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IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION AND RESULTS REPORT

TF013991

ON A

GRANT

FROM THE

Global Environment Facility

IN THE AMOUNT OF US\$1 MILLION

TO THE

Sahara and Sahel Observatory (SSO)

FOR THE

MENA Desert Ecosystems and Livelihoods
Knowledge Sharing and Coordination Project

June 28, 2018

Environment & Natural Resources Global Practice
Middle East And North Africa Region

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

Exchange Rate Effective: December 31, 2017

Currency Unit = US\$

SDR0.68 = US\$1

US\$1.42 = SDR 1

FISCAL YEAR

July 1 - June 30

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|-----------|--|
| ADA | Agriculture Development Agency |
| ASIMA | Mutually Supportive and Integrated Agriculture project (Projet d'Agriculture solidaire et intégrée au Maroc) |
| BRICKS | Building Resilience through Innovation, Communication and Knowledge Services |
| CES/DRS | Water & Soil Conservation / Soil Protection and Restoration (Conservation des Eaux et du Sol/Défense et Restauration des sols) |
| COP | Conference of Parties |
| CPF/ CPS | Country Partnership Framework/ Country Partnership Strategy |
| DELP | Desert Ecosystems and Livelihoods Program |
| EA | Executing Agency |
| EEAA | Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency |
| FHP | Foundation of the Hashemite Princess |
| GCF | Green Climate Fund |
| GEF | Global Environmental Fund |
| IDM | World Desert Institute (Institut Déserts du Monde) |
| ICR | Implementation Completion and Results (Report) |
| ISR | Implementation Status and Results Report |
| LD | Land Degradation |
| LDN | Land Degradation Neutrality |
| JOHUD | Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human development |
| MATE | Ministry of Land Planning and Environment |
| MENA | Middle East North Africa Region (Région Moyen Orient et Afrique du Nord) |
| MENA-DELP | Middle East and North Africa Desert Ecosystems and Livelihoods Knowledge Sharing and Coordination Project |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MTR | Mid Term Review |
| NCARE | National Center for Agriculture Research and Extension |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| OSS | Sahara and Sahel Observatory (Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel) |
| PAD | Project Appraisal Document |
| PDO | Project Development Objective |
| PMU | Project Management Unit |
| RADDO | Network for the sustainable development of oases (Réseau Associatif de Développement Durable des Oasis) |
| SC | Steering Committee |
| SSO | Sahara and Sahel Observatory (Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel) |
| TTL | Task Team Leader |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification |
| UNFCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| USD/US\$ | United States Dollars |
| WB | World Bank |
| WOCAT | World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies |

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DATA SHEET

BASIC INFORMATION

Product Information

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Project ID | Project Name |
| P130343 | MENA- Desert Ecosystems and Livelihoods Knowledge Sharing and Coordination Project |
| Country | Financing Instrument |
| Middle East and North Africa | Investment Project Financing |
| Original EA Category | Revised EA Category |
| Not Required (C) | Not Required (C) |

Organizations

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Borrower | Implementing Agency |
| Sahara and Sahel Observatory (SSO) | Sahar and Sahel Observatory |

Project Development Objective (PDO)

Original PDO

The proposed project development objective is to strengthen cooperation among selected organizations of beneficiary countries in areas of sustainable management of desert ecosystems.



FINANCING

| | Original Amount (US\$) | Revised Amount (US\$) | Actual Disbursed (US\$) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| World Bank Financing | | | |
| TF-13991 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Total | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Non-World Bank Financing | | | |
| Borrower | 487,500 | 487,500 | 487,500 |
| Total | 487,500 | 487,500 | 487,500 |
| Total Project Cost | 1,487,500 | 1,487,500 | 1,487,500 |

KEY DATES

| Approval | Effectiveness | MTR Review | Original Closing | Actual Closing |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| 23-May-2013 | 10-Jun-2013 | 12-Jun-2015 | 31-Dec-2017 | 31-Dec-2017 |

RESTRUCTURING AND/OR ADDITIONAL FINANCING

| Date(s) | Amount Disbursed (US\$M) | Key Revisions |
|---------|--------------------------|---------------|
| | | |

KEY RATINGS

| Outcome | Bank Performance | M&E Quality |
|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Satisfactory | Moderately Satisfactory | Modest |

RATINGS OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN ISRs

| No. | Date ISR Archived | DO Rating | IP Rating | Actual Disbursements (US\$M) |
|-----|-------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| 01 | 26-Dec-2013 | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | .10 |
| 02 | 05-Feb-2014 | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | .10 |
| 03 | 25-Jul-2014 | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | .25 |
| 04 | 28-Jan-2015 | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | .37 |



| | | | | |
|----|-------------|--------------|--------------|-----|
| 05 | 23-Jul-2015 | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | .49 |
| 06 | 15-Jan-2016 | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | .65 |
| 07 | 29-Jul-2016 | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | .78 |
| 08 | 11-Apr-2017 | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | .86 |
| 09 | 29-Dec-2017 | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | .98 |

SECTORS AND THEMES

Sectors

Major Sector/Sector (%)

Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry 28

Other Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry 28

Energy and Extractives 12

Renewable Energy Biomass 3

Renewable Energy Geothermal 3

Renewable Energy Solar 3

Renewable Energy Wind 3

Water, Sanitation and Waste Management 30

Other Water Supply, Sanitation and Waste Management 30

Industry, Trade and Services 30

Other Industry, Trade and Services 30

Themes

Major Theme/ Theme (Level 2)/ Theme (Level 3) (%)

Urban and Rural Development 7

Rural Development 7

Land Administration and Management 7



| | |
|--|-----------|
| Environment and Natural Resource Management | 95 |
| Climate change | 20 |
| Mitigation | 20 |
| Environmental Health and Pollution Management | 21 |
| Air quality management | 7 |
| Water Pollution | 7 |
| Soil Pollution | 7 |
| Renewable Natural Resources Asset Management | 34 |
| Biodiversity | 27 |
| Landscape Management | 7 |
| Water Resource Management | 20 |
| Water Institutions, Policies and Reform | 20 |

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I. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

A. CONTEXT AT APPRAISAL

Context

1. The Middle East North Africa (MENA) region is home to two of the world's largest deserts: the Sahara (4.6 million km², i.e., about 10 percent of the African continent) and the Arabian Desert (2.3 million km²). On a global scale, deserts play an important role through their regulating ecosystem services namely air quality, atmosphere composition, and climate regulation. In the MENA region, deserts encompass unique and highly adapted ecosystems that continue to provide life-supporting services to the environment and the communities inhabiting them, linked with several productive sectors, including tourism and agriculture. Ninety percent of the region lies within arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas.

2. Although over the last years the region has made significant progress on key social and economic indicators, in the longer-term MENA countries are profoundly challenged by many of the structural problems that existed before – and partly caused - the recent popular uprisings, namely inequitable growth and high unemployment rates. In this context, it should be noted that the project was prepared and implemented in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, which caused political unrest in several countries across the region and removed from power the Presidents of two of the participating countries.

3. Desert communities represent a small proportion of the overall population of the region. Despite their traditional know-how, economic initiative and a high level of social cohesion, these populations are not fully integrated within the development policies and plans of their respective countries and are not always able to capitalize on new economic opportunities and improve their livelihoods. Poverty pockets tend to be more prevalent in desert areas, where social and economic development has lagged, even though populations possess valuable know-how and have adopted a range of environmentally-sensitive practices and techniques to adapt to their arid environment.

4. To this end, the World Bank, in partnership with several countries and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), had launched the *MENA-Desert Ecosystems and Livelihoods Program* (MENA-DELP), a 10-15-year program aimed to contribute to the enhancement of livelihoods in desert ecosystems by harnessing their value in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner so that the flow of desert goods and services can be optimized. National projects in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia have focused on pilot investments to optimize the provision of desert goods and services for enhanced livelihoods.

5. However, there was little coordination or knowledge sharing between the organizations, and each of the projects had a different results framework. Hence, the program was not optimally designed to take advantage of synergies created through enhanced collaboration between participating beneficiaries, nor was it able to measure the programmatic impact of the portfolio across a shared set of indicators.

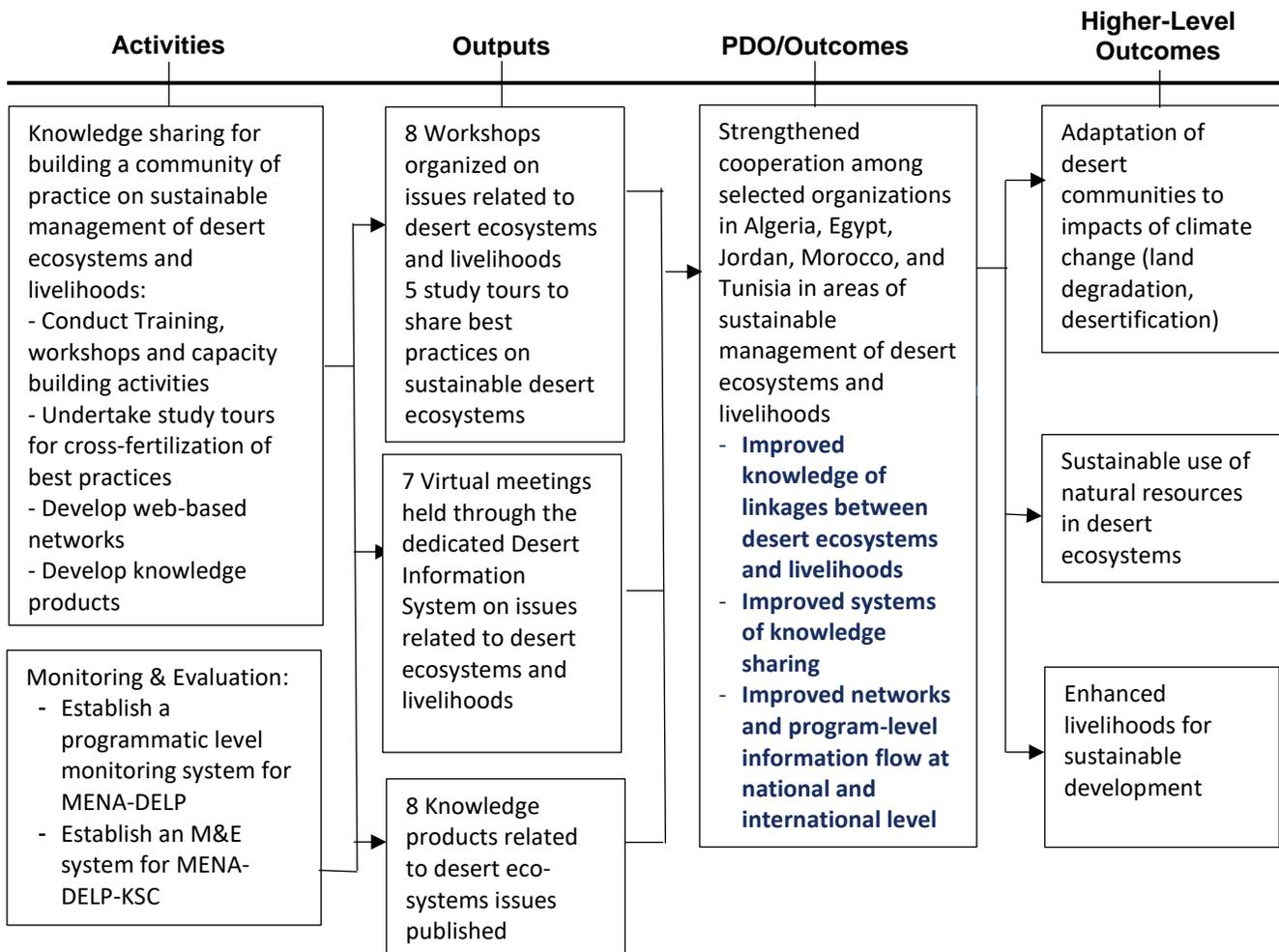
6. **The rationale for Bank involvement** was to support the overall MENA-DELP program - and each of the national projects under it - by promoting knowledge sharing on opportunities for enhancing desert livelihoods among participating pilot countries. The *MENA Desert Ecosystem and Livelihood Knowledge Sharing and Coordination Project* (henceforth called “the Regional Project”) covered Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia and was managed by the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) located in Tunis. The project contributed to the objectives of each participating country’s partnership strategy or framework with the World Bank.



