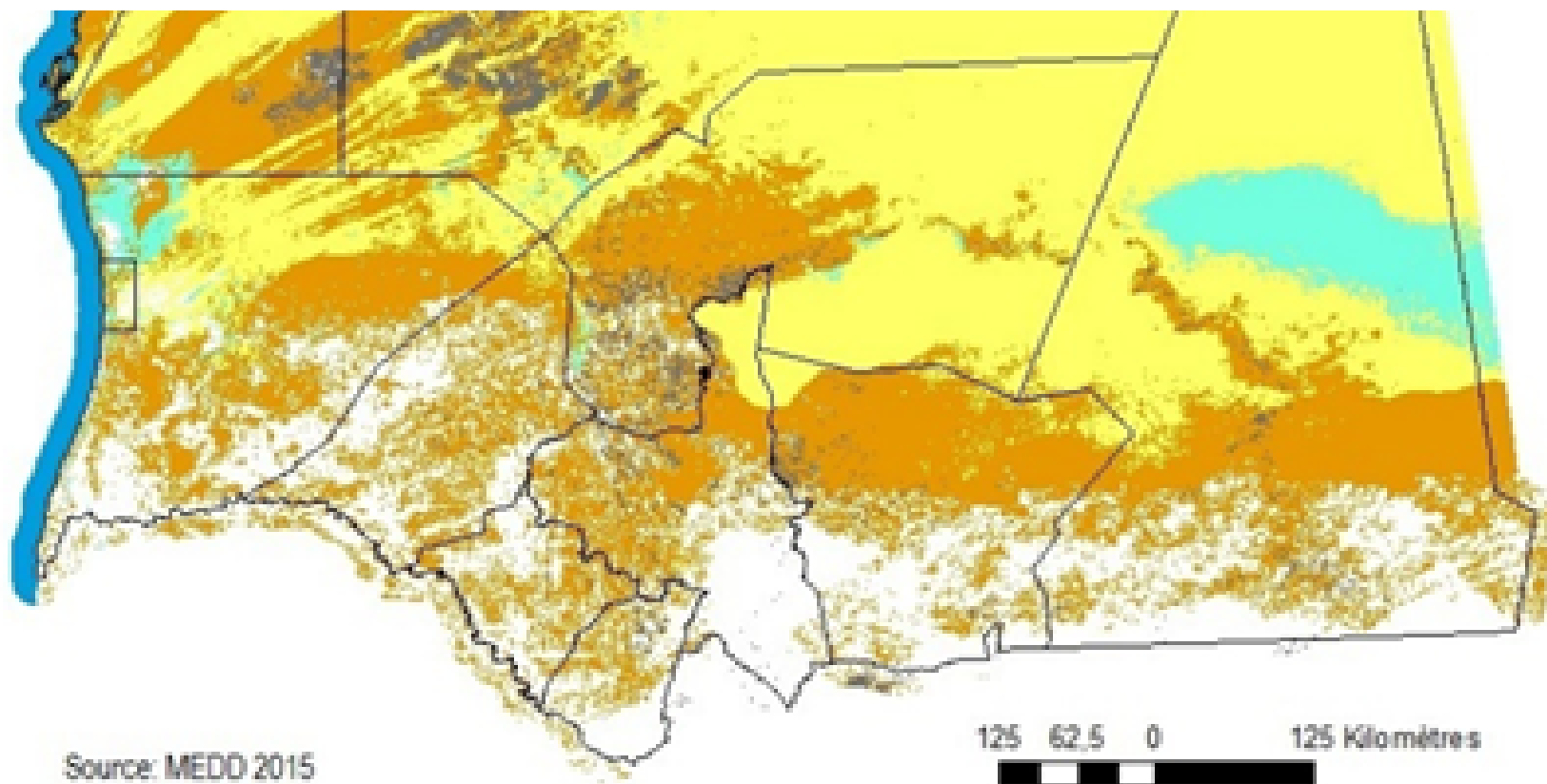
The Wilaya of Adrar: The Wilaya is on an elevation of about 700 m in the north and west. It gets subsumed in dunes in the southern and eastern sides. More than half of the inhabitants of Adrar are considered to be poor (57.1%), or 15 points more than the national level (42%). Socio-economic activities in Adrar are related to tourism and crafts, mining and petroleum, transport, energy, and dressed stone, as well as livestock and exploitation of natural resources. Agriculture is the main activity of the Wilaya, which contains the largest number of oases in the country (more than 63), is self-sufficient and participates in the supply (with vegetables and dates) of the capital Nouakchott. Nevertheless, cereal production, largely dependent on irregular rainfall, only covers 30% of estimated needs in good years. Tourism is another critical economic activity due to the geographical location, its magical landscape (sand dunes, mountain ranges, and historic towns of Chinguity and Ouadane).

Tourism has recovered after 2018, making a steady increased contribution to the income of the household standard of living and to the national GDP.[5] Adrar has therefore substantial ecotourism potential with the full involvement of local communities. For example, past interventions from the European Union (EU) offered training programmes to local communities in support of eco-tourism and eco-surveillance. Other partners have also worked in the past to promote traditional weaving, dyes and seams, inn creation; promote the exploitation of livestock products in handicrafts (such as camel skins and wool); and systematization of access rights. There have been efforts to reintroduce gazelles, antelopes and other Sahelo-Saharan species in the Parc d'Aouleigat created

in Trarza Wilaya in 2016. The MESD has established partnerships with Spain, Senegal, Niger, Zimbabwe to this effect and recently collaborated with CBD Habitat (Spain) in the successful reintroduction of about 150 individuals and 10 species in the Parc. The MESD has demonstrated interest in the potential reintroduction of indigenous Sahelo-Saharan species in the new PA as recommended by the decree drafted for the designation of Guelb Er Richat as PA. This will be explored during PPG, when due diligence will be applied to assess feasibility in full (including quality of habitat, presence of solid food source, presence of required technical expertise, sourcing, success of similar efforts etc.), as well as financial feasibility (identification of funding sources including through past partnerships indicated), cost-effectiveness from a conservation standpoint and fit with the overall conservation strategy in the area.

Figure 1: Map of desert and arid zones in Mauritania





It is important to note that the potential of biological resources in Mauritania is unknown, never having benefited from a systematic inventory to determine more precisely the potential of their biological or genetic diversity and the areas they cover. There is only a partial inventory on government official record made in 1981 by USAID that covers only one part of southwest Mauritania, giving an idea of the diversity of species in the areas covered. Unfortunately, it can no longer be taken into consideration today due to the different drivers of biodiversity loss at the national level.[1] This partly explains the poor environmental governance indicator of Mauritania.

Animal species in Adrar Wilaya: In Adrar, the terrestrial fauna is found in two distinct biotopes. These are the massifs and valleys which are the respective areas of the Barbary sheep and the Dorcas gazelle. The Guelb Richat, has been recognized for the faunistic diversity, particularly the Oryx, Addax, Ostrich, and Gazelle dama.

Biodiversity in Adrar Wilaya

Species	Scientific name	Existence based on observations
List of wild mammals in Adrar		

Dama gazelle	<i>Gazella dama</i>	Very rare
Gazelle dorcas	<i>Gazella dorcas</i>	Very rare
Barbary sheep	<i>Ammotragus lervia</i>	Very rare
Orycteropus	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>	Very rare
Porcupine	<i>Hystrix cristata</i>	Very rare
Hare	<i>Lepus capensis</i>	Undetermined
Desert hedgehog	<i>Paraechinus aethiopicus</i>	Undetermined
Red monkey	<i>Erythrocebus patas</i>	Scarce
Golden jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>	Undetermined
Pale fox	<i>Canis pallidus</i>	Undetermined
Civet	<i>Viverra civetta</i>	Scarce
Striped hyena	<i>Hyaena hyaena</i>	Very rare
Genette tigrine	<i>Genetta tigrina</i>	Very rare
Sand cat	<i>Felis margarita</i>	Undetermined
Burrowing squirrel	<i>Euxerus erythropus</i>	Frequent
Rock hyrax	<i>Procavia capensis</i>	Frequent
List of birds of Adrar[2]		
Great Bustard	<i>Ardeotis arabs</i>	Rare
Pharaoh's hen	<i>Eupodotis senegalensis</i>	Less frequent
Denham Bustard	<i>Neotis denhami</i>	Rare
Black-bellied bustard	<i>Eupodotis melanogaster</i>	Rare
Curvite Isabelle	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>	Undetermined
Senegalese gangas	<i>Pterocles exustus</i>	Undetermined
Gambian gangas	<i>Pterocles quadricinctus</i>	Undetermined
African turnix	<i>Turnix sylvatica</i>	Undetermined

African raven	<i>Corvus syriacus</i>	Undetermined
Crow pie	<i>Corvus albus</i>	Undetermined
Brown raven	<i>Corvus ruficollis</i>	Undetermined
List of reptiles in Adrar		
Desert monitor	<i>Varanus griseus</i>	Abundant
Sand monitor lizard	<i>Varanus varanus</i>	Rare
African snake	<i>Dasypeltis scabra</i>	Undetermined
Puff adder	<i>Bitis arietans</i>	Undetermined
Horned viper	<i>Cerastes carastes</i>	Undetermined
Erg viper	<i>Cerastes vipera</i>	Less frequent
Sand snake	<i>Psammaphis schokari</i>	Rare
Land turtle	<i>Testudo sulcata</i>	Very rare
Agama sp	<i>Agama sp</i>	Abundant

Source: Government of Mauritania (2017). Actualisation de la Monographie De La Wilaya de l'Adrar Rapport diagnostic

Guelb er Richat Nature Reserve, one of the only three nature reserves in Mauritania[3] is located in the Wilaya of Adrar, in the Moughataa of Ouadane. The reserve covers an area of 20,000 km² (2,000,000 ha), created in an area with diverse biotopes. According to the European Union study conducted in 2007 to create a community-managed protected area for the Guelb Er Richat site and its outlying areas, Guelb Er Richat is of great geological interest (refer to figure 2) and hosts a variety of healthy ecosystems. This is partly thanks to the difficult of access to the area, therefore less anthropogenic impact on the landscape. The prehistoric and cultural wealth of the area is unparalleled in Mauritania. There are permanent sources of water, natural protection against winds for the animals and human access. The presence of oases in the Reserve is also particularly important for migratory birds. The Reserve was created for the protection of a bighorn sheep (mouflons) population that is endangered. Today it is used for protection of a rich and varied Saharan flora and fauna. The most important wildlife species are the addax, dorcas gazelle, bighorn sheep, red-fronted gazelle and the owls[4]. The dominant plant species are those of the arid zones which are certainly scattered but of great biological diversity.[5] Given its natural, including geological endowments and cultural value, the Reserve has increasingly gained political support to invest in considerably improving its protection. In bilateral negotiations, between GiZ, the European Union, the World Bank and the Government, the Reserve has become part of the topics to attract investments in the near future to spur eco-tourism potential, conserve biodiversity, prevent the movement of sand dunes, particularly in the southern end of the Reserve and to create employment opportunities to curb migration to cities.

At the level of flora more precisely, the southern part of the Guelb Er Richat is poor in pasture. Only a few tufts of *panicum turgidum* grow there. The woody vegetation is very sparse and is made up of *balanites aegyptiaca* and *Acacia raddiana*. The northern part of Guelb Er Richat is richer. There are important meadows of *Panicum turgidum* combined, with *Acacia ehrenbergiana*, *Capparis decidua*, *Maerua crassifolia*, *Acacia raddiana*, *Euphorbia bamalsifera*, *Sclerocephalus arabicus*, *Cymbopogon schoenanthus*. The concentric enclosures of Guelb Er Richat leave between them clayey-silty depressions where fodder plants grow in case of rains. The *sebkhas* located inside the Richat constitute, in the event of rains, pastures that are attract herbivores. The northern periphery of Richat is a flat area interspersed by wadis where *Panicum turgidum* and relatively dense stands of *Acacia* grow. The southern periphery is covered with dune formations where grow *Aristida pungens*, *Aristida plumosa*, *Anastatica hirochuntina* (*Jericho rose*), *Broechia cinerea*, *Crotalariae sahariae*, *Cleome tenalla*, *Aerva javanica*, *Schouvia purpurea*, *Cassia obovata* and *Colocytis vulgaris*. The Guelb Er Richat is surrounded by a wadi which seemed to be occupied by an old gallery forest. Currently the dominant vegetation consists of *Leptadenia pyrotechnica* and *Acacia raddiana*. At the level of fauna, there are Dorca gazelles, Barbary sheep, addax and oryx around the Guelb Er Richat. The presence of these antelopes as well as other species of animals such as the rock hyrax, the gray monitor, the jackal and migrating raptors is threatened by various activities including hunting. In addition, competition between wild species and domesticated animals for water supply in certain pastoral areas still turns to the disadvantage of wild species. The Guelb Er Richat area is a crossing point for migrating passerines from the Western Palearctic.[6]

Figure 2: the Richat Structure

Richat Structure Mauritania

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To the north-east of the Guelb Er Richat Nature Reserve is an important Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), *El Ghallâouiya* (coordinates: 21°35'N 10°35'W). El Ghallâouiya is a winding escarpment that links to the Guelb Er Richat and, further south, to the Adrar plateau. El Ghallâouiya is a permanent water-source exploited by nomadic herders, acknowledged as “one of the best water source in the Sahara”, critical for species that rely on the water for their biological processes such as birds, the dorcas gazelle or the felou gundi. Data on biodiversity value of global significance will be compiled during PPG to update the relevant KBA criteria and status of the site as defined by the KBA standard. Deep ravines intersect the cliffs and there are many ledges and crevices in the rock-face. The plains are dominated by ergs and isolated dunes, punctuated by wells and sebkhas. The area has relatively important vegetation in depressions: *Hyoscyamus muticus*, *Tamarix sp.*, *Acacia raddiana*, *Capparis decidua*, *Leptadenia pyrotechnica*, *Maerua crassifolia*, *Salvadora persica*, *Balanites aegyptiaca*, *Panicum turgidum* and *Stipagrostis pungens*. [1] According to the 2001 assessment, El Ghallâouiya sits on 35,000 ha and has the following bird species with their IBA criteria in brackets: Crowned Sandgrouse *Pterocles coronatus* (A3); Nubian Bustard *Neotis nuba* (A1); Pharaoh Eagle-owl *Bubo ascalaphus* (A3); Greater Hoopoe-lark *Alaemon alaudipes* (A3); Bar-tailed Lark *Ammomanes cinctura* (A3); Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti* (A3); Pale Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne obsoleta* (A3); Streaked Scrub-warbler *Scotocerca inquieta* (A3); Fulvous Babbler *Argya fulva* (A3); White-crowned Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga* (A3); *Passer simplex* (A3); and Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus* (A3). [2]

According to the same European Union Study of 2007 mentioned earlier, El Ghallaouiya is the richest rock carving site in Mauritania with a rich diversity of biotopes, especially along the cliffs with a rich ecological niches around permanent water sources and forests in depressions. Gazelles, dorcas, addax and the bustard appear to survive on the plateau. These animals are rare and adapted to the harsh conditions of the Sahara. However, cultural hunting practices (illegal) and the buying of hunting permits by large wealthy hunters to hunt the last specimens of large and endangered wildlife is a real threat to the biodiversity in the area. Additionally, government presence is limited, and this contributes to the general failure to enforce and comply with existing legislation, particularly with regard to the plundering of Paleo and Neolithic resources, and the illegal hunting of large Saharan fauna. The well of El Ghallaouiya and the pass to the north to the pastures of erg Maqtier and Baten at the foot of Adrar Wilaya and the pastures of the great sandy plains of Mreyye and Adrar have always been a place of transit. This explains the richness of the rock site.

The main environmental constraints in Adrar Wilaya include: (i) a strong human pressure on scarce natural resources for domestic needs and unsustainable agricultural and pastoral production leading to ecosystem degradation; (ii) erosion of sandy soils due to winds; (iii) silting that affects arable land and infrastructure; and (iv) land and soil degradation [1]. More specifically, the main environmental threats in the proposed project area include human population growth, illegal hunting, overdraft of scarce water resource and plastic pollution from local populations and tourists. Other threats human-wildlife conflict, mineral explorations and proliferation of trunk roads that have eased human access to the area. [4]

The Wilaya of Adrar in the arid zones of the country represents important productive landscapes for agricultural and pastoral communities. They are home to the rare mouflons as well as endangered gazelles of Mauritania, and to the 'Eye of the Sahara' [5] that is of cultural, geological and environmental importance at national and global levels. Sadly, the arid zones have received little development attention from both the national Government and development partners. This is however, beginning to change, and this proposed project is strategically placed to catalyse many interventions in the target Wilaya, including the interventions listed in the baseline scenario, among others.

It is very important to note that the El Ghallâouiya KBA and the Guelb er Richat Nature Reserve form a contiguous landscape that supports both the wildlife and vegetation detailed above. Therefore, the establishment of a Protected Area between the El Ghallâouiya KBA and the Guelb er Richat is critical to the sustainable management and conservation of both the flora and fauna in Adrar Wilaya. Creating a Protected Area will safeguard the biodiversity integrity of species that are found in both Guelb er Richat Nature Reserve and El Ghallâouiya KBA.

It should be noted here that the government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania has taken an important step in establishing the Guelb Er Richat as a Nature Reserve. This remains an important step in improving biodiversity conservation in the country, however, on its own, it is insufficient. Thus, herein lies the value added in the creation of the PA to give the area a legal conservation status with regimented conservation programs, which hitherto, have been absent in the Nature Reserve. Overall, the government has financial, human and institutional constraints, and its presence to ensure sufficient conservation measures in Adrar Wilaya is limited.

The long-term solution sought by the project is to create an enabling environment for conservation of key species in this arid Wilaya of Mauritania through integrated PA management and sustainable land management in production systems of the surrounding landscape. The project aims to apply an integrated landscape approach that leads to multiple environmental benefits through biodiversity conservation and support to sustainable, resilient and healthy ecosystems. The effectiveness of efforts to realise this long-term solution is however being compromised by the following key barriers, linked to the weak institutional and policy structures (as reflected in the low environmental governance indicator) to improve environmental governance and conserve biodiversity; lack of an integrated approach to biodiversity conservation and natural resource management in Mauritania; and insufficient capacity in sustainable natural resource management and participation of rural communities resources in biodiversity conservation. These barriers are detailed below.

- *Weak institutional and policy structures to improve environmental governance and conserve biodiversity:* The capacity of the national and local agencies responsible for the conservation planning and management is weak, with insufficient operational funding, staffing complement and technical skills being committed to fulfil their conservation mandates (refer to baseline scenario). Areas where resources are locally managed by user associations are an exception. The target areas are all poorly demarcated, there is a lack of information on status and trends of biodiversity, including benefits from biodiversity and ecosystem services. They have weak support from local communities and political decision-makers. There is a need to reinforce government presence in El Ghallâouiya, currently limited an army base at Al Ghallaouiya. Given the absence of the government, there is non-adherence to the existing regulation, particularly the pillage of paleo and neolithic resources and poaching of the Saharian fauna.

- *Lack of an integrated approach to biodiversity conservation and natural resource management in Mauritania:* Fisheries, agriculture, forestry and livestock holding that constitute Mauritania's important natural resources are estimated at 30% of the total national wealth stock.[6] However, the condition of land, water, forests and biodiversity continues to deteriorate owing to the combined effect of hostile climatic conditions and continued overexploitation and pressure from deforestation to increased land for agriculture, timber and fuel needs. These factors contribute to habitat loss of key species in and around El Ghallâouiya KBA. Despite the high levels of land degradation, only 0.62% of the land area is protected in an institutional context where planning processes are siloed, rather than integrated to address the complex interlinkages between environmental, social and economic issues affecting the country. Added to this is weak environmental governance, i.e., institutional, material, financial and human resources available to the authorities in charge of environmental management. Despite these challenges, we have noted a number of emerging opportunities and a combination of private and public investments under the leadership of the Government. These will be harnessed by the project in the context of the existing natural resource to support the country to towards achieving its conservation and development goals and reduce poverty levels of communities whose livelihoods are tied to the exploitation of natural resources.

Insufficient capacity in sustainable natural resource management and participation of rural community resources in biodiversity conservation:

Mauritania's HDI ranks 161 out of 189 countries and territories. Though Mauritania's economy has seen growth from the mining sector, the poverty levels in rural areas -where almost 70% of the poor people live- are still very high. There is generally limited community involvement in and benefit from protected area management. This is related to a variety of factors. There is generally lack of awareness on the value of biodiversity conservation and related ecosystem services, understanding of sustainable natural resource management and related investments. This is partly linked to the lack of institutional frameworks at local level to support capacity development for improved integration of communities in sustainable management of natural resources that underpin their livelihoods. Additionally, the government is less present in the drylands, depriving communities in those areas of social services, including economic opportunities that come with a vibrant government and private sector presence. Therefore, reliance on the maximum exploitation of natural resources is almost their only option to survive. As a strategic management policy direction for rural development, sustainable economic growth depends on the development of income-generating activities that diversify the livelihoods of the poor rural communities around El Ghallâouïya who depend almost entirely on the exploitation of natural resources for their survival. Alternative and diversified income generating activities for rural communities will expand economic opportunities to reduce their reliance and exploitation of natural resources that lead to resource degradation.

2) The baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects

As a signatory to the CBD, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (IRM) is committed to providing an effective response across sectors and at various government levels to conserve biodiversity and to achieve the Aichi targets. Mauritania seeks to continue integrating the process of sustainable use of biological resources for future generations. The country's National Strategy for Biodiversity (2011-2020) indicates that Mauritania seeks to preserve the functions of long-term ecosystems, including their capacity to adapt and evolve according to environmental changes, especially climate change and desertification. Several projects to create Protected Areas are currently being studied in Mauritania, some of which are in a very advanced state. Among those, Guelb El Richat, which forms the same contiguous landscape with the El Ghallâouïya KBA, is listed as a priority project (6th National Report to CBD, 2018). The parliamentary decree to establish a PA in the area has been prepared, the National Tourism Office has been relaunched in October 2020 and the Government has initiated investments in support for tourism infrastructure in target villages in Adrar, the proposed Wilaya (region) for the project.

The Government of the IRM acknowledges the above-mentioned barriers in its commitments. In line with the country's multilateral biodiversity commitments, there are a number of national organizations implementing biodiversity-related activities. In this baseline scenario, a few of them have operations in Adrar Wilaya. These are however largely insufficient, linked to financial, human and institutional constraints as indicated in the barrier analysis (including the limited government presence). Beyond the efforts made by the IRM to designate the area as nature reserve and the leadership of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD) to mobilize technical and financial partners, the GEF funding will be critical to enable the scientific basis and governance framework that will lead to the formal creation of the PA and its sustainable management with regimented conservation programs and sustainable financing mechanisms. Within the MESD, the Directorate of Protected Areas and Coastline (DALP) is responsible for designing the national policy for the conservation of terrestrial and marine protected areas and developing the network of protected areas in the context of sustainable development, among other functions. The Directorate includes three departments: Protected Areas Service; Littoral Service; Biodiversity Monitoring Service. The Protected Areas Service is responsible for promoting new models of protected areas and implementing them within the framework of new classification projects, serving as an interface between protected areas and between them and partners and ensure the preservation of endangered species, including migratory or resident species in protected areas, the coast and wetlands. Article 33 defines responsibilities of the Biodiversity Monitoring Service for data collection and proposition of measures for the safeguard and conservation of migratory species in protected areas and along the coast. The Directorate of Protected Areas and Coastline with a total staff capacity of 35 personnel (including a Director, a Deputy Director, 3 Head of Services and around 30 officers) has an estimated budget of USD 3 million for 2021-2026 period.

The DAPL will work together with the National Unit for Environmental Observation and Arid Zones (CNOEZA) and both will be supported by different institutions, including the National Bureau for Tourism and the Regional Directorate of the MESD in Adrar, in addition to the different baseline projects and coordination projects mentioned below. CNOEZA was established to support government efforts and development partners to prioritise investments for rural development and sustainable management of natural resources in arid zones of Mauritania. The role of CNOEZA in this project is IRM's strategic and deliberate decision to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management in the arid regions of Mauritania. The principle community economic activities in Adrar are related to oasis agriculture based on the cultivation of dates, gardening and production of cereal crops; and pastoralism, dominated by livestock transhumant camel, sheep and goat breeds on large pastoral areas with little to no forest formations. Oasis agriculture and pastoralism are very important to the local and national economies in Mauritania. To this end, these activities are a priority to IRM that has sought to develop and implement a development agenda axed on biological diversity, sustainable development, and agriculture. Thus, with different development partners, the IRM has invested in oasis agriculture and pastoralism in Adrar region through the following projects that constitute the associated baseline projects:

- *Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania*: This is a \$2.7 million four-year GEF-funded and IUCN implemented proposed project for the period 2021/2022 – 2024/2025. The project aims at improving livelihoods of rural communities in the wilayas of Adrar, Inchiri and Dakhlet Nouadhibou in Mauritania through sustainable land restoration and management. It has been designed around four components: capacity building and governance; land and ecosystem restoration; financing scaling-up of SLM; and project-specific knowledge management and Monitoring and Evaluation. The proposed project presents solid potential to complement the biodiversity conservation focus of the UNEP project with the implementation of activities in the Wilaya of Adrar related to SLM and ecosystem restoration outside the PA. More specifically, the proposed project will build on the 15 community livelihoods improvement and land restoration micro-projects, taking advantage of community-level mobilization to expand livelihood activities that go beyond land restoration to include biodiversity-friendly approaches, sharing approaches and best practice from component 2 and through component 3.
- *Regional Support Project for the Sahel Irrigation Initiative (PARIIS)*: This is a \$197.25 million program funded by the World Bank for the period 2017 to 2024. The objective is to improve the capacity of stakeholders to develop and manage irrigation and to increase irrigated areas by following a regional approach based on "solutions" in six countries in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad). The project interventions revolve around three components: Modernization of the Institutional and Planning Framework; Financing of irrigation solutions and Knowledge Management and Coordination. This project operates in the oasis areas of Adrar where the proposed project will synergise with the current one in land use plans and development of knowledge products regarding date production to improve the management of ecosystems in the oasis areas. In the implementation of irrigation solutions and modernization of institutional and planning frameworks, the current project uses participatory approaches – establishing local-level structures that the proposed project will make use of to engage with communities through participatory processes.
- *Regional Project of Support to Pastoralism in the Sahel (PRAPS)*: \$248 million World Bank funded project for the period 2015 – 2021. The PRAPS stems from the Nouakchott Declaration on pastoralism that was adopted on October 29, 2013 for 6 Sahelian countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad and Senegal). The PRAPS-MR intervenes according to the main transhumance axes in 6 eco-pastoral zones (cross-border zones) at the level of 10 wilayas (Trarza, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Assaba, Hodh Elgharbi, Hodh Echargui, Tagant, Adrar, Inchiri), to improve access to essential production means and services and to markets for pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in selected cross-border areas and along transhumance routes. The main components are:

Improve animal health; Improve the management of natural resources; Facilitate market access; Improve the management of pastoral crises; Project management and institutional support. Date farming and livestock production are important socioeconomic activities in Adrar. In Adrar, the proposed project will learn from with the current project on community mobilisation. and improved management of natural resources.

- *Adaptation and Livelihoods Project in 3 Arid Regions of Mauritania (AMSTRA)*: funded by the GEF, implemented by UNEP with \$ 4 million for 2019-2022 to strengthen adaptation to climate change and design activities that protect, preserve and rehabilitate ecosystems and improve the living conditions of local populations at the local level in the arid and semi-arid zones of Inchiri, Adrar, Tagant, Tiris Zemmour and Dakhlet Nouadhibou. Some of the ecosystem strengthening activities involving communities as well as technical institutional capacity building of this project will be implemented in Adrar - offering potential for collaboration in terms of community engagement and capacity development. The KM work envisaged under this project would also serve to inform the proposed project component 3.

- *The Development of an Improved and innovative Management system for Sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods in Mauritania project (DIMS)*: This was a \$5 million four-year (2013 – 2017) GEF-UNEP funded project. With the objective to develop improved and innovative irrigation systems to improve the livelihoods of farmers in Mauritania, this project focused on the development of an improved and innovative management system for climate resilient livelihoods in Mauritania. The proposed project will draw lessons from this project regarding engaging government agencies and other stakeholders to develop innovative governance mechanism deliver livelihood options to local communities. Additionally, the proposed project will draw on lessons regarding community consultative processes that support local community engagement in identifying biodiversity hotspots in the targeted project area, and how communities can be engaged to develop meaningful alternative livelihood strategies.

- *Partnership to Mainstream Biodiversity into Oil and Gas Sector Development in Mauritania (2010 - 2016)*: This is a \$1 million UNDP-GEF project to mainstream biodiversity conservation into Mauritania's new era of oil and gas development through a concerted partnership involving the oil and gas industry, government and civil society stakeholders. It was conceived around the following components: mainstream biodiversity considerations within national government policies, guidelines and regulations for the oil and gas sector, and within the sector's operations; oil and gas sector partnership for conservation financing; and strengthened capacity of local stakeholders and key government agencies to work collaboratively with the oil and gas sector to protect biodiversity. This project was implemented targeting the coastal regions of Mauritania. The proposed project will learn from this project's experience of establishing legal and policy framework for the Biodiversity Trust Fund with a transparent management structure, to efficiently guide the allocation of resources to biodiversity conservation with community participation in marine and coastal environments.

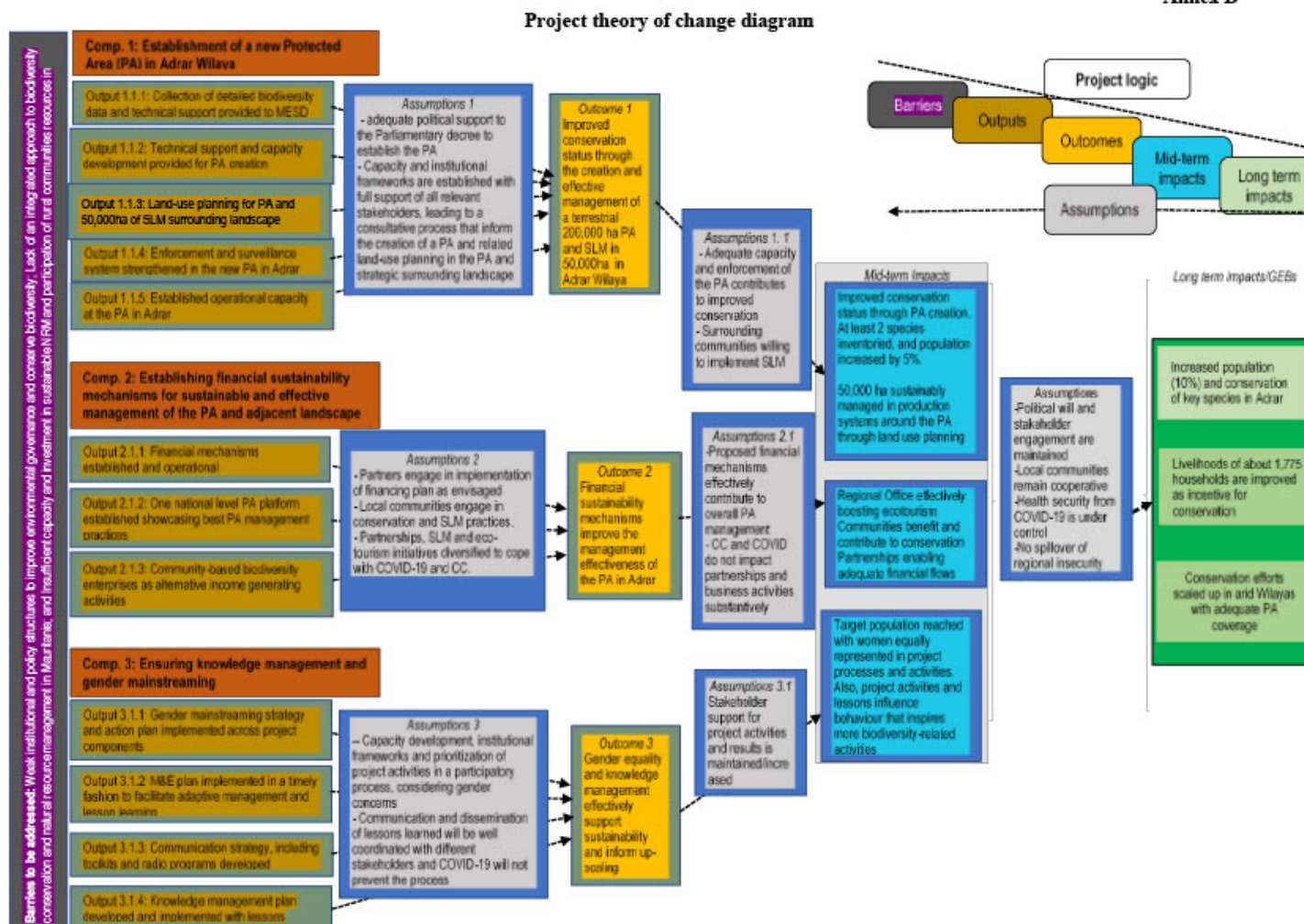
- *Adaptive management and monitoring of the Maghreb's Oases systems*: This is a three-year (2014 – 2017) \$1.7 million GEF-5 GEF-FAO project to enhance, expand and sustain the adaptive management and monitoring of the Magreb's Oases systems. Its components focus on enhancing institutional skills to collect, manage and monitor trends in degradation of natural resources and impacts for an improved capacity to apply adaptive management tools in NRM and SLM reporting; enhancing knowledge on best practices for dynamic conservation, adaptive management, and monitoring of oases ecosystems; and awareness-raising to facilitate scaling-up and mainstreaming of adaptive management tools for oases ecosystems. This multi-country project had one of its activities that focused on best practices for the adaptive management of oasis ecosystems – documenting and sharing the best practices among CSOs. In Mauritania, it was in Adrar Wilaya. The proposed will therefore learn from the best practices that were selected and documented to improve oasis ecosystems.

- *Natural Resource Management Programme in Mauritania*: This is a \$9.6 million Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) funded programme (2011 – 2016) to create a framework for sustainable management of natural resources by local populations in selected areas. The project focused on capacity building of all stakeholders and their organizations; training of local communities; consideration of gender aspects; and consultation with development partners to achieve greater aid effectiveness. The programme successfully established local collective management associations. These are

community-based organizations for sustainable management of natural resources within designated local areas. The project had a national scope, and one of its focus areas relevant to the proposed project is the strengthening of decentralised management of natural resources in the agricultural, woodland and pasture areas in the south of the country. The proposed project will therefore draw on lessons regarding the decentralisation of resource management in its co-management plans in Adrar Wilaya.

3) The proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project

The objective of this project is to enhance the conservation of key species in the arid Wilaya of Adrar through the creation and sustainable management of a new Protected Area (200,000ha) and through sustainable land management in production systems in 50,000 ha adjacent to the new PA. In the proposed alternative scenario, the project aims to create a terrestrial protected area and to build on current efforts by the Government of the IRM to establish the necessary institutional structures, capacity and legal provisions to ensure effectiveness in their management. The proposed approach is centered on the involvement of local communities in the management strategy to promote alternative income generating activities linked to community-based biodiversity enterprises. It will support the implementation of sustainable natural resource management practices, and conservation and management measures, in selected other use zones within the proposed protected area. In doing so, it aims at designing and implementing measures that achieve multiple benefits through conserving biodiversity and safeguarding and enhancing ecosystem services and the well-being of people who depend on them for their livelihoods. The project will build on best practices and collaboration with existing development interventions and the conducive policy space in the country to support integrated management of protected areas and contribute to the conservation of key biodiversity species in Adrar Wilaya. The project proposes a suite of interventions that address the institutional and policy gaps, financial sustainability, livelihoods and knowledge products to support sharing of lessons, awareness-raising and informing conservation strategic decisions in arid zones beyond Adrar Wilaya as reflected in the theory of change diagram in annex D (also attached separately in the portal).



Accordingly, the three inter-connected components as described below have been conceived to address the barriers identified previously:

Component 1: Establishment of a new PA in Adrar

Beyond the combination of both natural and anthropogenic factors, the loss of biodiversity in the country is exacerbated by the lack of appropriate management policies and legislation to foster the protection of species and constrained logistical and financial means to ensure effective biodiversity conservation. Addressing these barriers, this component has been designed to improve the conservation status through project support to enable the designation and registration of the KBA to contribute to the creation and effective management of a new PA in the Wilaya of Adrar. This component will enable the creation of an IUCN Category VI 200,000 ha protected area, effectively linking El Ghallâouiya KBA and Guelb Er Richat. The proposed site is a co-habited production landscape that supports the movement of wildlife and the livelihoods of local communities and that will result in a substantial increase in the coverage of the national terrestrial protected area state.

Four outputs have been designed to deliver the outcome 1, “Improved conservation status through the creation and effective management of a terrestrial 200,000 ha PA in Adrar”. Output 1.1.1 will build local capacity to support the collection of detailed biodiversity data to enable the KBA assessment, designation and registration process of the entire new PA in line with current Global KBA criteria. Detailed biodiversity data of the site will be collected during PPG and early start of implementation to compile numbers of mature individuals of vulnerable and endangered species such as Dorcas Gazelles (VU in the IUCN red list), likely to trigger the KBA criterion in view of the existence of the permanent water-source in El Ghallâouiya, acknowledged as one of the best water source in the Sahara. Information will also be collected on endemic species of plants and invertebrates and other data to explore the possibility that the site can meet criterion C – ecological integrity. Building partly on the basis of the work under Output 1.1.1, Output 1.1.2 will provide technical support and capacity development to government and other strategic partners to carry out further scientific research and to prepare documentation for the creation of a terrestrial protected area covering El Ghallâouiya KBA and Guelb Er Richat in Adrar.

Under Output 1.1.3, these efforts will include accompanying land use plans to facilitate the identification and demarcation of priority areas for conservation in compliance with the gazetting process. The land-use planning will also cover an estimated 50,000 ha (possibly to be increased during PPG) that will strengthen sustainability of the PA through the participation of neighboring communities in sustainable land management in production systems of the surrounding landscape. Output 1.1.4 will ensure a surveillance system in the new PA in Adrar through the establishment of a long-term monitoring and enforcement system and a platform for information sharing and intelligence gathering between the PA authority and the local communities. Appropriate mechanisms and incentives will be put in place to enable reporting and monitoring of illegal activities. Output 1.1.5 will focus on ensuring that there is an established operational capacity at the PA in Adrar. It will build on the recent relaunch of the National Tourism Office and commitment of the Government to issue a decree towards the creation of a Regional Office for the PA in year 2 of the project. This will ensure that there is a permanent institution with budget and regular staff that is integrated in the institutional structures of the Government of the IRM. The project will build the capacity of the staff, establish a long-term ecological monitoring system for the protected and adjacent areas and support the development and approval of its management plan.

Component 2: Establishing financial sustainability mechanisms for sustainable and effective management of the PA

The creation of a PA with accompanying institutional arrangements in component 1 will be an important step towards improved biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in Mauritania. The newly created PA also requires financial sustainability to ensure management effectiveness through the implementation of institutional arrangements and sustained individual and institutional capacity to achieve its conservation objectives. Component 2 builds on component 1 to explore and establish an adequate mechanism, including external funding to support PA management costs, that can provide additional socio-economic and environmental benefits beyond the existence value of biodiversity, including by improving and changing agriculture and pastoralist production practices through technical capacity building and implementation of the mentioned financial mechanisms. The component is designed to address the barriers identified such as lack of institutional frameworks at local level to support capacity development for improved integration of communities in sustainable management of natural resources. It builds on the opportunities mentioned in the baseline scenario concerning: the commitment from the Government to conservation in the Arid Wilayas, paired with planned infrastructure developments towards eco-tourism, the variety of projects supporting livelihood interventions, sustainable land management (SLM) and sustainable agricultural practices and the legal establishment of a PA Regional Office to coordinate with the National Tourism

Office to support the management of the new PA with funding from government. The project will explore during PPG the best practice that can be applied to the local context to promote private sector investments towards conservation and eco and scientific tourism and will also take into consideration alternative opportunities and mitigation strategies to the potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Directly, the project will support about 1,775 households with biodiversity conservation-friendly alternative income generating activities to integrate local communities in the financial system that will support the management of the PA.

In response to lack of integrated approaches to biodiversity conservation that ensure financial sustainability and community engagement in the local financial economy, this component has been designed to draw on accepted practices designed by the GEF and others to develop and use innovative tools and revenue mechanisms that are responsive to specific needs of the drylands of Mauritania, around three interlinked outputs: While Output 1.1.4 focuses on the creation and legal basis for operationalization of the new Protected Area Regional Office, Output 2.1.1 will focus on mobilizing resources to implement the management plan for the PA and on developing financial management and sustainability systems. The output will support the development of a financing plan for the PA as part of the establishment of financial mechanisms and the necessary institutional capacity and processes for PA conservation. In view of the increased contribution to the income of the household standard of living and to the national GDP, the government commitment and investments in support for tourism infrastructure and the Regional Tourism Office in Adrar and the substantial ecotourism potential conducive to the full involvement of local communities, the promotion of eco-tourism will be aggressively pursued, and so will partnerships for conservation with (international) development partners active within the country, and beyond.[7] The project will pursue investments from development partners such as the European Union, GiZ and the World Bank, including through the GGW and from private sector to materialize and promote the eco and scientific tourism potential of the PA. This will include local tourism around the festivals and cultural importance of the ancient villages in the Wilaya as one of the potential measures to mitigate COVID-19 impacts. Complementary approaches will be explored in detail during the preparatory phase, including agreements with the private sector in line with corporate social responsibility related Community Projects. Initial discussions with the Banque Populaire de Mauritanie, the date production company Société Toumour Mauritania (STM), foundations such as Fondation Elkheir and from mining companies such as Kinross will be pursued during the preparatory phase to develop this output in detail. Implementation of incentives for private conservation should be considered with the participation of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, local government, businesses, and local producers through baseline projects and in establishing agreements to finance activities of PAs' management plans. These recommendations have been considered and will be further analyzed as part of the PPG.

On this basis, Output 2.1.2 will lead to the establishment of one national level PA platform to showcase best PA management practices, eco-tourism potential, investment potential and biodiversity status to be managed by the National Tourism Office of Mauritania. During PPG, the potential to support the development and integration of adaptation and resilience management measures for the newly created PA will be explored and integrated as relevant into the work of the platform. The platform will also serve as a one-stop shop for government and other stakeholder-organized eco-tourism promotion events. Under output 2.1.3 the project will focus on ensuring actual implementation of the land use plans for the PA and surrounding landscapes, providing the knowledge, technical capacity and financial means, in line with the financing mechanism and plans to be designed under output 2.1.1. The studies and consultations envisaged during the preparatory phase will inform the identification and support towards optimal community-based biodiversity enterprises as alternative income generating activities. This will be done through a participatory approach, ensuring adequate representation of women and youth and involvement in decision making processes and prioritization of interventions. The identification of activities under this output will first focus on those communities that are involved in activities within and around the PA. The involvement of communities and other key stakeholders through consultative and collaborative processes will be critical to effective design and implementation to provide and strengthen the basis for sustainability, community behavioral change towards conservation, and sustainable natural resource management practices. The activities will then be triaged based on the following considerations: i) their potential impact in enabling communities to contribute to biodiversity conservation and PA effective management; ii) their potential for scaling up incentives for conservation and sustainable management in the medium and long term; and iii) the ability of local communities to sustain the enterprises beyond the life of the proposed project. In this regard, the support will focus on capacity and technical support, but also activities such as microfinance through cooperatives.

It is envisaged that community-based natural resource management groups be explored to capitalize on community-level social ties to create and strengthen community-level institutions to support livelihood goals and biodiversity conservation priorities of the project. This approach is consistent with the understanding that sustained individual and institutional capacity, implementation of PA interventions through established frameworks and co-management between state and local governance structures will contribute to achieving biodiversity conservation objectives. The details of the outputs described for this outcome will be fine-tuned during PPG, when detailed consultations with key public and private stakeholders will inform their development.

The PA creation processes needs to be accompanied by incentives for local communities to contribute to effective PA management during and after project life to minimize management costs associated with community resource exploitation in the absence of alternative sources of livelihoods. Therefore, this project will seek to identify and support sustainable community-based activities that will meet the three considerations mentioned above.

Component 3 Knowledge management and gender mainstreaming

This component will aim at developing robust and gender-sensitive communications, monitoring and knowledge management for the project. A gender mainstreaming strategy will be developed across project components during PPG and will be implemented under output 3.1.1. Output 3.1.2 will ensure implementation of the M&E plan in a timely fashion to facilitate adaptive management and lesson learning. The project will monitor and generate information on reduction of threats to key species identified for projection. Output 3.1.3 will develop a communication strategy, including environmental awareness education programs and other targeted communication tools in support to achieving outcomes across the 3 components. For example, radio programs will be developed under this output to raise awareness about biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management and to ensure that information reach target audiences. Output 3.1.4 aims at developing a knowledge management plan that includes environmental education and draws on lessons learned to develop and disseminate knowledge management products to promote replication of the community co-management biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management approach in arid areas. It will involve national academic institutions as partners for training and knowledge transfer and extension services as a form of training.

4) Alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies

The project addresses two of the direct drivers of biodiversity loss identified by the GEF-7 BD strategy - habitat change (loss, degradation, and fragmentation) and overexploitation or unsustainable use in the arid areas of Mauritania. It will contribute to the BD focal area Objective 2: Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species and its priority BD-1-1 by linking the objective of sustaining the PA and its conservation objective with targeted investments in land use planning in the surrounding geographies and improving and changing production practices in priority sectors through technical capacity building and implementation of financial mechanisms (Components 1 and 2). The project will contribute to priority BD-2-7 mainly through the creation of a new Protected Area (PA) in Adrar Wilaya (Component 1) and establishing financial sustainability mechanisms for sustainable and effective management of the new PA and through ensuring knowledge management effectively support sustainability and inform up-scaling of PA creation and sustainable management in arid areas (Components 2 and 3).

5) Incremental

6) /additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing

The IRM has made great efforts towards addressing the loss of biodiversity of key species while facing extreme financial constraints, degradation of natural resources, population growth, and chronic and elevated levels of poverty. IRM aspires to improve the management of its fragile biodiversity through the creation and support to management effectiveness of a new protected area,[8] and outlining strategic objectives that include the following related to the proposed project:

- Objectives 3 and 9: Preserve species and their diversity, and ensure equitable share of biodiversity benefits;
- Objectives 4 and 7: Preserve and restore ecosystems and their functioning, and reduce pressure on biodiversity;
- Objective 5: Include the preservation of biodiversity in the economic decision; and
- Objectives 6, 11 and 13: Develop financial and human resources, strengthening governance and, build technical capacity to support biodiversity conservation.[9]

Under the baseline scenario, the target areas will continue to experience the current pressures to biodiversity and decline in ecosystem services. The strong baseline of projects described under the baseline scenario include a suite of livelihood interventions, sustainable land management and sustainable agricultural practices in the target Wilaya. The increased political commitment to the development of the project area provides an excellent opportunity for the GEF increment to generate a range of global environmental benefits. The GEF investment will improve the conservation of key species in the arid Wilayas of Mauritania through the creation, protection and integrated management of a new protected area and through shifting at least 50,000 ha under sustainable land management in production systems in landscapes adjacent to the new PA. Under the current baseline, Mauritania's poor environmental governance indicator will continue to be so particularly in the arid zones of the country where government presence in terms of institutional arrangements to support biodiversity remains wanting. The project will assist IRM to increase coverage of terrestrial protected areas from 4,216,000 ha[1] to 4,416,000 ha (after the addition of the 200,000 ha PA). This improvement in territorial coverage will be an important step in improving environmental governance score, but also will be consistent with the commitment expressed in the 6th National Report to the CBD and contribute to the achievement of Aichi Target 11 to conserve 17% of terrestrial areas. In the alternative scenario, the newly protected area will report a 65% score as per METT. In the alternative scenario, GEF investments in the arid yet productive landscapes will also contribute to improving and changing production practices to be more biodiversity-positive with a focus on sectors that have significant biodiversity impacts such as agriculture and tourism, through technical capacity building and implementation of financial mechanisms (Component 2), therefore improving the environmental governance profile of the country. The project in the alternative will allow the country to realize a contribution to 'good environmental governance which revolves around planning / updating the National Action Plan for the Environment (program approach), political, institutional and legal framework' – one of the priority areas of the 2011-2020 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Accordingly, the project interventions have been designed to address the weak institutional, policy and regulatory context and population pressure on biodiversity resources in the target areas. GEF financial support will be instrumental to the improved conservation of key species in the arid Wilayas of Mauritania, an unprecedented conservation effort that will use an integrated and inclusive approach through community co-management to effectively protect the KBA and creation of a new PA. The GEF investment will therefore be critical in shifting the baseline scenario and enable the target region to conserve its biodiversity and to build required institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks to effectively reduce pressure on biodiversity in the arid regions of Mauritania.

With the GEF support, the proposed project will thus incrementally respond to challenges reflected in the baseline scenario and systematically seek to improve the coverage and management effectiveness, support institutional and capacity reforms for biodiversity conservation and engage local communities in conservation to reduce pressures to biodiversity in the arid Wilaya of Adrar.

It should be noted that the baseline scenario of the existing and planned projects has a clear focus on expanding socioeconomic opportunities for communities in terms of livelihoods from alternative livelihoods, and agricultural activities (e.g irrigation). Also, the projects have focus on integrated ecosystem management and sustainable land management to improve the productive capacity of land. The projects are therefore foundational in creating and improving socioeconomic benefits on which to build interventions for biodiversity conservation. Thus, the proposed approach to create a PA and improving and changing production practices in priority sectors, including surrounding landscapes through technical capacity building and implementation of financial mechanisms is consistent with the overall incremental reasoning logic of the proposed project – providing technical capacity and investments to create a PA with associated institutional arrangements and improving and changing production practices in surrounding landscapes to be more biodiversity-positive.

7) Global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)

The proposed project will support biodiversity conservation efforts to generate Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) by creating and improving the management effectiveness of a new PA in an arid Wilaya of Adrar. The global benefits associated with the Biodiversity focal area are the creation of and improved management effectiveness of 200,000 ha for conservation and sustainable natural resource use and 50,000 ha under sustainable land management in production systems in landscapes adjacent to the new PA. The 35,000 ha of El Ghallâouiya KBA will be extended towards the south-west where the KBA has the same contiguous landscape with the Guelb er Richatt Nature Reserve to create a 200,000ha terrestrial protected area. This will contribute to improving the conservation of the bird species in El Ghallâouiya KBA in Adrar Wilaya. The project will support conservation actions through changes in local community behavior and by improving and changing production practices in arid areas to be more biodiversity-positive with a focus on sectors that have significant biodiversity impacts such as agriculture and tourism, through technical capacity building and implementation of financial mechanisms. This approach will be scaled up to other areas in Mauritania, particularly the arid zones of the country. Socio-economic benefits from the project will include the improved livelihoods and reduced vulnerability of at least 1,775 community members. Furthermore, the project's communication strategy will aim to reach at least 135,316 people through radio environmental education/awareness programs on the value of biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management.

Embedded in the principles of an integrated natural resource management approach, the generation of the aforementioned GEBs will consider the environmental conditions of the arid landscapes in Adrar Wilaya. The project will also consider existing production practices (including pastoral practices), how communities interact with the environment and the limited institutional frameworks, insufficient regulations and current land uses in Adrar. The rationale is based on an integrated approach to more holistically address underlying drivers of environmental degradation while simultaneously, addressing socio-economic concerns of local communities. In this regard, an integrated natural resource management approach will be valuable in ensuring economic, social and ecological sustainability in a resource-constrained and climate-impacted environment[1] as in Mauritania.

[1] Sara J. Scherr, Seth Shames and Rachel Friedman. (2013). Defining Integrated Landscape Management for Policy Makers

7) Innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up

Innovation: Previous interventions in the target regions (please refer to the baseline scenario and associated projects) have used climate change, management of oases, pastoralism or agriculture as isolated entry points to address the environmental and socio-economic challenges. With a focus on rights, rights-holders and benefits, the project will seek to promote inclusion as it delivers innovative approaches to apply an integrated management of PAs in an arid Sahelian environment – this will be in view to integrally and holistically addressing both environmental and socio-economic challenges in the proposed target region. Through this approach, the project will seek to simultaneously address underlying drivers of environmental and socio-economic challenges as well as lacunas in institutional and legal frameworks (enablers of improved environmental management). The project will promote the involvement of the private sector in biodiversity conservation and sustainable conservation finance plans tailored to the region under Component 2. GEF support for the creation of PAs in the arid regions will catalyse and attract additional investments. The project will promote incentives to ensure that private sector investments in biodiversity-friendly businesses are viable. These innovative tailored solutions will also be collected and shared to be replicated in other arid areas.

Sustainability:

The project approach of engaging local communities and the private sector, with strong commitment of relevant government institutions has been designed to enable sustainability. Component 1 of this project is focused on the creation and effective management of a new terrestrial PA in Adrar and by shifting at least 50,000 ha under sustainable land management in production systems in landscapes adjacent to the new PA, building the required institutional structures, technical capacities and solid management, land-use and financial plans. Additionally, the project will also seek to support financial resources for the management of the PA to be secured through the implementation of a board-approved business plan. Anchoring the implementation in government institutions with the participation of neighboring communities in sustainable land management in production systems of the surrounding landscape with land-use, management and financial plans will ensure the sustainability of the project outcomes. Implementation of the plans through support to climate-smart, sustainable agricultural and pastoral practices and the promotion of community-based biodiversity enterprises with the potential to change community behavior towards conservation and sustainable natural resource management will be critical to this effect. On the basis of the strong commitment from Government and the complementary support from development partners and private sector as described in the baseline, the proposed project seeks to establish a robust financial mechanism for effective management of the PA to ensure sustainability. The project will support the creation of the Regional PA Office in Ouadane, capital of Adrar. The Office will closely work with the Office National du Tourisme, the Conseil Régional de l'Adrar, the Mauritanian Dates Society (under the Ministry of Agriculture) and the Banque Populaire de Mauritanie. During the preparation of this proposal, the government has confirmed their intention to create a budget line in support of the operational costs of the Regional PA Office and to be integrated in the relevant institutional structures to ensure the effective management of the PA in the long term. The GEF's financial support to create the PA and regional office will trigger and catalyze this

commitment and weave partnerships to ensure financial sustainability beyond the life of the proposed project. Additionally, as has been noted under component 2, the proposed project will support at least 50,000 ha under sustainable land management in production systems in landscapes adjacent to the new PA with livelihood activities that will complement and strategically contribute to conservation efforts and the effective management of the PA.

Potential for scaling up: The project is proposed in Adrar Wilaya that constitutes about 22.8% of the total territory of Mauritania.[12] The project will be supported by the recently relaunched National Tourism Office, a national-level institutional arrangement that will potentially share lessons from Adrar Wilaya to other parts of the country, and beyond the borders at international fora. The success in the implementation of the project will generate lessons that will potentially inform investments and scaling up of the lessons in other arid zones. The project has a dedicated component on knowledge management, and therefore, lessons learned and best practices for biodiversity conservation in arid zones will be packaged for dissemination to relevant stakeholders to inform development intervention in other parts of the country and beyond – particularly in countries with similar climatic conditions and environmental affordances.

[1] <http://datazone.birdlife.org/userfiles/file/IBAs/AfricaCntryPDFs/Mauritania.pdf>

[2] <http://datazone.birdlife.org/site/factsheet/el-ghall%C3%A2ou%C3%AEya-iba-mauritania/details>

[3] UNDP-Mauritania. (2015). Regional Program to Combat Poverty in the Wilaya of Adrar

[4] Ali Ferchichi & Ethmane Monane. (2018). Mauritania Sixth national report to the Convention on Biological Diversity

[5] The Richat Structure, also called Guelb er Richât, the Eye of Africa, or Eye of the Sahara is a prominent circular feature in the Sahara's Adrar Plateau, near Ouadane, west–central Mauritania, Northwest Africa.

[6] World Bank. Mauritania: Counting on Natural Wealth for a Sustainable Future. Policy Research Working Paper No. 6887. Washington DC, 2014

[7] Detailed information will be furnished during PPG following additional and systematic consultations with relevant stakeholders that got interrupted and have been very challenging since the beginning of the COVID-19.

[8] See the number of proposed areas on p110 of the Sixth National Report to UNCBD (2018)

[9] Mauritania National Biodiversity Strategy

[10] According to the 2011-2020 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan on p13

[11] Sara J. Scherr, Seth Shames and Rachel Friedman. (2013). Defining Integrated Landscape Management for Policy Makers

[12] Government of Mauritania (2017). Actualisation de la Monographie De La Wilaya de l'Adrar Rapport Diagnostic

[1] The National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity (2011-2020) page

[2] Not recognised as game and not in the table but exist in large numbers including doves, raptors, swallows.

[3] Referred to by the MESD as Nature Reserve although the parliamentary decree to establish a PA in the area remains in draft form and is listed as a priority project in the 6th National Report to CBD, 2018.

[4] Information compiled from: 1999, F. Lamarque. Rapport de mission en republique islamique de mauritanie: "Réintroduction des antilopes saharo-sahéliennes". 2007, IUCN. Mission de caractérisation de la diversité biologique de la zone du Guelb-Er-Richât.

[5] The National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity (2011-2020). These include: *Alternanthera nodiflora*, *Amaranthus viridis*, *Aerva javanica*, *Pancratium trianthum*, *Calotropis procera*, *Caralluma retrospiciens*, *Leptadenia pyrotechnica*, *Pergularia tomentosa*, *Cordia rothii*, *Heliotropium bacciferum*, *Indigofera oblongifolia*, *Tephrosia purpurea*, *Boscia senegalensis*, *Capparis decidua*, *Maerua crassifolia*, *Cornulaca monacantha*, *Nucularia perrinii*, *Combretum aculeatum*, *Bauhinia rufescens*, *Cassia italica*, *Ipomea repens*, *Ipomea asarifolia*, *Cyperus sp*, *Chrozophora brocchiana*, *Euphorbia balsamifera*, *Euphorbia granulata*, *Euphorbia scordifolia*, *Euphorbia sudanica*, *Jatropha chevalieri*, *Tapinanthus sp*, *Acacia raddiana*, *Acacia Senegal*, *Acacia seyal*, *Gisekia pharnacoides*, *Boerhavia repens*, *Aristida funiculata*, *Grewia tenax*, *Balanites aegyptiaca*, *Tamarix sp*

[6] Legros cyril & Leguet Nicolas (2003). Potential for the development of ecotourism in the Ouadane region (Adrar, Mauritania) as part of the establishment of a protected area on the Guelb Er Richat. *Master dissertation*, University of Angers. [1] Mauritania's UNDAF - Partnership framework for sustainable development 2018 – 2022

[2] 2019 World Population Review <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/mauritania-population/>

[3] The National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity (2011-2020)

[4] Chouaib Ould Abdellahi & Mohamed Fadhel Aghdhafna. (2013). Strategic Investment Framework in Sustainable Land Management in Mauritania

[5] National Statistics Office of Mauritania (2019). Adrar in Numbers 2014 - 2018

1b. Project Map and Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.

Please refer to Annex A.

2. Stakeholders

Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Yes

Civil Society Organizations Yes

Private Sector Entities Yes

If none of the above, please explain why:

In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement

The leadership of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the National Unit for Environmental Observation and Arid Zones have been critical in the development of this PIF with the active participation of national focal points of multilateral environmental agreements, Civil Society Organizations, research institutions, women groups and development partners (both bilateral and multilateral). Consultations were complemented by field visits to target communes to appreciate better the socioeconomic and environmental conditions of proposed project areas. Further development of the proposed project will be informed by views and development interests from stakeholders that include civil society organisations and local communities. Stakeholder consultation meetings will promote gender balanced representation and will be hosted in Adrar Wilaya. Participatory processes will be used to widely consult with relevant stakeholders in the target Wilaya to ensure that their concerns are integrated in the design of project activities, and their roles are clarified. A participatory engagement with relevant stakeholders will ensure ownership of project implementation and sustainability of project outcomes by directly and indirectly involved stakeholders. The table below summarizes a basic stakeholder mapping for this project. As COVID-19 has substantively restricted the opportunities for a detailed mapping, the basic information below will be complemented in detail during project preparation.

Stakeholder	Role in the proposed project
Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development National Unit for Environmental Observation and Arid Zones (CNOEZA) Directorate of Protected Areas and Coastline (DALP) Directorate for Nature Protection (DPN) Regional Directorates of the MESD in Adrar	CNOEZA is the executing agency of this project at the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. It will therefore provide oversight on the day to day implementation of project activities on the ground. The DAPL will work together with CNOEZA, supported by different institutions including the different base line projects and coordination projects. The role of CNOEZA in this project is IRM's strategic and deliberate decision to promote natural resource management in the arid regions of Mauritania.
Government Institutions Ministry of Rural Development	These institutions will provide support to ensure alignment of project activities to Wilaya development priorities. For example, through the National Agricultural Research and Development Center (CNRAD

<p>National Tourism Office</p> <p>Ecole Normale de l'Enseignement Supérieur</p>	<p>A), the Ministry of Rural Development will also support the identification and extension services to accompany the implementation of agriculture-related activities.</p> <p>Given the level of development programs in the pipeline to raise the eco-tourism profile of Guelb er Richat, the National Tourism Office will play an important role in the management of the PA and in advancing partnerships with the private sector.</p> <p>The Ecole will provide technical expertise on the creation and improved management of the Protected Areas. The Ecole will also be instrumental in knowledge generation and dissemination.</p>
<p>Development Agencies</p> <p>World Bank,</p> <p>European Union,</p> <p>GIZ,</p> <p>Fondation pour la Nature MAVA Foundation for the Conservation of Biodiversity and its Habitat (CBD-Habitat)</p>	<p>These will provide coordination support, knowledge exchange and co-financing. For example, the World Bank, the European Union and GIZ are investing in tourism infrastructure in Adrar and CBD-Habitat have supported the reintroduction of wildlife in the recently created National Park of Awleigatt.</p>
<p>Scientific and Civil Society Organisations</p> <p>IUCN,</p> <p>Nature Mauritanie (local partner of Birdlife International)</p> <p>GRET</p>	<p>Depending on specific needs, support research, community mobilisation, awareness-raising activities and knowledge sharing. For example, IUCN led in 2007 scientific research on the biodiversity in Guelb Er Richatt.</p>
<p>Private Sector</p> <p>Mauritania Copper Mine</p> <p>Kinross</p> <p>Société Toumour Mauritanie</p> <p>Fondation Elkheir</p> <p>Banque Populaire de Mauritanie</p>	<p>The private sector will play a key role in developing alternative income generating activities, engaging in conservation finance, eco-tourism and to provide co-financing towards this project</p>
<p>Local Authorities</p>	<p>These institutions will support the orientation of the project with local</p>

Regional Council of Adrar Municipal Council of Oudane	al level development plans, particularly land use plans. The Commune of Oudane will also provide co-financing for the project.
Local communities	The successful creation of the PA will hinge on local community engagement. The local communities in the protected area will be consulted and actively involved in the planning, participatory decision-making processes and identification of activities. They will also be beneficiaries of community-level interventions.

Means of stakeholder engagement: The successful design and implementation of the proposed project will largely depend on the collaboration and engagement of key stakeholders. Building on the preliminary consultations reflected in the table above, the project preparation phase will seek to further discuss the project concept, gather additional information, discuss opportunities and risks and refine risk mitigation measures and intervention strategies. The stakeholders will be engaged to discuss, select and prioritize activities and appropriate means of engagement, including implementation modalities.

The primary means of stakeholder engagement throughout the project cycle will be focused on consultations at appropriate levels, depending on the stakeholders. In this regard, consultations will remain part of the project preparation, but also implementation at national, regional and local levels. Field visits, meetings, awareness raising, workshops and trainings, will constitute means of keeping stakeholders engaged. A detailed stakeholder engagement plan will be prepared during PPG. The underpinning rationale is that all key stakeholders are engaged in a manner that enables them to effectively play their role to the successful implementation of the project [*further information to be elaborated during PPG*].

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis).

Because women tend to be more reliant on natural resources and land, land degradation negatively affects them disproportionately. However, they are often not granted an equal role in official land governance decision-making or land use planning (UN Women, 2018). At the same time, the large environmental steward role bestowed upon women makes them key partners in land degradation neutrality actions that need to be enabled towards action against degradation (Collantes et al., 2018). Constitutionally, women and men are guaranteed equal rights to own property and land in Mauritania (Constitution, Art. 15; Land Reform Act, 1983). However, under civil law, women cannot purchase or transfer land without the authorization of a third party, generally her guardian or a male family member.^[1] The promotion of the fundamental rights of women and girls in Mauritania is limited by illiteracy, poverty, ignorance of the law, and gender-based violence (GBV), underscoring fundamentals that hinder progress on closing the socio-economic gender gaps in the country. Other gender-related challenges that keep women from socio-economic participation include women's low financial capacity, the absence of gender-responsive Income Generating Activities, lack of female credit (as Nissa Bank),^[2] lack of support for women's agricultural and craft cooperatives, early marriages and lack of empowering professional training for women.^[3] According to the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) for 2017, Mauritania ranks 132 out of 144 countries.

In view of these serious challenges, the project will be designed to be consistent with UNEP's Gender Policy and Strategy and with the GEF's updated Policy on Gender Equality which aims to "aims to ensure equal opportunities for women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from GEF-Financed Activities in support of the GEF's efforts to achieve global environment benefits". A gender responsive Rapid Social Assessment (RSA) will be prepared during the project preparation phase. The RSA will analyze gendered roles in production, access to resources and services, and decision-making power and will identify opportunities to promote gender equality and women economic empowerment to address the differentiated challenges to gender equality and women empowerment across Adrar Wilaya. Adequate funding will be committed to ensuring that gender is addressed in the project implementation phase. To ensure this, this project will support the development and implementation of a gender mainstreaming strategy across project components (output 3.1.1). All project components are envisioned to have a positive impact on gender equality and participation through the development of a gender mainstreaming strategy for the project and inclusion of specific criteria, indicators and targets in the related project activities to more equally and effectively participate in the access, use and management of natural resources. In Mauritania, about 54.5% of the population are employed in the agriculture sector.^[4] Therefore, mainstreaming gender concerns in biodiversity-friendly activities related to agricultural production and pastoralism in Adrar region will create opportunities that will benefit both men and women - understanding that this project will be deliberate in empowering women and youth participation in the project activities.. Having a gender-balanced voice will also indirectly positively impact other women involved in either crop production or pastoralism for their livelihoods. Through alternative livelihood activities, capacity development, alternative agricultural production systems and practices, project management and consultation during the design of the project activities, this project will deliberately ensure gender considerations are duly addressed.

[1] OECD Gender Index for Mauritania: <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/MR.pdf>

[2] UNDP-Mauritania. (2015). Regional Program to Combat Poverty in the Wilaya of Adrar

[3] Peace Women Mauritania Country Profile: <https://www.peacewomen.org/profile/country-region-profile-mauritania>

[4] Gender Data Portal for Mauritania: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/mauritania>

Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes

closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; Yes

improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or Yes

generating socio-economic benefits or services for women. Yes

Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

4. Private sector engagement

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.

The project will actively support the development of collaborative working partnerships between prospective private sector businesses (e.g. tourism operators, mining companies, and agricultural producers), representative community structures and mandated government institutions. It will seek to optimise the mutual benefits (community-private sector-government) from existing and new use agreements operating or being negotiated within the envisaged PA. The project will promote market linkages for community enterprises in the target areas. To encourage investments from the private sector, the project will provide incentives to ensure that private sector investments in biodiversity-friendly businesses are viable – that is, including in the co-management plans private sector space for ‘business and biodiversity’ mechanisms that allows and regulates business profits through biodiversity conservation. Some of the livelihoods activities that this project will support such as improving crop production and pastoralism and associated products will require the involvement of relevant stakeholders, the private sector entities that can particularly support efforts to, for example, breeding of small ruminants and fodder production, community mobilisation and organisation into local level institutions for the conservation of key species. In the course of development to this proposal, relevant private sector entities beyond those indicated in the stakeholder table will be identified to play this role of facilitating the promotion of conservation of key species.

5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the Project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the Project design (table format acceptable)

Additional social and environmental risk screening for this project is as detailed in the attached UNEP ESERN which categorizes the risk level of this project as **Moderate**. ESERN is comprehensively reflective of the nine minimum standard requirements GEF's nine Minimum Standards for Agency policies, procedures, systems and capabilities related to identifying and addressing Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts in projects and programs.

Risks	Level (Low, Moderate, High)	Mitigation measure (how the risk will be minimized? How the mitigation measures will be minimized or eliminated with the project planned activities)
Weak and poor coordination with ongoing biodiversity conservation processes affecting stakeholder engagement and participatory processes that underpin co-management regulations and plans	Medium	Coordination and consultation mechanisms will be established to ensure ownership of the process and engagement by all stakeholders. Local communities rely on the extraction of natural resources in the proposed area and as per UNEP safeguards policy FPIC procedures will be followed. No resettlement is envisaged as part of the project and the ESERN will be updated during PPG.
Technical risk: Conservation private sector entities not found. The private sector will contribute to project sustainability through capacity building/trainings of local communities in value chains – which will be meant to improve and expand socio-economic opportunities to reduce community exploitation of natural resources. Additionally, through potential eco-tourisme activities, the private sector will be critical.	Medium	Broad level consultations will be undertaken involving the appropriate Ministry and other quasi-government institutions (eg the Office National du Tourisme) to identify viable business entities to work in AdrarWilaya.
Political risks: Changes in political circumstances and government priorities	Low	Broad stakeholder engagement and aligning the project to broader government development goals embedded in government institutions will support the management of any changes in political circumstances.
Social risks: Communities turn down the project and refuse to be engaged	Low	Through sensitization programs, community members will

	w	be consulted and engaged so that they appreciate the benefits of the conservation of key species and accruing socio-economic benefits. Additionally, communities will be actively involved in alternative income generating activities, capacity building and community conservation initiatives.
Lack of technical and institutional capacities for the management of natural resources in Adrar	Low	Capacity building is part of this project design, and therefore, capacity needs will be identified to ensure that the required policy and institutional capacities are in place. The project concept already counts on strong government ownership to ensure that built conservation capacities and developed BD mechanisms in the country are institutionalized for sustainability.
Local socio-cultural practices prevent the inclusion of women, and slow down the adoption of conservation practices	Medium	This project will seek to raise awareness and sensitise communities, and use a participatory approach to involve them in decision making regarding prioritization of activities and their implementation.
COVID-19 pandemic continues during implementation (a section on the COVID-19 situation in Mauritania included below)	Medium	Loss of co-financing would primarily affect the scale of operations of the project, causing the project to work with a smaller number of communities. It would not prevent the project from building on the planned investments by the Government, development partners, private sector or the Decree towards creation of the protected area or its management arrangements. At this point, it is very difficult to predict how long the pandemic will last and how it will evolve. Social distancing, wearing of masks, contact tracing and other measures will impact the project as long as the pandemic lasts. To the extent that local regulations allow, meetings and missions could be held while adhering to sanitary measures and precautions. Alternatively, electronic or virtual meetings can be used by those who have electricity, but this is generally not possible in rural areas. COVID 19 may also present new opportunities to integrate green recovery and resilience principles into projects and programs – Project partners will make use of the GEF guidance on this that was issued in August, 2020, titled, “Project Design and Review Considerations in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis and the Mitigation of Future Pandemics”

		<p>During the PPG the project will adopt the following measures and undertake a detailed assessment of risks to implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · UNEP and MESD will monitor the COVID-19 situation at national level and in the project area; · MESD and UNEP will explore options to conduct the PPG Inception and other stakeholder meetings remotely through on-line platforms and/or with limited number of participants practicing protective measures; · The project is designed on the basis of partnerships with organizations mainly located in Mauritania that will limit the needs of international travel to design and implement the project; · Part of the project Outputs can be delivered remotely via on-line tools, including mentoring, if necessary; · Some of the project activities can be reasonably delayed until restrictions are over in the framework of adaptive management and later fast-tracked for implementation; · The GEF will be informed in case of significant delays and the project can request a reasonable extension should the Pandemic worsen in the country;
Climate change (additional information included on climate change in the section below)	Low to medium	<p>The climate projections for the project area are elaborated further down. A climate risk assessment will be conducted before designing the project to mitigate among others the risk of a mismatch between the proposed boundaries and the climate niche of the globally significant species that are to benefit from the PA. The detailed assessment will ensure that the findings can inform the project interventions. The project preparation will also consult recent and ongoing projects, including those promoting ecosystem based adaptation, to learn from successful practices within Mauritania and the region - to enable beneficiaries to become more prod</p>

	<p>uctive and diversified economically for more resilient livelihood practices that support biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>It should be noted that the project will focus mainly on technical support to create a PA with supporting financing mechanisms, establish a monitoring system, creation of a regional office, gender mainstreaming and creation of a PA national platform. These core activities of the proposed projects are least likely to be affected -although need to be well informed- by climate change variability [<i>more detailed analysis focusing on Adrar Wilaya at PPG</i>]</p>
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The COVID-19 Situation in Mauritania

In the first week of December 2020, the cases of COVID-19 in Mauritania stood at 12,418, with 8,909 recovered and 281 deaths. The Government has lifted all restrictions and recently closed the containment centre for asymptomatic COVID-19 patients in place at the University of Nouakchott. These decisions continue to be interpreted by a large part of the population as the end of the pandemic in Mauritania, leading to a lack of respect for barrier measures and a very low level of alerts.[1] However, the month of December has recorded a spike in the number of active cases in the country despite low number of cases between September and end of October. This suggests the unpredictable evolution of the COVID-19 in Mauritania – just like in other countries. In terms of project design and implementation, the strategies and mechanisms (particularly as related to availability of technical expertise and capacity and changes in timelines, stakeholder engagement process, enabling environment, population migration and livelihood declines as noted below) will therefore, remain flexible to the evolution of the COVID-19 situation in the country.

The World Bank alerted about the macro-economic and social impact of COVID-19 in Mauritania, as well as the impact on food security. Based on their scenario in the report, the poverty rate could increase from 5.5% in 2019 to 6% (or 6.3%) in 2020, pushing 25,000 (or 42,000) additional people to fall into extreme poverty in Mauritania.[2] This impact would be felt more by women and girls through, for example, a withdrawal from the education system to take care of their family members at home and the increase in gender-based violence. The Government is developing a multi-sectoral plan for cohabitation with COVID-19 and economic recovery, which is about to be finalized.[3]

Mauritania's vulnerability to climate change

Mauritania is at risk to hydro-meteorological hazards and natural disasters. Climate change is expected to increase risks and severity of natural disasters in Mauritania, through more intense temperatures, prolonged heat waves and heightened rainfall variability. While Mauritania is prone to drought and flooding in some areas, human displacement and increased urbanization may become an additional future challenge. Furthermore, damage to crops and increased water stress is likely to result in significant economic losses, damage to agricultural lands as well as human health. Vulnerability is exacerbated due to the country's high level of poverty and high dependence on 'climate change sensitive' sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, mining and livestock.[4]

The main factors closely linked with climate change are: significant degradation of arable land; degradation of pasture and loss of livestock; degradation, even disappearance, of forests; high risk of collapse of coastal dune bar; and decrease of water resources in Mauritania are. The effects of climate change on the development of the country's economy can be measured through the evolution of the most vulnerable sectors and sub-sectors, i.e: agriculture, livestock farming, forestry, but also the pressure on the water resources both for human needs as well as for others (cattle, irrigation, etc.). These sectors and sub-sectors correspond mainly to the rural areas. Though the rural areas are home to 45% of the country's total population and 56% of the active population, they are home to more than 75% of the poor and they generate only 26% of GDP. In fact, agriculture and livestock farming, both being dependent on climatic conditions, have experienced a strong decline in the recent decades.[5]

The country's northern region is characteristically a desert with annual rainfall of <50mm, as compared to the southern region with the Senegalese river valley. The northern region which includes the proposed project's catchment area, therefore is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In the same region, and specifically in Adrar, farming of dates in the oases areas, is an important socioeconomic occupation. For example, it is estimated that Adrar as a region contributes 60% to Mauritania's dates basket. The worsening climatic conditions will therefore continue to negatively impact food crop production as well as pastoral activities in Adrar. The figures below summarize the gravity of the impacts of climate change (or climate variability) on important socioeconomic sectors in Mauritania. Complementary information is found in the section below, 'projected climate change in Mauritania'. On the left, the figure presents by sector sensitivity at national-level, and on the right, the figure presents the northern territory impacts of climate change – it is reiterated the proposed project's catchment area is part of the northern territory.

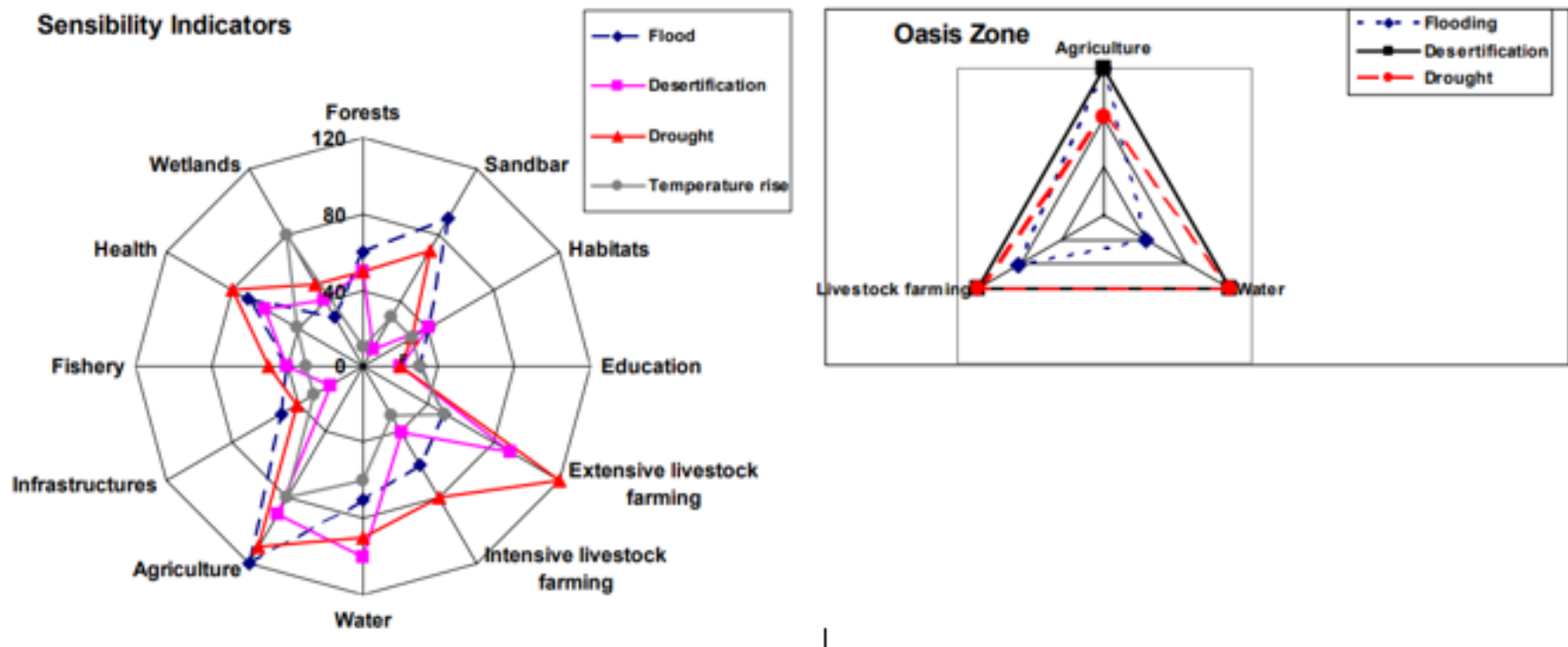


Figure 3: Sensibility Indicators at national level (left) and northern territory that includes Adrar Wilaya (right)

Source: Mauritania's National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change (NAPA) (2004)

Climate change and biodiversity in Mauritania

Climate change has obvious implications on biodiversity and biodiversity-based ecosystem services. This is because climate change has impacts on ecosystem functions, including species composition and loss over time. As loss of biodiversity due to climate change continues to alter the structures and functions of ecological systems, so do the provision of biodiversity-based ecosystem services and the well-being of people that rely on these services.[1] In this regard, climate change in Mauritania is having negative impacts on terrestrial and marine ecosystems. In terms of terrestrial ecosystems, the land in Mauritania is entirely located in the arid zone (Sahara and Sahel) and its biological processes are affected by the water deficit, developing adaptation mechanisms that are being increasingly disturbed by climate change impacts in the country (weather variability).[2] The absence of measures taken to counter the impacts of climate change on biodiversity loss might lead to irreversible shifts in the structure of ecosystems and their services. The risk of local extinction of some of the surviving species.

Related to the implications of climate change on biodiversity are dune mobility and encroachment, decrease in water availability, overall reduction in vegetation, and soil degradation and erosion. These impacts have resulted in increased water and food insecurity, increased poverty and reduced income security, as well as heightened social conflicts over the use of natural resources, resulting in turn in increased human pressure on already degraded natural resources, in a vicious circle. Climate change projections suggest that these impacts may worsen in the near future.

Climate Change Projections in the project location in Mauritania (temperature and rainfall)

Climate change for the project location is assessed using data from the fifth phase of the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP5). CMIP5 includes “long term” simulations of twentieth-century climate and projections for the twenty-first century and beyond, and formed the basis for the Fifth Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (see Taylor et al. 2012).[3] Two key variables for the region were examined: temperature and precipitation change with regards to 1986-2005 full CMIP5 ensemble. The point taken for the assessment is latitude 21.180960, and longitude -11.254555 and for two Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs). RCPs are greenhouse gas concentration (not emissions) trajectories adopted by the IPCC for climate modeling and research for the IPCC fifth Assessment Report (AR5) in 2014. The pathways describe different climate futures, all of which are considered possible depending on the volume of greenhouse gases (GHG) emitted in the years to come. The RCPs – originally RCP2.6, RCP4.5, RCP6, and RCP8.5 – are labelled after a possible range of radiative forcing values in the year 2100 (2.6, 4.5, 6, and 8.5 W/m², respectively) (Arora et al. 2011).[4] Figures 1 and 2 below represent RCP2.6 and RCP4.5.

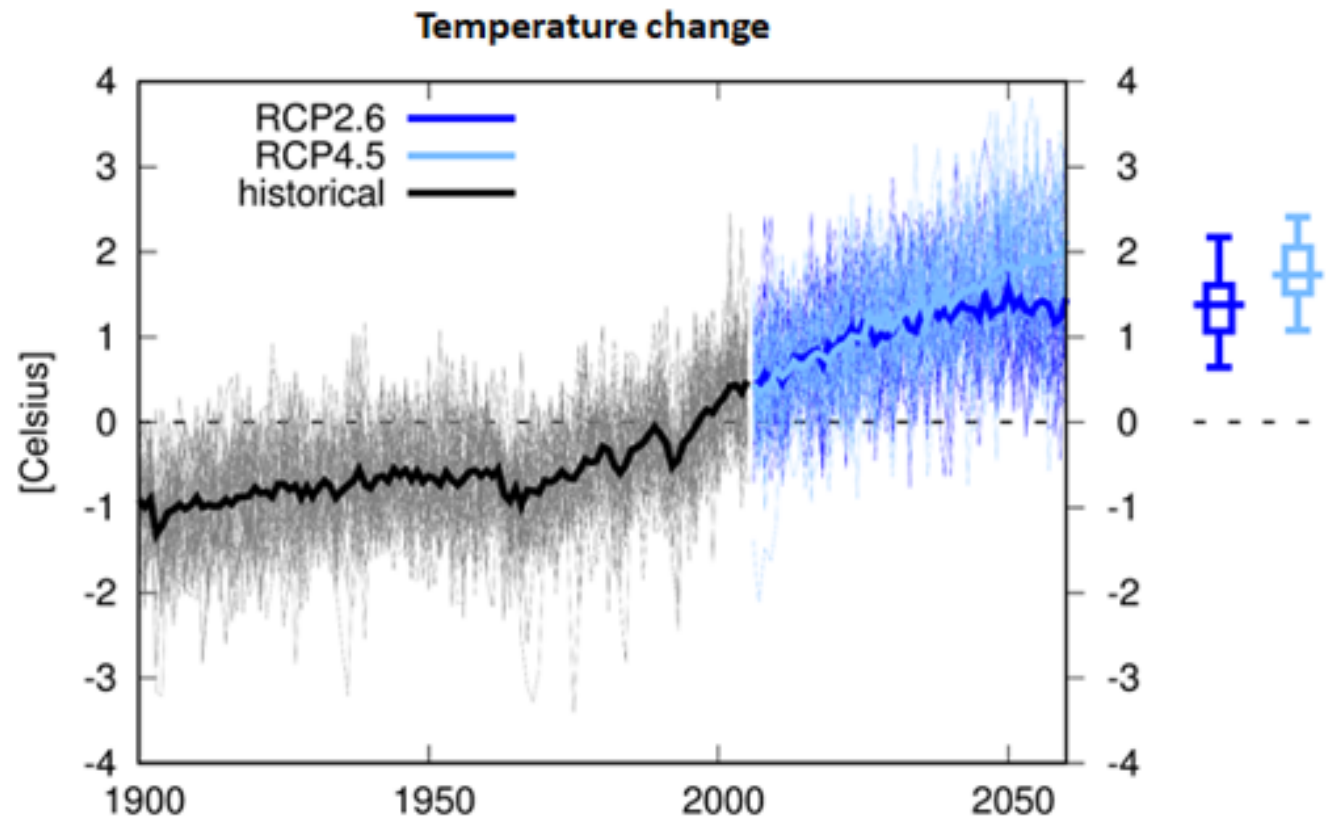


Figure 4: Temperature change (January to December) with regards to 1986-2005 full CMIP5 ensemble. On the left, for each scenario one line per model is shown plus the multi-model mean, on the right percentiles of the whole dataset: the box extends from 25% to 75%, the whiskers from 5% to 95% and the horizontal line denotes the median (50%).

The figure 4 shows an increase in temperature of about 1.5 degrees Celsius from the long-term multimodal mean for the project location by 2050 under RCP 2.6, and of about 2 degree Celsius under RCP 4.5. In general, projections of mean annual rainfall averaged over the country from different models in the ensemble project a wide range of changes in precipitation for Mauritania, but tend towards decreases. Projected change range from -65 to +28% by the 2090s, with ensemble means between -7 and -25% (McSweeney et al. 2010).^[1] Figure 4 shows relative change for precipitation in the same location. The percentage change in precipitation is small, but with very high variability.

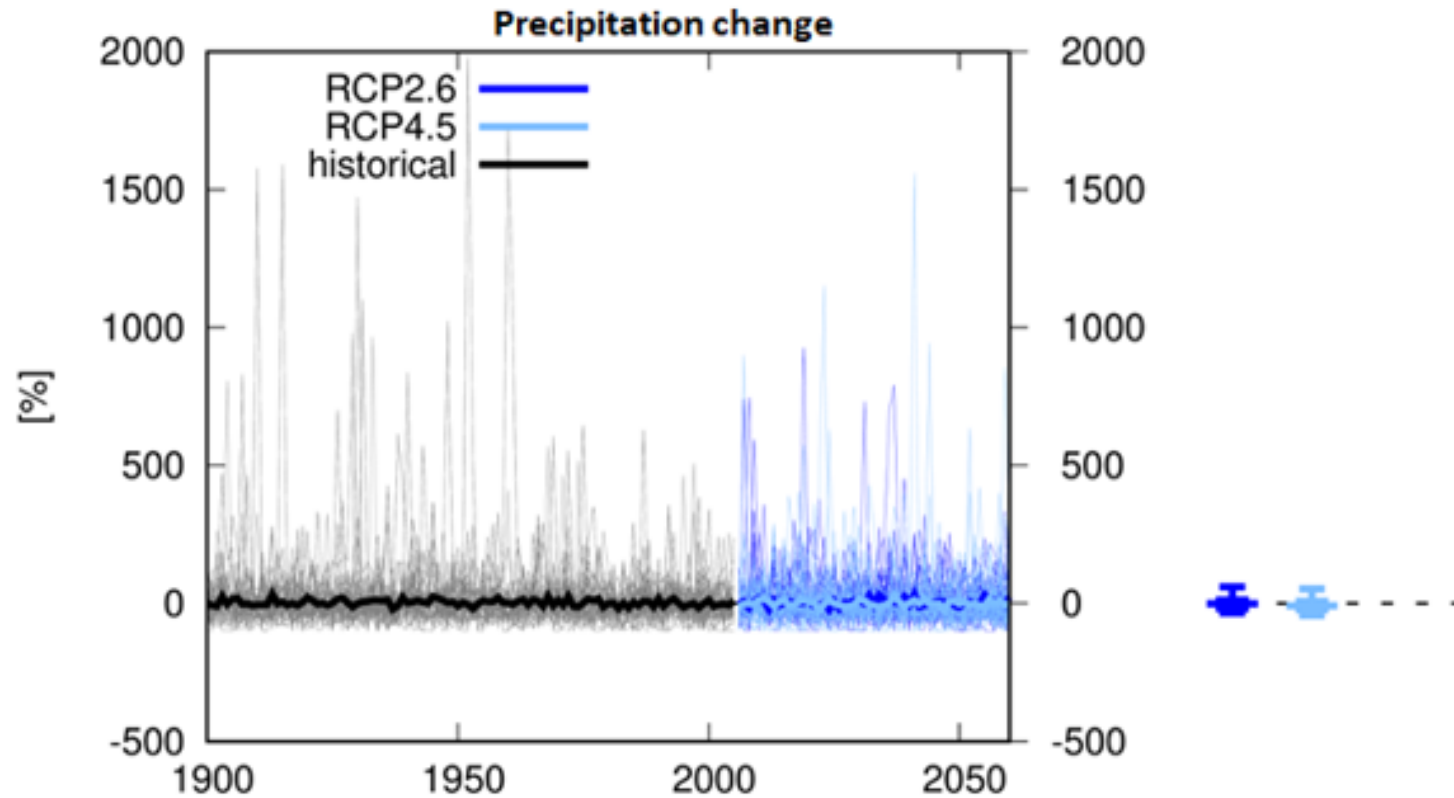


Figure 5: Relative precipitation change (January to December) with regards to 1986-2005 full CMIP5 ensemble. On the left, for each scenario one line per model is shown plus the multi-model mean, on the right percentiles of the whole dataset: the box extends from 25% to 75%, the whiskers from 5% to 95% and the horizontal line denotes the median (50%).

A closer look at the expected changes in precipitation on the project location can be done using the analysis of McSweeney et al. (2010). The value in the centre of each grid box (denoted in red for where the project location is found) gives the median value for the ensemble of 15 models, and the values in the top-right and bottom left in a smaller font give the maximum and minimum values of the ensemble. The median values remain consistently near negligible (represented by the zero values).

Annual rainfall

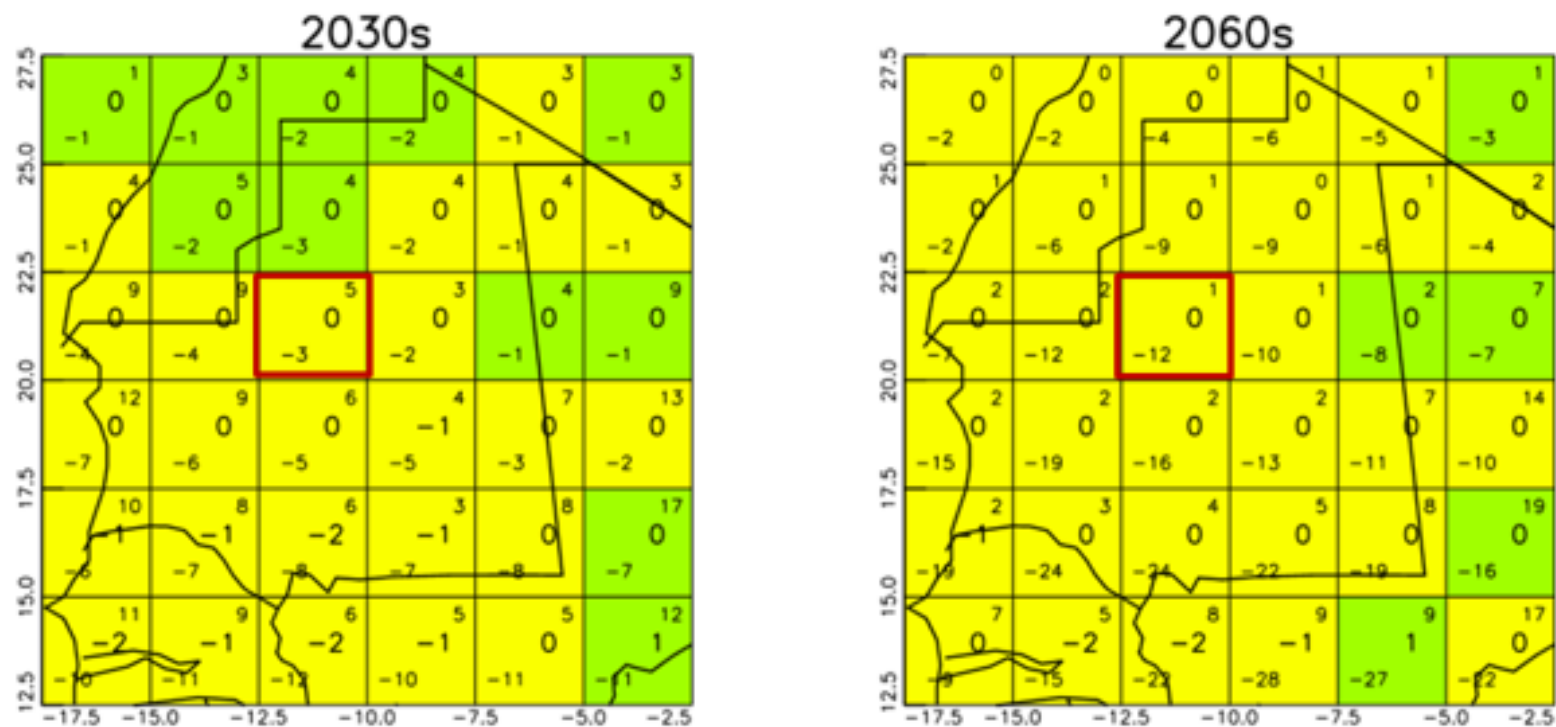


Figure 6: Time slice maps for mean annual precipitation for the 2030s and 2060 for Mauritania as a whole and the project location (indicated in a red box).

Annual rainfall



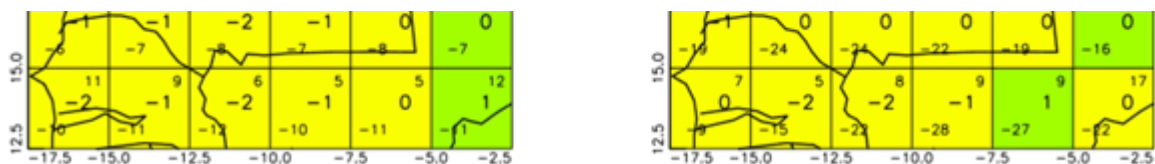


Figure 6: Time slice maps for mean annual precipitation for the 2030s and 2060 for Mauritania as a whole and the project location (indicated in a red box).

[1] McSweeney, C., New, M., Lizcano, G. & Lu, X. 2010. The UNDP Climate Change Country Profiles Improving the Accessibility of Observed and Projected Climate Information for Studies of Climate Change in Developing Countries. Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, 91, 157-166.

[1] Dejene W. Sintayehu (2018) Impact of climate change on biodiversity and associated key ecosystem services in Africa: a systematic review, Ecosystem Health and Sustainability, 4:9, 225-239, DOI: 10.1080/20964129.2018.1530054

[2] Islamic Republic of Mauritania (2004). National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change (NAPA) Mauritania's National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change (NAPA) (unfccc.int)

[3] Taylor E. Karl, Ronald J. Stouffer, and Gerald A. Meehl (2012). An Overview of CMIP5 and the Experiment Design. Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, 93:4. pp. 485–498. <https://doi.org/10.1175/BAMS-D-11-00094.1>

[4] Arora V. K., J. F. Scinocca, G. J. Boer, J. R. Christian, K. L. Denman, G. M. Flato, V. V. Kharin, W. G. Lee, and W. J. Merryfield (2011) Carbon emission limits required to satisfy future representative concentration pathways of greenhouse gases. Geophysical Research Letters, Atmospheric Science. Vol. 38, L05805, doi:10.1029/2010GL046270.

[1] UNICEF (2020). MAURITANIA: COVID-19 Situation Report – #12. Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs.

[2] World Bank (2020). Preliminary analysis of the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 in Mauritania

[3] UNICEF (2020). MAURITANIA: COVID-19 Situation Report – #12. Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs.

[4] World Bank Group. (2021). Climate Change Portal: Mauritania. <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/mauritania/vulnerability>

[5] Islamic Republic of Mauritania (2004). National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change (NAPA) Mauritania's National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change (NAPA) (unfccc.int)

6. Coordination

Outline the institutional structure of the project including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level. Describe possible coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.

The project will be implemented by UNEP, in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development as follows.

UNEP – through its GEF Task Manager (TM) and Funds Management Officer (FMO) - will monitor the implementation of the project, review progress in the realization of the project outputs, and ensure the proper use of GEF funds. The UNEP TM will be directly responsible for: (i) providing consistent and regular project oversight to ensure the achievement of project objectives; (ii) liaising between the project and the GEF Secretariat; (iii) ensuring that both GEF and UN Environment policy requirements and standards are applied and met (i.e. reporting obligations, technical, fiduciary, M&E); (iv) approving budget revisions, certifying fund availability and transferring funds; (v) organizing mid- and end-term evaluations and reviewing project audits; (vi) providing technical, legal and administrative guidance if requested; and (vii) certifying project operational completion.

The Project Steering Committee will be chaired by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD) and the National Unit for Environmental Observation and Arid Zones (CNOEZA) as its executing entity in close collaboration with the Directorate of Protected Areas and Coastline (DALP). It will also comprise the National Bureau of Tourism and other key stakeholders such as local government, civil society, development partners and research institutes as part of the institutional arrangements of the project implementation. The PSC will provide oversight for project execution, ensuring that the project is implemented in accordance with the agreed objectives, activities and budget, to achieve envisaged project outcomes. The full composition and terms of reference for the PSC will be defined during PPG. Through the Committee, a Project Management Unit (PMU) will be established. This will include a Project Coordinator, an M&E expert and a Project Financial Assistant. The indicative partners will be confirmed and other potential partners will be identified during the development phase of the project to support the implementation of relevant project activities.

The project will build and compliment recent and ongoing national and regional projects executed in Mauritania. The project will particularly learn and be informed by both country level and regional projects with objectives related to sustainable land management, natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. This will include initiatives such as the 2012 reforestation program of 19,091 ha to fight siltation in Mauritania.[1] Aligned GEF-funded interventions include the following:

- *Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania:* This is a land degradation \$4.3 million GEF-7-IUCN project that has already been approved and will go into implementation in 2020. It is designed around three components: capacity building and governance; land and ecosystem restoration; financing scaling-up of SLM; and project-specific knowledge management and M&E. Some of its activities will be implemented in Adrar Wilaya, therefore, offering the best of coordination of the proposed project which is focused on biodiversity conservation.

- *Climate change adaptation and livelihoods in three arid regions of Mauritania:* This is climate change adaptation \$4.4 million GEF-7-UNEP project that has already been approved for 2021-2024 implementation period. It has been conceived around the following three components: institutional and technical capacity development for the planning and implementation of climate change adaptation in arid ecosystems; Sustainable access to and efficient use of water;

Protection, productivity and diversification of local livelihoods; Knowledge for action on climate change and EbA in arid ecosystems; and Monitoring and Evaluation. This project's component 2 is on the Protection, productivity and diversification of livelihoods through EbA in Adrar, Inchiri and Trarza. This proposed project will therefore, coordinate with this proposed project regarding strengthening livelihoods for biodiversity conservation.

- *Strengthening transboundary cooperation for improved ecosystem management and restoration in the Senegal delta (Mauritania and Senegal)*: This is a GEF-6 three-year (2018 – 2021) \$3 million GEF-IUCN project to support improved governance, socio-economic development and ecosystem management in the Senegal Delta Trans-boundary Biosphere Reserve. Its components focus on integrated ecosystem-based management and restoration in the lower Senegal delta, the governance of the Senegal Delta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, and Scientific cooperation, knowledge acquisition and sharing, and ecosystem monitoring and evaluation.

- *Integrated ecosystem management program for the sustainable human development in Mauritania*: This is a GEF-6 five-year (2017 – 2022) \$8.2 million GEF-FAO project to increase human sustainable development through the restoration of ecosystem services and an integrated ecosystem management approach in the Wilayas of southern Mauritania. Its components focus on the integrated and participatory planning for the sustainable development of ecosystems; conservation, restoration and sustainable management of the landscape/system; and reduction of pressure on the ecosystems through income generation and funding mechanisms.

- *PSG-Sustainable Landscape Management Project under SAWAP*: This is a three-year (2016 – 2021) \$4.8 million GEF-5 GEF-World Bank project to expand and strengthen sustainable landscape management in targeted productive ecosystems in Mauritania. Its components focus on sustainable landscape management knowledge, governance and partnerships; sustainable landscape management practice, including integrating sustainable landscape management practices in local development planning.

[1] The National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity (2011-2020)

7. Consistency with National Priorities

Is the Project consistent with the National Strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions?

Yes

If yes, which ones and how: NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc

Faced with the situation of environmental degradation, the Government has taken various political measures and to strengthen the sustainable management of its natural resources. The development of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (SNDD) and its action plan for the environment (PANE), the promulgation of the Environment Code and the ratification of the various Conventions conferences on climate change, biodiversity and the fight against desertification, among others, aim to rationalize the management of potential and guarantee sustainability natural capital and ecosystems. The integration of environmental well-being and sustainable development into national development priorities are supported and guided by Mauritania's National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS, 2006) and the National Environment Action Plan (NEAP, 2007-2016). In these national documents, effective environmental policy, economic growth, good governance and poverty reduction are reflected as important national development priorities. Strengthening the institutional capacity in the 2 target regions for effective management of fragile natural resources, promoting the sustainable management of resources, awareness raising and the promotion of integrated and participatory management for sustainable use of natural resources are some of the key areas in which the proposed project will be aligned with the two national document priorities.

Alignment with Mauritania's UNDAF (Partnership framework for sustainable development 2018 – 2022): The proposed project is aligned with the Strategic Priority 1 that focuses on inclusive growth. Mauritania's UNDAF notes that environmental hazards and climate change pose a real threat to the Mauritania's growth and sustainable development, which is threatened particularly by drought and floods, heat waves, locust danger and marine incursion (erosion of the dunes). Agriculture, livestock and artisanal fishing, the main sources of livelihood and income for rural people, are all climate-sensitive activities. The loss due to the misuse of natural resources in Mauritania is very high. The evaluation of the global cost of the degradation of natural resources or their misuse reveals a loss of more than 14% of the national wealth (Gross Domestic Product) corresponding to a direct loss of \$192.2 million dollars and a loss indirect linked to the health effects of \$ 23.4 million, which could have been used directly to fight poverty in the absence of environmental losses.

Additionally, the proposed project is also aligned with the following:

- The Mauritania we want in 2030: The document promotes the respect for and preservation of the environment and sustainable management of natural resources, as well as managing the impacts of climate change. The proposed project is aligned with the 'Mauritania we Want in 2030' as it contributes to its promotion of environmental preservation and sustainable management of natural resources.
- The National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity (2011-2020): This is an important national document that reflects current government priorities on the biodiversity conservation front. The document articulates Mauritania's current national environmental management priorities defined around sectoral reforms; sustainable environmental management through improved governance mechanisms; preservation and valorisation of natural resources; promotion of natural capital accounting; promotion of renewable energy; sustainable management of urban environments; and environmental education and sensitization. The proposed project is aligned with these some of these national priorities, particularly sectoral reforms; sustainable environmental management through improved governance mechanisms; and environmental education and sensitization.

- The National Action Plan for the Environment (NAPE) 2012-2016: The Plan aims to provide Mauritania with a coherent framework of actions for good environmental governance in general, and for the fight against degradation of natural resources, in particular. Through components 1 and 2, the proposed project contributes to NAPE's objectives;
- Environmental Code (2000): The Code indicates that forests, protected areas, flora and fauna need to be managed rationally and balanced, taking into account, in particular, the need to avoid overexploitation or extinction, to preserve the genetic heritage and to ensure the maintenance of ecological balances in accordance with the texts in force (Article 25).[1] Additionally, the Code instructs that endangered animal or plant species, as well as their natural habitats need enhanced protection (Article 28). Thus, the proposed project is closely aligned with the Environment Code of Mauritania.
- National Gender Strategy (2006): The national strategy is conceived around an integrating vision that seeks the development of equal rights and dignity for all citizens to promote the equitable sharing of resources and responsibilities between women and men.[2] The proposed project will advance the vision of the gender strategy by ensuring an equal representation of women and men in the decision making processes in capacity development, definition and prioritisation of livelihoods activities, and all other activities for the project.
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2011-2015 (PRSP). This PRSP is centred on five pillars: i) accelerating economic growth; ii) anchoring growth in the economic environment of the poor by developing the growth potential and productivity of the poor; iii) developing human resources and facilitating access to basic infrastructure; iv) promoting real institutional development supported by good governance; and v) efficient and effective implementation of the PRSP.[3] The proposed project through components 1 and 2 will contribute to particularly pillars ii (livelihoods of local communities in Adrar Wilaya), iii (capacity development) and iv (through co-management plans).

At the local level, the proposed project is also aligned with the Regional Program to Combat Poverty in the Wilaya of Adrar[4] and the Ministry of Housing, Urban and National Planning of Mauritania. (2017).. The proposed project is conceived to meet regional development priorities, regulations and policy directions applicable to the two target Wilayas (tbc at PPG). Overall, the proposed project will contribute to SDGs 1, 2, and 15 and towards Aichi Targets 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 11 and 14.

[1] Islamic Republic of Mauritania (2000). LOI N° 2000-045/Portant Code de L'Environnement. <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/fr/mr/mr011fr.pdf>

[2] Islamic Republic of Mauritania (2006). National Gender Strategy. https://www.masef.gov.mr/IMG/pdf/strategie_nationale_d_institutionnalisation_du_genre.pdf

[3] Islamic Republic of Mauritania (2011). Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2011/cr11252.pdf>

[4] UNDP-Mauritania. (2015). Regional Program to Combat Poverty in the Wilaya of Adrar

8. Knowledge Management

Outline the knowledge management approach for the Project, including, if any, plans for the Project to learn from other relevant Projects and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.

Knowledge management is critical to the project’s innovative approach to improving the use and management of natural resources among competing land uses in the two target regions. The knowledge management strategy includes learning from relevant projects and initiatives in the country and beyond. The strategy will also include the documentation of lessons learned and best practices from the implementation of the proposed project and will include a dissemination plan on experiences and the definition of key elements of success that can be replicated and scaled up. Best practices and lessons learned will be communicated through different channels. Some of these platforms, such as the UNCBD COP side events, can be leveraged for cross-country exchange, to drive replication of successful approaches, and as a means of accessing complementary technical and financial support. Other means of knowledge management and dissemination will include flyers, and media programmes (e.g TV and Radio programs).

The project will include a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation component, which will be informed by the results of the context assessment and project theory of change. The project’s Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) plan will, first and foremost, provide reliable evidence to track progress, facilitate management decisions, and inform adaptive management decisions during the life of the project. Lessons learned from the project will also be shared within community members (fishermen, crop producers and pastoralists), development partners, biodiversity and land managers, political decision-makers and civil society organizations through organization of exchange visits, and participation to national, regional and international conferences on sustainable forest and land management. Additionally, knowledge resources developed by the project will be shared with CSOs to facilitate reaching out to a broader base of people, particularly local communities who are the direct custodians of land and forest.

9. Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's ESS systems and procedures

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification*

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate			

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

Provide preliminary information on the types and levels of risk classifications/ratings of any identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project (considering the GEF ESS Minimum Standards) and describe measures to address these risks during the project design.

Supporting Documents

Upload available ESS supporting documents.

Title	Submitted
GEF-7 Mauritania IMPADRA ESERN CRC_revised March 2021	

Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And GEF Agency(ies)

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter with this template).

Name	Position	Ministry	Date
Mohamed Yahya O. Lafdal	GEF Operational Focal Point	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	4/9/2020

ANNEX A: Project Map and Geographic Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project intervention takes place



Figure 7: Coordinate representation of the proposed protected area.

The proposed protected area is delimited by the following coordinates:

Map point	Latitude	Longitude
Point-1	21°26'54.14"N	10°46'13.56"W
Point-2	21°33'17.62"N	10°51'12.81"W
Point-3	21°24'8.34"N	11° 2'39.41"W
Point-4	21°20'1.14"N	11°19'51.01"W
Point-5	21°18'54.85"N	11°21'5.10"W
Point-6	21°16'34.39"N	11°27'24.19"W
Point-7	21°13'30.55"N	11°28'53.53"W
Point-8	21°12'4.84"N	11°31'4.00"W
Point-9	21° 8'33.57"N	11°31'55.35"W
Point-10	21° 5'50.46"N	11°30'35.14"W
Point-11	21° 2'30.56"N	11°28'3.98"W
Point-12	21° 0'54.60"N	11°23'40.34"W
Point-13	21° 1'26.93"N	11°14'23.00"W
Point-14	21° 4'44.45"N	11° 7'43.59"W
Point-15	21° 9'14.02"N	11° 2'6.57"W
Point-16	21°16'57.45"N	10°59'44.66"W
Point-17	21°22'18.92"N	10°51'40.11"W

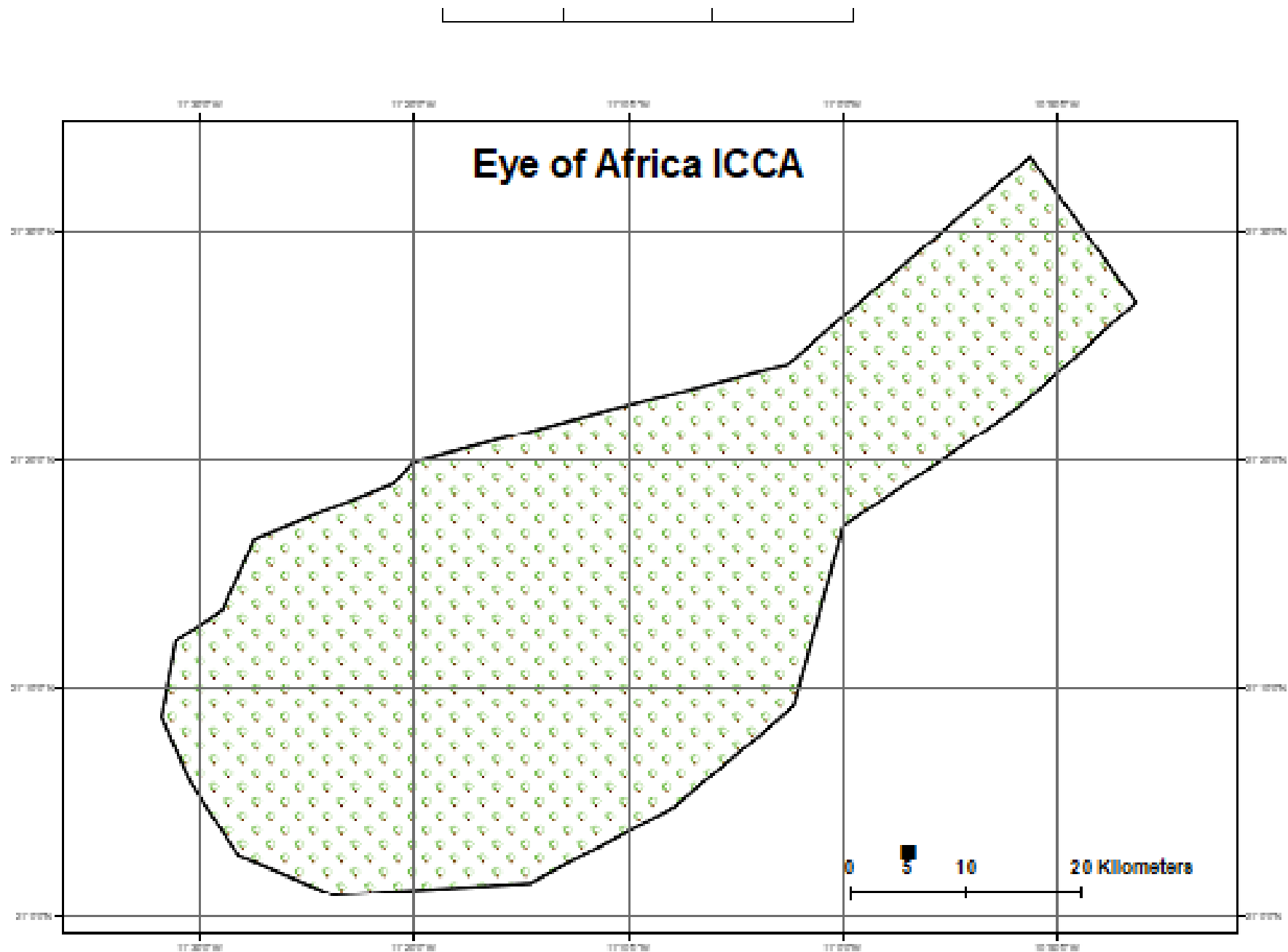


Figure 8: Map showing the location of the proposed PA, covering the existing KBA and the Guelb Er Richat Reserve.

Figure 9: Satellite image showing the location of projected new PA in Adrar Wilaya