



REQUEST FOR: CEO ENDORSEMENT

PROJECT TYPE: MEDIUM-SIZED PROJECT
TYPE OF TRUST FUND: MULTI-FOCAL AREA

PART I: PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title:	Conservation of biodiversity and mitigation of land degradation through adaptive management of agricultural heritage systems		
Country(ies):	Morocco	GEF Project ID:	5481
GEF Agency(ies):	FAO	GEF Agency Project ID:	618618
Other Executing Partner(s):	National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA)	Submission Date:	13/02/2015
GEF Focal Area (s):	Multi Focal Area	Project Duration (months):	36
Name of parent program (if applicable):	N/A	Project Agency Fee:	73,332
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For SFM/REDD+ <input type="checkbox"/> • For SGP <input type="checkbox"/> • For PPP <input type="checkbox"/> 		

A. FOCAL AREA STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Focal Area Objectives	Focal Area Outcomes	Focal Area Outputs	Trust Fund	Indicative Grant Amount (\$)	Indicative Co-Financing (\$)
BD-2	Outcome 2.2: Measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity incorporated in policy and regulatory frameworks	Output 2.3: Certified production landscapes (640 hectares of agricultural land labelled organic)	GEFTF	268,105	2,669,000
LD-1	Outcome 1.3: Sustained flow of services in agro-ecosystems	Output 1.3 Suitable SL/WM interventions to increase vegetative cover in agro-ecosystems.	GEFTF	238,383	2,826,000
LD-3	Outcome 3.3: Increased investments in integrated landscape management	Output 3.3 Appropriate actions to diversify the financial resource base	GEFTF	192,069	2,355,000
			Sub-Total	698,557	
			Project Management Costs	73,361	
			Total project costs	771,918	7,850,000

B. PROJECT FRAMEWORK

Project Objective: To strengthen approaches that promote biodiversity conservation and mitigate land degradation in globally important oases ecosystems by demonstrating adaptive management of agricultural heritage.

Project Component	Grant Type ¹	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	Grant Amount (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1. The enabling environment to support the conservation of agro biodiversity has been enhanced through targeting regulatory frameworks, local institutional capacity building and collection and storage of data.	TA	<p>Outcome 1.1 The enabling environment to support the conservation of agro biodiversity has been enhanced through targeting regulatory frameworks, local institution building and collection and storage of data.</p> <p><i>Indicator: Agricultural framework enhancement: Score 4. A seed regulatory framework is formally adopted by the Government. [LD PMAT LD1. i)]</i></p> <p><i>At least 500 qx local seed varieties are identified, classified and georeferenced in local seed catalogues.</i></p>	<p>Output 1.1.1 Databases and catalogues on local seed varieties including plant genetic resources are developed.</p> <p>Output 1.1.2 A regulatory framework for the development of local seed varieties is established and the seed sector is strengthened.</p> <p>Output 1.1.3 Seed growers' cooperatives and seed growers' networks are established.</p>	GEFTF	104,600	1,400,000
2. Reducing pressures on natural resources from competing land uses, to reverse land degradation trends in the Oases landscapes through the application of good agricultural practices and agro-ecology.	TA	<p>Outcome 2.1, Agricultural production is enhanced and allows alleviation of land degradation in the oasis systems.</p> <p><i>Indicators: Measures to reduce degradation conserve and sustainably use of 1117 ha of land lead to improvement of soil fertility, resilience and an increase of productivity by 15% in 640he (certified land).</i></p>	<p>Output 2.1.1 Sustainable land and water management practices targeting the reversion of land degradation trends implemented in five selected pilot sites in Oases systems.</p> <p>Output 2.1.2 Farmers are coached on flood control techniques and on measures against land degradation/desertification in the five pilot locations.</p> <p>Output 2.1.3 : Local producers are coached on conservation and water use efficiency</p>	GEFTF	404,260	3,600,000

¹ TA includes capacity building and research and development.

			practices and on hydro-agricultural development measures based on traditional irrigation systems.			
3. Mainstreaming of the biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into the local communities' strategies for economy diversification in Oases landscapes.	TA	<p>Outcome 3.1 Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use have been integrated into alternative income-generating mechanisms, with the participation of local communities living in the oases landscapes.</p> <p><i>Indicators:</i> <i>5 specifications submitted for application for the labelling of local products, including dates, cereals, apples and wool.</i></p> <p><i>640Ha in Oases-Ecosystems under certification/labelling scheme.</i></p> <p><i>At least 500 qx local seed varieties are conserved involving 75 farmers.</i></p>	<p>Output 3.1.1 Enhanced local capacity for implementing existing labelled local Oases products in the five pilot sites. The labelling criteria will include sustainable production standards in view of biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>Output 3.1.2 Applications are submitted to the competent authorities for labelling of local Oases products, on the distinctive signs of origin and quality of the food and agricultural products (cereals and apples in Imilchil, Assiane dates in Figuig and wool in Imilchil and Figuig).</p> <p>Output 3.1.3 Agricultural products from local crop varieties are labelled organic.</p> <p>Output 3.1.4 Valuation of local agrifood products such as dates and durum is enhanced.</p> <p>Output 3.1.5 Product benchmarking of labelled agro-biodiversity products.</p>	GEFTF	142,300	1,920,000

			Output 3.1.6 Local producers are trained on seed conservation and participatory plant breeding techniques through demonstration plots.			
4. Project monitoring and evaluation.	TA	Outcome 4.1 Project implementation based on results-based management.	Output 4.1 System for systematic collection of field-based data to monitor project outcome indicators made operational. Output 4.2 Final evaluation conducted. Output 4.3 Information dissemination.	GEFTF	47,397	930,000
Sub-Total					698,557	7,850,000
Project management Cost (PMC)					73,361	0
Sub-total project costs					771,918	7,850,000
Total project costs						8,621,918

C. SOURCES OF CONFIRMED CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY SOURCE AND BY NAME (\$)

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount (\$)²
GEF Agency	FAO	In-kind	350,000
National Government	Agency for the development of oases and the argan areas (ANDZOA)	Cash	4,000,000
National Government	Agency for the promotion and the Economic and Social Development of the Southern Provinces of the Kingdom (Agence Sud)	Cash	1,000,000
National Government	Agency for the Agricultural Development (ADA)	Cash	2,000,000
National Government	National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA)	In-kind	500,000
Total Co-financing			7,850,000

D. TRUST FUND RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY, FOCAL, AREA AND COUNTRY

GEF Agency	Type of Trust Funds	Focal Area	Country Name/ Global	Grant Amount (\$) (a)	Agency Fee (\$) (b)	Total (\$) c=a+b
FAO	GEFTF	Biodiversity	Morocco	268,105	25,470	293,575
FAO	GEFTF	Land Degradation	Morocco	503,813	47,862	551,675
Total Grant Resources				771,918	73,332	845, 250

F. CONSULTANTS WORKING FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPONENTS:

<i>Component</i>	<i>Estimated person days</i>	<i>GEF amount(\$)</i>	<i>Co-financing (\$)</i>	<i>Project total (\$)</i>
International consultants*	33	14,900	0	14,900
National consultants**	1050	206,539	0	206,539
Total	1083	221,439	0	221,439

* Details to be provided in Annex C.

** Does not include the Project Coordinator

PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

A. DESCRIBE ANY CHANGES IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE PROJECT DESIGN OF THE ORIGINAL PIF

During the extensive PPG process the following adjustments affecting project design were made:

- The geographical coverage was reduced to cover five project sites considering funding and time available. Following the baseline analysis conducted during PPG, some project sites changed. The current selection of target sites better reflects the operational structures and planning priorities of baseline projects enabling smooth implementation and seamless integration of the GEFTF-funded outputs into these projects.
- There has been no major change in the project components or budgetary allocations. However outcomes and outputs have been amended. The changes listed below are merely a re-organization of the original PIF strategy, keeping its broader objective and framework intact.
- The indicative Project Management Costs (PIF) were elaborated on in detail during the project preparation phase. With a slight increase from 6% to 10 %, they now reflect the project's PMC needs based on an analysis of the project's scope and administrative requirements. This is detailed in the table below and further illustrated in Section A.4.

Changes in Project Outcomes and Outputs:

- The Outcome 1 has been reformulated to read: *The enabling environment to support the conservation of agro biodiversity has been enhanced through targeting regulatory frameworks, local institution building and collection and storage of data.* This change does not indicate any significant change in the envisaged activities but merely a fine tuning of the PIF to address specific needs identified during the PPG baseline studies. In the PIF Outcome 1 was: *The enabling environment within the agricultural sector has been enhanced through targeting national policy and regulatory frameworks to support conservation of agro-biodiversity and sustainable use of land and water resources in the Oases Systems, in line with the principles of the CBD and National Charter for Regional Development.*
- The Output 1.1.1 in the PIF: *One national policy package is developed to support the 3' national ongoing programmes for sustainable land and water management, and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity in productive landscapes located in the mountains, valleys and arid areas in oases systems,* was removed and substituted by three new Outputs: Output 1.1.1 *Databases and catalogues on local seed varieties including plant genetic resources are developed;* Output 1.1.2 *A regulatory framework for the development of local seed varieties is established and the seed sector is strengthened;* and Output 1.1.3 *Seed growers' cooperatives and seed growers' networks are established.* This change reflects the findings of the PPG analysis on gaps & barriers in baseline initiatives and investments; it better addresses the need to strengthen local institutional capacities as key to enhance the enabling environment to support conservation of agro-biodiversity and sustainable use of land and water resources in the oases systems.
- The Outputs 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3 and 2.1.4 in the PIF have all been slightly rearranged and synthesized into three main Outputs as to further define specific target activities.
- The Output 3.1.1 in the PIF has been broken down into five Outputs to specifically target five separate interventions: Output 3.1.1 aims at strengthening local capacities in implementing existing quality control labels; Output 3.1.2 aims at developing new Geographical indication (GI) and Agricultural Labels (AL); Output 3.1.3 targets organic labelling; Output 3.1.4 targets the transforming and valuation of small-scale agro-biodiversity food production and; and Output 3.1.5 supports benchmarking activities, and sales contract development for the commercialization of labelled agro-biodiversity products.
- The Output 3.1.3 in the PIF: *Seeds of local varieties of legumes and forages are conserved and widely disseminated between farmers* has been reformulated to specifically target in-situ conservation and participatory plant breeding activities. It now reads: *Local producers are trained on seed conservation and participatory plant breeding techniques through demonstration plots.*

- Based on the detailed analysis undertaken during the PPG, the allocation of GEF funding and co-financing across the components has been slightly modified due to the change in the level of co-financing and as per changes made in the arrangement of outcomes and outputs. The details are provided in the following Table:

Component	PIF GEFTF (USD\$)	Actual GEF TF (USD\$)	PIF Co-financing (USD\$)	Actual Co-financing (USD\$)	Note
Component 1	236,503	104,600	2,365,000	1,425,000	Grant amount/Co-financing ratio changed from 1:10 in PIF to 1:7
Component 2	254,155	404,260	2,215,000	3,600,000	Grant amount/Co-financing ratio remained as in PIF: 1:11.
Component 3	170,672	142,300	2,315,000	1,925,000	Grant amount/Co-financing ratio remained as in PIF: 1:7
Component 4	71,992	47,397	510,660	930,000	Grant amount/Co-financing ratio changed from 1:14 in PIF to 1:5

- The co-financing structure is described in detail in the Project Document Section 4.3 (financial planning by component and by co-financier).

A.1 National strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions, if applicable, i.e. NAPAS, NAPs, NBSAPs, national communications, TNAs, NCSA, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, Biennial Update Reports, etc.

There are no changes as compared to when the PIF was developed

A.2 GEF focal area and/or fund(s) strategies, eligibility criteria and priorities.

There are no changes as compared to when the PIF was developed

A.3 The GEF Agency's comparative advantage

There are no changes as compared to when the PIF was developed

A.4 The baseline project and the problem it seeks to address

The problem analysis provided in the PIF has further been developed, and deepened during project preparation.

Section 1.1 of the Project Document provides a detailed description of the situation with regards to agricultural development in the oasis systems of Morocco, and of climate related impacts and threats to oasis dwellers as follows:

Problems and issues to be addressed

Loss of Biodiversity and Land Degradation

The following major constraints affecting biodiversity and soil quality in the five pilot sites were assessed through the PPG financed studies:

- **High levels of salinity in water and soil:** in most of the targeted oasis systems, soil salinization is causing native vegetation to become unhealthy or die leading to a decline in biodiversity through the dominance of salt-resistant species.
- **Reduced groundcover** is causing soils to become more prone to erosion, polluting water with increased sediment, making it unsuitable for both human and animal consumption and threatening high value ecosystems and the plant and animal species they support.
- **Water scarcity- mismanagement of water resources:** In terms of water availability, the current situation is highly precarious especially in the southern oasis systems, due to the deteriorated state of the traditional water collection and irrigation systems. Historically, irrigation was mostly been made possible through the use of an intricate network of earthen canals (seguias), all of these ancient and historic dams have now silted up or breached and are becoming useless for irrigation. Most canals were traditionally filled with water diverted from the larger river channels (oueds or wadis), or from small reservoirs - intermittent pools of water – impounded behind a series of low-water dams across the oueds. However, the introduction of new technologies and government policies, have led to changes in traditional water management. Insufficient water (from the dam) and non-sustainable methods of groundwater use (overuse of diesel pumps) are resulting in a dramatic lowering of the water table underlying the oasis systems. These modern water technologies, because they are proffered and subsidized by the government, continue to replace the few remaining khattara, which are abandoned as the water table drops. Khattara are employed either as primary irrigation sources or at least to supplement the water from mechanized wells and government canals. "Qsour" which used to operate khattara have abandoned theirs only because "the water has gone dry". Usually this means that water no longer flows through the khattara because the water table has dropped, but it may also mean that a flood has damaged the subterranean conduit, or the tunnel has collapsed, or side walls have blown out into a neighbouring tunnel as the result of dynamite (occasionally) used during cleaning operations. In Akka for instance, according to the baseline study developed during this project preparation less than 10 % of the operating khattara systems is foreseen to remain active in the near future.
In terms of biodiversity, decline in water availability is causing the abandonment of crop land and the prioritizing of date palm production. Loss of crop production is endangering endemic seed varieties, severely threatening species and genetic resources.
- **Loss of soil fertility:** unsustainable land management practices coupled with low use of fertilizers and manure has compromised soil fertility and quality in most of the targeted oasis. Losses of vegetation covering some areas due to overgrazing and over-harvesting of wood for fuel, coupled with decreased water table levels is causing severe soil erosion. Increased sand drift and the development of new dune fields in some areas also is a considerable cause of loss of soil fertility. The limited adoption of good agricultural practices also compromises soil fertility, for instance, in all targeted oasis systems, legumes are seldom employed in crop rotation and intercropping.
- **Low agricultural productivity:** concerning productivity and productivity levels of date palm production, major constraints include lack of inputs, inadequate labour and the high costs for labour-intensive management practices including pollination, pruning and harvesting throughout the year. Emigration of skilled labour to work in the cities is further worsening the status of date palm production. As the majority of these migrants are young men between the age of 20 and 40, necessary agricultural activities such as soil preparation, selection and planting out of palm offshoots are hardly executed by many households. The maintenance of date palms is generally minimized. The result of this neglect is the running wild of the palm-groves, densely grown with date palms, reducing harvests and consequently, agricultural productivity. In many oasis systems, the costs of date production have surpassed revenues and to compensate for production losses farmers have introduced new and improved seed varieties and crop species. In Imilchil for instance, apples and potatoes are becoming the main agricultural produce at the expense of local seed production. Endogenous varieties of cereals and legumes are mostly affected - a loss of 37% of native varieties has been reported. The loss in plant genetic resources is also threatening the survival of wildlife species, altering high value ecosystems.

Furthermore, agricultural production is affected by Bayoud disease. Bayoud is caused by fungus and has affected nearly all Moroccan palm groves killing more than 12 million. In the oasis system of Akka, date palms numbered 1.2 million in 1970, currently only 800,000 exist.

Baseline projects and investments

The 2008 **Green Morocco Plan (PMV)** constitutes the Moroccan government's agricultural policy, with the goal of making agriculture an important driver of economic growth by 2020. The two pillars of the PMV cover (I) high-productivity modern agriculture; and (II) support for small scale agriculture. Both pillars focus on a process of value creation driven by the voluntary aggregation of farmers and farmers' associations around private investors, traders and/or entrepreneurs (contract farming model), with primarily private sector financing within the first pillar and public financing within the second.

Pillar II of the PMV has been devised to provide solidarity-based support to small scale farming with a view to improving the income of the most precarious farmers. This will be done by implementing 545 economically viable projects. The latter integrate the safeguarding of natural resources, by working to establish three project categories:

- Reconversion Projects: substituting cereal cultivated areas with high-value crops;
- Intensification Projects: improving productivity and valuation of existing productions; and
- Diversification Projects: creating complementary agricultural revenues through additional production (saffron, honey, perfume rose, argan tree, carob tree, caper bush, aromatic and medicinal plants, among others).

Moreover, the PMV is linked to safeguarding natural resources in order to promote sustainable agriculture by:

- Implementing projects within the context of improving the agricultural sector's resilience to future climate change as well as preserving biodiversity;
- Integrating technology capable of adapting to climate change on matters relating to genetic improvement, recourse to water/soil conservation techniques and good agricultural practice;
- Implementing a National Programme for Water Savings Economising in Irrigation.

The PMV is linked to the adoption of a participatory and contractual approach as a pragmatic transactional basis intended to concretise development projects. This therefore inscribes itself within a view to mobilise all of the concerned stakeholders, whose administration and organisms are supervised by the MAPM through its agency ADA, local and regional elected representatives, economic operators and their professional organizations.

The envisaged partnerships take on different forms:

- Regional Agricultural Plans (PAR) established between Regions, Chambers of Agriculture and the MAPM;
- Contract-programmes (CP) of agricultural sectors, signed between inter-branch organisations or representative professional Organisations and the MAPM. These programmes constitute the basis for collaboration between the public and private sectors.

The main investment projects are identified in the 16 PARs. These projects altogether aim to: increase production levels of the identified sectors; improve the conditions and quality of the commercialization of production; increase the level of valuation of irrigation water. Projects will be carried out benefitting natural resources and creating value-added taxation and employment.

The most pertinent projects of the PARs contribute to the baseline of the proposed GEF project as follows:

PAR Guelmim-Smara, which includes the Assa site, disposes of a budget of 204M USD for the 2013-2020 period. Main sectors are the palm date, vegetable crops, cereals, henna, animal production and the improvement of fields and apiculture. The Assa site is currently benefitting from several projects. Some of these, such as pruning date palms, maintenance of irrigation systems, and the construction of dikes and walls against flooding of Oued Assa have been completed. Others are currently being implemented and logically follow in the footsteps of their predecessors. This is the case for rehabilitating the Assa date palm grove based on noble palm varieties and resistant to the Bayoud disease

and other crop diseases. These include regional fruit species (pomegranate, fig, olive, almond and others), henna, which is a cash crop in the region, vegetable and forage crops, needed after introducing the D'Man sheep breed in the Assa oasis. Amongst existing projects in this location, apiculture is an important activity due to the abundance of *Euphorbia beaumeruene*. The site has 4500 hives divided over about forty cooperatives. In 2012, honey production reached about 40 tons. Assa honey is labelled. In addition, two processing units, one for goat milk and the other for camel milk have been installed. Nevertheless, the need for expertise on normalising camel meat and hard goat cheese has been voiced. The Projects implemented by the various agencies of the MAPM, namely ADA, ANDZOA, APDESPS and ONCA, as part of the PAR budget allocation will support Component 2 and Component 3 activities.

PAR Sous-Massa-Draa, which includes the project sites of Akka and Ait Mansour has a significant budget for the 2013-2020 period. Projects implemented in this area essentially focus on rehabilitating the irrigation system over 12 kilometres, the construction of eight underground dams to feed the date palm grove, and dikes to prevent river flooding and to protect pastures. The Bouittoub variety originating from this site has been labelled as a Geographical Indication. The INRA has launched the programme for the industrial production of this type of plant in vitro culture. Ongoing projects focus on rehabilitating date palm groves via the cultivation of in vitro plants. These are produced in the context of the palm date Contract Programme between the State and private sector. It also includes improving production techniques and the rehabilitation of the irrigation system. Other projects scheduled for 2015-2016 focus on water management. They concern the realisation of 40 water points and the purchase of 100 reservoirs (cisterns) for a budget for a budget of 1.4M USD.

The Ait Mansour site is part of this PAR and is considered a priority by the public authorities. A budget of 536,000 USD has been granted to this area for 2014-2015 and is to be utilized for several activities such as pruning palms and cleaning of palm groves; rehabilitating Khettaras; protecting fields and irrigation systems against flooding; maintenance of irrigation systems and water reservoirs; reinforcing the capacity of local actors; rehabilitating high added value crops (saffron, roses and other aromatic plants) and the development of apiculture. The implementation of activities linked to rehabilitating palm groves and the irrigation system is the responsibility of ANDZOA alongside the in-kind contribution of the local population. The development of apiculture (formation, purchase of tree nursery apiaries) and the creation of cooperatives are headed by the Provincial Direction of Agriculture of Tiznit. The Projects implemented by the various agencies of the MAPM, namely ADA, ANDZOA and ONCA, within the framework of the **PAR Sous-Massa-Draa** will support Component 1, Component 2 and Component 3 activities.

PAR Meknès-Tafilalet includes the project site of Imilchil- Amellago. Investments mainly focus on water and irrigation system recovery. The region has seen a large growth in fruit species, such as apple tree, peach tree and almond tree. An almond crushing plant has been built in Amellago in the context of this crop's recovery. An apple packaging and vinegar production plant has been created at the Imilchil site. This plant, which has a 100-ton per year capacity, ensures the partial recovery of an increasingly low apple production, which is due to lack of water in the critical phase of fruit growth. Other plantation projects are being implemented by the PMV in the region. The Projects implemented by the various agencies of the MAPM, namely ADA, ANDZOA and ONCA, within the framework of the PAR will support Component 1, Component 2 and Component 3 activities of the proposed GEF project.

PAR Figuig disposes of an integrated programme budget amounting to 247,000 USD for the 2011-2014 period. In partnership with ANDZOA, activities in the Oasis system of Figuig are centred on integrated economic development with the extension of palm groves over an area of 700ha including land development and induction of water from the Sffeissif dam. It also focuses on hydro-agricultural developments, the improvement and utilization of water resources and the rehabilitation of Khettaras. One of its achievements has been assisting farmers in establishing cooperatives and integrating them into the GEI (Group of Economic Interest) in order to improve their negotiation power and competitiveness. This has resulted in creating a favourable context for the diffusion of more adequate technologies and approaches to improve productivity. With regard to the development of date production, the Figuig palm grove has been equipped with a packaging plant with a capacity of 500 tons. A programme to reinforce the capacity of local actors in best practice on date production and management of cooperatives is currently being implemented. The Projects implemented by the various agencies of the MAPM, namely ADA, ANDZOA, APDESPS and ONCA, within the framework of the PAR will mainly support Component 2 and Component 3 activities of the proposed GEF project.

Within the framework of the PMV and the PARs, the main MAPM agency programmes that will provide co-financing to the current project are as follows:

ADA's *PMV Pillar II* projects (explained above). ADA will provide USD 2,000,000 of cash co-financing to the project (See details in Section 4.3.1).

ANDZOA's *Improvement of Agricultural Production in Oases* (2010-2020) which aims at conserving and developing products from Oases systems. ANDZOA will provide USD 4,000,000 of cash co-financing to the project (See details in Section 4.3.1).

INRA's *Agricultural and Environmental Research Programme* (2013-2020), which focuses on the in-situ conservation of agricultural biodiversity and value-adding of the products, derived from mountain areas and oases systems. INRA will provide USD 500,000 of in-kind co-financing to the project (See details in Section 4.3.1).

APDESPS's *Development of the Southern Oases Programme* (2010-2015), which seeks to mainstream different activities implemented by governmental departments, towards economic and social development of southern provinces. APDESPS will provide USD 1,000,000 of cash co-financing to the project (See details in Section 4.3.1).

Although the national government is implementing the above-mentioned initiatives to respond to the growing environmental problems in the country and, in particular, in the oasis systems, further efforts are needed to meet the challenges to ensure integrated approaches for sustainable development and biodiversity conservation. The package of engineering and technology solutions, long put forward to solve the problems in these areas have demonstrated failure. These solutions, sometimes conceived outside of the socio-cultural context of the people concerned and their practices, have resulted in adverse negative effects.

Remaining barriers to address threats on GEB/CC vulnerabilities

The baseline assessments and studies developed during the PPG financed studies identified three main barriers that are preventing the strategies for conservation of biodiversity and sustainable land management from being implemented:

Barrier #1: The institutional and regulatory frameworks promoting biodiversity conservation are inadequate and fail to address sustainable harvesting and product marketing. The seed sector is weak and with the dismantling of traditional productive systems, endangered endemic seed varieties and genetic resources continue to be severely threatened. Low yields due to unsustainable agricultural practices and the absence of appropriate technology for conservation and use of endemic seeds for production, coupled with the absence of a supportive structure for seed stockpiling, has led to the decreasing availability of landraces. Another cause of the scarcity of local seed varieties is of an economic nature. In the face of increasing needs of the local population and the absence of a recovery strategy for local production, the primary aim of farmers is to improve their income by introducing new commercial types and varieties. Yet, the introduction of new crops is negatively impacting on local varieties (genetic erosion). Apart from losses in local agro biodiversity, these crops are accompanied by an increased use of water, pesticides and fertilisers.

Barrier # 2: The introduction of the market law and increasing monetization of exchanges has greatly upset the world oasis, which is traditionally dependent of a solidarity-based economy. The thrust of individualism and the new economy have led to the gradual dismantling of the traditional structures. This upheaval is exacerbated by the harshness of the climate, the scarcity of water, the poor irrigation management practices, overgrazing of natural vegetation, limited provision of organic fertilizer, and the over-harvest of woody vegetation for firewood in the pastoral areas at the periphery of the oasis to cover the needs for fuel wood. The operators in the oasis are engaged in a race to the water. The use of excessive pumping became the common reflex, which has resulted in the depletion of groundwater. Moreover, emigration of skilled labour to work in the cities is further worsening the status of traditional production systems which is generally minimized. The result of this neglect is the running wild of the palm-groves, densely grown with date palms, reducing harvests and consequently, agricultural productivity.

Barrier # 3: Weak integration of biodiversity promotion in the mechanisms of the market, low marketing infrastructure and incentive schemes³ for farmers, and the weak institutional capacity of local and national actors (extension workers) to develop market strategies for agro biodiverse products continue to challenge the development of the oasis systems. Although in the past ten years Morocco has developed a significant regulatory and legal arsenal for the labelling of local products, boosting recovery in 16 of the country's regions, some shortcomings and gaps have however emerged with regard to the structure and implementing of certification systems, recognising labels for Moroccan consumers, and in particular connections between valuation measures and protecting genetic and agricultural resources, which lie at the basis of primary production. In relation to labelling mechanisms of agricultural products the following barriers have been identified:

- Traditional local products enjoy quality labels linked to origin but implementing these labels has not become entrenched. As a result, the impact of labelling on the revenue of relevant sectors has not yet been felt by producers;
- Key product sectors are not or poorly structured. They suffer from a lack of integration between upstream and downstream production processes. The PPG studies have demonstrated weak dynamics of professional organisation alongside the dominance of the associative model and weak regrouping in cooperatives and groupings of economic interest in all project sites;
- Valuation through agro-food processing is poorly developed;
- Commercialization is essentially carried out through intermediaries. There are however cases in which commercialization via short circuits has been adopted and;
- Aggregation projects are inexistent.

A.5 Incremental/Additional cost reasoning and associated GEBs

The additional cost reasoning has been further developed and detailed in the Project Document Section 1.1.1 as follows:

Additional reasoning

Without this FAO- GEF intervention, the awareness of the need for conservation of agricultural biodiversity products in oasis systems will remain low, traditional water collection and irrigation systems will continue to deteriorate, loss of crop production will continue to endanger endemic seed varieties, severely threatening species and genetic resources, the institutional capacities for conservation activities and the resources committed will remain inadequate and the economic incentives necessary to encourage changes in human behavior will remain unshaped.

The GEF financing will support the initiatives and efforts initiated by the government to promote sustainable agriculture and improve agricultural production in Oasis systems and will provide incremental value by reinforcing an integrated approach increasing the multiple benefits and services derived from the Oasis systems. Through interventions aimed at preserving water and soil resources, and at the same time valuating bio diverse crops and products, the project will reverse land degradation trends and promote biodiversity.

Global Environmental Benefits

Products of agricultural biodiversity, particularly local produce with high nutritional value for sustainable diets. By supporting an improved soil health and fertility and promoting sustainable agricultural practices, the project will enhance food production and improve the livelihood of the local communities. Moreover, the project will improve the sustainability of highly valuable oasis systems by supporting the conservation of biodiversity in the selected project sites, which are located in natural reserves. More specifically, the project will deliver the following GEBs: i) in situ conservation of selected crops/plants including staple foods such as local durum wheat, local vegetables, leguminous crops which are important for nutrition and food security; ii) improvement of soil health and fertility, enhancement of soil resilience to increase organic matter; iii) reduction of soil erosion in mountain ouadi valleys, iv) mainstreaming of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into regulatory frameworks, v) mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations into market mechanisms and increased investments in SLM (product labeling). The benefits will be

³ Incentive schemes from the government to farmers include provision of free equipment for conversion to drip irrigation, digging equipment for wells and some support to the enhancement of production through labialization.

verified by monitoring: i) the number of local varieties preserved and cultivated, the number of drafted and submitted applications for product labelling (incl. seeds); ii) the agricultural area covering 1117ha benefitting from improved agricultural practices and labelled production standards, iii) agricultural area (1117ha) protected against flooding; and iv) the adoption of SLM and sustainable production intensification practices by at least 500 rural farmers in the 5 selected project sites.

This proposed project will also generate GEBs by contributing to Aichi Targets #1 and 2 by i) raising awareness on the value of biodiversity and the necessary steps to safeguard it and sustainably manage it, and ii) supporting the integration of biodiversity conservation and its value into national policies and strategies in Morocco, through policy recommendations and advocacy.

A.6 Risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and measures that address these risks

The risk analysis has been further detailed during project preparation and mitigation measures have been included in the project design as follows:

Risk	Rating	Risk Mitigation measures
Climate shocks risk: high-probability of occurrence of extreme weather events which may affect crop and livestock cycles and increase food/nutritional insecurity, as well as natural climate shocks which may cause contingencies and emergencies during project operations	M	The project will mitigate this risk by providing capacity building to local communities on flood control techniques and on measures against land degradation/ desertification. With project support, local communities will be engaged in the rehabilitation and construction of stone walls and will receive training on organic techniques for stream control and rehabilitation of gullies.
Institutional risk: Decrease in project ownership and support from governmental agencies	L	The government agencies (INRA, MAPM, DPAs, ORMVAT, ANDZOA, ADA, Agence du Sud) have been fully involved in the project preparation and are expected to be fully involved in project implementation through the PMCU. FAO will provide technical assistance. The project design takes into consideration the need of achieving results in the short-term to show the importance of project objectives, results, and activities to local and national governmental agencies.
Institutional risk: Low involvement and participation of local institutions in micro-watershed coordination and monitoring mechanisms.	M	The Project will encourage local participation, empowerment and ownership by supporting multi-stakeholder processes for the development of regulatory frameworks and for the coordination of project activities. Site level operational committees will be put in place ensuring a bottom up approach.
Social risk: Lack of participation of beneficiaries	L	Awareness-raising workshops on the local negative impacts of land degradation and loss of biodiversity in oasis systems will be conducted involving local institutions and stakeholders. This approach will stimulate local participation, since problems to be addressed are highly known and visible in local

Risk	Rating	Risk Mitigation measures
		population's everyday life.

A.7 Coordination with other relevant GEF financed initiatives

The project will seek to coordinate with the projects mentioned below. The coordination will focus on exchanging lessons learned and sharing technical expertise and will be established through partnership agreements and joint work plans.

- *Social and Integrated Agriculture in Morocco (ASIMA)*. This is a World Bank- GEF Project that will be implemented over the period 2013-2017. The ASIMA project will explore horizontal integration among agri-food chains by providing incentives to small farmers to produce animal feed using by-products of crops. The project will also support the vertical integration from production to commercialization of agri-food chains. The common aim will be to strengthen land and biodiversity conservation measure by farmers while making optimal use of the limited natural resources available. ASIMA is being implemented in the same project areas namely, the regions of Sous Massa and Haouz.
- *A circular economy approach to agro biodiversity conservation in the Souss-Massa Drâa Region of Morocco*. This is a UNDP- GEF project that will be implemented over the period 2014-2019. This project seeks to ensure the promotion of an agricultural sector resilient to the impact of climate change and a low carbon economy. Activities include multiple aspects from the reutilisation of non-conventional water resources to the adoption of good agricultural practices that can resist climate change. The proposed project will establish a partnership agreement with the executing agency, UNDP, to share experiences in relation to the labelling of local production and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in the market mechanisms.
- *Participatory Control of Desertification and Poverty Reduction in the Arid and Semi-Arid High Plateau Ecosystems of Eastern Morocco (MENARID)*. This project falls under the wider umbrella of the GEF's MENARID Programme which aims at combating desertification and protecting ecosystems functions. The proposed project will complement the activities under MENARID through knowledge sharing and regular exchanges of experiences related to strengthening the enabling environment for SLM as a way of reducing desertification and land degradation.
- *Conservation and Adaptive Management of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)*. This is a FAO-GEF project with global coverage. The proposed project will benefit from lessons learned from the GIAHS project in Oases systems in Tunisia and Algeria. In the specific case of Morocco, FAO is engaging in awareness campaigns to promote the recognition of agricultural heritage systems across the country. This includes the project pilot sites.
- *Land Degradation Assessment and Monitoring for Sustainable Land Management Decision Support and Scaling up of Best Practices (LADA Phase II)*. LADA is a FAO-GEF project with global coverage that aims at improving the capacities the member countries of the UNCCD to assess and report on the status of their land resources and to adopt climate change resilient Sustainable Land Management (SLM) measures. The proposed project will seek coordination with LADA for sharing of best practices.
- *Integrated water resources management in Morocco*. This is a GIZ Project that will be implemented over the period 2008- 2018. The project concentrate on four main components: improving the monitoring and control systems in water management planning; protecting groundwater resources; promoting the reuse of wastewater; reinforcing the participation of the various actors to enhance water resources planning and management. The proposed project will seek coordination with the GIZ initiative for the implementation of Component 2 activities.

B. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION NOT ADDRESSED AT PIF STAGE:

B.1. Describe how the stakeholders will be engaged in project implementation

The Project will be technically executed by the Government of Morocco represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries (MAPM) with its Regional and Provincial Directorates (DPATiznit, DPA Figuig, DRA Guelmin-Smara), its Regional Office for the agricultural development of the Tafilalet region (ORMVA/TF), and its agencies including: The Agency for Agricultural Development (ADA), the National Agency for the Development of Oasis and Arganier Areas (ANDZOA), The National Food Safety Authority (ONSSA), The Office for Agricultural Extension Services (ONCA), the Agency for the Promotion and Economic and Social Development of the Southern of the Kingdom (APDESPS) and the National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA). In addition, local authorities, grass root NGOs, producer's organizations and national associations, as well as cooperatives and customary institutions located in the five targeted Oasis systems will participate in project implementation. FAO will be responsible for the financial and operational execution of the project in addition to being the GEF implementing agency providing supervision and technical advice services to the project (see figure 4.1 in the Project Document).

INRA will be the lead government counterpart and the Project Executing Partner with technical responsibility for the Project. The Project Management Coordination Unit (PMCU) will be composed of the national focal points of INRA, MAPM, ANDZOA, APDESPS and ONCA; which will ensure coordination and collaboration with the Project Management Regional Committees (PMRCs) in each of the five project sites for project implementation. FAO will provide procurement and contracting services of GEF TF resources, as well as supervision and technical guidance for the overall implementation process. Project implementation will follow a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach, involving traditional customary institutions (Qsour), women cooperatives and local NGOs (Adrar in Imilchil).

INRA is the main agricultural research and research for development institution in Morocco. INRA has greatly contributed to the modernization of the agricultural sector and agro-systems, and to the improvement of the competitiveness of the country's agriculture. Moreover, INRA is a member of several regional networks and maintains bilateral cooperation with several countries. In order to be responsive to different agricultural environments, INRA has an extensive capacity for field experiments: 10 Regional Agricultural Research Centres (RARC) encompassing all existing agro-systems; 23 experimental stations; 30 research units in charge of planning and implementing research activities; 10 services of research for development to serve as interface between research and development. Over the years, INRA has accumulated vast experience in legume improvement, and in studying legumes in cereal based cropping systems, crop rotations, mixed cropping, biological nitrogen fixation and diversifying agriculture for the benefit of farmers.

INRA and FAO will be responsible for providing technical assistance, supervision and monitoring of Project Component 1 (all Outputs), partly Component 2 (Output 2.1) and Component 3 (Output 3.6). In addition, the Project Coordinator (financed by GEF resources) will be a Biodiversity expert, and will support the PMCU to achieve and monitor the aforementioned Project Outputs.

ANDZOA is an agency of the MAPM established in 2010 during the restructuring of the Department of Agriculture to support the implementation of the Morocco Green Plan. It is mainly responsible for promoting the management and sustainable development of oasis and Argan ecosystems. ANDZOA and FAO will be responsible for providing technical assistance, supervision and monitoring of Component 2 (all outputs with the exception of output 2.1).

ADA is mainly responsible for promoting the domestic supply of agricultural investments and organizing communication and information actions for investors and various stakeholders in the agricultural sector. It is an Agency of the MAPM, established to support the implementation of the Green Plan Morocco. It plays a key role in coordinating agricultural policy. ADA and FAO will mainly be responsible for providing technical assistance, supervision and monitoring of Component 3 Outputs and activities related to agricultural transformation and valuation of agricultural products.

ONSSA, under the direct guidance of the MAPM, has the mandate to ensure increased state policy integration and efficiency in terms of the quality control of animal and plant products.

It is in charge of regulating, implementing, and controlling conformity of products with the local regulations, including standards, labelling, and packaging. ONSSA will mainly be responsible for providing technical assistance, supervision and monitoring of Component 1 and Component 3 project Outputs.

ONCA is an agency of the MAPM, responsible for improving the governance and efficiency of agricultural extension services. ONCA and FAO will be responsible for providing technical assistance, supervision and monitoring of all project activities related to capacity building.

In addition a team of **agronomists**, a **sustainable land and watershed management specialist** a **value chain development specialist** and a **marketing specialist** (financed by GEF resources) will provide further technical support for the implementation of the project outputs, in close collaboration with the PMCU.

Implementation arrangements

National level

The **Ministry of Energy Mining, Water & Environment** is the GEF Operational Focal point of Morocco responsible for coordinating the programming of GEF resources and overseeing the Morocco GEF portfolio with the GEF Agencies.

INRA will be the **main Project Executing Partner** directly responsible for technical implementation of project activities, as well as day-to-day under the direct supervision of the **MAPM**. INRA will use its monitoring system to measure Project Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 activities related to: i) the number of local varieties preserved and cultivated and ii) the agricultural area benefitting from improved agricultural practices and labelled production standards. INRA will provide in-kind co-financing as office space, equipment, utilities, and will finance events logistics and local travels needed to carry out the project workshops and capacity-building activities. INRA will also make available a senior chief advisor who will provide technical assistance to the project coordinator and PMCU.

The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries (**MAPM**) or his representative will chair the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and annual project review and planning meetings. FAO will sign a Government Cooperation Project (GCP) Agreement with the MAPM. The GCP Agreement will outline the roles and responsibilities of FAO and MAPM and legal aspects of collaboration such as responsibilities for facilitating inputs, copyrights among others. The MAPM will provide cash co-financing for the implementation of project activities across the four project components based on the institutional set up of its flagship program: the Plan Maroc Vert. MAPM will provide cash co-financing through the Plan Maroc Vert (PMV) institutional structure and its agencies: **ADA, ANDZOA and APDESPS**.

INRA, ADA, ANDZOA, APDESPS, ONCA, and FAO will be integrated through a **Project Management Coordination Unit (PMCU)**, which will be responsible for day-to-day project operations. The role of the PMCU will be, in close consultation with the PSC and TWG members (see below), to ensure the coordination and execution of the Project through the timely and efficient implementation of annual work plans. The PMCU will act as secretariat to the PSC. It will coordinate work and follow closely the implementation of project activities, handle day-to-day project issues and requirements, coordinate project interventions with other on-going activities and ensure a high degree of national and local inter-institutional collaboration, monitor project progress and ensure the timely delivery of inputs and outputs. It will organize workshops and annual meetings for the Project for monitoring project progress and develop work plans with detailed budget for the next year to be approved by the PSC. It will be responsible for: i) implementing the Project M&E plan, supported by a short-term M&E specialist and the Project Coordinator; ii) managing its monitoring system and communication program; and iii) elaborating the six-monthly Project Progress reports and giving inputs to the annual Project Implementation Review (PIR) and the midterm and final evaluations, supported by the Project Coordinator. Project Progress Reports on implemented activities and progress in achieving project outputs and outcomes for the previous year will be submitted together with the Annual Work Plan and detailed Budget (AWP/B) to the PSC and FAO via the Project Coordinator.

The PMCU will have a **full-time Project Coordinator**⁴ (financed by GEFTF funds), responsible for the overall coordination and supervision of the project in close coordination with the **National Focal Point** from the MAPM, as

⁴ Detailed TORs in Appendix 6 of the Project Document

well as, ADA, ANDZOA, APDESPS and ONCA staff (financed by the Government co-financing). The Project Coordinator will be in charge of project daily management and technical supervision including: i) preparing AWP/B and allocating tasks to Project Executing Partners; ii) providing technical supervision and guidance to the Project Executing Partners in implementing project activities; iii) conducting regular field supervision visits and provide on-site guidance to technical staff from Project Executing Partners; iv) day-to-day coordination and communication with Project Executing Partners staff in charge of the GEF project; and v) preparing the Project Progress Reports.

The PMCU will incorporate a **short-term Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist**⁵ (financed by GEFTF funds) in charge of designing the Project M&E system. The M&E system will be used by the Project Coordinator when complying M&E tasks, as detailed: vi) conducting regularly field M&E visits to project sites, which information will be included into the six-monthly Project Progress Reports; vii) monitoring progress in achieving project outputs and outcome indicators; and viii) proposing eventual shifts in project implementation strategies if the project is not performing as planned.

The **National Budget and Operations Officer (part-time)** will be responsible for the day-to-day financial management and operation of the project including raising contracts and procure other needed inputs in accordance with the approved budget and annual work plans. The Budget and Operations Officer will work in close consultation with the Project Coordinator, BH, LTOs and executing partners, particularly with the FAO Representation in Morocco (FAOMA), and will take the operational responsibility for timely delivery of needed inputs to produce project outputs⁶.

Regional/Project Site level

At the regional level, five Regional Project Management Committees (RPMC) will be established to coordinate activities at project site level. The RCCs will be headed by the Regional and Provincial Directorates of Agriculture (DRA/DPA) and will comprise local authorities, including representatives from the decentralized offices of ADA, ANDZOA, INRA, ORMVAT, ONCA, DRA/DPA, as well as a representative of APDESPS and a community based organizations, NGO's and producers organizations. Each RPMC will meet twice a month for planning and monitoring of project activities.

GEF Agency

FAO will be the GEF Agency of the Project as well as the financial and operational executing agency. As the financial and operational executing agency FAO will provide procurement and contracting services and financial management services of GEF resources. As the GEF Agency FAO will supervise and provide technical guidance for the overall implementation process. Administration of the GEF grants will be in compliance with the rules and procedures of FAO, and in accordance with the agreement between FAO and the GEF Trustee. As the GEF agency for the project, FAO will:

- Administrate funds from GEF in accordance with the rules and procedures of FAO;
- Oversee project implementation in accordance with the project document, work plans, budgets, agreements with co-financiers and the rules and procedures of FAO;
- Provide technical guidance to ensure that appropriate technical quality is applied to all project activities and outputs;
- Carry out at least one supervision mission per year; and
- Report to the GEF Secretariat and Evaluation Office, through the annual Project Implementation Review, on project progress and provide financial reports to the GEF Trustee.

Based on a request from the Government of Morocco, FAO will also be the financial and operational executor of the GEF resources including financial management, procurement of goods and contracting of services following FAO rules and procedures. As the financial executor, FAO will provide six-monthly financial reports including a statement of

⁵ Ibidem

⁶ Ibidem

project expenditures to MAPM, INRA and other partners of the PMCU and the PSC. In accordance with the present project document, progress in the financial execution of the project, and the Annual Work Plan and Budget approved by the PSC, FAO will prepare budget revisions to maintain the budget current in the financial management system of FAO. The budget revisions will be provided to INRA, other partners of the PMCU, and the PSC to facilitate project planning and execution. FAO will, in collaboration with INRA and the other partners of the PMCU, participate in the planning and execution of contracting and procurement processes.

B.2. Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the project at the national and local levels, including consideration of gender dimensions, and how these will support the achievement of global environment benefits (GEF Trust Fund/NPIF):

The socio-economic benefits will be delivered through the introduction and adoption of a multi-stakeholder, bottom-up and gender-sensitive planning approach that focuses on the preservation of valuable traditional knowledge and cultural practices in Oasis systems. Direct beneficiaries will be empowered to take ownership over the formulation of regulatory frameworks affecting their livelihoods. Indeed, seed growers and small scale producers will be fully involved in the formulation of the seed sector regulatory framework resulting from the participatory plant breeding exercise. Moreover the project will promote the integration of local agricultural and livelihood systems to global environmental markets such as the labelling of agricultural products linked to biodiversity conservation and sustainable harvesting, thereby ensuring the sustainability of traditional knowledge systems without their fossilization. At the local level, the project will adopt an agro-biodiverse food chain approach and will identify priority agri-food chains for each targeted oasis system on the basis of biodiversity characteristics, sustainable harvesting and crop economic potential. Activities are designed to promote the vertical integration from production to commercialization of each agro-biodiverse food chain. This will be done through farmer's cooperatives and associations, some of which include women's cooperatives. Producers' cooperatives and "Groups of Economic Interest", who bring about cooperation between public and private agents, will be formed to facilitate and develop the economic activity of its members; promote farmers participation; enable their access to finance, knowledge, and technologies; and improve marketing and commercialization. Accordingly, some 500 farmers will benefit from increased knowledge and increased ability to generate revenue in a sustainable manner, and in a manner that preserves oasis biodiversity. Women cooperatives will be targeted and representatives from women cooperatives will be part of the local management and coordination mechanism. The changes introduced by the project will be developed through a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach and will respect local needs, local resources and local capacity. Hence, the local communities will be able to sustain the economic improvements after the project.

The project's main objective is to strengthen SLM and sustainable water management practices as well as to mainstream biodiversity conservation in agricultural valuation and transformation processes to increasing the natural capital of vulnerable communities living in degraded oasis systems. It directly addresses the issue of land degradation and biodiversity loss and proposes integrated activities promoting low input-based production systems based on organic farming and agro-ecology. Several aspects illustrate environmental sustainability:

- Many of the project intervention areas currently consist of large areas of already degraded land. In those areas, the aim of the project is to improve natural and agricultural resources management. Several approaches will be demonstrated under Outcome 2. These approaches build on indigenous knowledge and the use of indigenous and local adapted species and varieties/cultivars;
- Many of the project intervention areas also include degraded agricultural land, due to over-exploitation and inadequate management. The project will introduce alternatives and technological improvements to reverse this land degradation tendency;
- The large body of training material to be developed by the project will cover environmentally sustainable practices and measures. This will include low-input farming, sustainable crops production intensification techniques, sustainable land management, water conservation measures, etc.;
- The Project supports the conservation of genetic diversity through the participatory plant breeding approach, and through in-situ conservation of local seeds.

B.3 Explain how cost-effectiveness is reflected in the project design:

The proposed project is expected to be highly cost effective as it builds on ongoing national initiatives with similar objectives. It seeks to redirect investments in the adaptation of good agricultural practices based on traditional knowledge systems hence, piggy backing on institutional structures that are already existent. Moreover, the project will introduce new practices proven to be cost-effective such as participatory plant breeding which could offer a rapid, cost effective strategy for developing farmer-preferred cultivars. Farmers' direct involvement in setting breeding goals, in selecting early generation and segregating materials could greatly increase the efficiency of developing varieties that meet local needs. Participatory plant breeding methods will be applied in the project Oasis systems, to develop seed varieties suitable for sustainable harvesting and for product marketing. If this approach is successful in the project sites, then national dissemination of the knowledge gained, and the varieties produced, would encourage the adoption of these methods in other target sites.

Furthermore, will channel funds the project will directly include local authorities and NGOs that are already active in similar activities in the project intervention area. Hence there will be few start-up costs and few costs related to the mobilization of expertise from outside the region or country.

The Project also intends to minimize the use of international consultants where national expertise is available. This will reduce the travel costs and the costs of consultancy fees. Notwithstanding, where international expertise is unique or exceptionally credible, it will be utilized.

C. DESCRIBE THE BUDGETED M&E PLAN

Monitoring and evaluation of progress in achieving project results and objectives will be done based on the targets and indicators established in the Project Results Framework (Appendix 1 and described in Section 2). The project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan has been budgeted at USD 47,397. Monitoring and evaluation activities will follow the FAO and GEF monitoring and evaluation policies and guidelines. Supported by Component 4 the project monitoring and evaluation system will also facilitate learning and mainstreaming of project outcomes and lessons learned.

The monitoring and evaluation plan will serve two functions: first, periodic assessment of project implementation and performance of activities and, second, evaluation of their outcomes in terms of relevance and effectiveness. Both will contribute to improved decision making and management, by keeping the project on track towards achieving the human development and global environmental goals/objectives and by feeding knowledge from experiences and lessons learnt into planned activities.

Monitoring will take place at two levels: project execution and project performance.

Project Execution: Monitoring at project execution level will involve collection of information on actual implementation of project activities compared to those scheduled in the work plan, including the delivery of quality outputs in a timely manner, identify problems and constraints (technical, human resource and financial), make clear recommendations for corrective actions, identify lessons learned and best practices.

Day-to-day monitoring of implementation progress will be the responsibility of the Project Coordinator, who reports directly to the Project Steering Committee and FAO. It is envisaged that the Project Coordinator will utilize a M&E system that will be designed and agreed in PY1. The system will allow the Project Coordinator to identify key milestones and outputs from each of the main components of the project as defined in the work plan. Each activity will have allocated a percentage score based on an evaluation of its contribution to the completion of each component.

Project Performance: Performance evaluation will assess the project's success in achieving its outcomes. Project performance will be monitored closely by FAO and by the Project Steering Committee through semi-annual project progress reports (PPRs), annual project implementation reviews (PIRs); technical reports, and technical supervision missions. The overall achievement of the project's outcomes will be evaluated at the end of the project through an independent terminal evaluation (see section 4.6).

The **Table 5** below provides a summary of the main M&E reports, responsible parties and timeframe

Type of M&E Activity	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	Estimated of costs (USD)
----------------------	---------------------	------------	--------------------------

Type of M&E Activity	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	Estimated of costs (USD)
Inception Workshop	PMCU, supported by the FAO LTU, BH, and the FAO GEF Coordination Unit	Within two months of project start up	2,000
Project Inception Report	PMCU, cleared by FAO LTU, BH, and the FAO GEF Coordination Unit	Immediately after workshop	The visits of the LTO will be paid by GEF agency fee
Field-based impact monitoring	PMCU, participating executing partners and other relevant institutions.	Continually	8,000
Supervision visits and rating of progress in PPRs and PIRs	PMCU, FAOMA, FAO LTU and FAO GEF Coordination Unit.	Annual or as required	The visits of the LTO will be paid by GEF agency fee. The visits of the NPC and Technical Assistants will be paid from the project travel budget
Project Progress Reports	PMCU and Project Coordinator with inputs from other partners.	Six-monthly	0 (as completed by NPC and Technical Assistants)
Project Implementation Review report	Inputs provided by the Project Coordinator. FAOMA and LTUs supported by the PMCU. PIRs cleared and submitted by the FAO GEF Coordination Unit to the GEF Secretariat	Annual	Completed by NPC and National Technical Assistants. LTO's involvement is covered by the fee.
Co-financing Reports	PMCU	Annual	Completed by NPC and Technical Assistants
Technical reports	PMCU, LTU	As appropriate	Covered by NPC and National Technical Assistants salaries. LTO's involvement is covered by the fee.
Final evaluation	External Consultant, FAO independent Evaluation Office in consultation with the project team including the FAO GEF Coordination Unit, the LTU, and other partners	At the end of project implementation	30,000 for external, independent consultants and associated costs. In addition the agency fee will pay for expenditures of FAO staff time and travel
Terminal Report	PMCU, FAOMA, LTUs, TSCR report Unit	At least two months before the end date of the GCP Agreement	Covered by NPC and National Technical Assistants salaries. LTO's involvement is covered by the fee
Best practices publication	PCU, LTO & Participating Units	Between the second and last year	7,397 for publication preparation and printing
Total			47,397

Indicators and information sources

To monitor project outputs and outcomes, including contributions to adaptation benefits specific indicators have been established in the Project Results Framework (see Appendix 1). The framework's indicators and means of verification will be applied to monitor both project performance and impact. Following the FAO's monitoring procedures and progress reporting formats, data collected will be of sufficient detail to be able to track specific outputs and outcomes and flag project risks early on. Output target indicators will be monitored on a six-monthly basis and outcome target indicators will be monitored on an annual basis if possible or as part of the mid-term and final evaluations. The project

output and outcome indicators have been designed to monitor on-the-ground impacts and progress in building and consolidating capacities for improved climate-resilient agro-pastoral practices both at the municipal institutional level as at the level of local farmers and communities.

Evaluations:

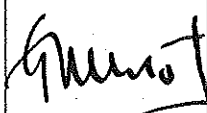
An independent Final Evaluation (FE) will be carried out three months prior to the terminal review meeting of the project partners. The FE will identify the project impacts and sustainability of project results and the degree of achievement of long-term results. This evaluation would also have the purpose of indicating future actions needed to expand on the existing project in subsequent phases, mainstream and up-scale its products and practices, and disseminate information to management authorities responsible for the management of other project partners.

PART III: APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT BY GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT(S) AND GEF AGENCY(IES)

- A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S):** (Please attach the Operational Focal Points endorsement letter(s) with this template. For SGP, use this OFP endorsement letter).

NAME	POSITION	MINISTRY	DATE (MM/DD/YYYY)
Mohamed Benyahia	GEF Operational Focal Point Directeur du Partenariat, de la Communication et de la Coopération, Département de l'Environnement	Ministère de l'Energie, des Mines, de l'Eau et de l'Environnement	JULY 9, 2013

B. GEF AGENCY(IES) CERTIFICATION

This request has been prepared in accordance with GEF/LDCF/SCCF policies and procedures and meets the GEF/LDCF/SCCF criteria for project identification and preparation.					
Agency Coordinator, Agency name	Signature	Date	Project Contact Person	Telephone	Email Address
Gustavo Merino Director Investment Centre Division Technical Cooperation Department FAO Rome, Italy TCI-Director@fao.org		February 13, 2015	Michael Hage, FAO Representative in Morocco	+2120537654776	Fao-ma@fao.org
Jeff Griffin					

FAO GEF/TCID
Senior Coordinator
Email:
Jeffrey.Griffin@fao.org
Tel: +3906 5705 5680

--	--	--	--	--	--

ANNEX A: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK (either copy and paste the framework from the agency document, or provide reference to the page in the project document where the framework could be found)

Please see Appendix 1 of the FAO GEF Project Document.

ANNEX B: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS (from GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF).

Secretariat Recommendations at PIF:

- Synthesize the list of species that will benefit from the SLM practices needed to justify labelling of local products. For each of the target areas (Oases), please provide the common and scientific names of at least the following groups: Birds (migratory), Mammals (including endemics as appropriate), and Plants (endemics only). A useful option is to consider species compositions based on Ecoregions, especially the following: Mediterranean forests, dry woodlands and scrubs -Terrestrial Eco-regions 85, 86 and 87), Desert Saharan Steppe (Terrestrial Eco-region 93) and Permanent Maghreb (Freshwater Eco-region 34).

Please refer to Appendix 8 in the Project Document where a description of the project sites has been provided, including a list of species that will benefit from the SLM practices using their common and scientific names.

- Provide a clear description of the labelling requirements for the local products. Who will provide this labelling? Is it a local labelling system, or does it have some international recognition? What biodiversity standards will be used for this labelling? That is, how do we know that the labelling has a positive impact on biodiversity conservation?

In terms of labelling of agricultural and food products, two labelling/certification systems exist in Morocco. One directly involves the private sector and mainly targets products for export while the other is implemented, regulated and controlled by the MAPM. The latter targets a range of agricultural products, mainly organic and origin-linked quality products and is governed by a series of decrees and laws enacted between 1984 and 2013 for food quality control and fraud repression, amongst others. In recent years, geographical indications and appellation of origin have gained more importance, leading to the establishment of the Law #25-06 on June 2008. This law regulates the use of distinctive signs of origin as they relate to the quality of food and agricultural products (SDOQ) including labelling of geographical indication. To apply for labelling geographical indication and origin appellation, producers associations and food processors have to file a request (cahier des charges) to a national commission created for this purpose. Food and agricultural products that have been approved by this commission are registered by the Moroccan Office of Industrial and Commercial Property (OMPIC) and the MAMP and then published in the Official Bulletin.

The law recognizes three different kinds of labels:

- *Geographical indication* (GI): identifies the origin, quality, reputation or other characteristics of products. A GI signals to consumers that the goods have special characteristics due to their geographical place of origin;
- *Appellation of Origin* (AO): represents a more restrictive category of GIs as geographical designations of products whose quality and characteristics are due exclusively or essentially to the geographical environment, including both natural and human.
- *Agricultural label* (LA): identifies high level quality products based on how they are produced, processed and packaged, their manufacturing characteristics including, where applicable, their geographical origin.

The project will target GI and LA labels.

In terms of organic production and organic labelling, a law (39-12) addressing organic agriculture was passed on 2012, based on European standards. Within the MAPM, the Directorate of Production Chain development (DDFP) is the unit in charge of all matters related to organic agriculture and labelling together with the Moroccan Association of Organic Agriculture (AMABIO). However, despite gaining more importance in recent years, organic farming in Morocco still

faces several challenges, including lack of supportive national policies and initiatives for organic consumption and lack of national investment in data collection about organic agriculture and absence of local labelling and inspection bodies.

The Moroccan Association of Organic Agriculture (AMABIO) was created in 2010 to guarantee the Biological Label in Morocco while supporting the development of local products by investing resources in scientific research, value chain development and improving marketing strategies. During the PPG studies, producer's organizations in the project area of intervention have been identified as potential members of the AMABIO. The project will support activities to link producers association and cooperatives to the AMABIO.

In relation to labelling mechanisms of agricultural products, in the targeted oasis systems the following barriers have been identified during the PPG studies:

- Traditional local products enjoy quality labels linked to origin but implementing these labels has not become entrenched. As a result, the impact of labelling on the revenue of relevant sectors has not yet been felt by producers;
- Key product sectors are not or poorly structured. They suffer from a lack of integration between upstream and downstream production processes. The PPG studies have demonstrated weak dynamics of professional organisation alongside the dominance of the associative model and weak regrouping in cooperatives and groupings of economic interest in all project sites;
- Valuation through agro-food processing is poorly developed;
- Commercialization is essentially carried out through intermediaries. There are however cases in which commercialization via short circuits has been adopted and;
- Aggregation projects are inexistent.

To address the above mentioned challenges and ensure that biodiversity standards are included in labeling requirements, the project will support three kinds of interventions: activities aiming to strengthen local capacities in implementing existing quality control labels; activities aiming to develop new Geographical indication (GI) and Organic labels in order to mainstream biodiversity into labelling mechanisms; as well as activities aiming to transform and value small-scale agro-biodiversity food production. Component 3 specifically addresses the need to strengthen the capacity of local communities in integrating local products to local and international markets, and the urgency of ensuring the integration of in-situ conservation in the new market access legislations for local products such as local seeds (organization, production standards, labeling, and distribution). With project support appropriate knowledge will be transferred to local authorities and producer organizations on sustainable harvesting and product marketing at national and international level.

With project support, 640ha of agricultural productive land in the targeted oasis systems will be labelled organic. Local producers will be trained on organic labelling specificities and on the implementation of traceability systems and procedures, such as record-keeping, that improve their ability to track and orchestrate the movement of their agro-biodiverse products along the value chain.

ANNEX C: STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION ACTIVITIES AND THE USE OF FUNDS⁷

A. PROVIDE DETAILED FUNDING AMOUNT OF THE PPG ACTIVITIES FINANCING STATUS IN THE TABLE BELOW:

PPG Grant Approved at PIF: \$ 54,750				
<i>Project Preparation Activities Implemented</i>	<i>GEF/LDCF/SCCF/NPIF Amount (\$)</i>			
	<i>Budgeted Amount</i>	<i>Amount Committed</i>	<i>Amount Spent To date</i>	<i>Balance Remaining</i>
5011 Salaries Professional	2,830		0	2,830
5013 Consultants	32,100		28,335	3,765
5021 Travel	7,400		12,723	- 5,323
5023 Training	5,000		193	4,807
5024 Expendable Procurement	2,670		0	2,670
5027 Technical Support Services			2,783	- 2,783
5028 General Operating Expenses			62	- 62
Total	50,000		44,096	5 904 *

*: The remaining balance has been committed for the translation of project related documents.

⁷ If at CEO Endorsement, the PPG activities have not been completed and there is a balance of unspent funds, Agencies can continue undertaking the activities up to one year of project start. No later than one year from start of project implementation, Agencies should report this table to the GEF Secretariat on the completion of PPG activities and the amount spent for activities.

ANNEX D: CALENDAR OF EXPECTED REFLOWS (if non-grant instrument is used)

Provide a calendar of expected reflows to the GEF/LDCF/SCCF/NPIF Trust Fund or to your Agency (and/or revolving fund that will be set up)