Theory of Change (Results Chain)

7. The project’s theory of change is illustrated in the figure below. The objective of the project is to strengthen cooperation among selected organizations of beneficiaries in areas of sustainable management of desert ecosystems. These beneficiary organizations included:

- In Algeria, the World Desert Institute (IDM) and Ministry of Land Planning and Environment (MATE);
- In Egypt, the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA);
- In Jordan, the National Center for Agriculture Research and Extension (NCARE);
- In Morocco, the Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fisheries; the Agriculture Development Agency (ADA); the National Institute for Agronomic Research (INRA), and the National Agency for Oases and Argan Tree Zones (ANDZOA), and;
- In Tunisia, the State Secretariat of Environment.





8. The rationale for the PDO is that strengthened cooperation between beneficiary organizations can help promote concerted action for sustainable development of desert ecosystems and livelihoods. Support for coordination and knowledge sharing can enhance institutional capacity, prevent redundancies, and alleviate leadership gaps, all of which are critical to fragile ecosystems such as deserts. It is important to emphasize that this was a very modest investment of US\$ 1 million that was aimed at initiating strengthening of coordination and knowledge sharing among the participating countries. As such, it is key that assumptions and expectations match the scale of the project.

9. To achieve the PDO, the project planned to (i) improve knowledge on the linkages between desert ecosystems and livelihoods, (ii) improve the systems of knowledge sharing between the beneficiary organizations, and (iii) improve the networks and program-level information flow at national and international levels. Activities related to knowledge development and sharing sought to bring together practitioners from the participating organizations in workshops, study tours, and virtual meetings to discuss issues related to sustainable management of desert ecosystems and livelihoods, provide guidance to national policy- decision makers and sharing of best practices on management of desert eco-systems and livelihoods. The development of an online Desert Information System (DIS) would create a depository of knowledge products and facilitate virtual interactions, collaboration and meetings between organizations and a network for information flow. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) was intended to be an integral part of project activities through the harmonization of results frameworks of on-going MENA-DELP projects, and through shared online tracking of implementation of the Regional Project.

10. Project outcomes would support a better understanding of how the employment and environment agenda intersect, particularly focused on developing knowledge of the policy levers on social and economic inclusion of marginalized communities living in desert areas. These were – and remain - priorities throughout MENA as the Regional Project was approved in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. Overall, the project was also an instrument for supporting regional cooperation for sustainable development, in general. At a higher-level outcome, the project on the long term is expected to enhance capacity of desert communities to adapt to impacts of climate change (land degradation, desertification), enhance livelihoods for sustainable development and optimize sustainable use of natural resources in desert ecosystems.

Project Development Objectives (PDOs)

11. The objective of the project is to strengthen cooperation among selected organizations of beneficiaries in areas of sustainable management of desert ecosystems (Grant Agreement).

12. The PDO in the PAD is worded slightly differently: To strengthen cooperation among selected organizations of beneficiary countries in areas of sustainable management of desert ecosystems. As per ICR guidelines, the PDO in the Grant Agreement will be used for this evaluation, although it should be noted that the ICR does interpret any meaningful difference between the two.

Key Expected Outcomes and Outcome Indicators

13. In the PAD, the project had one development outcome (see PDO above) and three associated indicators:

- PDO indicator #1: Number of Workshops organized on issues related to desert ecosystems (target: 7)
- PDO indicator #2: Number of virtual meetings held through the dedicated Desert Information System on desert related issues (target: 10)



- PDO indicator #3: Number of knowledge products related to desert ecosystems issues developed through the project (target: 7)

14. To support and inform the discussion on efficacy in Section II.B, the ICR draws on the description of expected outcomes in the GEF Approval Document, which are also included in the TOC, namely:

- Outcome 1.1: Improved knowledge of the linkages existing between ecosystems and livelihoods in desert areas;
- Outcome 1.2: Improved systems of knowledge sharing on issues related to desert ecosystem and livelihoods;
- Outcome 2.1: Improved networks and program level information flow on desert ecosystems at national and international level.

Components

Component 1: Knowledge Management and Sharing (Approved: US\$800,000, Actual: US\$800,000).

15. This component aimed to establish and strengthen existing networks between national institutions to encourage management and sharing of knowledge on key issues related to sustainable desert ecosystem management and their associated livelihoods. It aimed at contributing to respond to the main questions related to desert issues and at helping build a community of practice to guide policy-makers on matters related to the sustainable development of desert ecosystems. Eligible activities were Workshops, Study tours, and Web-based networks.

Component 2: Monitoring and Evaluation (Approved: US\$100,000, Actual: US\$100,000).

16. The objectives of this component were two-fold: (i) Establish a programmatic level monitoring system for the MENA-DELP program based on aggregating national project level indicators and results; and (ii) Establish a specific M&E system for the regional project. To create a positive feedback loop between M&E and knowledge management, the regional project M&E system incorporated a dedicated desert information system, which benefit from and establish linkages with existing and similar knowledge management platforms.

Component 3: Project Coordination (Approved: US\$100,000, Actual: US\$100,000)

17. The component aimed to finance project management fees of the OSS as the Executing Agency (amount: US\$44,000), as well as all costs related to the organization of meetings of the Steering Committee of the project (travel of all participants (members, observers, guests including OSS), accommodation, etc.) and audit costs.

B. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES DURING IMPLEMENTATION

Revised PDOs and Outcome Targets

18. The PDO was not revised.

Revised PDO Indicators

19. The PDO indicators were not revised.

Revised Components

20. The components were not revised.



Other Changes

21. There were no formal changes to the project.

Rationale for Changes and Their Implication on the Original Theory of Change

22. There were no formal changes or restructurings during project implementation.

II. OUTCOME

A. RELEVANCE OF PDOs

Rating: Substantial

Assessment of Relevance of PDOs and Rating

23. The PDO remains substantially relevant to the objectives of current Country Partnership Framework (CPF) / Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) and key Bank strategies. It is also relevant to the new global priorities for GEF projects, as well to national development strategies and policies (see Annex 1 for further analysis). Below is an outline of how the project relates to current Bank-Country CPF/CPS:

- *In Algeria*, since 2010 the strategic partnership framework has been based on advisory services (Reimbursable Advisory Services), focused on six sectors including “integrated desert management” as the conservation of desert ecosystems and the improvement of the livelihoods of their populations are critical to inclusive and sustainable development of desert regions.
- *In Egypt*, the Country Partnership Framework for FY15-FY19 is mainly focused on improving governance, supporting private sector job creation, and improving social inclusion. While not specifically aimed at the desert communities, the project is overall in line with the current CPF by supporting job creation in ecotourism and improving the livelihoods of marginalized desert communities.
- *In Jordan*, the overarching objective of the new Country Partnership Framework for FY17-FY22 is to help renew Jordan’s social contract and promote economic and social inclusion. Understandably, there is a strong focus on alleviating the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan. However, the CPF also includes provisions for private-sector-led growth, better management of water and energy resources, support to lagging regions, and activities aimed at mitigating climate change and protecting the environment. The Regional Project supports these objectives by sharing knowledge on best practices to create markets for desert products and assets in a sustainable manner and adapting to climate change impacts.
- *In Morocco*, the PDO is also consistent with the current Bank Country Partnership Strategy (CPS for the period 2014-2017): one of its three results areas concerns building a green and resilient future, including strengthening management of soil and water resources. This topic is central to improving knowledge on the linkages of desert ecosystems and livelihoods, outcome #1 of this Regional Project.
- *In Tunisia*, the PDO is aligned with the new WBG’s CPF for the period FY2016-2020, which focuses on landscapes where the poorest populations in the lagging regions are concentrated, and creating economic opportunities for these populations (CPF pillar 3). Project activities related to better understanding the opportunities and markets for desert products and value chains support these objectives.
- *MENA Regional strategy* from 2015 and the Regional Update in 2017 is built around four pillars to foster inclusion and shared prosperity by renewing the social contract, supporting economic recovery, Resilience to refugee/IDP shocks, and promoting regional cooperation. This project is especially relevant to Pillar 2 Regional Cooperation, particularly around regional public goods that will help build greater trust and collaboration across MENA countries.



- For the new GEF-6 - covering the period between July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2018, the Objective 3 of the Land Degradation Focal Area is “to reduce pressures on natural resources by managing competing land uses in broader landscapes” (LD-3). This objective addresses the pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and is supported by the project outcomes, which has improved and shared knowledge on sustainable management of desert ecosystems, including forested areas, water resources, and agricultural practices.

B. ACHIEVEMENT OF PDOs (EFFICACY)

Rating: Substantial

Assessment of Achievement of Each Objective/Outcome

24. The project substantially achieved the stated development objective as it strengthened cooperation among some of the participating organizations in areas pertaining to the sustainable management of desert ecosystems. The cooperation between participating organizations were strengthened through: i) Improved knowledge about desert ecosystems and livelihoods as developed in 8 regional and international workshops, 5 study tours, and 8 knowledge products (see Outcome I below); ii) improved systems of knowledge sharing by building a dedicated Desert Information System with an online platform for accessing knowledge products, for sharing M&E updates and best practices on national and regional projects to foster a collective understanding of regional activities, and for facilitating virtual meetings (see Outcome II below); and iii) improved networks and information flow through the establishment of a programmatic M&E system to track national and regional-level project implementation of the MENA-DELP program (see Outcome III below).

25. To frame the discussion about project outcomes, it is useful to draw on the outcome indicators listed in the GEF Approval Document underpinned by the PDO indicators listed in the PAD. This combination reflects project achievements at the outcome level better than solely relying on the output-focused PDO indicators from the PAD (see also Section IV.A on M&E Design).

i) Improved knowledge of the linkages between desert ecosystems and livelihoods

- **PDO outcome indicator #1: Number of Workshops organized on issues related to desert ecosystems. Target 114% achieved.**

- **PDO outcome indicator #3: Number of knowledge products related to desert ecosystems issues developed through the project. Target 114% achieved.**

26. The project has improved knowledge on desert ecosystems and livelihoods in three ways, namely through i) workshops, ii) study tours, and iii) knowledge products.

27. Eight regional and international workshops were organized with a sectoral or thematic focus on deserts as a central theme – bringing together a total of 479 participants from beneficiary organizations, ranging from Director-level decision-makers, to technical staff of engineers, economist, and scientists, and to consultants preparing project proposals and research documents on sustainable management of desert ecosystem (102% of intermediate target #1).

28. At the regional level, the workshops brought together stakeholders participating in the MENA-DELP national project to share knowledge and information about their experiences with country pilot projects enhancing desert



ecosystem and livelihoods. Notably, a workshop on the concept of Land Degradation Neutrality (NDT) was held in Tunis from 11 to 13 July 2017 and attended by representatives of ministries, forestry management, research and development, and civil society from several countries in the Circum-Sahara region (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia and Senegal) with remote participation, via video conference, of representatives of the UNCCD and the Global Mechanism. The workshops were informed by the knowledge products developed, and helped to create a community of practice on critical issues related to the sustainable management of desert ecosystems.

29. At the international level, side-events at the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 13) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 23 UNFCCC) put a spotlight on desert ecosystems in the MENA region. Presentations were made in several parallel events on (i) oasis ecosystems: what contributes to the realization of the concept of neutrality in terms of land degradation; (ii) land degradation neutrality in the circum-Saharan region; (iii) policies and financing for successful partnership transformation; (iv) increasing adaptive capacity and reducing the vulnerability of the most vulnerable communities and ecosystems through a regional approach.

30. Five study tours to three countries in the region were organized, benefitting a total of 120 participants (171% of intermediate target #2). The study tours had specific objectives: In Tunisia, for example, the objective was to present local initiatives in developing oases and valuing their resources and assets; and in Morocco, the objective was to stress the know-how of local artisans and their adaptation to market needs. These events greatly improved knowledge among participants from beneficiary organizations about the experiences of managing desert ecosystems in other parts of the region.

31. Eight knowledge products on various issues pertaining to desert ecosystems and livelihoods, and the linkages between them, were published as part of the project (114% of PDO target #3). The studies have improved knowledge on agricultural practices in desert areas, on forest management in arid and semi-arid regions, on water resources, and on oases, including a valorization study of the products and by-products of the oases in the MENA region. The project also produced technical guides on ecosystem accounting and carbon sequestration techniques. The studies laid the foundation for the workshops held, were discussed among participants, and will help inform future focal areas for collaboration at the OSS.

32. The exchange of experiences, the cross-fertilization of ideas, and the development of personal contacts between members of regional organizations are some of the dimensions with which the project has strengthened regional cooperation through improved knowledge of sustainable management of desert ecosystems. The impact of the project is visible on the ground:

- In Jordan, the visit and training organized at the Marrakech crafts training center has prompted the Jordanian participants to request the creation of a similar center in Jordan.
- In Tunisia, experiencing the ecotourism and forest conservation taking place in Jordan was key to stimulate the activities of an ecotourism and biodiversity conservation project.
- In Morocco, the ASIMA project is replicating best practices related to decentralization of procurement activities learned from the Tunisian oasis project, which aims to increase the value of agricultural by-products (compost, livestock feed, etc.) through sustainable practices.



- In Tunisia and Jordan, best practices concerning the plantation of cactus in degraded lands and extraction and processing of cactus oil were applied following a study tour to Morocco.
- Regionally, the discussions of knowledge products and exchange of experiences are leading to collaboration around developing project proposals for international funding for sustainable management of desert ecosystems and livelihoods. For example, the OSS, which is now accredited as the regional implementing agency of the "Green Climate Fund" (GCF).

33. A Beneficiary Survey conducted at the end of the project showed that participants from the beneficiary organizations were satisfied with the thematic foci of the various workshops, study tours, and reports. They also confirmed that cooperation and exchange networks were strengthened as a result of the project.

ii) Improved systems of knowledge sharing on issues related to desert ecosystem and livelihoods

- **PDO outcome indicator #2: Number of virtual meetings held through the dedicated Desert Information System on desert related issues. Target 70% achieved.**

34. The project ambitiously embraced new technological solutions to improve systems of knowledge sharing. It did so by building the dedicated Desert Information System (DIS), a web-based platform where partner organizations can share knowledge products, hold virtual meetings and conferences, and track M&E information for regional and national MENA-DELP projects (for M&E see point iii) below). The information system affords partner organizations more frequent interaction "in person" and direct access to regional resources on desert ecosystems and livelihoods (publications, projects, etc.).

35. 7 virtual meetings were organized with the participation of some the beneficiary organizations (70% of PDO target #2). The indicator was partially achieved, which is due to periodically poor internet connectivity in the region, and a lack of commitment by some MENA-DELP participants. Foremost among the virtual meetings held were the discussions launched in preparation for the side events organized at UNFCCC COP 22 in Marrakech. Utilizing the virtual aspect of the DIS, those discussions were preceded by the posting of questionnaires on the DIS platform to inform the dialogue prior to the meetings. Other discussion topics related to governance of forest ecosystems and M&E.

36. Over the life of the project, a total of 1,420 users accessed the dedicated DIS (129% of intermediate target #3). Of those, 70% were new visitors and 30% were regular users. Specifically, the users could access: (i) information on desert ecosystems, livelihoods and sustainable management practices; (ii) a link and a platform for exchange of information between partners; (iii) a centralized Geographic Information System (GIS) database; (v) a predefined set of M&E indicators to facilitate analysis, consistency and monitoring of activities; and (vi) a forum to moderate virtual discussions through existing or new web-based networks.

37. At the institutional level, the project has reinforced the capacities of beneficiaries in various ways. First, by helping them understand and follow procedures to obtain funds from specialized institutions, such as the GCF. Second, the planning capacities of partner institutions has been strengthened through the organization of training sessions provided by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) experts on Collect Earth, a tool that enables data collection through Google Earth, and by helping users analyze high- and very high-resolution satellite imagery (through Google Special Resolution) for a wide variety of planning purposes. Finally, civil society associations and



national Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also been strengthened in their innovative thinking and longer-term commitment to policies to diversify livelihoods in their communities.

iii) Improved networks and program level information flow on desert ecosystems at national and international level

38. The project has improved networks between participants in MENA-DELP projects by bringing together experts in different fields, such as oases, forests, water, etc., and nurtured the development of personal contacts across organizations and a wider community of practice across the region.

39. The project has also improved the flow of programmatic-level information about the regional and national MENA-DELP projects by incorporating a monitoring and evaluation capability into the DIS as an online tracking tool that is an integral part of the project's dedicated website and can be accessed by following this link: (<http://www.oss-online.org/mena-delp/index.php>). It did so by training 26 members of national institutions on the M&E system and the DIS (325% of intermediate target #4)

40. Working with various members of the MENA-DELP projects, a standardized set of indicators were developed to track national project implementation of the MENA-DELP program in a shared framework. The MENA-DELP national projects were approved prior to the regional umbrella project, and while the nature of the projects was the same, the results frameworks were all different. The programmatic level monitoring allows for a harmonized evaluation of the project achievements based on aggregated national project level indicators and results.

41. The use of the developed M&E system contributed directly to the achievement of the PDO as it allowed for sharing relevant information and best practices amongst experts of national projects and M&E specialists, thereby strengthening collaboration and cooperation amongst beneficiary organizations.

42. The Beneficiary Survey confirms that the monitoring and evaluation tool and the dedicated DIS have facilitated the monitoring of national projects across the region. It also recognizes that use of the M&E tool and the DIS may be difficult in the absence of the regional project as the tool depends on regular updating.

Justification of Overall Efficacy Rating

43. Overall efficacy is rated Substantial as the project strengthened regional collaboration between beneficiary organizations and substantially met the project development objective. The project met or exceeded all outcome and intermediate indicators, except for outcome indicator #2 relating to the number of implemented virtual meetings. This is a minor shortcoming, which was caused by occasionally-poor internet connectivity and a lack of commitment from some participants.

C. EFFICIENCY

Rating: Substantial

Assessment of Efficiency and Rating

44. The PAD noted that the project was not amenable to a quantitative cost-benefit or financial analysis. However, while it is difficult to estimate in monetary terms all the global and local benefits expected as a result of the activities, the project applied cost-effective principles at the design phase and during implementation, which should be



considered in the context of the Incremental Cost Analysis prepared at project preparation. The project was financed by the GEF Grant in the amount of US\$1.00 million. In-kind contribution (co-financing) for a total of US\$0.49 million was provided by the OSS and national governments hosting the beneficiary organizations.

45. In Annex 4, the Incremental Cost Analysis from the PAD is reproduced and complimented with a column on incremental achievements. The results show that the project largely delivered the expected incremental benefits to the global environment and worked as a catalyst for strengthened regional collaboration around a shared understanding of the importance of desert ecosystems to the sustainable development of the region.

46. Under Component 1, the project has broadened and deepened the collaboration of organizations working to protect desert ecosystems and livelihoods. It has done so by bringing together specialists, decision-makers, and researchers to exchange knowledge and experiences, through study tours to the field and meeting with local desert communities, and by creating web-based networks and communities of practice to stay connected and deepen the engagement and collaboration around sustainable desert management.

47. Under Component 2, the project has developed a new information and knowledge management system, which has strengthened collaboration at an institutional level through virtual discussion fora, sharing of knowledge products, and collective tracking of MENA-DELP project at the programmatic level.

Cost-Effective Approach

48. The project design was based on a cost-effective approach, which assumed that inherently limited funds relative to the scale of its objectives may have relatively large benefits and spillovers, which can trigger an institutional shift in the participating organizations towards greater collaboration on a regional scale.

49. During project design and implementation, the team applied judiciousness in the use of funds leading to cost-effective measures. For example:

- The organization of different events (such as virtual meetings, study tours and workshops) were combined to reduce organizational costs, particularly so in Amman and Djerba in 2014, Montpellier in 2015, and Marrakech in 2016).
- The costs related to the creation of the DIS was kept to a minimum due to the use of the in-house services of the OSS IT-specialist. Contracting this activity would likely have resulted in higher costs.

50. Disbursing the full amount by project closing, the project proved to be efficient in the use of project resources, particularly in considering the regional scale and the number of outputs produced, and when comparing the Regional Project with other projects, which have provided knowledge management and capacity building services (see Annex 4 for a comparison). The Regional Project delivered 8 workshops, 5 study tours, 8 knowledge products, an Information System, and a harmonized programmatic-level M&E framework for five participating countries for US\$1 million. This compares well to other regional projects such as Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Program for Aral Sea Basin (P151363), with a knowledge management component of \$12.5 million, for two countries.

Knowledge Spill-Over Effects

51. The project is expected to generate non-quantifiable knowledge spill-over benefits, which may materialize over time (tacit knowledge).



- Shared knowledge and experiences among the five countries of the regional challenges for sustainable management of desert ecosystems and livelihoods are expected to result in closer cooperation over time, for example in future Green Climate Fund projects, which are currently under preparation.
- It may also lead to better integration of issues and concerns into sectoral policies and investment decisions of national governments. A better understanding of key issues affecting desert ecosystems and livelihoods - in terms of constraints and potentials - may have a considerable economic impact on key sectoral policies of each participating country and potentially translate into multi-sectoral changes as well.
- The interventions may also enhance the institutional capacity of the beneficiary organizations to make effective use of their limited human and financial resources.

D. JUSTIFICATION OF OVERALL OUTCOME RATING

52. An overall outcome rating of Satisfactory is justified by (i) the substantial continued relevance of the development objectives, (ii) the substantial achievement of intended project outcomes and targets, and (iii) the substantially efficient allocation of resources in achieving those outcomes.

E. OTHER OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS (IF ANY)

Gender

53. There were no explicit poverty or gender related objectives at the time of project design, and relevant data were not collected throughout the project implementation.

54. However, the project was implemented with an awareness of gender issues pertaining to the region. In preparation for various project activities, the project sensitized men and women to the socio-economic gaps between genders in terms of employment and control over productive assets. More specifically, the project targeted women and women's groups for the dissemination of cacti plantations in degraded lands in Tunisia and Jordan (following well-proven operations in Morocco). The project also focused on training women in handicrafts as a way to increase economic goods from the desert region.

55. However, it is worth noting that the percentage of women beneficiaries taking part in study tours and workshops was only 10%.

Institutional Strengthening

56. In terms of institutional strengthening, the project has made significant contributions beyond the stated objectives.

57. Importantly, the project has provided the OSS with international visibility. The project contributed to the recent accreditation of the OSS as the regional implementing agency of the "Green Climate Fund" (GCF) granted in October 2017. The OSS will facilitate and mobilize funding from the international community, and directly support and develop climate change-related operations that benefit OSS partners and members.



58. At the national level, the project helped accelerate the process of accreditation for the Agency for Agricultural Development of Morocco to the Green Climate Fund through contact exchanges within this network following the training on Finance Climate in Marrakech in 2016.

Mobilizing Private Sector Financing

59. N/A

Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity

60. Indirectly, the project has supported poverty reduction and shared prosperity through diagnostic studies and various training and capacity building initiatives, particularly focused on value chains of local products, diversification of local livelihoods, and strategies to cope with the effects of climate change.

Other Unintended Outcomes and Impacts

61. N/A

III. KEY FACTORS THAT AFFECTED IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME

A. KEY FACTORS DURING PREPARATION

62. The project was a regional umbrella for the MENA-DELP program, and as such benefitted from the existing institutional context established. A number of factors positively influenced the operation at the preparation stage. The objective of the project was realistic and the design was straightforward. The components had a clear operational logic, appropriate timing and sequencing of tasks. It built on the Bank's extensive experience with knowledge management and capacity building.

63. One shortcoming relates to the design of an output-based results framework, in which the indicators were not ambitious or at the right level. Complementing the results framework with the outcomes defined in the GEF Approval Document helps to elevate project results to the outcome level. The indicators were mostly aligned with operational objectives, with clear baselines and targets, except for outcomes related to "improved networks and program-level information flow on desert ecosystems at national and international level", which was only linked to two intermediate indicators.

64. Overall implementation risk was rated Modest, though three issues were highlighted as potential areas of risk. First, country risk was anticipated to impact project implementation. Civil unrest and a sensitive political environment in several countries in the region was expected to cause implementation challenges and delay. While externalities to the project, the Bank tried to mitigate this risk through bilateral consultations in Algeria, Tunis, Egypt, Morocco and Jordan, where institutions confirmed their interest to participate in the regional project and gave concrete propositions on how to enhance the project design. Furthermore, the Bank committed to closely monitor the situation in each participating country and identify opportunities for engagement and alternatives.

65. Second, M&E was highlighted as a potential area of increased risk. At the project preparation stage, national institutions of participating countries had expressed little interest in carrying out M&E activities (Component 2). Some of them also lacked key technical expertise, especially in order to align national and regional



M&E systems. To mitigate the risk, additional consultations were held during the preparatory phase to better identify institutional capacities and needs.

66. Third, the accounting system used at OSS did not allow for producing Interim Financial Reports. This was mitigated by planning to use Excel sheets on the basis on information extracted from the accounting system. Subsequently, control measures would be applied to verify the accuracy and completeness of the reporting. The residual financial risk was rated modest.

67. At the time of approval, the project was in an advanced stage of readiness with stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the project clearly and appropriately identified, and a procurement plan was in place for the first 18 months.

B. KEY FACTORS DURING IMPLEMENTATION

(i) Factors subject to government and/or implementing entities control

68. Key to the successful outcome of the project was the commitment and leadership of the OSS to successfully implement the project and coordinate between participating countries and beneficiary organizations. Utilizing their human and organizational capacity, the project built on the institutional strength of OSS to deepen the engagement and collaboration among beneficiary organizations by improving knowledge development and sharing in traditional and new ways.

69. A Mid-Term Review took place on June 4-12, 2015, which overall confirmed the satisfactory progress of project implementation towards the achievement of the development objective. At that time, the project had disbursed 49% of funds, a rate slightly above the originally planned estimate. Timely implementation and disbursement characterized the entire project period, and helps to explain the continued Satisfactory rating for both achievement of Development Objective (DO) and Implementation Progress (IP).

70. A number of factors influenced the implementation process: i) The lack of appetite for the results and recommendations from various studies carried out; and ii) the challenge of engaging stakeholders in virtual meetings. The MTR made a number of recommendations to adjust implementation in areas, which needed further attention: i) Valorize the results of the studies through the elaboration of policy briefs to communicate the key points with the use of graphics; ii) better capture lessons learned from workshops and study tours; and iii) improve the organization of the discussion forums by considering them not as isolated events, but rather as the result of a consultation process. On the last point, the MTR recommended increased use of questionnaires to collect information and feedback from participants. These recommendations were followed and implemented by the Project Management PMU.

71. Another issue is related to the lack of commitment of and changing members of the Technical Steering Committee. At the time of the MTR, the TSC had met five times since project start, although not all members had participated on a regular basis. In the MTR, a concerted push was organized to have all members of the TSC meet – possibly virtually if that could help secure the participation of all members. Through consistent follow-through this was partly accomplished, though without the participation of Algeria.



72. Harmonization of the M&E framework was challenging. The PMU and the Bank were proactive in addressing this by i) organizing training workshops to build the capacity of MENA-DELP national M&E experts, and ii) redesigning the M&E system website to improve accessibility and usability. Since improvements were made to the portal of the project, the number of visitors increased markedly and exceeded the target substantially.

73. The OSS handled fiduciary issues as well as social and environmental safeguards with proficiency.

(ii) Factors subject to World Bank control

74. Bi-annual implementation support missions were undertaken by Bank. The project benefitted from having a single Task team leader (TTL) from start to finish, and who was based in Tunis like the PMU. This allowed for close coordination and follow-up, which undoubtedly have aided in the satisfactory implementation progress through-out the life of the project.

75. The MTR discussed the option of revising the results framework, but decided against it on the basis that results stories of the project be captured by data and information outside of the results framework. Specifically, it was recommended that semi-structured interviews be implemented in the participating countries with key decision-makers in the environment sector to solicit satisfaction with project interventions and to collect success stories of cooperation between countries more systematically.

76. This recommendation was not followed by the project team. In lieu of interviews, the PMU prepared an end-of-project Beneficiary Survey, which was posted on the DIS platform for one week to solicit feedback from participants on knowledge products and workshops, study tours, virtual meetings, etc. The number of responses received were not high enough to draw meaningful conclusions from the survey. In hindsight, the survey was not an effective nor adequate substitution to revising the RF.

77. Overall, the Bank team maintained candor in reporting on project and implementation progress. They were proactive in addressing some of the issues arising on engagement, such as those mentioned above under factors subject to the IA control. The Bank team remained committed to providing supervision support, and provided technical assistance and leverage when required.

(iii) Factors outside of the government and/or implementing entities control

78. The project was prepared in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. With a shifting political environment, the most challenging aspect of project implementation related to country risk. While the project secured early commitment from all five participating countries and beneficiary organizations, the institutional engagements were sometimes challenged. In Tunisia, the first presidential elections following the revolution that began in 2010 were held in 2014, the same year that a new constitution was adopted. Consequently, the first year of project implementation took place in the context of an interim government, in which various political factions fought for influence and control. In Algeria and Egypt, continued political unrest and instability eventually hindered their full participation in the project activities. Against this backdrop, it is commendable that the project was able to achieve the development objectives without any need for restructurings or extensions.

IV. BANK PERFORMANCE, COMPLIANCE ISSUES, AND RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME



A. QUALITY OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

Rating: Modest

M&E Design

79. The theory of change of strengthening institutional cooperation through knowledge development and sharing, and harmonization of monitoring and evaluation of on-going and related national projects was clear and realistic. Monitoring and evaluation was designed to be an integral part of the project as evident in Component 2 on Monitoring and Evaluation, which sought to establish two M&E systems, and the inclusion of two intermediate indicators measuring M&E related performance (#4 and #5).

80. Overall, the results framework was could have better tracked project progress towards achievement of the PDO. The output-focused indicators related to number of workshops held and number of knowledge products developed could not fully capture the intended strengthened collaboration at an organizational level. However, when complementing the RF with the stated outcomes in the GEF Approval Document, this minor short-coming was adequately mitigated to assess the impact of the project at the PDO level.

M&E Implementation

81. M&E was implemented at two levels. At the level of the regional project, the PMU was focused on tracking progress against the PDO and intermediate indicators. As the nature of the indicators were output-based, data collection for M&E was readily accessible. This may explain why M&E was consistently rated Satisfactory throughout the project implementation period.

82. At the level of the national projects, a consolidated M&E framework was developed with a standardized set of indicators to harmonize the M&E of outcomes based on aggregated indicator values. The M&E tool developed by the PMU had a graphical interface, which provided access to project data for three different categories of users, namely: The general public, the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager at the level of the national projects, and the PMU in charge of managing the database. This interface has been also integrated into the online project platform.

83. Because the national projects were under implementation by the time the regional umbrella project got approved, there were discrepancies between the M&E frameworks at various levels. The processes of harmonizing the indicators of the regional project with those of the national projects was laborious. National projects were often unable to provide the regional project with appropriate data, because they did not track progress with the same indicators. Consequently, M&E teams for national projects did not initially utilize the regional M&E system on a consistent basis.

84. Corrective measures were adopted, as the PMU provided on-going support to national project teams. For example, with the help of the PMU, two Tunisian projects set up an efficient online system to monitor and evaluate their activities; and a special training workshop on M&E and the use of indicators was held. Substantial improvements in the use of the regional M&E system occurred over the last 18 months of implementation.

M&E Utilization

85. M&E data was used to track project performance. The project has laid the foundation for a programmatic evaluation of the MENA-DELP national projects to assess the outcomes at the regional level using harmonized indicators that allow for an aggregated analysis of project performance data.



86. The PMU made increasingly use of questionnaires to solicit feedback from participant on the topics they wished to explore and their opinions about knowledge products through the online DIS. This afforded the PMU a chance to continuously monitor and evaluate the implementation course ahead.

87. At the end of the project, the PMU used a questionnaire to collect feedback from national stakeholders on a variety of issues and assess their overall level of satisfaction with project activities. Overall, the feedback shows a high level of satisfaction with the project, including workshops and the choice of thematic foci. However, the Beneficiary Survey was based on recall of events, some of which occurred years ago, and the number of respondent were too low to draw meaningful conclusions from the findings.

88. Systematically collecting M&E on national MENA-DELP projects in a harmonized framework leverages project impacts on a regional scale, which could be tremendously valuable going forward, as the OSS and partner organizations, including beneficiaries to the Regional Project, explore new opportunities for international funding of desert ecosystem and livelihood projects.

Justification of Overall Rating of Quality of M&E

89. The quality of the M&E system used for project management is rated Modest. This is justified by the design of an output-focused results-framework, which was not revised, and by the use of a survey tool that relied on recall to assess levels of satisfaction years after the events took place, which resulted in a low number of respondents.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND FIDUCIARY COMPLIANCE

90. For environmental and social safeguards purposes, the project was rated “category C” (not required) and was expected to have a global positive impact on sustainable development of desert ecosystems. The project did not trigger any safeguards policies.

91. The project remained in full compliance with fiduciary requirements. Interim Financial Reports were consistently submitted on time and in line with World Bank standards and procedures. Annual audits were duly conducted, according to international auditing standards. The auditors expressed consistent positive views about the use of the resources. All the planned activities were completed within the planned period and time. Overall, this is evidence of an experienced Executing Agency with sufficient capacity for project implementation.

92. A comprehensive review of procurement arrangements at the Mid-Term Review found that all procurement matters were executed to the full satisfaction of World Bank standards. The PMU’s capacity for project implement and procurement was deemed globally satisfactory. Consultant contracts were timely executed and payments were generally processed rapidly and efficiently.

C. BANK PERFORMANCE

Quality at Entry

93. The Bank team employed due diligence in basing the project on a solid diagnostic foundation of the region’s development priorities, which remained highly relevant throughout the project period. The project team drew on the Bank’s global experience with knowledge management and capacity building in designing the project. Close



consultations with the beneficiary organizations and other key stakeholders helped set-up the institutional arrangements, upon which project outcomes ultimately rested.

94. The project was designed according to a number of correct strategic decisions, taking a pragmatic approach by integrating technical solutions into existing institutional settings and providing value added to the available resource base. The design reflected key environmental issues affecting the region.

95. As discussed in Section IV.A the RF was inadequate, and could have incorporated the outcome-based indicators included in the GEF Approval Document.

96. Provision for safeguards, fiduciary responsibilities, and procurement were all adequate at entry, as was the overall risk assessment. In hindsight, it is not clear what more could have been done at the preparation stage to mitigate the factors related to country risk, which affected the project during implementation. All other mitigation actions effectively mitigated the identified risks as intended.

Quality of Supervision

97. The Bank provided regular and timely supervision. Six implementation support missions were conducted, in which continued support addressed fiduciary aspects and implementation arrangements. The mid-term evaluation of the Project was timely conducted in 2015 and the related report, prepared by an external evaluator, discussed during a subsequent steering committee meeting, provided guidance to the project management unit. Adequate implementation support was facilitated by the fact that the same TTL, based in Tunis like the PMU, supervised the project from preparation and through to project closing.

98. One short-coming in the quality of supervision relate to decision not the revise the results framework. The Bank team should have employed a sharper focus on measuring the development impact of the project, and revised the RF when given the opportunity during discussions at the MTR.

99. Overall, the Bank team provided timely and high-quality technical assistance to the PMU, effectively dealing with safeguards, fiduciary responsibilities, and other related project management issues. Internally, the Bank team maintained candor in reporting on project and implementation progress.

100. Through the inherent efforts to build the capacity and collaboration of the OSS and beneficiary organizations, the Bank team have ensured adequate transition arrangements for activities to continue beyond project closing.

Justification of Overall Rating of Bank Performance

101. Overall Bank performance is rated Moderately Satisfactory due to the design of an output-focused results framework, and the decision not to revise the RF at the MTR.

D. RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

102. Overall, the risk to the achieved development outcome of strengthened collaboration between organizations is modest. Knowledge about desert ecosystems and livelihoods has been developed and shared in workshops, in study tours, and in documents. Experiences have been exchanged and networks nurtured across different communities, organizations, and countries. Issues critical to the ecosystems of the Circum-Sahara have been voiced in international fora. National and regional institutions have received accreditation with the GCF. These outcomes are not at risk of being undone.



103. Going forward, the achieved strengthened organizational cooperation will be partly ensured by the OSS through its current mandate and commitment to support communication and networking activities across the region on issues related to desert ecosystems and livelihoods. The OSS has recently created an internal financial facility to support country studies and assessments on natural resources and the implementation of United Nations' conventions.

104. In October 2017, the OSS has been accredited as a regional implementing agency of the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Being able to mobilize financing from important climate funds endorsed by the international Community, the OSS will have the capacity to directly sustain and develop climate change-related operations benefitting its partners and members. This accreditation underlines once again the importance of desertification, biodiversity and climate change issues at OSS. The recent GCF accreditation of OSS is likely to help ensure continuity and favor new opportunities. Discussions have already begun with other national and regional partners on a potential regional operation on oasis ecosystems.

105. The Desert Information System is well integrated into the online MENA-DELP platform, hosting all knowledge products developed as part of the project, as well as reports from all thematic and training workshops held during project implementation. The OSS and the beneficiary organizations have gained experience in establishing and maintaining an online M&E system for tracking shared progress, which will be valuable going forward as collaboration continues and deepens. The national projects under MENA-DELP are either closing or have already closed, and as a consequence project monitoring for decision making is ending. The World Bank together with countries in the region are engaging in new related initiatives for the benefit of desert ecosystems and communities.

V. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

106. **Multi-country projects require clear parameters on ownership and participation by each beneficiary country especially in national activities to ensure achievement and sustainability of project outcomes.** During appraisal of a regional/multi-country project, provisions should clearly define and spell out the terms of the partnership between the regional executing agency and the participating countries and respective national management units, and clear parameters should be used to ensure the full implementation of these agreements.

107. **Clearly defined quality assurance mechanism should be incorporated into knowledge management projects.** While the project produced useful knowledge products (studies and reports), their quality was in some cases low by international standards. For projects whose main aim is knowledge management and sharing, design elements should include internal and external quality assurance procedures and mechanisms (including appropriate peer reviews) to ensure high international standards. Such an approach should be supported with the appropriate level of financial resources at the design stage.

108. **Assessing the impact of knowledge management projects should be considered in the context of producing and sharing knowledge and timely implementation.** The objective of each knowledge product should be clearly defined and the impact assessed before and after the event (i.e. training, workshop, study tour, document, etc.) This will allow the feedback to be used in real time to inform future knowledge management.

109. **Ensuring built-in sustainability of the program-level M&E systems is essential for future collaboration.** Following project closing, it will be essential to build on the momentum generated by the project and deepen



institutional collaboration through continued monitoring and evaluation of project activities and of the desert ecosystems and the livelihoods it sustains. This will anchor the dialogue and broaden the scope of focal areas as they emerge through shared knowledge and experiences.



ANNEX 1. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND KEY OUTPUTS¹

Table 1: PDO Outcome Indicators

| Indicator | Baseline Value | Original Target Values (from approval documents) | Formally Revised Target Values | Actual Value Achieved at Completion or Target Years |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Indicator 1: | Number of Workshops organized on issues related to desert ecosystems | | | |
| Number | 0 | 7 | | 8 |
| Date achieved | 23-May-2013 | 31-Dec-2017 | | 31-Dec-2017 |
| Comments (incl. % achievement) | <p>Target 114% achieved. The target was defined as the number of workshops organized with a sectoral or a thematic focus with deserts as a central theme. A total of eight workshops were held throughout the region, bringing together organizations participating in the MENA-DELP project to share knowledge and information about their experiences with country pilot projects enhancing desert ecosystem and livelihoods. Participants ranged from Director-level decision-makers to technical staff, such as scientists and engineers, and to consultants developing project proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop 1: Prospects for development in desert regions (Marrakesh, 17-19 December 2013) - Workshop 2: Good agricultural practices in desert areas (Amman, 04 and 05 May 2014) - Workshop 3: Valorization of oasis products and by-products (Djerba, 11 and 12 November 2014) - Workshop 4: Co-organization of the Desertification event (10-13 June 2015) - Workshop 5: Sustainable management of forest ecosystems in arid and semi-arid zones facing climate change (Amman, 22 and 23 November 2015) - Workshop 6: Co-organization of the International Conference on Territorial development and Tourism (Marrakesh, 1-2 June 2016) - Workshop 7: Regional Climate Finance Workshop (Marrakesh, 30-31 May 2016) - Workshop 8: Land Degradation Neutrality: Commitments and implementation (Tunis, July 13-14 July 2017) <p>The workshops contributed significantly to achieving the project objectives as they created ample opportunities for stakeholders to form professional relationships across borders and institutions, to enhance participants understanding of activities in other countries, and to build capacity by sharing experiences and distilling lessons learned. This in turn has improved knowledge development and sharing, supported the formation of a community of practitioners, and improved the flow of information through online and offline interactions. See also Section B below for a detailed account by workshop.</p> | | | |
| Indicator 2: | Number of virtual meetings held through the dedicated Desert Information System on desert related issues | | | |

¹ The RF tables were manually updated as system issues prevented the ICR team from using the system generated tables which had incorrect original target dates with original targets missing



| Indicator | Baseline Value | Original Target Values (from approval documents) | Formally Revised Target Values | Actual Value Achieved at Completion or Target Years |
|---------------|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Number | 0 | 10 | | 7 |
| Date achieved | 23-May-2013 | 31-November-2017 | | 31-Dec-2017 |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|
| Comments (incl. % achievement) | Target 70% achieved. The target was defined as the number of virtual meetings to be held via the web-based platform with an online and virtual discussion forum, which was built with project funds. By the end of the project, a total of 7 such virtual meetings had been held (see Section B for a detailed account). The indicator was partially achieved due to internet connectivity challenges, and a lack of commitment by some MENA-DELP participants. The outcome contributes to the PDO by improving systems of knowledge sharing in support of strengthening regional cooperation on desert ecosystems and livelihoods. | | | |
| Indicator 3: | Number of knowledge products related to desert ecosystems issues developed through the project | | | |
| Number | 0 | 7 | | 8 |
| Date achieved | 23-May-2013 | 31-Dec-2017 | | 31-Dec-2017 |
| Comments (incl. % achievement) | Target 114% achieved. The target was defined as the number of knowledge products on desert ecosystems and livelihoods to be produced during project implementation. By the end of the project, a total of 8 knowledge products in terms of policy briefs, best practice summaries, and technical guidance notes had been developed. These products were shared with stakeholders in workshops and hosted online in the dedicated DIS. The publications have contributed to the achievement of the PDO by improving knowledge development and providing a platform for shared understanding of the critical issues facing the region related to desert ecosystems and livelihoods. | | | |

Table 2: Intermediate Indicators

| Indicator | Baseline Value | Original Target Values (from approval documents) | Formally Revised Target Values | Actual Value Achieved at Completion or Target Years |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Indicator 1: | Number of participants to workshops organized by the project | | | |
| Number | 0 | 470 | | 479 |
| Date achieved | 23-May-2013 | 31-Dec-2017 | | 31-Dec-2017 |
| Comments (incl. % achievement) | Target 102% achieved. The target was defined as the total number of participants in all planned events. At the end of the project, 279 participants took part in 8 regional thematic workshops, and 200 participants took part in three side events at international meetings: Three sides events, one on the sidelines of the UNCCD Scientific Conference (~ 50 participants) and the other on the margins of UNCCD COP 12 and of the COP22 (~ 50 people); Co-organization of three | | | |



| Indicator | Baseline Value | Original Target Values (from approval documents) | Formally Revised Target Values | Actual Value Achieved at Completion or Target Years |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| | international meetings (DA'15, Défismed DA'17); and two Side Events at UNCCD COP 13. Participants at these events, which range from Director-level decision-makers, to technical staff, such as engineers and scientists, and to consultants preparing project proposals, were provided with the tools for strengthened cooperation in areas of sustainable management of desert ecosystems. | | | |
| Indicator 2: | Number of participants in study tours organized by the project | | | |
| Number | 0 | 70 | | 120 |
| Date achieved | 23-May-2013 | 31-Dec-2017 | | 31-Dec-2017 |
| Comments (incl. % achievement) | Target 171% achieved. A total of five study tours were organized between May 2014 and May 2016 to 3 different countries in the region (see also Section B below on key outputs). The study tours had specific objectives: In Tunisia, for example, the objective was to present local initiatives in developing oases and valuing their resources and assets; and in Morocco, the objective was to stress the know-how of local artisans and their adaptation to market needs. These events greatly strengthened cooperation among organizations in the areas of sustainable management of desert ecosystems. | | | |
| Indicator 3: | Number of users of the established information system (web server) | | | |
| Number | 0 | 1,100 | | 1,420 |
| Date achieved | 23-May-2013 | 31-Dec-2017 | | 31-Dec-2017 |
| Comments (incl. % achievement) | Target 129% achieved. A total of 1,420 users visited the dedicated Desert Information System (a new website developed under the project), which contained (i) information on desert ecosystems, livelihoods and sustainable management practices; (ii) a link and a platform for exchange of information between partners; (iii) a centralized Geographic Information System (GIS) database; (v) a predefined set of M&E indicators to facilitate analysis, consistency and monitoring of activities; and (vi) a forum to moderate virtual discussions through existing or new web-based networks. Of the 1,420 visitors, 70% were new visitors (= 994 visitors) and 30% were regular users (= 426 users). The project targeted a wide audience, and succeeded in attracting M&E experts of national projects to the website. The use of the developed M&E system contributed directly to the achievement of the PDO as it contributed to sharing relevant information and best practices amongst experts of national projects, thereby strengthening collaboration and cooperation amongst beneficiary organizations. | | | |
| | | | | |
| Indicator 4: | Number of members of national institutions trained on M&E system and information system | | | |
| Number | 0 | 8 | | 26 |
| Date achieved | 23-May-2013 | 31-Dec-2017 | | 31-Dec-2017 |



| Indicator | Baseline Value | Original Target Values (from approval documents) | Formally Revised Target Values | Actual Value Achieved at Completion or Target Years |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Comments (incl. % achievement) | Target 325% achieved. Mastering the developed M&E system by beneficiaries' countries is an important prerequisite for the continued updating and use of the M&E tool for project managers and decision-makers. The application of shared tools and databases constitute an important means to reinforce and pursue collaboration and exchange of data and analyses, and therefore contributes significantly to the achievement of the PDO. | | | |
| Indicator 5: | Number of comprehensive M&E reports prepared at Program and Project levels | | | |
| Number | 0 | 8 | | 14 |
| Date achieved | 23-May-2013 | 31-Dec-2017 | | 31-Dec-2017 |
| Comments (incl. % achievement) | Target 175% achieved. The target was defined as the number of monitoring reports to be produced by utilizing the M&E system developed by the project. At the end of the project, a total of 14 M&E reports had been developed (see Section B below for details), implying that there is great interest in and capacity for shared monitoring and evaluation of implementation progress in support of regional cooperation. | | | |

A. KEY OUTPUTS BY COMPONENT

| To strengthen cooperation among selected organizations of beneficiaries in areas of sustainable management of desert ecosystems | |
|--|---|
| Outcome Indicators | <p>1. Number of Workshops organized on issues related to desert ecosystems <i>Baseline: 0 - Target: 7 - Actual: 8</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop 1: Prospects for development in desert regions (Marrakech, 17-19 December 2013) The first workshop in a series of regional workshops to be organized under the Regional Project. The works have been structured around four phases: (i) Presentation of national projects; (ii) presentation of thematic studies; (iii) group work on country priorities and exchange of experiences; and (iv) field visit (plantation of Atriplex, training center and promotion of trades crafts). - Workshop 2: Good agricultural practices in desert areas (Amman, 04 and 05 May 2014) |



The overall objective of the workshop was to bring together the national partners involved in the MENA-DELP project to deepen the reflection on good agricultural practices in desert areas for sustainable management of water lands, with a view to improving living conditions of local populations. The exchanges and works were structured around the following points:

- a. To evaluate the potentialities of the desert regions and to identify development prospects for the products and by-products of oases and desert areas such as PAMs;
- b. To discuss the development potential of greenhouse crops using geothermal energy for heating and the development prospects of this sector in the desert areas benefiting from the MENA-DELP project;
- c. To evaluate the techniques and management methods of the rangelands that can be practiced at the level of the desert zones in a perspective of sustainable development and improvement of productivity'; and
- d. To highlight the contribution of best practices in improving production techniques in arid and desert areas.

- **Workshop 3: Valorization of oasis products and by-products (Djerba, 11 and 12 November 2014)**

The overall objective of the workshop was to bring together the national partners involved in the MENA-DELP project to deepen reflection on the valorization of oasis products and by-products, with a view to improving the living conditions of the populations. The exchanges and works were structured around the following points:

- a. Methods of management, conservation and enhancement of the natural resources of oases and desert areas. Presentation of comparative analysis in the management and development of natural resources of oases and desert areas in MENA region. The workshop also addressed the legal, technical and institutional prerequisites for sustainable desert management and discussed the prospects for disseminating identified management methods and promoting them at the regional level;
- b. Development of the value chain in the oases of the MENA region. Examples of successful experiences have been analyzed to draw lessons learned on the conditions for applying a value chain approach and the prerequisites for its extension and adaptation to various sectors at the oasis level while taking into account the structure and priorities of family-run businesses.
- c. The recycling of oasis by-products: Starting from a critical analysis of the state of the art of oasis by-products and waste recycling, the workshop discussed the achievements and the prospects of development and promotion of various techniques. Special attention was paid to the potential environmental and socio-economic impacts in the context of oasis ecosystems while taking into consideration the sustainability and profitability of the actions to be implemented.

- **Workshop 4: Co-organization of the Desertification event (10-13 June 2015)**



- **Workshop 5: Sustainable management of forest ecosystems in arid and semi-arid zones facing climate change (Amman, 22 and 23 November 2015)**

The regional workshop offered a platform for exchange and sharing of knowledge aimed to:

- a. Outline the methodologies and initial results of the regional study dealing with approaches to sustainable management of forest ecosystems in the desert areas of the MENA region in the face of climate change
- b. Present the results of the online forum discussions and deepen the debates on the various issues discussed.
- c. Gather feedback from beneficiary partners in view of adapting the logical framework and the concept note of a regional project, as well as the Policy Brief to the needs of sustainable and efficient management of forest ecosystems in the region.
- d. The workshop gathered a total of fifty participants composed of: (i) Beneficiaries for each of the 13 beneficiary countries of these projects (including 03 for MENA-DELP and 02 for BRICKS); representatives of civil society; consultants in charge of the regional study; representatives of partner institutions (ICARDA, NCARE, RSCN and HFDJB); representatives of regional coordination institutions of MENA-DELP and Circum-Saharan.

- **Workshop 6: Co-organization of the International Conference on Territorial development and Tourism (Marrakesh, 1-2 June 2016)**

- **Workshop 7: Regional Climate Finance Workshop (Marrakesh, 30-31 May 2016)**

Overall, the objectives of the training workshop were:

- a. Allow a better understanding of the workings of global climate funds in order to increase the chances of mobilizing funding for regional projects with a particular focus on the Green Climate Fund;
- b. To discuss the content of a concept note for a regional project developed by the OSS to be submitted to the GCF. Indeed, the project in question will deal with strengthening the resilience of forest ecosystems and other woodlands in arid and semi-arid regions in countries in MENA region.

- **Workshop 8: Land Degradation Neutrality: Commitments and implementation (Tunis, July 13-14 July 2017).**

2. Number of virtual meetings held through the dedicated Desert Information System on desert related issues



| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| | <p><i>Baseline: 0 - Target: 10 - Actual: 7</i> Virtual meetings were held through two types of information systems.</p> <p>a. Via Skype: Meeting 1: Presentation of the MENADELP web portal Meeting 2: Presentation of M&E tools Meeting 3: Forest ecosystem governance Climate Finance</p> <p>b. Via the Discussion Forum tool on the MENA-DELP portal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion1: The modes of governance of forest ecosystems • Discussion2: Climate Finance • Discussions 3 & 4: COP22 from Paris to Marrakech - Two online questionnaires and discussions were launched in preparation for side events organized on the sidelines of international meetings. Discussions were on a variety of topics, such as: forest ecosystems; optimal use of oases products and by-products; challenges of land degradation; M&E system and key indicators etc. to further inform participants about sustainable management of desert ecosystems and how they can better share information towards a common goal. <p>3. Number of knowledge products related to desert ecosystems issues developed through the project <i>Baseline: 0 - Target: 7 - Actual: 8</i> A set of information and knowledge products has been developed: 1: Potential and development prospects of desert areas (3 studies) 2: Good agricultural practices in desert areas (4 studies) 3: Valorization of the products and by-products of the oases of the MENA region (3 studies) 4: Approaches for sustainable management of forest ecosystems in the desert areas of the MENA region (1 study) 5: Policy Brief on Water Resources in MENA 6: Policy Brief on Sustainable development of desert areas 7. Policy Brief on Oasis Ecosystems in MENA 8. Policy Brief on sustainable development of desert value chains 7: Guide on eco-systemic accounting 8: Synthesis of carbon sequestration techniques.</p> |
| Intermediate Results Indicators | <p>1. Number of participants to workshops organized by the project <i>Baseline: 0 - Target: 470 - Actual: 479</i></p> |



- 148 participants attended the 8 regional thematic workshops organized by the project on topics related to the studies.

- 200 participants attended five international meetings, including: i) Three side events, one side event during the UNCCD Scientific Conference (50 participants) and another side event during the UNCCD COP 12 and in the margins of COP22 (50 participants); ii) Two international conferences that were co-organized with the World Bank with (100 participants).

2. Number of participants in study tours organized by the project

Baseline: 0 - Target: 70 - Actual: 120

Five study tours were organized by the project:

1. Jordan - May 2014 "Good Agricultural Practices": 22 participants
2. Tunisia - Nov. 2014 "Valorization of oasis products and by-products": 19 participants
3. Morocco - April 2015 "Training of craft training": 22 participants
4. Jordan - Nov. 2015 "Sustainable management of forest ecosystems in arid and semi-arid zones": 43 participants.
5. Morocco - May 2016 "Resilience and adaptation to CC: 14 participants

3. Number of users of the established information system (web server)

Baseline: 0 - Target: 1,100 - Actual: 1,420

70% new visitors = 994 visitors

30% regular users = 426 users

4. Number of members of national institutions trained on M&E system and Information system

Baseline: 0 - Target: 8 - Actual: 26

The cumulative number of national institutions trained on M & E is detailed as follows:

- Algeria: Two people
- Egypt: Four people
- Morocco: Eight people
- Jordan: Three people
- Tunisia: Nine people

5. Number of comprehensive M&E reports prepared at Program and Project levels



| | |
|--|---|
| | <p><i>Baseline: 0 - Target: 8 - Actual: 14</i></p> <p>The Regional Project has developed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An M&E Concept Note 2. A training package on monitoring and evaluation and documents on M&E and Risk Assessment 3. A synthesis report on the indicators of the MENA-DELP regional project 4. Fact sheets describing the project and program indicators 5. A booklet on project M&E tools 6. A guide to create and use the Quick Response Code 7. Eight comprehensive M&E reports on project activities (included in bi-annual progress reports) <p>In addition: The Regional Project was also able to undertake the following activities or initiatives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of four sets of thematic studies on a number of topics (four lots totaling a set of 11 studies dealing with subjects of importance for national projects and countries of the region). All these studies have been posted on-line. 2. Creation of an Information System - including Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) data and maps - hosted by OSS. 3. Creation of a Facebook page to promote exchanges within the regional network: 4. Development of a Web application allowing the display and the consultation of historical data series through the visualization of curves and graphs describing the evolution over time of data and spatialized indicators (including a geographical interface centered on the zone of action of the MENA-DELP program). 5. Organization of a total of eight meetings of the Steering Committee. |
| <p>Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 1)</p> | <p>COMPONENT 1 (see also outputs under intermediate indicators 1-3 above):</p> <p>a. Preparation of briefing notes of the consultations launched in preparation for the Thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 13): (i) Towards Sustainable Oases in the Circum-Sahara, presented on September 13, 2017, during the side-event "Oasis Ecosystems: What contributes to the realization of the concept of neutrality in land degradation"; (ii) Neutrality in Land Degradation in the Circum-Sahara: From commitment to implementation, presented at Ordos during the side event "Neutrality in Land Degradation in the circum-Saharan region of Africa: from commitment to implementation "14 September 2017.</p> |



b. Organization of a regional workshop on the concept of Land Degradation Neutrality (NDT) in Tunis from 11 to 13 July 2017. The workshop was attended by representatives of ministries, forestry management, research and development, and civil society from several countries in MENA region (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) and Senegal. The remote participation, via video conference, of representatives of the UNCCD and the Global Mechanism was also recorded.

c. Attend the Thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 13) and the Twenty-Third Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 23 UNFCCC) through the co-organization of several parallel events: (i) oasis ecosystems: what contributes to the realization of the concept of neutrality in terms of land degradation; (ii) land degradation neutrality in the circum-Saharan region; (iii) policies and financing for successful partnership transformation; (iv) increasing adaptive capacity and reducing the vulnerability of the most vulnerable communities and ecosystems through a regional approach.

COMPONENT 2 (see also outputs under intermediate indicators 5-4 above):

The PMU ensured the updating and monitoring of the M&E database.

c. Elaborated M&E systems, developed database and established GIS including land occupation maps at the scale of the whole region that are currently used by the OSS and beneficiary countries. This allows them access to best available knowledge on land degradation and desertification. The operational use of these data and tools will help shape future focal area strategies by enhancing the knowledge base on global environmental benefits on desert ecosystems and livelihoods.

d. The project web was enriched by two new interfaces: (i) an interface dedicated to the sharing of "Success stories" and; (ii) another to the sharing of activities and results of national projects. These tools have been designed in such a way that national projects have the opportunity to enter directly useful and necessary information to describe the activities or the "Success Story" they intend to share.

e. Periodic update of the systems developed (the M&E system for the programmatic level and for the regional project). Both systems are integrated into an online tracking tool that is an integral part of the project's dedicated website and can be accessed by following this link: (<http://www.oss-online.org/mena-delp/index.php>) / is /



monitoring of indicators). During the second half of 2017, the PMU continued to provide support to national partners responsible for M&E at the project management unit level.

f. Periodic M&E Database Feeding: During the second half of 2017 and following partner support meetings, the PMU periodically updated the M&E database. This is mainly the integration of the values of MENA-DELP project indicators; and support to national M & E managers in updating the values of project indicators.



ANNEX 2. BANK LENDING AND IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT/SUPERVISION

A. TASK TEAM MEMBERS

| Name | Role |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Preparation | |
| Supervision/ICR | |
| Taoufiq Bennouna | Task Team Leader(s) |
| Blandine Marie Wu Chebili | Procurement Specialist(s) |
| Mehdi El Batti | Financial Management Specialist |
| Enos E. Esikuri | Team Member |
| Markus Friedrich Vorpahl | Social Safeguards Specialist |
| Mohamed Adnene Bezzaouia | Environmental Safeguards Specialist |
| Enos E. Esikuri | ICR Author |

- STAFF TIME AND COST

| Stage of Project Cycle | Staff Time and Cost | |
|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| | No. of staff weeks | US\$ (including travel and consultant costs) |
| Preparation | | |
| FY12 | 6.623 | 33,543.78 |
| FY13 | 5.425 | 30,613.06 |
| FY14 | .300 | 1,540.62 |
| Total | 12.35 | 65,697.46 |
| Supervision/ICR | | |
| FY14 | 2.225 | 11,188.19 |
| FY15 | 2.600 | 22,578.65 |
| FY16 | 2.875 | 50,272.62 |
| FY17 | 6.800 | 79,138.23 |

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| FY18 | 6.600 | 77,417.16 |
| Total | 21.10 | 240,594.85 |



ANNEX 3. PROJECT COST BY COMPONENT

Table 3: Project Costs

| Components | Amount at Approval (US\$M) | Actual at Project Closing (US\$M) | Percentage of Approval (US\$M) |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Knowledge Management and Sharing | .80 | .80 | 100% |
| Monitoring and Evaluation | .10 | .10 | 100% |
| Project Coordination | .10 | .10 | 100% |
| Total | 1.00 | 1.00 | 100% |

Table 4: Sources of Funding

| Components | AMOUNT AT APPROVAL (US\$M) | | | ACTUAL AT PROJECT CLOSING (US\$M) | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| | GEF | Co-Financing | TOTAL | GEF | Co-Financing | TOTAL |
| Knowledge Management and Sharing | .80 | .30 | 1.10 | .80 | .30 | 100% |
| Monitoring and Evaluation | .10 | .18 | .28 | .10 | .18 | 100% |
| Project Coordination | .10 | .05 | .15 | .10 | .05 | 100% |
| Total | 1.00 | 0.49 | 1.49 | 1.00 | 0.49 | 100% |

The total amount of in-kind co-financing of US\$487,500 was available from the following sources:

- (i) total in-kind contributions estimated at US\$187,500 from Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia (US\$ 62,500 each), mainly staff time, national institutions selected to carry out knowledge management and sharing activities; and
- (ii) in-kind contribution estimated at US\$ 300,000 from the Sahara and Sahel Observatory, mainly for staff time, products generated by its programs on environmental monitoring, early warning, management of water resources and monitoring and evaluation.

This project was delivered without any additional cash contribution.



ANNEX 4. EFFICIENCY ANALYSIS

The PAD noted that the project was not amenable to a quantitative cost-benefit or financial analysis. However, while it is difficult to estimate in monetary terms the global and local benefits expected as a result of the activities, the project applied cost-effective principles at the design phase and during implementation, which should be considered in the context of the Incremental Cost Analysis prepared at project preparation. The project was financed by the GEF Grant in the amount of US\$1.00 million. In-kind contribution (co-financing) for a total of US\$0.49 million was provided by the OSS and national governments hosting the beneficiary organizations.

In the table below, the Incremental Cost Analysis from the PAD is reproduced and complimented with a column on incremental achievements. The results show that the project largely delivered the expected incremental benefits to the global environment and worked as a catalyst for strengthened regional collaboration around a shared understanding of the importance of desert ecosystems to the sustainable development of the region.

Under Component 1, the project has broadened and deepened the collaboration of organizations working to protect desert ecosystems and livelihoods. It has done so by bringing together specialists, decision-makers, and researchers to exchange knowledge and experiences, through study tours to the field and meeting with local desert communities, and by creating web-based networks and communities of practice to stay connected and deepen the engagement and collaboration around sustainable desert management.

Under Component 2, the project has developed a new information and knowledge management system, which has strengthened collaboration at an institutional level through virtual discussion fora, sharing of knowledge products, and collective tracking of MENA-DELP project at the programmatic level.

Table 5: Incremental Cost & Achievement Analysis

| Activity | Baseline | GEF Alternative | Global Benefits | Incremental Costs (US\$) & Achievements |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Component 1: Knowledge Management and Sharing | | | | |
| Workshops or training sessions: Knowledge sharing | Difficult dialogue between stakeholders on the importance of the Desert ecosystems Focus of knowledge sharing on local environmental issues | Strengthened synergy between stakeholders at all levels to place the importance of the desert as a cornerstone for long-term development prospects in the region and the necessity to improve the flow of desert ecosystem services for sustainable development in a | More rational management of desert ecosystem, protection of the desert biodiversity, improvement of local population livelihood | Baseline: 100,000 GEF alternative: 400,000 Incremental: 300,000 Knowledge development and sharing: 8 Workshops 8 Knowledge products 479 participants Synergy and collaboration between stakeholders has been strengthened. Knowledge sharing was broadened from a local context to a regional and international level. |



| Activity | Baseline | GEF Alternative | Global Benefits | Incremental Costs (US\$) & Achievements |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| | | positive feedback loop Knowledge sharing broadened to regional and international focus | | |
| Study tours: Knowledge production | Focus of knowledge production on local environmental issues | Knowledge generation broadened to stronger focus on Desert ecosystems issues | Stronger focus on deserts issues in knowledge production | Baseline: 100,000 GEF alternative: 300,000 Incremental: 200,000 5 Study tours with 120 participants, in which the participant's knowledge about desert ecosystems and livelihoods across the region was broadened. |
| Web-based networks | N/A | Create a forum for open discussion and integration, identification of key issues and agreed opportunities for collaboration; support enforcement institutions with similar mandates to protect Desert ecosystems | More concerted and cost-effective and strengthened desert resources management activities | Baseline: 0 GEF alternative: 100,000 Incremental: 100,000 By bringing together members of beneficiary organization, communities of practice have formed around various issues related to the sustainable management of desert ecosystems. The CoP meet to discuss those issues and possibilities for collaboration on existing and new web-based networks, including the DIS (see point below under Component 2) |
| Component 2: Monitoring and Evaluation | | | | |
| Dedicated information system | Desert information systems and environmental observatories mobilized around local environmental threats | Regional level externalities are also tracked and constituencies mobilized | Improved monitoring of Desert MENA Region | Baseline: 0 GEF alternative: 100,000 Incremental: 100,000 Development of the dedicated Desert Information System, housed at the OSS. DIS is an online platform for discussion, virtual meetings, |



| Activity | Baseline | GEF Alternative | Global Benefits | Incremental Costs (US\$) & Achievements |
|--------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| | | | | knowledge sharing, and collaboration for organizations working to protect desert ecosystems, biodiversity, and livelihoods. During the project, DIS was used to hold 7 virtual meetings, distribute polls and questionnaires, and track project progress of MENA-DELP projects in a harmonized results framework. |
| TOTAL | | | | Baseline: 200,000 GEF alternative: 900,000 Incremental: 700,000 |

Cost-Effective Approach

The project design was based on a cost-effective approach, which assumed that inherently limited funds relative to the scale of its objectives may have relatively large benefits and spillovers, which can trigger an institutional shift in the participating organizations towards greater collaboration on a regional scale.

During project design and implementation, the team applied judiciousness in the use of funds leading to cost-effective measures. For example:

- The organization of different events (such as COPIL meetings, study tours and workshops) were combined to reduce organizational costs, particularly so in Amman and Djerba in 2014, Montpellier in 2015, and Marrakech in 2016).
- The costs related to the creation of the DIS was kept to a minimal due to the use of the in-house services of the OSS IT-specialist. Contracting this activity would likely have resulted in higher costs.

Disbursing the full amount by project closing, the project proved to be efficient in the use of project resources, particularly in considering the regional scale and the number of outputs produced, and when comparing the Regional Project with other projects, which have provided knowledge management and capacity building services (see Table below). The Regional Project delivered 8 workshops, 5 study tours, 8 knowledge products, an Information System, 7 virtual meetings, and a harmonized programmatic-level M&E framework for five participating countries for US\$1 million. This compares well to other regional projects such as Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Program for Aral Sea Basin (P151363), with a knowledge management component of US\$12.5 million, for two countries.



Table 6: WB projects with knowledge management and capacity building interventions

| Project Name | Countries | Knowledge Management | | Capacity Building | |
|--|--|----------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| | | Amount | Activities | Amount | Activities |
| Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Program for Aral Sea Basin (CAMP4ASB) (P151363) | Tajikistan, Uzbekistan | \$12.5M | Open information platform | \$1.0M | awareness raising, participatory planning, and implementation support of climate investment plans at the community level. |
| Nigeria Scaling Up Sustainable Land Management Practice, Knowledge, and Coordination | Nigeria | US\$1M | Knowledge management | US\$6M | Building the underlying capacity at federal, state, and local government levels |
| REGOKO | Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza | US\$1.3M | Knowledge management, studies, distribution | US\$1.5M | Trainings |

Knowledge Spill-Over Effects

The project is expected to generate non-quantified knowledge spill-over benefits, which may materialize over time (tacit knowledge).

- Shared knowledge and experiences among the five countries of the regional challenges for sustainable management of desert ecosystems and livelihoods are expected to result in closer cooperation over time, for example in future Green Climate Fund projects, which are currently under preparation.
- It may also lead to better integration of issues and concerns into sectoral policies and investment decisions of national governments. A better understanding of key issues affecting desert ecosystems and livelihoods - in terms of constraints and potentials - may have a considerable economic impact on key



sectoral policies of each participating country and potentially translate into multi-sectoral changes as well.

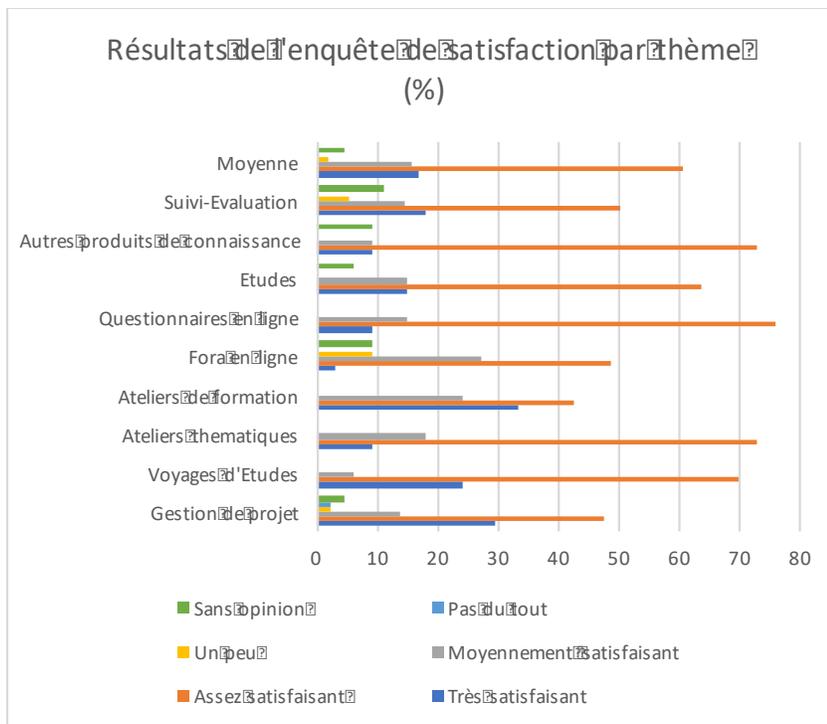
- The interventions may also enhance the institutional capacity of the beneficiary organizations to make effective use of their limited human and financial resources.



ANNEX 5. BORROWER, CO-FINANCIER AND OTHER PARTNER/STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

In preparation for the final World Bank supervision mission in November 2017, the PMU prepared a survey to measure the degree of satisfaction of national project partners and beneficiaries with project outputs and activities. The survey was implemented as a questionnaire and structured in 9 parts: (i) project management, (ii) study tours, (iii) thematic workshops, (iv) training workshops, (v) online fora, (vi) online questionnaires, (vii) studies, (viii) other knowledge products and, (iv) monitoring and evaluation. The questionnaire was posted online at the dedicated Desert Information System for a period of one week. A total of 11 responses were received.

Figure 1: Results of the Satisfaction Survey, by theme (%)



Source : Enquête de satisfaction en ligne, Janvier 2018

The main conclusions were: (i) cooperation and exchange networks have been further strengthened through study tours and training workshops, (ii) the level of satisfaction varies from one theme to the other; the most positive being in the case of thematic workshops, online questionnaires and other knowledge products, (iii) the themes of the studies were appreciated, but their quality to a lesser extent, (iv) the Monitoring and Evaluation tool and the information system have facilitated the monitoring of national projects and (v) the use of the Monitoring and Evaluation tool and information system will be difficult in the absence regional project.



ANNEX 6. PROJECT AREA AND BENEFICIARIES

The regional project was implemented in five countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia. The regional umbrella organization Sahara and Sahel observatory was the Executing Agency.

The beneficiary organizations and institutions included:

1. **Algeria:** World Desert Institute (IDM) and Ministry of Land Planning and Environment (MATE);
2. **Egypt:** Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) - later replaced by the Desert Research Center (DRC);
3. **Jordan:** National Center for Agriculture Research and Extension (NCARE);
4. **Morocco:** Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fisheries; Agriculture Development Agency (ADA); Institut National de Recherche Agronomique (INRA), and the Agence Nationale de Développement des Zones Oasiennes (ANDZOA); and
5. **Tunisia:** State Secretariat of Environment.



ANNEX 7. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Project Documents:

- Project Appraisal Document. May 1, 2013 (Report No.: 72341-MNA)
- Grant Agreement. Negotiated Draft (Grant No.: TF012284)
- Minutes of Appraisal Meeting (October 2012)
- GEF Approval Document (October 2012)

Implementation Supervision Reports:

- Sequence 1-9

Aide Memoires (and related mission documents):

- November, 2017
- April, 2016
- December, 2015 (Mid-Term Review)
- June, 2015 (Mid-Term Review)
- December, 2014
- June, 2014

Additional Documents

- Beneficiary Survey (*Synthèse Enquête de Satisfaction*) January, 2018.
- Documentation available on the MENA-DELP/OSS Web site:
<http://www.oss-online.org/mena-delp/index.php/fr/s-e/suivi-des-indicateurs>
- MENA Regional Framework (2015)

Country Strategic Frameworks:

- *Algeria*: Working for Algeria 2018
- *Egypt*: Country Partnership Framework FY15-FY19
- *Jordan*: Country Partnership Framework FY17-FY22
- *Morocco*: Country Partnership Strategy FY14-FY17
- *Tunisia*: Country Partnership Framework FY16-FY20