

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

Basic Information

GEF ID

10586

Countries

Mauritania

Project Title

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

GEF Agency(ies)

UNEP

Agency ID

UNEP: 01799

GEF Focal Area(s)

Biodiversity

Program Manager

Jurgis Sapijanskas

PIF

Part I – Project Informatic

Focal area elements

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/19/2021 - Thank you for the revisions, cleared.

JS 4/6/2021 - While removing BD-1-1 in table A would be acceptable given the focus of the project, this change has been accompanied by a significant downscaling of the GEB targets while maintaining the same funding request. The 50,000 ha target under core indicator 4 has been removed and the number of beneficiaries went down from 10,000 to 2,000. The cost effectiveness of the project, especially given the good level of co-financing reported, appears now relatively low.

Besides, this change seems to imply that all on-the-ground interventions would take place within the limits of the protected area, when sustainability of the PA largely depends on the surrounding landscape and buy-in from neighboring communities. It was our understanding that the project was also to promote community behavioral change towards conservation, and sustainable natural resource management practices outside of the PA, in particular through output 2.1.3.

Please revise and clarify the project's approach to the surrounding landscape and communities.

JS 3/25/2021- Thank you for the revisions and clarifications in the review sheet.

The project is clearly aligned with BD-2-7 but the project contribution to mainstreaming is not clear. Accordingly, the amount allocated to BD-1-1 BD mainstreaming seems high compared to the content of the project, which is mainly a protected area project (BD-2-7). Please clarify the contribution to mainstreaming (is it through land use planning and/or changing agricultural practices? See comment 1 on table B in the comment box below) and consider revising the breakdown or justify the relative share of BD-1-1.

All the rest is cleared.

JS 11/13/2020

Thank you for the revisions throughout the PIF and explanations provided in the review sheet.

1- **Global significance as defined by the KBA standard:** The revised project proposes to create a 100,000 ha protected area, down from

200,000 ha in the first submission, but still does not justify that the targeted area fulfils the KBA standard. The target area includes 35,000 ha that were identified in 2001 as KBA of international significance using previously established criteria and thresholds for the identification of Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) but for which available data indicate that they might not meet global KBA criteria and thresholds set out in the Global Standard (<http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/6627>). While we note and fully understand the scarcity of available data, please clarify in the PIF that you think the target area fit one of the KBA criterion and provide evidence to substantiate that hypothesis. For example, the PIF mentions the presence of the critically endangered (CR) Addax antelopes which would likely trigger one of the KBA criterion on its own. Please provide the source and date of that data.

2- Cost-effectiveness: The cost-effectiveness of the proposal is very low with 100,000 ha impacted for a GEF contribution of \$3 million, especially as there seems to be very few activities (a national level platform to showcase best PA management practices, some awareness raising) reaching beyond the targeted 100,000 ha. Please improve the cost-effectiveness of the proposal or justify thoroughly the cost of the project. Please consider notably strengthening the project contribution at the landscape level (e.g. improving the effectiveness of the Guelb Er Richat reserve and mainstreaming biodiversity in the adjacent area outside the PA - see point 3 below) and the project's national-level contribution. Given Mauritania's plans in relation to protected area creation, described in its 6th report to the CBD (2018) and mentioned in the PIF, the project could have a more systemic interventions for the set-up and sustainability of these anticipated protected areas.

3- Mainstreaming / Impact outside of the PA: If the project remains with a target on core indicator 1 related to protected areas and no target on core indicator 4, please move all the funding in table A to BD-2-7. However, the project seems to intend to produce land use plans beyond the PA ("*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*" in output 1.1 and response below pointing at "*improve[d] resource use within and outside El Ghallaouia PA*"). Please clarify if these land use plans cover only areas within the proposed PA. If not and if these land use plans are acted upon as part of the project, a target under core indicator 4.1 should probably be added and the corresponding work outside the PA could potentially be funded through the BD-1-1 window.

JS 4/16/2020

The project proposes to support the creation of two protected areas (PA), which could be in line with BD-2-7. However, as stated in the GEF-7 biodiversity focal area strategy, "new protected areas established with GEF support must be globally significant, as defined by the Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) standard" and:

- one of the two proposed PA is not on a registered KBA, the PIF does not provide evidence that the targeted area fulfills the criteria of a KBA and does not seem to plan to go through the KBA registration process.

-the second proposed PA would be of 200,000 ha, which is far more than the 35,000 ha KBA it would cover. The PIF does not justify that areas beyond the already registered KBA meet criteria for global significance. It is unclear that a large buffer zone around what is actually an IBA would have benefits for biodiversity of global relevance in the targeted area.

The project is thus not eligible as described.

Please justify the global significance of the target sites and integrate the KBA registration process in the project, or consider other location(s) as they are several registered KBAs in Mauritania that are not covered by protected areas, including in Inchiri and Adrar (e.g. the Ibi Craret el Erass and Arâquib el Jabfa KBAs)

If the global relevance of the target sites were to be justified, note that alignment with BD-1-1 is unclear as the location of the interventions of component 2 relative to PAs is not specified (within or outside PAs?), there is no target set for core indicator 4 and the sub-entry point of BD-1-1 to which the project would align is not straightforward. BD-1-1 entry points are (i) spatial and land-use planning, (ii) Improving and changing production practices in priority sectors through technical capacity building and implementation of financial mechanisms, (iii) developing policy and regulatory frameworks that remove perverse subsidies and provide incentives for biodiversity-positive land and resource use. The sparse description of component 2 does not seem aligned with any of these.

Please clarify the location and nature of component 2's interventions. If these are primarily designed to improve PA acceptance and effectiveness, please consider using only the BD-2-7 entry point.

Note that, irrespective of the entry point chosen, livelihood interventions of component 2 need to be underpinned by a solid theory of change, tailored to the context, linking them to benefits for biodiversity of global relevance to be eligible for BD STAR funding (e.g. what type of past experiences or references will the project mobilize to make sure that alternative income generating activities do not displace biodiversity-degrading activities).

Agency Response

27 Oct 2020

Many thanks for the comments that are well noted.

In response, the PIF has been adjusted to remove the MPA in Inchiri. In consultations with the country and other stakeholders, the choice of creating the El Ghallaouia PA is maintained given its proximity to an existing touristic activity, and the fact that it is ecologically close to the Er Guelb Richat, an area that has already been decreed to be a PA by the Government of Mauritania – thus contributing to effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate.

The creation of the El Ghallaouia PA will be informed by spatial and land-use planning that will be accompanied by management frameworks, including community co-management institutional structures. These regulatory frameworks will inform the identification and definition of community livelihoods (consistent with biodiversity conservation) to improve resource use within and outside El Ghallaouia PA. Considering the resource endowment in the area and the socio-economic dynamics of the local communities, resource use within and outside of the PA will be regulated to ensure there is improved resource management without undermining local community resource use – hence the proposed IUCN category VI of the PA.

