



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

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

10586

**Countries**

Mauritania

**Project Name**

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

**Agencies**

UNEP

**Date received by PM**

12/30/2022

**Review completed by PM**

2/3/2023

**Program Manager**

Jurgis Sapijanskas

**Focal Area**

Biodiversity  
**Project Type**  
FSP

**PIF**   
**CEO Endorsement**

**Part I ? Project Information**

**Focal area elements**

**1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/21/2023 - Cleared

JS 9/19/2023

1- Thank you for the revisions. However, the Climate Change Adaptation Rio marker is still on 1, when it should be 0 according to the reply below. Please correct.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Rio Markers</b>                                    |   |
| <b>Climate Change Mitigation</b><br>No Contribution 0 | <b>Climate Change Adaptation</b><br>Significant Objective 1 |
| <b>Biodiversity</b><br>Principal Objective 2          | <b>Land Degradation</b><br>Principal Objective 2            |

JS 1/12/2023

1- Please revise the Rio markers: the project should be rated 2 on biodiversity, and at least 1 if not 2 on land degradation (contribution to land use plans for sustainable land management in production systems in the surrounding landscape). Please clarify the project contribution to adaptation that would justify a Rio marker 1 on adaptation.

|                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Rio Markers</b>               |                                  |
| <b>Climate Change Mitigation</b> | <b>Climate Change Adaptation</b> |
| No Contribution 0                | Significant Objective 1          |
| <b>Biodiversity</b>              | <b>Land Degradation</b>          |
| Significant Objective 1          | No Contribution 0                |

The rest is cleared.

#### Agency Response

**September 21, 2023**

The CCA Rio Marker tag has been removed from the portal.

The Rio Marker related to Adaptation is corrected. Now it is 0.

September 19, 2023

As recommended, Rio Markers Biodiversity 2 and Land Degradation 2 have been included at the bottom of Annex G: GEF Project Taxonomy Worksheet.

The Rio Marker for Adaptation had been marked 1 as a mistake. This has now been corrected.

#### Project description summary

**2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/22/2023 - Cleared.

JS 9/21/2023 - Previous comment cleared, thank you.

A- However, with the revision of the co-financing, there is no longer proportionality between the GEF financed part of PMC and the co-financed part of PMC. GEF financed PMC represents 5% of GEF project financing, while less than 3% of co-funding devoted to components is allocated to PMC. Please correct, e.g. by increasing the share of co-funding devoted to PMC.

JS 9/19/2023

1- Thank you but this has not been corrected in several places of the portal entry:

|  |                      |  |  |     |            |              |
|--|----------------------|--|--|-----|------------|--------------|
| Component 2: Establishing financial sustainability mechanisms for sustainable and effective management of the PA | Technical Assistance | Outcome 2: Financial sustainability mechanisms improve the management effectiveness of the PA in Adrar by 50%.<br>Indicators and targets: (Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices | 2.1.1 Financial mechanisms established and operational with necessary institutional capacity and processes in place for the financial sustainability of PA conservation.<br>2.1.2 One national level PA platform | GET | 948,025.00 | 7,600,000.00 |
|--|----------------------|--|--|-----|------------|--------------|

| Component 2 level changes |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| 1.                        | Outcome 2 read 'Financial sustainability mechanisms improve the management effectiveness of the PA in Adrar' | Outcome 2 now reads 'Outcome 2: Financial sustainability mechanisms improve the management effectiveness of the PA in Adrar by 50%' – given the creation of the PA and the planned institutional arrangement and financial mechanisms to be established. |

| Component 2: Establishing financial sustainability mechanisms for sustainable and effective management of the PA                         |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Outcome 2: Financial sustainability mechanisms improve the management effectiveness of the PA in Adrar by 50%.<br>Indicators and targets | 2.1.1 Financial mechanisms established and operational with necessary institutional capacity and processes in place for the financial sustainability of PA conservation. | One of the key activities under output 2.1.1 will seek to improve the capacity of the PA allied institutions and stakeholders to develop sustainable financing through fiscal incentives, environmental services and other instruments as deemed feasible. Women |

Please correct.

2- A new M&E row has been added in table B to reflect the M&E budget, when it is our understanding that M&E is already included in component 3 / output 3.1.2. In table B, please remove the separate "Project M&E" row and include the M&E budget in that of component 3, which means component 3's total budget is \$640,700. In Annex E (detailed budget), please label the M&E column has belonging to component 3 as well to ensure consistency.

JS 1/12/2023

1- "Outcome 2: Financial sustainability mechanisms improve the management effectiveness of the PA in Adrar by 50%". It is unclear what is meant by an increase by 50% for a PA that is still to be created and has no baseline. Please revise.

Rest of table B is in line with that of PIF stage.

Agency Response

September 22, 2023

The comment is well noted and appreciated. The cofinancing allocated to PMC has been now revised upwards by a ratio of 1:5 as suggested.

**September 21, 2023**

1. As recommended, the sentence has been replaced in the document.
2. Corrected and M&E amount combined with component 3 for consistency as advised.

September 19, 2023

Indeed, consistent with the rationale behind outcome 2 to sustain the management of the PA, the sentence has been revised to, "Financial sustainability mechanisms improve strengthens the sustainable management effectiveness of the PA beyond the life of the project."

**3. If this is a non-grant instrument, has a reflow calendar been presented in Annex D?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Co-financing

**4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/21/2023 - Cleared

JS 9/19/2023

Thank you for the clear response and new co-financing letters. However:

A- Cofunding from Fondation Nationale pour la Sauvegarde des Villes Anciennes: the co-financing letter states that \$8 million of announced co-funding were actually over 2021-2023 and thus cannot be counted as co-financing for this project, and \$4 additional million are over 2021-2027 and thus cannot be counted in full as co-funding this project, which has not yet started. No need to provide a new co-financing letter, but please revise the amount of co-funding from Fondation Nationale pour la Sauvegarde des Villes Anciennes reported in table C to the amount that will actually support the objectives of this project during its lifetime.

The rest is cleared.

JS 1/12/2023- We welcome the significant increase in co-financing reported from \$16.9 million to \$25.5 million. However,

1- World bank - REDISSE co-financing:

1a- The WB project Regional Disease Surveillance Systems Enhancement (REDISSE) Phase III, which indeed provided a \$20 million grant funding to Mauritania, started in 2019 and is, to our knowledge, set to close in 2024. Besides, most of its activities are unrelated in scope and geography to the creation of a protected area in Adrar. It thus seems highly unlikely that the full \$20 million grant can be considered as co-financing this GEF project. Please provide a new letter of co-financing reflecting the actual amounts of REDISSE that will support the implementation of the GEF-financed project and the achievement of its objectives and correct accordingly in table C. Please ensure that new letter clarifies the period over which co-financing will be provided and the form of co-financing (grant vs in kind, recurrent expenditure vs investment mobilized).



Please also ensure that if the co-financing comes from a 'donor agency' as stated in the table, the letter is from the co-financing donor agency.

Finally, please provide a courtesy English translation of the cofinancing letters.

2- Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development co financing:

2a- The letter does not specify the form of co-financing (grant vs in kind, recurrent expenditure vs investment mobilized). Please provide an email from the co-financier clarifying the form of co-financing and reflect in accordingly in table C. Please note that the letter currently points more towards at least in part in -kind co-financing and recurrent expenditures than what is currently reported in table C:.

2b - Please provide a courtesy English transition of the letter and additional email.

| Sources of Co-financing       | Name of Co-financier                                | Type of Co-financing | Investment Mobilized | Amount(\$)           | Evidence  |
|-------------------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| Recipient Country Government  | Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development | Grant                | Investment mobilized | 5,473,804.00         |  |
| Donor Agency                  | World Bank REDISSE Project                          | Grant                | Investment mobilized | 20,000,000.00        |  |
| <b>Total Co-Financing(\$)</b> |   |                      |                      | <b>25,473,804.00</b> |   |

3- Co-financing from many anticipated co-financiers at PIF stage (Institute of Higher Education, Association Mauritanie de la Conservation de la Nature, Metereological National Office, Mauritania Copper Mine Community Projects, KINROSS TASIAST, Project Agropole Maraicher of Benichab, National Agency of the Great Green Wall, Commune Ouadane, Birdlife International, European Union) has not materialized. Please explain.

4- The elaboration on the identification of investment mobilized includes elements related to institutions that are not providing any co-financing. Please explain or revise:

**Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified**

Investments mobilized were mainly identified through collaborative initiatives from donor agencies such as the World Bank and Government agencies' projects and initiatives where the costs were budgeted for (other than recurrent costs).. The government, through the Directorate for the Protection and Restoration of Species and Environments (DPREM) 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. 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, DPREM 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.

**Agency Response**  
**September 21, 2023**

Comment noted, and based on the reasoning in the comment, the reasonable co-financing has been adjusted to \$5 million for the Fondation Nationale pour la Sauvegarde des Villes Anciennes. Cofinancing amounts have been adjusted accordingly in Tables B and C

September 19, 2023

UNEP would like to clarify that the country context has changed with significant changes in current stakeholders in the project area. As a result of this new context, new co-financiers have been identified and provided co-financing letters. The co-financing structure presents the most realistic baseline projects and situations in the project area. The announced, REDISSE co-financing at the first submission of the CEO Endorsement Requests, has now been abandoned taking into consideration the genuine comments from the review. The new co-financing include:

1a. The Fondation Nationale pour les Villes Anciennes (Foundation for the Safeguard of Ancient Cities). Even though the activities are planned to end in 2023, the achievements will provide great foundation for the IMPADRA project and will provide an enabling environment for the promotion of tourism industries in the historic city of Ouadane and the high tourism attraction the Guelb Richard.

The English translation of the foundation letter is provided.

2a. Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development co financing: The cofinancing letter has been revised and now it provides information about the nature of the cofinancing (Cash and In ? kind).

2b. A courtesy English translation is now provided.

3. The institutions were engaged at PIF and promised to cofinance the project. Between the PIF and PPG, situations changed, and were not able to commit for co-financing because they are no more active in the region. Part of this change has been linked to the covid-19 pandemic which financially constrained institutions while others have had to refocus their priorities.

However, other co-financing sources have been identified. These are 2 foundations very active in the region. Their cofinancing letters are attached including a courtesy translation.

4. The elaboration has been edited to only highlight the sources of cofinancing institutions.

#### **GEF Resource Availability**

**5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request JS 1/12/2023- Cleared.

Agency Response  
**Project Preparation Grant**

**6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/19/2023 - Cleared.

JS 1/12/2023- Rather than listing the expenditure category "International consultant" and "national consultant", please stipulate the eligible activities funded through the PPG.

Agency Response  
September 19, 2023

As recommended, the broad categories have been ?unpacked? into GEF-eligible activities as indicated in the GEF document here on page 13.

**Core indicators**



7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E? Do they remain realistic?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/22/2023 - Cleared.

JS 9/21/2023 -

1- This comment has not been addressed. The result framework still shows only a target of 2,000 beneficiaries when the target under core indicator 11 is 10,000. Please correct.

The rest is cleared.

JS 9/19/2023 -

1- Thank you but the Results Framework has not been updated accordingly. Please update:

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Number of direct beneficiaries of Community-based biodiversity enterprises as alternative income generating activities for local communities GEF Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment</p> | <p>None currently within IMPADRA catchment area</p> | <p>1,000 direct beneficiaries of Community-based biodiversity enterprises as alternative income generating activities for local communities</p> | <p>2,000 direct beneficiaries of Community-based biodiversity enterprises as alternative income generating activities for local communities</p> | <p>Project progress and evaluation reports, list of participants technical support missions</p> | <p>specialty community-based enterprises and those related to halting poaching.<br/><br/>iii). COVID-19 will continue to be a barrier so as not to disrupt the implementation of project activities</p> |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

2- We note the addition of 2,500 ha under core indicator 4.3. However, our understanding is that these 2,500 ha correspond to rehabilitation / restoration within the protected area or in the buffer zone already reported under 4.1. Reporting them under CI 4.3 would thus be double counting the same surface area. Please:

- remove the 2,500 ha from 4.3 to avoid double counting.

- Include a specific indicator on restoration over 2,500 ha in the Results Framework.

JS 1/12/2023- We welcome the increase in the core indicator 4 target.

1- Core indicator 11: the target remains at 2,000 beneficiaries when the explanation provided (" 16% of the population in Adrar would be concentrated in the proposed project area) would rather suggest a target of ca. 10,000 (16% of 62,658). Please explain and revise either the target or the explanation provided under table E.

## Agency Response

**September 22, 2023**

The target is now corrected as 10,000 beneficiaries everywhere in the CEO ER and UNEP Project Document

September 21, 2023

- 2500 ha under core 4.3 has been removed to avoid double counting.
- As recommended, an indicator for land restoration of 2,500 ha of degraded ecosystems has been included in Table B and RF.

September 19, 2023

The target has been revised as 10, 000 constituting 16% of the population in Adrar.

## Part II ? Project Justification

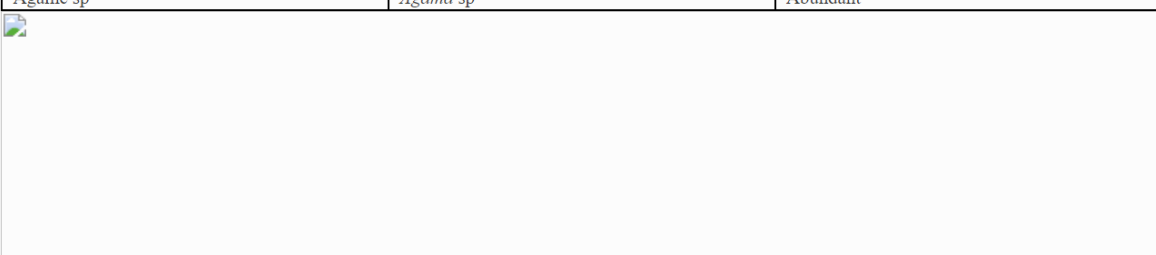
**1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/19/2023 - Cleared.

JS 1/12/2023

1- There is an issue with the following figure/table in the portal entry. Please correct:

| Agame sp   | Agama sp | Abundant |
|--|----------|----------|
|  |          |          |

Source: Government of Mauritania (2017). Actualisation de la Monographie De La Wilaya de l'Adrar Rapport diagnostic 13. A baseline study for the development of IMPADRA reveal that the Guelb er Richat is part of the migratory corridor of birds

The rest is cleared.

## Agency Response

**2. Is there an elaboration on how the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects were derived?**

## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/19/2023 - Cleared.

JS 2/1/2023

1- Please update the information on the GEF-7 project GEFID 10444 Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania, which has now been CEO endorsed. It is benefiting from \$3.9 of GEF project financing with \$7.5 million of co-financing with implementation planned over January 2023 - December 2026.

2- REDISSE is not presented in the baseline, and as a matter of fact nowhere in the CEO endorsement request, when it is put forward as co-funding this project. Please explain and/or revise.

## Agency Response

September 19, 2023

1. As guided, details of the GEF-funded project (GEFID 10444) have been updated.
2. As REDISSE III is coming to an end, it is considered in the baseline project to learn from its achievement. However, it has been dropped as the co-financing source.

**3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?**

## Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 9/21/2023 - Cleared.

JS 9/19/2023 -

1b -While the response is noted, please note that the portal entry still states that "The project will support conservation actions through changes in local community behavior [...]". At a minimum, please clarify in the ToC in the portal entry how the project is to address (both legal and illegal) hunting pressure, which is presented as a significant threat to biodiversity of global significance in the targeted area.

3- Species reintroduction is still included in the results framework. Please delete:

|  |  |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| 0,000 na PA  |  |  |  |  |   |
| Number of animal species reintroduced/restocked in the new PA, monitored and population size observed from 'rare appearance' to 'frequent appearance.' | Population of existing species in project not known with certainty, and only show rare appearance. | At least three (3) animal species are reintroduced/restocked and their population size observed from 'rare appearance' to 'frequent appearance.' | At least six (6) animal species are reintroduced/restocked and their population size observed from 'rare appearance' to 'frequent appearance.' | Project progress report, periodic participatory monitoring, reports from surveillance systems and Evaluation reports | <p>iii). Established capacities, particularly human capacity to manage the PA are maintained to minimise disruption</p> |
| % of women partic  | None   | Women inclusion bl   | 42% of women pa  | Project progress re  |   |

The rest is cleared.

JS 2/1/2023

1- Please provide an adequate theory of change (ToC) for the project.

1a- While it lacked a narrative, the PIF had a clearer ToC diagram that linked pathways to clear assumptions, and was more conducive to adaptive management and improvement of the ToC during implementation. There remain diverse ways of presenting a ToC, but key issues are to communicate clearly, through a diagram and a narrative, the causal pathways by which interventions are expected to have the desired effect and the justification that these causal pathways are necessary and sufficient. Please refer to STAP's guidance: <https://www.stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/theory-change-primer>

1b - In addition, the PIF review requested that PPG refine the ToC with regards to the livelihoods interventions designed to foster behavior change and with regards to ways to efficiently address hunting pressure. These comments have not been addressed. Please revise.

2- Many activities listed under outputs are broad aspirational statements instead of concrete, specific and actionable activities (e.g. "Use social and economic benefits generated by protected areas for poverty reduction" under 2.1.3; "Encourage integration of PA needs into [...] strategies" under both 2.1.1 and 2.1.2; "Increase technology transfer and cooperation to improve protected area management" under output 3.1.3) and/or are weakly related to their output (e.g. "Development of land use plans for the PA and adjacent landscape" as an activity under 2.1.3 when output 1.1.3 itself is to develop the land use plans).

2a- Please conduct a thorough revisions of all activities to ensure they are concrete, directly actionable, more specific than outputs, and both necessary and sufficient to deliver their parent output.

3- Species reintroduction: As clearly announced in the PIF review and discussed with the Agency at PIF stage, it was requested that if the idea of exploring species reintroduction was to be pursued and proved necessary, the PPG should carry out an in-depth technical and financial feasibility and ecological viability analysis. We understand the project plans to fund reintroduction and yet we fail to find any analysis of the technical and financial feasibility or

the ecological viability of the announced species reintroduction work. In addition, reintroduction is included as a sub-activity when it should be at least as a clear output, if not a dedicated outcome, with underlying activities, budget and partners already defined at this stage of project development.

As PPG funds are exhausted and such analyses and partnership building do no longer seem possible at this stage, please remove species reintroduction from the project.

4- Activities under output 1.1.1 do not include the actual KBA assessment and registration process. Please correct and confirm that dedicated budget has been planned to that effect. Please also clarify which scientific partners have been identified to help with the data collection methodology and the KBA assessment.

5- output 1.1.5: All activities are related to monitoring and none pertain to enforcement when enforcement is in the scope of the output. Underlying activities do not seem to involve any set-up and capacity building of staff/rangers, nor any element that would contribute to engaging communities in the enforcement strategy. Please explain or revise.

6- A good share of the development under output 2.1.2 seem rather related to output 2.1.3 and refer to the PPG (preparatory phase) in the future instead of presenting the results of PPG work. Please revise:

and beyond. The platform will showcase PA management practices, eco-tourism potential, investment potential and bio status to be managed by the National Tourism Office of Mauritania. The platform will also serve as a one-stop shop for government and other stakeholder-organized eco-tourism promotion events. The studies and consultations envisaged during the preparatory phase will inform the identification and support towards optimal community-based biodiversity enterprises as alternative generating activities. This will be done through a participatory approach, ensuring adequate representation of women and youth 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 community and other key stakeholders through consultative and collaborative processes will be critical to effective design and implementation. These activities will provide and strengthen the basis for sustainability, community behavioral change towards conservation, and sustainable resource management practices. The activities will then be triaged based on the following considerations: i) their potential in enabling communities to contribute to biodiversity conservation and PA effective management; ii) their potential for sustainable 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. Activities under output 2.1.2 will include:

7- output 3.1.1: Please explain or reconsider the activity "Support the adoption of gender-responsive budgeting to reflect the specific needs and interests of both women and men when conceiving and implementing budgets at Adrar Wilaya level." It seems the activity would

support general gender-responsive budgeting for the general budget of the Wilaya, which seems unrelated and beyond the scope of the project and beyond the mandate of the GEF.

8- output 3.1.3: Please be more specific on the objectives of the communication strategy and anticipated ways to achieve them, including how communication links with other project interventions to foster the desired behavior change. Communication effort should be strategic and targeted. GEF support should not go to general awareness raising on biodiversity. Please refer to STAP advisory document on behavioral change <https://www.stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/why-behavioral-change-matters-gef-and-what-do-about-it>

9- We failed to find information on which partners will be responsible for what outputs / activities and justification for the choice of partner when necessary. Please provide.

## Agency Response

**September 21, 2023**

1b. As recommended, additional information has been provided in a paragraph before the figure of the Theory of Change

3. As advised, allusion to reintroduction of animal species has been deleted from the RF

September 19, 2023

1a. As recommended, two paragraphs have been added to more clearly explain the logic that underpins the theory of change of this project. The explanation includes the steps that have followed the identification of the context and its challenges, the identified barriers to change and proposed recommendations to remove the barriers for results and impacts that will transform the specific context that is relevant to the project.

1b. In the PIF response matrix, the comment on behaviour change has been addressed and cleared. Essentially, the project acknowledges the importance of behaviour change, but behaviour change is a complex thing that is certainly beyond the primary focus of the project. However, the project intends to contribute to awareness-raising (component 3), believing that behaviour can be triggered and facilitated by awareness raising. This will be the primary focus and contribution of behaviour change ? which the project believes cannot be forced or imposed but facilitated with knowledge and awareness.

2a. As recommended, the activities have been reviewed, and rephrased to make them more concrete action-oriented. Where there were apparent mismatch (e.g. Development of land use plans for the PA and adjacent landscape" as an activity under 2.1.3 when output 1.1.3 itself is to develop the land use plans), the activity has been rephrased and shifted to 1.1.3

3. As recommended, the reintroduction of species has been removed from the project. It should be mentioned that the removal of the reintroduction of species will be a missed opportunity to the country that has expressed interest in improving the animal population in the Guelb Er Richat. The project will support the financial and ecological assessment so as to provide credible data for the country to explore other financing opportunity to engage on the proven viable option.

4. As requested, Support the actual KBA assessment and registration process has been included as an activity under output 1.1.1 and resources provided for the activity.

5. Regarding capacity of rangers and enforcement, please note the anticipated PA capacity needs assessments, and establish capacity building programmes on the basis of these assessments including the creation of curricula, resources and programs for the sustained delivery of PA management training? includes training programs for enforcement as will be identified during the capacity needs assessment. So the enforcement and rangers are duly part of the activity.

6. The comment is well noted and appreciated. As recommended, output 2.1.2 has been revised, and information relevant to output 2.1.3, including the activity to ?identify and foster economic opportunities and markets at local, national and international levels for goods and services produced by the new PA, consistent with the PA objectives and promote the equitable sharing of the benefits? have been moved to output 2.1.3.

7. As recommended, activity 2 under output 3.1.1 has been revised, and for clarity, an explanation has been added.

8. We take note of the comment regarding awareness-raising and behaviour change. However, as noted in response to comment 1b, behaviour change is a very complex process ? and intending to achieve it within the life of a process discounts real life contexts in which development processes unfold, but also, it can be seen to be too imposing which might simply yield the contrary results. What the project thinks is useful is to raise awareness, and let this awareness trigger or be the basis for behaviour change. It is important to recognise the cultural contexts within which a given development process is unfolding, including appropriate mechanisms to achieve desired ends.

9. As requested, information has been provided based on the consultations that have been had with different institutions and their comparative advantage ? representing a wide range of stakeholders that will play a role in the implementation of the project.

**4. Is there further elaboration on how the project is aligned with focal area/impact program strategies?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/19/2023 - Cleared.

JS 2/1/2023

1- Elaboration on alignment with the BD focal area is missing from the portal entry. Please correct.

Agency Response

September 19, 2023

Comment noted with thanks. The correction is made in the GEF Portal.

**5. Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/21/2023 - Cleared.

JS 9/19/2023 -

1- This comment has not been addressed satisfactorily. A paragraph has been added but with obsolete information. It still refers to co-financing from the REDISSE project, which has been removed. Please revise and clarify the role from co-financing.

2- This comment has not been addressed. No additional information has been provided in the section related to incremental reasoning. Please revise and be specific on the increment compared to and coordination with the GEF-7 project GEFID 10444 Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania, and ID 10103 - Climate change adaptation and livelihoods in three arid regions of Mauritania, that will both be implemented at the same time as this project and also in Adrar.

JS 2/2/2023

1- The role of co-financing is not explained. Please correct.

2- Please be more specific on the increment compared to and coordination with the GEF-7 project GEFID 10444 Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania, and ID 10103 - Climate change adaptation and livelihoods in three arid regions of Mauritania, that will both be implemented at the same time as this project and also in Adrar.



## Agency Response

September 21, 2023

1. As recommended, the information has been updated with new figures following the new changes. Also, REDISSE has been deleted.
2. As recommended, additional information has been added to highlight incremental reasoning of IMPADRA vis-a-vis GEFID10444 and GEFID 10103

September 19, 2023

1. As recommended, information has been provided to explain the role of cofinancing.
3. As advised, additional information has been provided to clarify incremental reasoning and coordination with GEFID 10444 and GEFID 10103 projects ? clearly highlighting potential areas of collaboration and complementarity.

**6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 2/2/2023 - Cleared.

## Agency Response

**7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/22/2023 - Cleared.

JS 9/21/2023 -

Thank you but the paragraph on tourism has not been deleted in the portal entry. Please correct.

JS 9/19/2023 -

Thank you. However the additions on innovation in the tourism sector relate to activities that are not eligible for BD FA funding and are not part of the description of the contribution of co-funding (e.g., tourism products unrelated to the PA or biodiversity, construction of a

museum, inventory of historic sites). Please delete the paragraph related to innovation in the tourism sector.

JS 2/2/2023

The elaboration is entirely identical to that of PIF stage when it should have gained in specificity following PPG work, in particular with regards to the up-scaling strategy and the how the project plans to engage key stakeholders (not just broad categories) to foster sustainability. Please revise.

Agency Response

**September 22, 2023**

The paragraph in the portal entry on ecotourism under innovation is now removed.

September 21, 2023

As recommended, additional information related to the tourism sector has been deleted.

September 19, 2023

As recommended additional information has been provided on innovation, scaling up and stakeholder engagement.

**Project Map and Coordinates**

**Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

**JS 9/21/2023 - Cleared.**

**JS 9/19/2023 -**

**Thank you, we note the updated map in the word document but the map has not been updated in the portal entry. Please update.**

JS 2/2/2023

A map and coordinates are provided. However, please clarify on the map what is the anticipated area for the PA and for the additional 100,000 ha reported under core indicator 4.

Agency Response

September 21, 2023

The Map is updated in the portal for consistency.

September 19, 2023

As requested, a planned buffer for the 100,000 ha as adjacent areas has been drawn around the PA planned area ? see annex E for the map

**Child Project**

**If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

NA

Agency Response

**Stakeholders**

**Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase? Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/21/2023 - Cleared

JS 9/19/2023

3- This comment has not been addressed in the portal entry, please remove the tag on executor or co-executor for civil society:

Select what role civil society will play in the project:

Consulted only; Yes

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor; Yes

Co-financier;

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body; Yes

Executor or co-executor; Yes

Other (Please explain)

The rest is cleared.

JS 2/2/2023

1- While the short summary included in the portal is noted, we failed to locate a detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase. Please provide a detailed report.

2- The elaboration on stakeholder has little evolved since PIF stage and we failed to locate an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase. As detailed in the GEF Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines (SD/GN/01), at CEO endorsement stage, the Plan, or equivalent document, should include the following minimum elements:

- The stakeholders, their relevant interests, and why they are included
- The steps and actions to achieve meaningful consultation and inclusive participation, including information dissemination
- Roles and responsibilities for implementation of the Plan
- The timing of the engagement throughout the project cycle
- The budget for stakeholder engagement throughout the project cycle and, where applicable, for related capacity-building to support this engagement
- Key indicators of stakeholder engagement during project implementation, and steps that will be taken to monitor and report on progress and issues that arise

Please provide an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent.

3- Please clarify why civil society has been tagged as executor/co-executor:

Select what role civil society will play in the project:

Consulted only; Yes

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor; Yes

Co-financier;

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body; Yes

Executor or co-executor; Yes

Other (Please explain)

## Agency Response

September 21, 2023

Executor/Co-executor roles for civil society have been removed from the portal.

September 19, 2023

- The budget for stakeholder engagement throughout the project cycle and, where applicable, for related capacity-building to support this engagement

- Key indicators of stakeholder engagement during project implementation, and steps that will be taken to monitor and report on progress and issues that arise

Please provide an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent.

2. In response to the comment, additional information has been provided, and we sincerely hope that this meets the minimum requirements that are sought in this comment. It has been reiterated several times that the project will continue to engage different stakeholders throughout its implementation and has specified certain roles to stakeholders as participants in the implementation of the project, while others will be beneficiaries. In practice, it is certainly the scope of this project to seek to understand the underlying interest or motive for participating in the project (it should be noted that in practice positions are easily stated, but not interests). However, it is good and standard practice to open space for stakeholder engagement so that based on the comparative advantage, stakeholders can play their role in the success of the project.

Like indicators of stakeholder engagement, financial resources for stakeholder engagement will be made available based on the financing of an activity that will require stakeholder

engagement. In the design of this project, consistent with the proposed components and activities, separate stakeholder indicators and resources for stakeholder engagement have not been foreseen to be separated from the principal budget and results framework.

Comparing this level of information on stakeholder engagement and information in other GEF CEO Endorsement documents, information provided is fairly at par.

3. Comment noted with appreciation. The check on executor or co-executor was inadvertent. It has been unchecked.

### **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

**Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
JS 2/2/2023 - Cleared.

Agency Response  
**Private Sector Engagement**

**If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
JS 9/19/2023 - Cleared.

JS 2/2/2023 -

1- Based on the incomplete documentation provided on stakeholder consultations during PPG and SEP and the absence of private sector co-financing at this stage, this section seems largely aspirational with little description of the concrete means to engage the private sector, and little evidence of the feasibility of the anticipated private sector participation. Please report on PPG consultations with the private stakeholder consultations and explain in the SEP the project concrete strategy and anticipated means to engage the private sector.

## Agency Response

September 19, 2023

As noted above on stakeholder engagement, additional information has been provided including on private sector. Additionally, based on consultations, specific roles to stakeholders have been assigned in the implementation of the project. For example, the private sector will participate in the implementation of activities under output 2.1.3. It should also be noted that there is a table that spells out stakeholders who have been part of the conversation to develop this project. Consultations at PPG include those with community members in their communities, as evidenced by the pictures that have been included but also with all key national institutions at central level. The Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Mauritania has been actively engaged right from the PPG inception. This group which includes many opinion leaders has committed to support the project even in its governance level.

## Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

**Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?**

## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/19/2023 - Cleared.

JS 2/2/2023 -

1- We note the risk "Local socio-cultural practices prevent the inclusion of women, and slow down the adoption of conservation practices" has been escalated from medium to high. Please explain what led to the escalation and be more specific on the mitigation measures the project will put in place. Currently, mitigation measures allude only to community participation on biodiversity monitoring, which will not be sufficient to foster behavior change regarding conservation practices. Please refer to STAP's advisory document on behavior change

(<https://www.stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/why-behavioral-change-matters-gef-and-what-do-about-it>).

2- Some parts of the table have not been updated. Please correct:

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Climate change (addition information included on climate change in the section below) |  | The climate projections for the project area are elaborated further down the climate risk assessment <b>will be conducted before designing the project</b> to mitigate among others the risk of a mismatch between the proposed boundaries and the climate niche of the globally significant species that are benefit from the PA. The detailed assessment will ensure that the findings can inform the project interventions. The project preparation will also consider recent and ongoing projects, including those promoting ecosystem b |
|---|--|--|

### Agency Response

September 19, 2023

As requested, a paragraph below the table of risks has been added to explain why the cultural risk has been escalated to 'high'. As has been noted before, behaviour change will be achieved through awareness raising that will inspire change eventually after equipping communities and other stakeholders with the right information and knowledge. IMPADRA's belief targeting behaviour change is very ambitious in society like Mauritania, rather it will engage over time on awareness raising using targeted opinion leaders which may bring about change over time. Mauritania is a very tribal society. The use of tribe group and leaders is a very common practice to achieve higher changes even at government level. The project will consider the tribal opinion leaders as drivers for change and use them without encouraging detrimental hierarchy.

The table related to climate risk has completely been reworked to consider the Climate Risk Assessment conducted by GIZ and its partners in Mauritania.

The table has been updated.

### Coordination

**Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?**



## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/19/2023 - Cleared.

JS 2/3/2023

- 1- Please clarify where the PMU will be based.
- 2- Please clarify the steps that have been and will be taken to coordinate with GEF-7 projects ID 10444 - Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania, and ID 10103 - Climate change adaptation and livelihoods in three arid regions of Mauritania, which both also target Adrar.

## Agency Response

September 15, 2023

1. As requested, under the section on institutional arrangement and coordination, information has been provided to clarify where the PMU will be based.
3. Regarding the coordination with GEFID 10444 and GEFID 10103, please refer to the response above under ?Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated.?

## Consistency with National Priorities

**Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?**

## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 2/3/2023 - Cleared.

## Agency Response

### Knowledge Management

**Is the proposed ?Knowledge Management Approach? for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
JS 2/3/2023 - Cleared.

Agency Response  
**Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)**

**Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately documented at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/21/2023 - Cleared. We note that the portal entry clarifies that the Agency considers that, given that the Environmental and Social Safeguard risk is Low, no further study or impact management required.

JS 9/19/2023 - It is noted that there are currently no permanent settlements in the anticipated PA but the SRIF does not exclude impact on nomadic communities.

Please add in the portal entry that the project, as announced in the response below, will develop an Environmental and Social Management Plan in early stage of project implementation.

JS 2/3/2023 - We note the downgrading of ESS risks from medium to low and the attached SRIF.

However, the risks related to involuntary resettlement (6.1 Physical displacement and 6.2 Economic displacement) still exist and there is no plan to develop Environmental and Social Management Plan to address these risks. In addition, there is no comment about these risks and changing ESS risk level from the safeguard team. Please provide a clear plan to avoid, minimize and mitigate involuntary resettlement, such as development of Environmental and Social Management Plan in early stage of project implementation. Please also provide the Safeguard risk assessment or impact assessment report, if it is prepared as stated in the SRIF. Note: The project PIF has been approved on June 18, 2021, after the Policy on ESS became effective.

Agency Response  
September 21, 2023

Indeed, as correctly pointed out, nomadic communities have not been excluded from the PA because though they don't permanently stay in the PA, they pass through as they move from place to place. Also, it is recalled that the PA will have a category of VI which allows for access.

September 19, 2023

The text in the SRIF has been modified to clarify that the planned PA is an IUCN Category VI (protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources) ? its management approach will be characterised by conservation of ecosystems and habitats, together with associated cultural values and traditional natural resource management systems. It is noted that Category VI are generally large (as is the case with the PA in Guelb Er Richat), with most of the area in a natural condition, where a proportion is under sustainable natural resource management and where low-level non-industrial use of natural resources compatible with nature conservation is seen. We endorse the suggestion of the development of Environmental and Social Management Plan in early stage of project implementation. We will use the opportunity to discuss and agree on the project grievance mechanism.

In the SRIF, it is noted that communities will be allowed access, and the PA Management Plan will spell out sustainable practices that will be allowed to be practised within the PA. This has been agreed upon in consultation with MESD and the local authorities in Ouadane. It has also been added that land use planning will involve zoning but will be in close consultation with communities and authorities at different administrative tiers to ensure socio-economic wellbeing of communities as well as sustainable environmental outcomes. The approach will be participatory to ensure community participation and contribution to land use planning.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

**Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/19/2023 - Cleared.

JS 2/3/2023

1- The proposed M&E budget is above the indicative threshold of 5% of GEF project financing. Please reduce the budget to \$125,700 or justify the specific M&E challenges faced by this project that would warrant a larger budget.

2- Please clarify what are the "Conference and others meetings" charged for \$17,000 on the M&E budget. If they are not strictly related to M&E but e.g. rather to KM, please remove them from the M&E budget.

3- We failed to locate a more detailed description of the monitoring framework of the project beyond the information contained in the results framework. Please notably clarify the methods of measurement and responsible entity for each indicator. In particular, how will the project concretely measure *area under improved practices to benefit biodiversity* (core indicator 4) in the particular context of this project.

4- As commented on by STAP at PIF stage, the absence of proper biodiversity baseline and anticipated biodiversity outcome quantification remains problematic. We note the qualitative assessment developed during PPG. However, the shortcomings of such a qualitative assessment should be compensated by a strong plan on rigorous biodiversity baselining and biodiversity monitoring, including identification of able partners and associated budget. Please provide as part of the M&E plan and/or other relevant part of the CEO endorsement request.

5- Please align the final targeted METT score throughout the document, it is 50% or 65% depending on the part of the document.

## Agency Response

September 19, 2023

1. We followed the GEF guidelines that indicate as follows: "Observed M&E budgets during GEF6-7 - i.e. 5% of the GEF-financed portion for projects/programs up to USD 5 million, 3% for projects/programs between USD 5-10 million, and 2% for projects/programs over USD 10 million". The GEF portion of the project is \$2,639,726. \$130,000 is 4.9% of \$2,639,726. However, the budget has been reduced as per the guidance.

2. As requested, we clarify that the \$17,000 budget item which now is reduced to \$15,000 for conference and other meetings falls within the lessons learning from the participation at national and international process and linking it to knowledge management.

3. In this version, and as has already been noted, each output has been allocated to identified partners. Naturally, these partners will be responsible to coordinate, as applicable and appropriate, data to feed into indicator monitoring. Overall, the M&E Specialist (see the Term of reference) will support data management from partners, collating the data and information to feed them into the problem monitoring reports, knowledge platform as well as for information dissemination with stakeholders.

4. The comment is noted, and in response, please note that additional information has been added under Output 1.1.2. As we have mentioned above, each output has identified Partners. Specifically for biodiversity monitoring, the principal Partners are the University of Nouakchott and Ecole Normale de l'Enseignement Superieur.

5. As advised, the figures of METT have been harmonized to remain 50%.

#### **Benefits**

**Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 2/3/2023 - Cleared.

Agency Response

**Annexes**

**Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/22/2023 - Cleared.

JS 9/21/2023 The Agency Project Document has been duly uploaded. Please make sure to update it with the changes requested in this review sheet and upload the updated version of the ProDoc with the next submission.

JS 9/19/2023

A-We failed to find an updated version of the Agency project document with this submission. Please provide, noting that the Agency project document is to be sent along with the portal entry for a 4-week Council review.

Previous comments are cleared.

JS 2/3/2023

1- budget:

1a- Please include the budget in the portal entry.

1b - Please ensure the financial breakdown by component is identical in the budget template and in table B. There is currently a discrepancy for all 3 components, seemingly because M&E has been removed from components and reported as a separate M&E column.

1c- Please see comment on M&E budget in a previous comment box.

1d - The budget includes many lines corresponding to sub-contract to MESD, when MESD is the EA. Please revise and identify the correct entity that would be contracted when it is already known.

1e - As commented on in the alternative scenario comment box, please remove support to species reintroduction.

1f - The budget includes \$300,000 for ecosystem restoration when it is not part of the project: not a single output or activity relate to restoration. Please explain. Please note that in GEF-7 the BD focal area supports restoration only when it is cost-efficient and necessary to deliver benefits for biodiversity of global significance.

1g - The budgeted travel expenses are zero. Please confirm that it is because they will be covered by co-finance.

Agency Response

September 22, 2023

The Prodoc with the updated elements as a result of the current review is uploaded in the Portal.

September 21, 2023

The Project document is included in the package as Annex 9.

September 19, 2023

1a. The comment is noted, and the budget will be included in the portal entry.

1b. The comment is noted, and the reviewer's has correctly pointed out that the figures are different between. The figures have been harmonized, and this has been possible by including a line in Table B with M&E budget.

1c. See response to the comment in previous box

1d. As recommended, the appearance of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development has been limited to the specific role of Executing Agency.

1e. As recommended, support towards reintroduction has been removed, and the budget has been adjusted consequently.

1f. Please, note that under outputs 1.1.3 and 2.1.3, there are activities dedicated to land rehabilitation ? clarified in this version as 2,500 ha ? this will target areas within the PA that are important for ecological connectivity and water points which are important for wildlife. Therefore, this rehabilitation of the habitat will be part of the overall effort to support wildlife conservation and creation of an appropriate PA. Also the biodiversity oriented income generation activities fall under that amount.

1g. Comment is well noted with thanks. A travel budget totalling \$37,900 has been included, split across the three components.

**Project Results Framework**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/22/2023 - Cleared.

JS 9/21/2023:

1- The number of beneficiaries has not been updated in this submission. Please correct.

A- Compared to last submission, the mid-term and end of project target METT scores for the PA have been modified/deleted without any justification. Target METT scores are required for projects working on PA management effectiveness. Please reinclude the previous targets which were a 25% METT score at mid-term and 50% at the end of the project:

| Component 2: Establishing financial sustainability mechanisms for sustainable and effective management of the PA             |   |   |  |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| Outcome 2.1 Financial sustainability mechanisms improved and strengthened the sustainable management effectiveness of the PA | Level of management effectiveness in terms of METT for the new PA | No existing management effectiveness within the Guell Er Richat | METT of creation of the PA established management effectiveness in terms of METT achieved for the new PA | % increase management effectiveness in terms of METT achieved for the new PA | Project progress and Evaluation reports, technical support missions | i). The political will that IMPADRA has generated among politicians, policy makers, academia, development partners and other stakeholders |

S 9/19/2023

1- Please see comments above related to the Results Framework following changes to other parts of the project (removal of species reintroduction, inclusion of 2,500 ha of restoration, update to the number of beneficiaries) and revise accordingly.

2- Please remove the newly added outcome indicator measured by "recruitment of a full time Gender Specialist personnel in the PMU". This is not an adequate indicator to measure whether "Gender equality and knowledge management effectively support sustainability and inform up-scaling" (outcome 3.1).

JS 2/3/2023 - Cleared

Agency Response

September 22, 2023

1. The number of beneficiaries has been updated from 2,000 to 10,000 everywhere necessary both in CEO ER and Project Document

A. The METT score increased at MTR and TE are now reincluded.



September 21, 2023

1. Noted with thanks, and as mentioned, changes have been effected following the reviewer's recommendation
2. As recommended, the indicator has been removed from the RF

#### **GEF Secretariat comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/22/2023 - Cleared.

JS 9/21/2023

Annex B has not been updated in the portal with responses to GEFSEC comments on PPG at the time of PIF approval. Please include these comments and responses in the portal entry / Annex B Responses to project review.

JS 9/19/2023 - Please include these comments and responses in the portal entry, Annex B Responses to project review.

JS 2/3/2023 -Responses to comments directed at PPG work have not been included in the portal entry. Please include. The comments included in the PIF review sheet were:

*Please, during PPG :*

- Carry out thorough consultations as these have been limited at PIF stage due to COVID-related constraints;
- Refine the ToC, especially with regards to the livelihoods interventions designed to foster behavior change and with regards to ways to efficiently address hunting pressure;
- design the project to avoid physical displacement or relocation of people;
- if the idea of exploring species reintroduction is pursued and proves necessary, carry out an in-depth technical and financial feasibility and viability analysis.

Agency Response

September 22, 2023

Comments are now included in Annex B on the portal as per the guidance.

September 21, 2023

Annex B responses to project review are included in the portal entry.

September 19, 2023

-Consultations: Consultations have been conducted and evidence has been provided, including pictures that have been included in the documents.

-ToC and livelihoods and behaviour change: On each of these aspects, additional information has been provided ? and these have been explained and views shared based on the context of the country, and the rationale for targeting awareness raising as a vehicle for behavior change.

-Displacements: Additional information has been provided both in the SRIF and below the table of risks to indicate that based on the PA category, no displacements will be done ? only access and use will be regulated to encourage sustainable use of resources within the PA. Grievance mechanism will be established and PMU will be tasked for its operability.

-Species reintroduction has been removed from the document.

#### **Council comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/21/2023 - Cleared

JS 9/19/2023

1- The comment from Germany related to risks related to corruption and nepotism has not been addressed (comment 2). Please provide a response and revise the CEO endorsement request as necessary.

2- The response 5 to the comment from Germany on the risks that the infrastructure investments and decree for the creation of a Regional Office for the PA is not taken in time is not adequate. Please elaborate on the how the project would still be viable and adapt to delays or change in priorities on the infrastructure investments and decree.

JS 2/3/2023 - Responses to Council comments have not been included in the portal entry. Please provide responses.

Council comments were:

### ***United States Comments***

? *We recommend extra consideration be given to the potential impacts of this project on nomadic populations.*

### ***Germany Comments***

*Germany requests for the following project that the Secretariat sends draft final project documents for Council review four weeks prior to CEO endorsement:*

*Germany requests that the following requirements are taken into account during the design of the final project proposal:*

? *The proposed project area is of high importance from a geologically, biodiversity and cultural heritage point of view. Provided that ecotourism can be re-developed and regional development strategies be implemented, the project can contribute to biodiversity conservation, local development and create jobs and income for local communities. The project area is not yet covered by international development organizations; thus, a well-developed project could contribute significantly.*

? *However, the project proposal seems to be outdated. CNOZEA, the main Mauritanian institution, has been closed down due to corruption related issues. This is mostly the same case for the DAPL. Thus, the strategic reorganization of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and presidential initiatives (ProPEP) is not reflected in the proposal. Furthermore, the Guelb er Richat area for the time being does not have the status of a natural reserve. The proposal needs to be restructured accordingly and consider the correct institutions to be involved. In addition, risks of corruption and nepotism need to be addressed clearly.*

? *The proposal mentions GIZ projects as partners to the project, including GIZ activities in the past. For the time being, this cannot be confirmed. Germany requests that the proposal clarifies the envisioned partnership or otherwise refrain from including it in the proposal.*

? *The proposal states that the project is to be set up with the involvement of local communities. However, a clear description of the mechanism for such involvement is missing. The GIZ approach of user's co-operatives is mentioned, yet no specifics of how to apply it. Germany requests a clear strategy for the equitable and transparent involvement of local communities in the design and implementation of the project.*

? *The proposals further states that the Government has committed to conservation through planning infrastructure developments towards eco-tourism and issuing a decree for the creation of a Regional Office for the PA in year 2 of the project. Given that governmental priorities may change due to currently unforeseen circumstances, Germany would like to suggest that the project seeks to either ensure that the governmental commitment is translated into action (by e.g. issuing the decree at a much earlier stage) or develops an alternative*

*scenario in case infrastructure investments are not carried out as foreseen or the decree cannot be issued as planned.*

*? Overall, the project layout does not seem feasible at this stage. Germany therefore requests that the points above are taken into account and the proposal is reformulated and restructured accordingly.*

### **Canada Comments**

*? This project makes sense for biodiversity (the focus on creating new PAs when Mauritania has so little of its areas conserved proportionally) and links well to the work of the CBD in this regard. There were some earlier improvements made to the project which strengthen the clarity on what the outcomes of this project will be (e.g. link to mainstreaming).*

*? This project, through its location and scope, is well aligned with Aichi Strategic Goals and the GEF-7 Biodiversity Focal Area. Hence, it will contribute to two objectives identified in the Convention Biological Diversity (CBD) COP 13 Guidance to the GEF, meaning:*

- o Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species;*
- o Further develop biodiversity policy and institutional frameworks.*

*? This PA also fulfils the mandate of GEFs International Water Focal Area, which role is to support the work accomplished under the UN Water Courses Convention and the UNECE Water Convention. In particular, it aims to cover an important freshwater ecosystem, and thus reaching the target of objective GEF-7 IW 3) Enhancing water security in freshwater ecosystems.*

*? However, Canada believes that the project, as presented, does not include nor mention any preparation related to an Environment and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA). Desired outcomes are well articulated, but the description of the process leading to those outcomes, which would include and use a risk evaluation based on ESG as a foundational work, is missing. Such an addition would have clearly helped anticipate an effective implementation of the project, in accordance with the GEF's policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards.*

*? Furthermore, as outlined in the STAP Chair's report of the GEF 60th Council Meeting, the success of this project and the durability of its outcomes will depend on the ability to initiate behavioral changes in the local communities and make them sustainable over time. A systemic approach to environmental sustainability that is not only focusing on biodiversity, but rather integrate biodiversity conservation into multiple use landscapes, would assure, even enhance, the effectiveness of the project.*

## Agency Response

September 21, 2023

1. As recommended, the comment has been addressed, and the document has been updated with information on corruption and nepotism
2. Under baseline scenario, and in addition to the previous submission, information has been added to highlight that IMPADRA will continue building partnerships, support advocacy and mobilize resources that should help to keep the project on course in case of government delays or change of priorities.

September 19, 2023.

We advise that Council comments have been included in the current document (Annex B page 77 of the CEO ER) and uploaded in the portal.

### **STAP comments**

## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/21/2023 - Cleared.

JS 9/19/2023

Please include the response below in the portal entry, more specifically in the response to STAP's first comment.

JS 2/3/2023

1- The response to the first STAP comment clarifies the updated geographical focus of the project but does not respond to the main comment, which is that "the narrative and TOC identifi[ed] poor governance across the Wilaya as a barrier but the responses imply that the focus on the [PA area and immediate surroundings] will solve this". Please clarify how the project addresses poor governance across the Wilaya.

## Agency Response

September 21, 2023

The response is included in the portal.

September 19, 2023.

It is good to clarify that poor governance has been identified not as barrier but as the consequence of weak policy and institutional capacity (barrier 1). Therefore there a logical

approach of considering that the institutional capacity which will be achieved through also the PA creation process seems to be the right response to the barrier which if lifted will solve the issue of poor environmental governance. A focus on PA reflects the project's priority on natural resources through the creation of a PA. The mention of poor governance as consequence of weak institutional and policy environment across the entire Wilaya intends to show that deliberate additional and external efforts in terms of financial and technical resources are needed to boost natural resources management through the creation of a PA.

**Convention Secretariat comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

**Other Agencies comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

**CSOs comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

**Status of PPG utilization**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/19/2023 - Cleared.

JS 2/3/2023 - Rather than listing the expenditure category "International consultant" and "national consultant", please stipulate the eligible activities funded through the PPG.

Agency Response

September 19, 2023

As recommended, the broad categories have been "unpacked" into GEF-eligible activities as indicated in the GEF document here on page 13.

**Project maps and coordinates**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request See similar comment box above.

Agency Response

Response as in the similar box above

**Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

**Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

**Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

**GEFSEC DECISION**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Is CEO endorsement recommended? (applies only to projects and child projects)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 9/22/2023 - Yes, the project is recommended for clearance.

However, this project requires the following priority improvements within its first year that should be evaluated by the mid-term review:

1) Refine the Theory of Change, especially with regards to the causal links between livelihoods interventions and benefits for biodiversity, and with regards pathways to efficiently address hunting pressure.

2) The absence of proper biodiversity baseline and anticipated biodiversity outcome quantification remains problematic. We note the qualitative assessment developed during PPG. However, the shortcomings of such a qualitative assessment should be compensated by a strong plan on rigorous biodiversity baselining and biodiversity monitoring.

JS 9/21/2023 - Not at this stage please address comments of this review sheet and resubmit.

JS 9/19/2023 - Not at this stage please address comments of this review sheet and resubmit.

JS 2/3/2023 - Not at this stage please address comments of this review sheet and resubmit.

#### Review Dates

|   | Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement | Response to Secretariat comments |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>First Review</b>                     | 2/3/2023                               | 9/19/2023                        |
| <b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b> | 9/19/2023                              | 9/21/2023                        |
| <b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b> | 9/21/2023                              | 9/22/2023                        |
| <b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b> | 9/22/2023                              |                                  |
| <b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b> |  |                                  |

#### CEO Recommendation

#### Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations