



## Basic Project Data

Project GEF ID:

<i>Staff</i>		<i>Processing Status</i>	<i>Date</i>
Program Manager	Acquay	Processing Stage	
Implementing Agency	UNDP	Concept Pipeline Discussion	10/18/99
Regional Coordinator	Hani Daraghma	PDF A - Agency Approval	
Executing Agency	National Government	PDF B - CEO Approval	
		Bilateral Project Review Meeting	10/18/99
		Work Program Submission and Approv	
		CEO Endorsement	
		Agency Approval	
		Project Completion	

## Cost Summary

Cost Item	Years	Amount (USD'000)
<u>Preparation</u>		
- PDF A		
- PDF B		\$0.18
- PDF C		
<u>Project Allocation</u>		
- Executing Agency Fees and Costs		\$0.00
- Project Managment Costs		\$0.00
- Other Incremental Costs		\$0.00

## Completeness of Documentation

Focal Point.....     Budget.....     Logical Framework.....   
 STAP Review.....     Increment Cost.....     Length.....   
 Disclosure of Administration Cost.....     Complete Cover Sheet....

## **1. Country Ownership**

### ***Country Eligibility***

(a) Syria is eligible for GEF funding because it is a party to the CDB; Syria ratified the Convention on Oct. 29, 1997.

### ***Evidence of Country Ownership/Country-Drivenness***

- (a) the PDF B proposal has been endorsed by the national operational focal point in a letter dated May 12, 1999 (We have copy of the translated version. Please send us copy of the original letter for our files);
- (b) the proposal is consistent with national priorities as outlined in the Country Study on Biodiversity in Syria; and
- (c) the Government would contribute \$27,000 (in-kind), 13% of the total preparation cost.

## **2. Program and Policy Conformity**

### ***Portfolio Balance***

The project would help to increase the size of OP#1 projects in the biodiversity portfolio. GEF allocation for OP 1 projects is among the two lowest in the portfolio.

### ***Program Conformity***

The objectives of the project are consistent with those of OP#1

### ***Replicability***

To be provided at Work Program Inclusion

### ***Potential Global Environmental Benefits of Project***

Syria is one of the most biologically diverse countries in the Mediterranean in terms of flora and fauna. The project is expected to support in-situ conservation of some of this biodiversity. Since the project sites would be selected during preparation, specific potential global benefits would be provided in the project brief.

### ***Sustainability***

We request additional information, even if general, on factors in the country that could contribute to the sustainability of the project.

More specific factors that would contribute to the sustainability of the project would be provided in the project brief.

### ***Baseline Course of Action***

We request information on baseline actions, at a conceptual level.

### ***Alternative Action Supported by project***

We request information on alternative actions to achieve global benefits, at a at the conceptual level.

### ***Conformity with GEF Public Involvement Policy***

Points to consider or clarify during project preparation:

UNDP-Syria will execute the preparation of this project, but the Min. of Agriculture, and possibly the Min. of Environment, will execute the full project. The proposal states that a Steering Committee will be established (p. 10). It may be good to clarify who will establish this committee and its composition.

There will be 2-3 sites to be identified from a desk review by national consultants (site selection criteria defined in p. 4), and as stated in p. 8, there will be rapid field assessments, as needed. It may be helpful to check whether there would be other groups involved, aside from consultations, in the conduct, for example, of the field work.

The consultations planned (as described in p. 7-8) cover informal meetings with national stakeholders, project formulation workshops at the national level, and "participatory meetings" with local stakeholders. However, the proposal does not describe how the participatory meetings will be conducted, and whether local NGOs will be asked to assist in these meetings.

The budget allocates some \$15,000 or 8% to workshops. Given this relatively small allocation, it is recommended that the project brief to be developed contain a description of the socio-economic profiles of the sites selected, the number and composition of affected populations, and the local groups to be involved in the project.

#### *Private Sector Involvement*

### **3. Appropriateness of GEF Financing**

#### *Incremental Cost*

To be provided at Work Program Inclusion

#### *Appropriateness of Financial Modality Proposed*

To be provided at Work Program Inclusion

#### *Financial Sustainability of the GEF-Funded Activity*

To be provided at Work Program Inclusion

#### *Absorptive Capability*

To be provided at Work Program Inclusion

#### *Cost Effectiveness*

To be provided at Work Program Inclusion

### **4. Coordination with Other Institutions**

#### *Collaboration*

Project preparation would involve inter-agency collaboration involving the Ministries of agriculture, Environment, Planning, Education, Tourism, Fisheries, and Irrigation

#### *Complementarity with Ongoing Activities*

The project seeks to complement activities being implemented under the World Bank/GEF MSP that focuses on biodiversity conservation in the Arz-Eshouh protected area.

### **5. Responsiveness to Comments and Evaluations**

### ***Core Commitments***

There is no co-financing from UNDP.

### ***Linkages***

### ***Consultation and Coordination***

### ***Consistency w/previous upstream consultations, project preparation work, and processing conditions***

### ***Monitoring & evaluation: Minimum GEF Standards, ME plan, proposed indicators, lessons from PIRs and Project Lessons Study***

To be provided at Work Program Inclusion

### ***Indicators***

To be provided at Work Program Inclusion

### ***Implementing Agencies' Comments***

Syria has no current protected area system; none of the 22 sites proposed as protected areas exist on the ground, nor is there any institutional capacity for protected area management. There are no staff with any training in protected area planning or management within the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MARR). In terms of protected area management Syria is starting from scratch.

To compound this problem, many if not most of the proposed areas are multiple use areas with high human use, already suffering severe disturbance and land degradation - see annex to proposal. It is not clear how much natural habitat remains or how much of that could be protected within core zones of protected areas in the normal sense of the term. In the Syrian context it may be more appropriate to think of sustainable land management and even restoration than establishment of protected areas per se.

The threats to whatever biodiversity remains at the proposed sites are multiple. One of those threats is reforestation activities and creation of plantations of commercial species by MARR in the same areas that are proposed for conservation.

Because of these constraints and because there is no legislation to create protected areas the World Bank decided to assist Syria on a small scale with a MSP to a) build some capacity in PA management (from zero) b) drafting enabling legislation and c) work at one demonstration site to attempt to provide a model for replication elsewhere.

Before moving on to plan and implement a representative protected area network for Syria it may be appropriate to evaluate experiences from the current GEF projects on agrobiodiversity (UNDP) and the Bank one-site protected area project.

Proposed PDF activities: Many of the PDF activities seem to be allocated to assessing which of the 21 proposed sites might be of global value and what management options could fall into place, with a final selection of sites being done under the PDF. This means that many of the activities normally done under preparation will not be done until the project itself, for example, social assessments and impacts on biodiversity at specific sites; review of policy impact on proposed protected areas etc. An analysis of what other projects/programs will address the root causes of biodiversity loss at specific sites would seem essential in landscapes under such heavy human pressure. It may be better to take a more phased approach both to preparation and implementation of the project itself, starting with a PDF A to better identify which sites might be appropriate for designation as protected areas at this time.

It is hard to see how the proposed PDF B activities will lead to a fully prepared project. Activities such as desk studies, informal consultations, brief field missions to assess viability of individual sites all seem like activities that should be conducted prior to a PDF B activity. The time frame of 6 months is clearly too short to allow detailed preparation for individual sites, especially from the 'no or very little prior knowledge baseline'.

Training for consultants: It seems extraordinary that PDF B resources should be allocated to train national and international consultants on GEF eligibility rules and incremental costs.

Institutional capacity: Given that there is no protected area capacity in Syria (with some limited capacity being built up under the bank MSP) it may be advisable to take a more modest and phased approach to any protected area project focussing on building capacity up front.

Land degradation: There is a clear linkage with land degradation in many of the proposed sites. It would be useful to know which other projects will be addressing land degradation issues (eg IFAD) and to what extent GEF will be required to undertake restoration activities - such activities would need careful costing, something normally done under PDF B preparation.

In summary it would seem advisable to take a step back on this proposal and do more preliminary feasibility work on a) which sites are appropriate for protected areas and b) what management needs and options may be for conservation in a much modified and heavily used landscape. A PDF A would seem a more appropriate instrument to move this process forward.

### ***STAP Review***

### ***Council members' Comments***

### ***Technical Assurances***

We would like assurance at the pipeline entry stage that the project preparation would be well-advanced during the six months proposed to implement the PDF so that information required at Work Program Inclusion would be available (see examples of information required in the "Further Processing" section).

We would like assurance at Work Program Inclusion that that project design is consistent with the absorptive capacity of the Ministries that would be involved in implementation.

### ***Convention Secretariat***

### ***Other Technical Comments***

Include agroecological systems and land use as criteria for site selection. Include an agronomist or hydrologist in the project preparation team (comments from Prof. Paola Rossi).

## **Further Processing**

The PDF B proposal would be recommended for pipeline entry and CEO approval upon receipt of a revised document reflecting the following agreed revision/assurance (agreed during the October 18, 1999 bilateral):

- (a) information would be provided on the baseline situation and GEF alternative envisaged, at the conceptual level; and
- (b) Technical assurance that the six-month implementation period proposed for the PDF would be sufficient to provide information required at Work Program Inclusion.

Informal revisions to the proposal were shared with the Program Manager and they fully address issues raised

above. The GEFSEC is awaiting a "clean copy" of the revised document from UNDP.

#### For Work Program Inclusion

Information to be provided in the project brief for Work Program Inclusion would include details on the following:

- (a) profile of project sites, including biodiversity and socioeconomic information;
- (b) issues to be addressed by the project and the root causes;
- (c) project components, including objectives and activities to be supported.
- (d ) baseline and incremental actions/incremental cost matrix;
- (e) public involvement in project preparation and expected involvement in project implementation and/or monitoring and evaluation;
- (f) logical framework and M&E plan
- (g) STAP review and Agency's response;
- (h) Preliminary implementation arrangements;
- (i) endorsement letter from the GEF Operational Focal Point; and
- (j) strategy to sustain project activities.