The definition of livelihood interventions will be fine-tuned during PPG and informed and synergised with the work of the GEF-IUCN project, 'Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania' in Adrar. The GEF-IUCN project is purely funded from the LD focal area, while the proposed GEF-UNEP is purely funded from the BD focal area and will enter the implementation phase after the GEF-IUCN one. The proposed BD project will therefore propose biodiversity-friendly livelihood options to complement and synergise with the LD project SLM activities to ensure land degradation interventions are catalysed by biodiversity interventions.

25 March 2021

Many thanks for the comments and constructive suggestions. In response:

1. Global significance: The general description of the biodiversity situation in Adrar has been complemented, including information on mammals, birds and reptiles in the Wilaya. The information is largely based on the Government of Mauritania 2017 diagnostic report for the Wilaya of Adrar. Furthermore, we have collected and shared additional reports supporting evidence that the area has hosted biodiversity of global significance, with hunting as main threat to wildlife. The project is designed to alleviate this pressure through the creation and improved management effectiveness of the proposed PA. The site also includes a permanent water-source in El Ghallâouîya, acknowledged as “one of the best water source in the Sahara”. There is thus good potential for wildlife, and birds in particular. We have also included an output dedicated to enable the KBA designation and registration process during the project that caters for the collection of detailed biodiversity data in the site.
2. In consultation with the country, the number of ha have been adjusted upwards from 100,000 ha to 200,000 for the PA, and as indicated below, the PIF clarifies that an additional 50,000 ha of production landscape will be brought under improved management.
3. We have included an additional 50,000 ha outside of the PA to be brought under improved management, consistent with core indicator 4.3. This brings the total number of hectares to 250,000 thus, increasing the project cost-effectiveness and responding to comment 2 regarding the project’s cost-effectiveness.
- 5.

01 01 April 2021

The need for clarity on the planning envisaged is agreed. In response:

1. Upon further consideration, the amount allocated to BD 1-1 has been deleted to clarify that the land use planning will be focused within the PA. The corresponding cofinancing has equally been adjusted.
2. Consistent with the above adjustments, the project confirms that planning will be focused within the PA in line with the text describing output 1.1.2 ‘with accompanying land-use plans to facilitate the identification and demarcation of priority areas for conservation in compliance with the gazetting process’. This is also in view of the proposed project’s focus in the PA given that substantive and complementary projects identified in the baseline ranging from livelihood interventions to sustainable land management and sustainable agricultural practices in the target Wilaya present excellent opportunities for complementary work outside the PA. Please refer to the baseline description for further detail.

15 April 2021

BD-1-1 has been put back in table A to reflect the need to deliver 50,000 ha target under core indicator 4 to strengthen sustainability of the PA through the participation of neighbouring communities in sustainable land management in production systems of the surrounding landscape. This support will be delivered mainly through land use planning (output 1.1.3) and the implementation of the LUP through climate-smart, sustainable agricultural and pastoral practices and the promotion of community-based biodiversity enterprises with the potential to change community behaviour towards conservation and sustainable natural resource management (output 2.1.3). Please note that the project support to improving and changing production practices to be more biodiversity-positive through implementation of land-use planning is envisaged mainly under output 2.1.3, but also in line with the financial mechanism to be developed under output 2.1.1. These changes have been integrated across the PIF.

Taking into consideration the sparse population in the target area, the number of beneficiaries has been kept at a very conservative 2,000 with the understanding that this number will most likely increase considerably during consultations at PPG.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/19/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 4/6/2021 -

A- Thank you. There is one remaining reference to "El Ghallaouiya PA" (Name of component 1 in the PIF section dedicated to the proposed alternative scenario). Please take the opportunity of the resubmission to correct this typo.

1- Please see comment in first comment box in this review sheet.

All the rest is cleared, thank you.

JS 3/25/2021-

A- Please clarify why the PA is referred to as "El Ghallaouiya PA" when it is to cover both the El Ghallaouiya KBA and the even more well-known Guelb Er Richat. Please consider removing the name of the PA throughout the PIF to avoid confusion.

B- Please revise output 1.1.1 so that the KBA assessment and designation covers the full PA, not just Guelb Er Richat. The El Ghallaouiya KBA was designated in 2001 and needs to be reassessed using current Global KBA criteria. Moreover, KBAs boundaries are defined to be relevant management units. Accordingly, please consider not referring to a "Guelb Er Richat KBA" in the PIF.

1- The outputs in table B do not seem to be conducive to improved practices over 50,000 ha outside of the PA as reported under core indicator 4. These 50,000 ha are not included as an outcome indicator contrary to the other targets. The only output that might be related is 2.1.3. The text under table F mentions land use plans for 50,000 ha outside the PA but they are not reflected in table B. If land use planning is to be added, please note that planning on its own is not sufficient to improve practices. The PIF should explain how these would be implemented during the course of project, providing as necessary the knowledge, technical capacity and financial means to do so. Please revise accordingly.

2-4. Cleared, thank you.

5 - Please revise the formulation of output 3.1.1 (gender mainstreaming strategy) and 3.1.2 (M&E plan) to implementation only as a Gender Action Plan or equivalent, and a M&E plan are already required at CEO endorsement stage.

JS 11/16/2020

1- Please address explicitly in table B comments of the first box of the review sheet related to strengthening project's contribution at the national level and clarifying project's interventions outside of the PA .

2- Please reformulate 1.1.3 and/or 2.1.1 that currently overlap (establishment of the PA regional office appears in both).

3 - Please clarify in the formulation of component 2's outputs how they contribute to the outcome long-term "financial sustainability" of the PA.

4- output 2.1.3: please clarify what "promoted" means in "*Community-based biodiversity enterprises as alternative income-generating activities identified and promoted*" and consider reformulating and expanding on the project's plans in relation to local communities. What does the project intend to do in practical terms? Training? Technical assistance? Micro-finance? How will it contribute to PA financial sustainability ?

JS 4/16/2020

The following comments are provided in case the eligibility issue raised in the first comment box can be solved. These comments would have to be addressed in table B and in the description of the alternative scenario.

Component 1:

It is a priori not straightforward to group in a project the creation of a small coastal MPA and a large terrestrial MPA that are some 700 km apart. Please clarify the added value of the approach.

Please correct the surface area of the MPA reflected in the alternative scenario description, which shows 40,000 ha instead of 4,000 ha. Please clarify its location, including relative to the Banc d'Arguin National Park and the "Canary current shelf-break South" KBA, and its planned relationship with the Banc d'Arguin National Park and its management. Why the expansion of the Banc d'Arguin National Park instead of the creation of a distinct MPA is not an option?

Please revise the formulation of outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 which currently may be read as overlapping. 1.1.1 is supposed to cover everything "through to gazettelement" but 1.1.2 is on the gazettal process. Please clarify that these include the process to register KBAs.

Please revise the formulation of output 1.1.3 and/or 1.1.5 to clarify the difference relative to the management, financial and business plans.

Please clarify the options envisaged for financial sustainability of the two protected areas. Currently only the BACoMaB Trust fund is mentioned as a concrete option but, given its mandate, it would only be able to contribute to the MPA.

While it does not have to be defined at PIF stage, please also add indicators to measure biodiversity outcome, not just indicator of means (e.g. population size of some relevant species).

A target of 35% METT score at the end is far too low to justify investment. Please revise.

Component 2:

Please clarify the target geographies of this component. Are the activities planned within the proposed protected areas? What is their extent? If it is outside PAs, a corresponding target should be set under core indicator 4 and the target areas should be specified in the PIF and justified for their effect on biodiversity of global relevance. If it is within PA, please clarify the difference between 2.1.1 and 1.1.3.

Please clarify the type of value chain assessments, training programs and “biodiversity enterprises” the project would support. The difference in contexts of the terrestrial and coastal PA should be reflected at least in the description of the alternative scenario. Please clarify also how the training would be institutionalized?

Please provide a theory of change to at least link the livelihood interventions of component 2, clarifying the assumptions and causal relationships to link outputs to positive outcomes for biodiversity of global relevance. Please notably include references to past projects, experiences or academic literature the project will build on.

Component 3:

Please clarify the project’s intentions relative to a Sea Turtle Observatory. There is no corresponding output, when it is announced as “to be explored” in the description of the alternative scenario and its creation is stated to be as part of the project in the GEB part of the PIF. If it is supposed to be part of the project, please clarify the scale of the observatory and its sustainability beyond the project.

Please reformulate outcome 3 “Effective project M&E and monitoring and assessment of GEBs reflect gender mainstreaming” as reflecting gender mainstreaming is not the sole purpose of this outcome.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

Many thanks for the comments that are well noted. In response:

1. The description of the revised component 2 now includes a paragraph that strengthens the rationale for linking livelihood interventions.
2. The document has been revised to only focus in Adrar Wilaya to create the El Ghallaouyia PA.
3. As suggested, outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 have been reformulated and merged into 1. As suggested, previous outputs 1.1.3 (focuses on management plans) and 1.1.5 (focuses on the capacity for monitoring systems) have been reformulated to clarify the difference relative to the management, financial, and business plans
4. Following additional consultations with the country and stakeholders, it should be noted that component 2 has been changed to ‘Establishing financial sustainability mechanisms for the management of the created the El Ghallaouiya PA in Adrar’ with the outcome being that ‘Financial sustainability arrangements improve the management of the El Ghallaouiya PA in Adrar.’
5. Given the reformulation of the PIF to focus only on Adrar, the partnership with BACoMaB is no longer an option. The financial

sustainability will be closely dependent on the long-term partnership with the Office National du Tourisme (ONT), the creation of a Regional PA Office, and the Conseil Régional de l'Adrar (CRA). Beyond ONT and CRA, the financial sustainability will also depend on the partnerships with the Society of Dates of Mauritania STM and the Foundation Limam Ebnou based in Ouadane and the Banque Populaire de Mauritanie, all of whom have confirmed their interest to collaborate with the project

6. A biodiversity indicator at the level of the population has been added – with a mention that specifics will be done at PPG.
7. 35% METT score has been adjusted upwards to 65%.

Component 2:

1. As noted above, the component will focus on financial mechanisms, and has been reformulated to 'Establishing financial sustainability mechanisms for the management of the created the El Ghallaouiya PA in Adrar' with the outcome being that 'Financial sustainability arrangements improve the management of the El Ghallaouiya PA in Adrar.'
2. ONT, the Regional PA Office (to be created), and CRA will be primary legal structures for institutionalizing training programs. Training will equally be in partnerships with the Foundation Limam Ebnou and the Banque Populaire de Mauritanie. More specifics will be provided at PPG.

Component 3

1. The comment on the Sea Turtle Observatory is no longer applicable given the revisions in the current PIF.
2. Outcome 3 has been reformulated to 'Gender, M&E, and knowledge products are effectively and fully reflected in the project implementation and support project sustainability, monitoring tools, and awareness-raising.'

25 March 2021

Please refer to the responses provided to table B comments above.

1. Outputs 1.1.4 and 2.1.1 have been reformulated to address the overlapping and to clarify that while Output 1.1.4 focuses on the creation, legal basis and capacity building for operationalization of the El Ghallaouiya Protected Area Regional Office (through deployed and capacitated staff; an established long-term ecological monitoring system for the protected and adjacent areas; and a board-approved management plan under implementation), Output 2.1.1 will focus on the financial management and sustainability through (i) co-management plans; (ii) annual workplans and financial plans; (iii) engagement with the private sector; and (iv) a 5-year business plan.
2. The formulation of component 2 outputs has been revised to reflect how they contribute to the outcome of "financial sustainability" of the newly created PA. Details will be elaborated during PPG.
3. Many thanks for the comment on clarifying output 2.1.3. In response, the output has been reformulated to 'community-based biodiversity enterprises as alternative income generating activities for local communities identified and supported.' In the description of component 2, additional information has been given to clarify the output's contribution to financial sustainability as well as what the project intends to do [*additional information on specifics at PPG*].

0101 April 2021;

Comments noted with thanks. In response:

- A. As recommended, the name "El Ghallaouiya PA" has been dropped to avoid confusion. It has been proposed the name of the PA will be confirmed at PPG;
 - B. Output 1.1.1 has been revised, and now reads as follows: Collection of detailed biodiversity data and technical support provided to MESD to enable the KBA assessment, designation, and registration process for the entire new PA in line with current global KBA criteria.
- 1 - Core indicator 4 has been revised to reflect that the project is focused on BD 1-1.

- 5 - Outputs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 have been rephrased to reflect the implementation as follows:
3. 1.1 Gender mainstreaming strategy and an action plan implemented across project components
3. 1.2 M&E plan implemented in a timely fashion to facilitate adaptive management and lesson learning

15 April 2021

A- The reference to the El Ghallaouiya PA has been deleted in component 1.

1. Please refer to earlier response (text box 1) on the 50,000 ha target under core indicator 4.

Co-financing

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 3/25/2021- Thank you, cleared.

JS 11/16/2020

Thank you for the clarification and revisions.

1- Please only tag as "GEF Agency" the co-funding from the IA of this proposal. All co-funding from agencies that are not IA for this project should be tagged to as "donor agency", even if they happen to be GEF agencies.

2- Please clarify how the Mauritanian WACA program could co-finance activities in land-locked Adrar?

3- Please clarify what the IFAD co-funding corresponds to? To our knowledge the Oasis sustainable development program closed in 2014 (<https://www.ifad.org/en/web/ioe/evaluation/asset/39824350>).

4- Please confirm that reported co-funding from Mauritania Copper Mine, KINROSS TASIAST and National Agency of the Great Green Wall are additional to that already reported for the same companies and agency for the GEF-7 project ID 10444, *Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania*, IUCN.

JS 4/16/2020

Co-funding by KINROSS TASIAST has been incorrectly tagged as “government”. Please correct.

Please clarify what “Birdlife and Wetlands”, tagged as a Research institute, is.

Please clarify if the co-financing figures have been discussed with the co-financiers and if they account for the fact that another project, referencing some of the same co-financiers, has already been submitted to the GEF for interventions in the same Wilayas.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

Birdlife and Wetlands has been clarified as it refers to the ‘Association Mauritanie de la Conservation de la Nature’.

The co-finance figures have been discussed with the co-financiers. Given the revisions, the total cofinance amount has changed slightly as some of the co-financiers pledged for activities in Inchiri Wilaya.

25 March 2021

Many thanks for the comments and guidance. In response:

1. Co-funding tagging: co-financiers are tagged as donor agencies
2. WACA co-financing: The agency has been removed from the table of co-financiers
3. IFAD co-funding: IFAD project co-financing removed from the table
4. Mauritania Copper Mine, KINROSS TASIAST and National Agency of the Great Green Wall co-funding: the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania has recently confirmed that these are additional funding sources.

GEF Resource Availability

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/16/2020

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

The STAR allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/16/2020

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

The focal area allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/16/2020

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

The LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

Focal area set-aside?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

Impact Program Incentive?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

Project Preparation Grant

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/16/2020

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Core indicators

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/23/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 4/21/2021- Thank you for the revisions. As this is a BD project, please move the 50,000 ha reported under core indicator 4.3 to core indicator 4.1.

JS 4/6/2021

1-2 - Please see comment in first comment box.

JS 3/26/2021 -

Thank you for the revision. However,;

1 - Please see comment in comment box 2 above on the 50,000 ha reported under core indicator 4.

2- Please confirm the feasibility of the 10,000 beneficiaries target. The training and employment linked directly to the PA would likely benefit only a small fraction of this figure. It thus seems that it is mainly output 2.1.3 on community-based enterprises that would deliver on this indicator (the description of component 2 states that it is to support 1,775 households) but the budget devoted to it appears fairly limited and the output, as we understood it, is to be concentrated on 50,000 ha just around the PA.

JS 11/11/2020

Please add under table F in the PIF the explanation provided below on the methodology used for core indicator 11. Please confirm and clarify why all of the population present in the project catchment area is hypothesized to benefit directly from the project. Please note that core indicator 11 is indeed meant to capture the number of direct beneficiaries when the PIF states that "*Indirectly, the project will support about 1,775 households with [...]*" (description of component 2 in the section dedicated to the alternative scenario).

Please see comments in the first box of this review sheet related to cost-efficiency and impact outside of PAs to be captured, if any, under core indicator 4.

JS 4/16/2020

Please clarify the methodology used to set the target under core indicator 11.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

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, and about 17% of the population is concentrated in the proposed project catchment area. Women constitute ~49.8% of the population in Mauritania.

25 March 2021

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1. Clarification for table F, core indicator 11: additional information has been provided to determine the calculation of beneficiaries. On the basis of stakeholder consultations at PIF stage, the 16% (10,000 people or 1,775 households) refer to the direct beneficiaries. [At PPG, this number will be confirmed if it refers to local communities within and outside the PA].
2. Cost-efficiency and core indicator 4: As already noted, core indicator 4.3 has been included with additional 50,000 ha of productive

2. Cost-efficiency and core indicator 4. As already noted, core indicator 4.3 has been included with additional 50,000 ha of productive landscape under improved management.

01 April 2021:

Comment well noted. In response:

1. Refer to our response above indicating the removal of the 50,000 ha from core indicator 4.
2. As indicated in footnote 6, the figure provided is based on an estimation from 2017 'Monographie De La Wilaya de l'Adrar Rapport' – we suggest that this be confirmed at PPG during the different assessments in the PA. Also, please note that the 2,000 estimation comprises at least one individual of the 1,775 households and relevant authorities and other partners that would directly benefit from project technical and/or financial support. Once again, this figure will be confirmed at PPG.

23 April 2021

Thank you for the comment. The 50,000 ha have been included in Annex B under core indicator 4.1.

Project/Program taxonomy

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/6/2021 - Cleared.

JS 11/16/2020

To be revisited once other comments are addressed.

Agency Response

Part II – Project Justification

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/6/2021- Cleared, thank you.

JS- 3/26/2021- Thank you for the clarifications and revisions.

1- On reintroduction, the new text states that it "will be explored during PPG after carefully assessing feasibility and success rates of similar efforts". Please clarify if, if found relevant, the intention would be to use GEF funding from this project to finance reintroduction. During PPG, please assess technical 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), cost-effectiveness from a conservation standpoint and fit with overall conservation strategy in the area.

2- Cleared.

3- The paragraph dedicated to the "main environmental constraints in Adrar Wilaya [...]" does not include hunting described elsewhere as prominent, but includes "over-exploitation of forest resources", when it is our understanding there is no forest in the targeted area. Please consider revising.

JS - 11/13/2020

1 - The II.1.a section of the PIF states "Other partners have also worked in the past to introduce new species in the area , including the restoration of the Ziri fort". Please clarify what is meant by "new species" and how it relates to this paragraph dedicated to eco-tourism.

2. In the II.1.a section, please clarify what is meant by "[...] *illegal hunting of large Saharan fauna. It includes both relatively old engravings (wildlife) engravings from the pastoral era and more recent engravings (tanks, metal weapons, oryx and addax hunting), but always in a context of cattle farming.*"

JS - 4/16/2020

Please :

- clarify the global relevance of the biodiversity, according to the KBA criteria, to be covered in the target 204,000 ha of new PA. Clarify why these sites have been chosen when they were not reflected as being under consideration of PA creation in Mauritania's 2018 report to the CDB.

- clarify the status of the Guelb er Richat Nature Reserve. It is not recorded in the WDPA, Mauritania's 2018 report to the CDB states that is under study and parts of this PIF say it exists while others state it is under study.

-clarify why terrestrial ecosystems of Inchiri are described when the project proposes to create a MPA. Does the project plan to have interventions in terrestrial ecosystems of Inchiri?

-clarify the threats that justify creating the proposed MPA. Currently the PIF states “overfishing and cultural practices supporting the trade and the consumption of sea turtles in the target area seem to pose major threats and the level of these threats will be assessed in detail during PPG”

Agency Response

27Oct2020

Many thanks for the comments, which are well noted. In response:

The revised PIF clarifies that areas in Adrar are among those prioritised in the NBSAP 2011 – 2020 and the 6th national report on biodiversity. The overall environmental governance indicator in Mauritania has been indicated to be poor, and therefore the government has increasingly expressed commitment to improving the different environmental performance indicators including biodiversity ecoregion protection. According to the national report, the situation is that the Guelb Er Richat Nature Reserve is in the process of being established as PA, and this has been backed by a parliamentary decree. Also, as noted in the PIF, it should be recalled here that the area between El Ghallaouiya and the Guelb Er Richat is a contiguous landscape that supports both wildlife and vegetation of global importance.

Following revisions to this current version of the PIF, information on Inchiri Wilaya has been removed.

25 March 2021

1. Clarification of new species: the sentence has been replaced as it was not accurate. *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 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 after carefully assessing feasibility and success rates of similar efforts.*
2. Clarification of what is meant by [...] ‘illegal hunting etc’: sentence deleted

01 April 2021:

Comment well noted. In response:

1. The Government has requested to consider that GEF funding from this project is used to finance reintroduction if deemed adequate. During PPG, 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, the 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.
2. Noted.
3. The ‘forest resources’ section of the sentence has been deleted, and illegal hunting has been added as it is indeed one of the main environmental threats.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/6/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS- 3/26/2021

1- Thank you for the clarification and revisions. However, please clarify in the PIF what actual conservation measures are in place in the "Guelb Er Richat Nature Reserve", if any, to make explicit the added value of the PA creation.

2 Thank you for the addition but note that IUCN- GEF-7 project "Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania" will not start implementation before 2021 at best, not 2020. It is indeed a 4-year project.

3 Cleared.

JS - 11/13/2020

1- Please clarify the current status and management effectiveness of the Guelb Er Richat Nature Reserve, as well as what the projects intends to do in relation to that reserve:

- the II.1.a.1 section of the PIF seems to imply the reserve exists when the baseline (II.1.a.2) states that is not yet the case ("The parliamentary decree to establish a PA in the area has been prepared [...]").

- Why is the Guelb Er Richat reserve not set to benefit from this proposal?

-1b. The PIF states "*Should co-financing from GIZ and World Bank for Guelb er Richat Nature Reserve materialize during PPG, the project would explore establishing a corridor linking the El Ghallâouïya and the Guelb er Richat Nature Reserve.*" Why is physically linking El Ghallâouïya and Guelb er Richat Nature Reserve not planned irrespective of this co-financing? Would the new 100,000 ha PA not be connected to the Guelb er Richat Nature Reserve in any case? Please provide maps to clarify the tentative location of the PA that is proposed for the creation, the El Ghallâouïya KBA and the Guelb er Richat Nature Reserve.

2 - Please add the GEF-7 project ID 10444 *Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania (IUCN)* to the baseline, and explain how the land management plans and livelihood interventions of that project will articulate with this proposal.

3- Please elaborate on the relevant projects and initiatives listed in the co-funding section (e.g. national GGW agency, private sector

interventions).

JS 4/16/2020

Please :

- Add the relevant projects and initiatives listed in the co-funding section (e.g. WACA, national GGW agency, IFAD – Oases sustainable development)
- for each project listed in the baseline, clarify its links with the proposal (in particular locations or potential for collaboration). For closed projects, please also add lessons learnt on which the proposal is building. If projects have no concrete links with the proposal, please consider removing them.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

Following revisions where Inchiri Wilaya has been removed from the project, some baseline projects have been removed, and lessons and potential areas of collaboration have been added to the remaining ones as recommended.

25 March 2021

Many thanks for the comments and suggestions. In response:

1. A footnote has been included in II.1.a.1 section to clarify that the decree is indeed still in draft form although the Government refers to it as one of the three Nature Reserves in Mauritania. 1.b: That is correct, and the sentence has been deleted as the creation does not depend on the co-financing from GIZ and WB. The mentioned investments have been confirmed by the Government.
2. The project GEF ID 10444 has been added to the list of baseline projects.
3. Information regarding the private sector and the National Agency of the GGW has been included on p.4 indicating the consultations that have been held so far between the government of Mauritania through CNOEZA and the institutions mentioned in the cofinancing table. Further detail and co-financing letters will be secured during the PPG phase.

01 April 2021

Comment well noted. In response:

1. 1. Beyond the efforts made by Mauritania to designate the area as a nature reserve and the leadership of the MESD to mobilize technical and financial partners, the PIF clearly indicates the largely insufficient conservation measures linked to financial, human and institutional constraints (including the limited government presence). The value added is therefore is in the GEF funding to enable the scientific basis and governance framework that will lead to the formal creation of a PA with regimented conservation programs and sustainable financing mechanisms.
2. 2. Revised as a four-year GEF-IUCN project to be potentially implemented between 2021/2022 and 2024/2025 (to accommodate for possible changes)
3. 3. Noted

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/19/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 4/6/2021

A - Thank you for the revision, the clear ToC diagram provided and the intentions to refine during PPG. Please add the ToC diagram in the portal entry (the Annex D provided in the uploaded document is not included in the portal entry).

2 - Please see comment in first comment box.

All the rest is cleared, thank you.

JS- 3/26/2021

A- The Theory of change diagram has not been updated to reflect the modifications made to the project design, and notably how work outside the PA contributes to the project's outcomes. Please also note that the diagram does not present an adequate theory of change (ToC). While there remains diverse ways of displaying a ToC, the current diagram is rather a graphical of the logframe and does not describe the causal pathways by which interventions are expected to have the desired effect and justification that these causal pathways are necessary and sufficient. Please refer to STAP's guidance <https://www.stagef.org/theory-change-primer>.

1-Cleared.

2- Thank you for the revision. However, please clarify the project's to biodiversity mainstreaming and how it would effectively improve on the ground practices over 50,000 ha (see comment 1 in second comment box of this review sheet).

During PPG, please refine ToC and approach to alternative livelihoods, which remains an oversimplification. The literature shows that the link between livelihood interventions and biodiversity outcomes is not automatic (e.g. Roe et al. Environmental Evidence 4.1 (2015): 22; the 2017 USAID review of WB projects <https://biodiversitylinks.org/projects/completed-projects/measuring-impact/resources/integrating-livelihood-and-conservation-goals-a-retrospective-analysis-of-world-bank-projects>). Please notably consult STAP advisory document on behavior change (<https://stagef.org/resources/advisory-documents/why-behavior-change-matters-gef-and-what-do-about-it>) and design a more complete strategy during PPG.

3 Thank you for the clarification on the government budget line. However, beyond this budget line, which we understand would not be sufficient, the overall approach(es) to generating resource flows dedicated to cover PA management costs over the long term remains unclear. Please be explicit on tentative funding sources / mechanisms that will be explored. Please unpack and clarify the different subcomponents of output 2.1.1, how they articulate with each other and with the management plan of 1.1.4 and how, together they are supposed to lead to long-term financial sustainability of the PA.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT ON PIF/WORK PROGRAM INCLUSION

3- See comments on outputs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 in comment box 2.

JS 11/16/2020:

1 - Please clarify whether the Guelber Richat Nature Reserve and the El Ghallâouîya PA would have the same management framework (Shared management plan, staff, source of funding)? If some elements are not planned to be shared, please explain why and how they would articulate.

2- Please clarify what the projects intends to do to benefit local communities and ensure a durable reduction of pressure on natural resources. In particular, what does "community-based biodiversity enterprises" means in the context of this project, and what the project contemplates doing to "promote" them in more concrete terms? Please elaborate more explicitly (context-relevant references, past experiences to build upon) on how the project intends to ensure that the livelihood interventions will generate conservation results, i.e. become alternatives displacing unsustainable activities and not just additional activities.

3- component 2 : The addition of a component dedicated to financial sustainability is welcomed. However, it remains unclear what the project will deliver on financial sustainability. Engagement with private sector, financial/business plans and community-based enterprises are mentioned but how will they translate into revenue flows towards the PA? Please clarify to what extent a recurrent budget line for the PA has been secured from the government (description of component 1 states that there is a "*commitment of the Government [...] [towards] a permanent institution with budget and regular staff*") and elaborate on what the project will do in practice to ensure adequate revenue flows towards PA management and long-term financial sustainability.

JS 4/16/2020

Please see comments in the second comment box and address them as necessary in the description of the alternative scenario.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

As recommended, outcomes 1.1 and 3.1 and outputs 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 2.1.1 have been changed and the changes are reflected in the description of the proposed alternative scenario.

25 March 2021

Many thanks for the comments and suggestions. In response:

1. Yes, the idea is for Guelber Richat Nature Reserve and the El Ghallâouîya PA in the same management framework and this will be confirmed during PPG.
2. The description of component 2 has been revised to respond to the comment. More specifics on the activities will be given at PPG in line with the evolution of the PIF development and constrained ability to carry out detailed consultations due to COVID-19. The following sentences have been added, 'The identification of activities under this output will first focus on those communities that are involved in within and around the PA. These 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 to significantly broaden socioeconomic opportunities and improve livelihoods in the short and long terms; 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 [specifics on activities at PPG after additional

consultations].'

3. The description of component 2 has been revised to clarify the overall approach that will be refined during PPG.

01 April 2021:

Comments well noted. In response:

- A. As recommended, the Theory of Change has been redone to highlight the logic and the causal pathways. At PPG, this will certainly be refined further after assessments and additional consultations.
2. See the response to the earlier comment above on the 50,000 ha outside the PA.
We take note of the recommendation to further refine the ToC at PPG, including clarifying livelihoods and behaviour change, drawing on the STAP document to design a more complete strategy.
3. We take note of the concerns regarding the financial sustainability of the PA and have revised the description of the component and of output 2.1.1 in particular to the best of our capacity due to COVID restrictions.
- 3- As noted in the response to the earlier comment on outputs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2, these have been rephrased. See response to comment on outputs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 in comment box 2

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/6/2021 - Cleared.

JS- 3/26/2021

Please see comment in first comment box on mainstreaming. Please also revise the formulation "establishing financial sustainability mechanisms for sustainable and effective management of the new PA and through ensuring knowledge management effectively [...] inform up-scaling of PA creation" is not relevant to BD-1-1 but to BD-2-7.

JS 4/16/2020

Please see first comment box.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

See the rationale in response to the recommendation in the first comment box.

01 April 2021:

Comment well noted, and as indicated, the project will focus on priority BD 2-7 and this has been revised.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/6/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS- 3/26/2021

1-Please correct the typo: "4,216,000 ha[20] to 4,316,000 ha (after the addition of the 200,000 ha PA"

2- The incremental cost reasoning does not acknowledge the strong baseline of projects that include livelihood interventions, sustainable land management and sustainable agricultural practices in the target Wilaya. Please revise to better reflect the specific increment of this project that is focused on biodiversity benefits, including through PA creation and (but see comments in first comment box) mainstreaming .

JS 4/16/2020

To be revisited once the other comments are addressed.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

Recommended changes have been effected and additional information added to strengthen the incremental/additional cost reasoning.

01 April 2021:

Comments well noted. In response:

1- Typo corrected, and it reads 4,416,000 ha

2- An additional paragraph has been added that succinctly acknowledges the strong baseline of projects, and their focus on livelihoods, SLM and agricultural activities have been highlighted.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/19/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 4/6/2021 - Please see first comment box.

JS- 3/26/2021 - Please see other comment box further up on core indicators.

JS 11/16/2020

Please see comment on cost-effectiveness in first comment box of this review sheet.

JS 4/16/2020

Please note that a 4,000 ha MPA would not allow to cover an additional 2.56% of Mauritania marine environment but rather only an additional 0.0256 %, going from 4.15% to 4.18% (not 6.71%).

Likewise, an additional 200,000 ha PA would only allow to cover a total of 0.72% of Mauritania's terrestrial environment, not 19.74%. Please correct.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

The figures have been adjusted and contextualized based on the figures in the 2011-2020 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan in table B and under the description of component 1 in the alternative scenario.

25 March 2021

Many thanks for the comments and suggestions. In response:

1. As noted in the response to the comment on cost-effectiveness in the first comment box, in consultation with the country, the number of ha have been adjusted upwards from 100,000 ha to 200,000 for the PA, and as indicated below, the PIF clarifies that an additional 50,000 ha of production landscape will be brought under improved management.

01 April 2021:

Comment well noted. Core indicators have been revised.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/6/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS- 3/26/2021 - Please correct the typo: Adrar does not constitute 77% of the total surface area of Mauritania.

JS 11/17/2020

Thank for the revisions. Please address comments above in this review sheet on the project's approach to ensure financial sustainability.

JS 4/16/2020

Please provide clear separate sections on innovation, sustainability and up-scaling.

On sustainability, please clarify the project's intention related to financial sustainability of the PA. Please notably clarify how the project will "promote involvement of the private sector" and how it plans to "attract private sector investments".

Please clarify the up-scaling strategy, in particular with respect to Mauritania's other PA projects, e.g. those listed in Mauritania's 2018 report to the CBD.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

Innovation, sustainability and up-scaling have been separated into dedicated paragraphs.

Private sector involvement and the attraction will be ensured through private sector lobbying but also providing deliberate 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.

The scaling-up strategy has been included, highlighting the specificity of GEF investments in Adrar arid Wilaya – successful implementation of the project will generate invaluable lessons to inform programming in other arid Wilayas in the country, including the semi-arid regions in the south. The knowledge management component will ensure packaging knowledge products to facilitate scaling up and a collaborative approach to KM with other initiatives as indicated in the baseline. The Office National du Tourisme is another strategic partner to ensure that lessons are more widely implemented beyond the project area.

25 March 2021

Many thanks for the comments and suggestions. In response 'sustainability section' has been revised to articulate more clearly the points mentioned.

01 April 2021:

Comment well noted.

In response, the typo has been corrected to 22.8% based on the government report (footnoted in the PIF).

Project/Program Map and Coordinates

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/6/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS- 3/26/2021 - Thank you for the maps. Please provide geo-referenced information, at least coordinates as text in the portal entry.

JS 11/16/2020

Please provide a map showing the location of the proposed PA, existing KBA and the Guelb Er Richat reserve.

JS 4/16/2020

A map of the target Wilayas Mauritania is provided, but please provide a map showing the location of the proposed PAs and the corresponding KBAs.

Please provide also coordinates.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

At this stage, and following the different iterations and COVID-19 challenges, we are unable to provide the exact coordinates. However, these shall be provided at PPG.

25 March 2021

1. Requested map showing the location of the proposed PA, inclusive of the existing KBA and the Guelb Er Richat reserve provided in Annex A.

01 April 2021:

Comment noted. Coordinates have been detailed.

Stakeholders

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS- 3/26/2021 -

We note the difficulties linked to COVID and the limited consultations that have taken place so far. Cleared.

Please pay particular attention to stakeholder engagement in the project preparation phase, and consider consulting the Sahara Conservation Fund as well during PPG.

JS 11/16/2020

Thank you for the revisions. Difficulties well noted.

Please clarify the anticipated means of engagement for the key stakeholders mapped.

JS 4/16/2020

Besides ministries and government agencies, the mapping of key stakeholder is too coarse, even at PIF stage, especially for a project that plans to shift behavior of local communities. While it does not have to totally defined, the stakeholder mapping should reflect some of the specificity of the target sites.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

Comment noted. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 Pandemic has greatly affected the intended efforts to further consult. Stakeholder mapping will be well articulated at PPG stage to reflect the stakeholder landscape relevant to the project site.

25 March 2021

Many thanks for the comment and suggestion. In response, two paragraphs describing the approach have been added after the stakeholder table.

01 April 2021:

Comment well noted. As advised, particular attention will be paid to stakeholder engagement, and the Sahara Conservation Fund will be duly engaged during PPG.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Is the articulation of gender context and indicative information on the importance and need to promote gender equality and

the empowerment of women, adequate?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/23/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 4/21/2021- The submission references the outdated GEF Gender policy on gender mainstreaming. Please review GEF's updated Policy on Gender Equality (https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Gender_Equality_Policy.pdf) and revise submission accordingly. Please revise in particular the following bolded part in the gender section:

*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 Policy on Gender Mainstreaming which aims to "promote the goal of gender equality through GEF operations"**.*

Please make sure to follow and use GEF's new policy on Gender Equality and the related Implementation Strategy and Guidance document during PPG.

JS 11/17/2020 - Thank you for the revisions, cleared.

JS 4/16/2020

We note that a Rapid Social Assessment and a gender mainstreaming strategy will be developed. However, gender is not yet mainstreamed in the project and the language in this section is rather generic on the national context in Mauritania with no specifics on the projects' targeted sectors / landscapes.

Please elaborate on the specific context of the project.

Please clarify what is meant by "In Mauritania, about 54.5% of the population are employed in the agriculture sector. Therefore, giving space to gender in creating an enabling environment for conservation of key species in Adrar and Inchiri regions will directly positively impact men and women equally."

Agency Response

27Oct2020

Additional information is provided to clarify gender mainstreaming, and the additional information refers to output 3.1.1 to ensure a gender mainstreaming strategy for the project.

The sentence has been reformulated to '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.'

23 April 2021

Thank you for the comment. The text has been corrected and now reads:

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".

We confirm that we will follow and use GEF's new policy on Gender Equality and the related Implementation Strategy and Guidance document during PPG.

Private Sector Engagement

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 11/17/2020- Cleared.

JS 4/16/2020

Yes, pending clarification on the links between the livelihood interventions and biodiversity outcomes as mentioned above in the review, and on the question on risks in the comment below.

Please revise the second to last sentence of this section, which seems to have some typos.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

Comment well noted.

In a reiteration of what has been mentioned, the project will seek to attract the private sector to biodiversity-friendly activities by creating co-management regulatory incentives that will be furnished through additional interactions with them to understand the bottlenecks in their investments in biodiversity-friendly activities.

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/7/2021- Cleared.

JS- 3/26/2021 -

1- Cleared. Thank you for the confirmation. We note the ESERN states that it is highly likely that indigenous people are present in the area.

2- Thank you for the additional elaboration but these mainly based on past climate and do not include any projection, when they are available for the target area (as suggested below, see CEO endorsement request GEF ID 10103 also submitted by UNEP). More importantly the elaboration is very generic, weakly related to the project. In particular, for what is mainly a PA project, the risk of a future mismatch between the proposed boundaries and the climate niche of the globally significant species that are to benefit from the PA is not addressed and not plans to address are detailed. Please revise the climate risk screening. Please note that climate risk is dealt twice with different content in the risk table. Please consolidate.

3-Please correct the COVID related addition, as it refers Madagascar instead of Mauritania. Please also address the impact of COVID on tourism and how the project, which seemingly plans for tourism as a source of revenue for the PA, intends to mitigate these risks.

JS 11/17/2020

Thank you for the revisions and clarifications.

1- Please clarify the presence of IPLCs in the proposed PA and confirm that FPIC procedures will be followed and that no resettlement is planned as part of the project.

2- Climate risk screening : We note that a climate risk assessment will be carried out during PPG but please provide at least a basic climate risk screening. At a minimum, at PIF stage, the climate risks should be identified, listed and described. This can include:

a. Outlining the key aspects of the climate change projections/scenarios at the project location (or as close to it with data available), which are relevant for the type of intervention being financed (e.g. changes in temperatures, rainfalls, increased flooding, sea level rise, saltwater acquirer contamination, increased soil erosion, etc).

b. Time horizon if feasible/data available (e.g. up to 2050). Please refer to list of examples from STAP guidance.

c. Listing key potential hazards for the project that are related to the aspects of the climate scenarios listed above (describe how the climate scenarios identified above are likely to affect the project, during 2020-2050).

d. Describing plans for climate change risk assessment and mitigation measures during PPG.

Please see STAP's guidance <http://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/publications/Climate%20Risk%20Screening%20web%20posting.pdf>

and <https://www.stapgef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF%20AGENCY%20RETREAT%20Mar-Apr%202020.pdf>. The recent training for GEF agencies also provides useful resources : <https://www.thegef.org/events/gef-and-world-bank-training-climate-risk-screening-climate-change-knowledge-portal>

Please note that the recent CEO endorsement request for project GEF ID 10103 (UNEP, Climate change adaptation and livelihoods in three arid regions of Mauritania), which in part will take place in Adrar, contains a relevant climate risk assessment.

3- COVID: Risk analysis well noted for project implementation. Please elaborate on risks and mitigation measures planned to ensure a successful PPG, as consultations and PIF preparation have already been impacted by the COVID pandemic.

JS 4/16/2020

As per the Guidelines on the GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards, please also provide the overall project risk classification in the PIF. We note it is rated as Moderate according to the attached Social and Environmental Screening.

Please address in the PIF the risks related to restriction of rights and access to resources, in particular as IPLCs are reported in target landscapes.

We note that a climate risk assessment is planned but it seems to be addressed only from the agriculture angle at this stage. Please address climate risk more comprehensively, in particular the likely impact on biodiversity in the targeted locations and how it is planned to respond to that. Please see STAP, 2019. STAP guidance on climate risk screening. A STAP Document. <http://www.stapgef.org/stap-guidance-climate-risk-screening>

Please clarify how “weak or poor coordination with ongoing biodiversity conservation processes” and “climate change affects agricultural production” would affect project objectives from being achieved?

Please clarify the risk related to “Conservation private sector entities not found”. What are these entities supposed to do in support of the project and, if they are critical, why has their presence not been secured at PIF stage.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

Many thanks for the comment, which is well noted.

The overall project risk classification in the PIF has now been selected on the portal.

The text on climate risk has been changed to indicate that indeed, a more comprehensive assessment of climate change risks on the investment will be carried out during project preparation that will cover in particular the likely impact on biodiversity in the targeted locations and the project's mitigation response.

Sentences have been added in the table to clarify how lack of coordination and climate change can affect the achievement of project objectives.

The risk table includes now COVID-19, a risk that has materialized in the meantime.

Sentences have been added to the private sector entities, underscoring their role in the project. Through the recently relaunched National Tourism Office (ONT) and Ministry of Environment, partnerships will be forged with the appropriate sector entities. Despite very positive initial discussions, COVID-19 restrictions have impacted further consultations and therefore additional information will be provided at PPG as part of the stakeholder mapping.

25 March 2021

Many thanks for the comment and suggestion. In response,

1. The required clarification has been provided under the first risk row.
2. Climate risk assessment: Climate Change has been included in the table of risks. Additionally, a section, 'Mauritania's vulnerability to Climate Change' has been added below the table of risks. Two national documents have been consulted: i) Mauritania 2004 NAPA for more national-level CC-related information; and ii) *Actualisation de la Monographie De La Wilaya de l'Adrar Rapport Diagnostic* for Adrar-level information based on Atar where the climate/weather data station is situated. [*More refined information at PPG*].
3. COVID-19: The following has been added in the table of risks:
During the PPG the project will adopt the following measures and undertake a detailed assessment of risks to implementation:
 - 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 Madagascar 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;

Additionally, a section on the COVID-19 situation in Mauritania has been added below the table of risks.

01 April 2021:

Comments well noted. In response:

2- Additional information has been provided on CC projections for temperature and precipitation variability with emphasis on the need to carry out detailed work on the main risks specific to PA creation and management in the target area and to define adequate mitigation measures during project preparation.

3- The typo referring to Madagascar has been corrected to Mauritania.

Coordination

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/6/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS- 3/26/2021 -

1-Cleared.

2- Please note that IUCN- GEF-7 project "Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania" will not start implementation before 2021 at best.

JS 11/17/2020

Thank you for the revisions and responses.

1-Please clarify why GEF ID 10103 (UNEP, Climate change adaptation and livelihoods in three arid regions of Mauritania) is not listed for coordination.

2- Please confirm that a larger steering committee gathering relevant stakeholders (e.g. Ministries, local government, civil society, private sector, research institutes) is foreseen for the project and its likely composition.

3-Please note that the GEF-7 project "Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania" is a \$4.3 million project, not \$2.8 million.

JS 4/16/2020

Please clarify why the chosen executing entity is CNOEZA and not DALP, which is responsible for designing the national policy for the conservation of terrestrial and marine protected areas and developing the network of protected areas.

Please remove all closed projects from the section on coordination, as it will be indeed challenging to coordinate with them. If they are relevant in terms of lessons learnt or results to build on, please add them in the baseline section.

While it would be confirmed during PPG, please clarify what partners are likely to be involved in the coordination / steering committee beyond the ministry and the National Institute for Environmental Observation of Drylands).

Please note that the project would likely have to coordinate closely with another submitted GEF-7 project that proposes to carry out land degradation work in the same wilayas.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

The comments are well noted. Thank you.

In response:

1. 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. CNOEZA was created to support government efforts and development partners to prioritise investments for rural development and sustainable management of natural resources in arid zones of Mauritania.
2. As recommended, closed projects have been removed, and relevant ones moved to the baseline projects section with information on lessons added.
3. Additional information on the role of the ONT has been added in the table of stakeholders and their roles. Certainly, detailed information will be provided at PPG.
4. It is well noted that this project will potentially coordinate with another GEF-7 that will partly be implemented in Adrar Wilaya. The project has been included among those that the project will coordinate with. Complementarity between the land degradation and the proposed biodiversity project has also been noted.

25 March 2021

Many thanks for the comment and suggestion. In response,

1. GEF ID 10103 for coordination: Project has been added.
2. Project steering committee: 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. *[to be further refined at PPG].'*
3. GEF-7 Project in Mauritania's drylands: Project amount adjusted as advised

0 01 April 2021

The comment has been noted, and the baseline project information corrected.

Consistency with National Priorities

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 11/17/2020

Cleared.

JS 4/16/2020

Please streamline this section to the most relevant strategies and plans and extract the relevant parts of these documents instead of providing an extensive listing.

Please justify alignment with the 2011-2020 NBSAP instead of the 1998 biodiversity strategy.

Agency Response

27Oct2020

The comments are well noted. Thank you.

In response:

1. The section has been streamlined as suggested, maintaining the most relevant strategies to the proposed project;
2. The 2011 – 2020 NBSAP is more recent than the 1998 biodiversity strategy, suggesting that the former has adjusted government priorities and reflect current government directions compared to the 1998 biodiversity strategy. In the same vein, the implementation timeframe of the proposed project is closer to the NBSAP one than the 1998 BD strategy.

Knowledge Management

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/16/2020

Yes, 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 PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/23/2021 Thank you, cleared.

We note the additions to the ESERN. We notably note, out of an additional layer of caution, the added reference to a potential resettlement management plan, when the ESERN stated and still states that the project is not to lead to physical displacement or relocation of people. Please, during PPG, design the project to avoid physical displacement or relocation of people.

JS 4/21/2021 - We note that the Environmental, Social and Economic Review Note (ESERN) identified risks related to resettlement, indigenous peoples and cultural heritage and it is planned to identify risks and develop mitigation measures in more details during PPG. However, from the ESERN, it is not clear what kind of actions including development of ESMF, ESMP, indigenous peoples development plan or others, will be taken to understand the risks and avoid and mitigate these risks of the project. Please indicate clearer actions to be taken

to understand, avoid and mitigate the project environmental and social risks.

JS- 3/26/2021 - Cleared.

We note the project`s risk classification is moderate.

JS 11/17/2020

Please note that the ESERN provided corresponds to the previous version of the PIF, which included interventions in Inchiri. Please provide an up-to-date ESERN.

Agency Response

23 April 2021

The UNEP Safeguards Advisor has integrated additional recommendations to respond to the comment on page 3, including a detailed list of actions to understand, avoid and mitigate the project environmental and social risks under each of the relevant safeguard standards.

art III – Country Endorsements

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/6/2021 - Thank you, Cleared.

An adequate LoE has been attached with this submission. Apologies if it was submitted before but it did not appear on our end in the portal.

JS- 3/26/2021 - Previous comments below are still valid. Please provide an adequate LoE.

JS 11/13/2020

The LoE is not adequate for the revised version of the project as it only authorizes the use of \$2.42 million from the BD STAR allocation when the revised project requests \$3 million from that allocation.

Please provide a new LoE making sure the project title (it is currently not the case) and amounts reflected in the LoE match that of the submission.

JS 4/16/2020

Yes, the LOE is valid.

Agency Response

01 April 2021

Comment well noted. However, please note that the LoE provided as annex has the correct figures in question. The correct letter will be uploaded again separately.

Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

NA

Agency Response

EFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/23/2021 Yes, the PIF and PPG are recommended for clearance.

JS 4/21/2021 - Not at this stage. Please address the very few remaining comments above (core indicators, gender, environmental and social safeguards) and resubmit.

JS 4/9/2021 - Not at this stage. Please address the few remaining comments above and resubmit.

JS 3/26/2021- Not at this stage. Please address comments above and resubmit.

JS 11/17/2020- Not at this stage. Please address comments above and resubmit.

JS 4/16/2020 - Not at this stage. Please address comments above and resubmit. Please contact jsapijanskas@thegef.org for any clarifications.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

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.

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	4/16/2020	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/17/2020	10/27/2020
Additional Review (as necessary)	3/26/2021	3/24/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/9/2021	4/1/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/21/2021	

PIF Recommendation to CEO

Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval