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Project Identification Form (PIF) entry – Full Sized Project – GEF - 7

## Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania

### Part I: Project Information

GEF ID

10444

Project Type

FSP

Type of Trust Fund

GET

CBIT/NGI

☐ CBIT

☐ NGI

Project Title

Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania

Countries

Mauritania

Agency(ies)

IUCN

Other Executing Partner(s)

CNEOZA, Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable

Executing Partner Type

Government

**GEF Focal Area**

Land Degradation

**Taxonomy**

Climate Change Adaptation, Climate Change, Focal Areas, Climate resilience, Livelihoods, Disaster risk management, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Drought Mitigation, Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach, Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques, Sustainable Livelihoods, Sustainable Pasture Management, Ecosystem Approach, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands, Community-Based Natural Resource Management, Sustainable Agriculture, Income Generating Activities, Food Security, Land Degradation Neutrality, Land Productivity, Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Private Sector, Stakeholders, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Large corporations, SMEs, Beneficiaries, Non-Governmental Organization, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Participation, Type of Engagement, Information Dissemination, Consultation, Partnership, Local Communities, Gender Equality, Gender results areas, Participation and leadership, Capacity Development, Awareness Raising, Access to benefits and services, Gender Mainstreaming, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Women groups, Gender-sensitive indicators, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Knowledge Generation, Workshop, Learning, Theory of change, Adaptive management

**Rio Markers****Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 0

**Climate Change Adaptation**

Climate Change Adaptation 2

**Duration**

48 In Months

**Agency Fee(\$)**

352,226

**Submission Date**

11/27/2019

## A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
LD-1-1	GET	1,813,626	2,200,000
LD-1-4	GET	1,500,000	15,000,000
LD-2-5	GET	600,000	3,000,000
Total Project Cost (\$)		3,913,626	20,200,000

## B. Indicative Project description summary

### Project Objective

Improving rural communities' livelihoods in the wilayas of Adrar, Inchiri and Dakhlet Nouadhibou in Mauritania through sustainable land restoration and management

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 1: Capacity building and governance	Technical Assistance	Outcome 1.1 : Key stakeholders are trained and equipped for evidence based decision making for SLM in arid lands	Output 1.1.1 : Arid land's observatory is equipped for conducting assessments	GET	500,000	3,792,250
		Outcome 1.2: Enabling environment to support voluntary LDN target implementation	Output 1.1.2: 90 national and local experts are trained for implementing / use of dry lands assessments and social vulnerability tool			
			Output 1.1.3: Land degradation assessments carried out and validated in the target wilayas .			
			Output 1.1.4: An online data platform in place and operational for storage of land assessment data and continuously updated			
			Output 1.2.1. Policy work at national levels supported to address obstacles to LDN objectives			

Output 1.2.2. LDN tool integrated  
into the existing planning  
frameworks and participatory

land-use planning

Output 1.2.3. Measures to improve  
land degradation and good  
governance on land tenure identified  
and promoted

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Component 2: Land and ecosystem restoration	Technical Assistance	Outcome 2.1: Key resource areas in targeted wilayas are under improved ecosystem restoration by communities and local government	<p>Output 2.1.1: Per targeted wilayas, an updated landscape management plan informed by assessments available</p> <p>Output 2.1.2: Communities' rights and access to natural resources with particular attention to the resource rights of women and marginalized groups are improved</p> <p>Output 2.1.3: 70,000 ha of arid landscape (including woodlands, rangelands and riparian wetlands) under improved governance and Drought-Smart Land Management interventions</p> <p>Output 2.1.4: Improved water management interventions implemented in the three target wilayas, following established guidelines for Nature Based Solutions to drought</p> <p>Output 2.1.5: 800 households supported to implement sustainable land management and land restoration projects through seed funding</p>	GET	2,000,000	10,547,000
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Component 3: Financing scaling-up of SLM	Investment	Outcome 3.1: Investment strategies are developed and funds are leveraged to finance up-scaling of good practices for sustainable land management	<p>Output 3.1.1: Per target wilaya, a Total economic valuation and cost-benefit analysis study is published</p> <p>Output 3.1.2: Within the targeted wilayas, three main dryland products and value chains of those products are improved to leverage environmental sustainability</p> <p>Output 3.1.3: An active investors forum in place to build capacities on value chain development and enhance investment in drylands ecosystem</p> <p>Output 3.1.4: Options for offsetting environmental impacts in targeted wilayas are identified through consultations with government and mining companies</p> <p>Output 3.1.5: For each targeted wilayas, a proposal for an investment plan is elaborated</p>	GET	900,000	4,186,250
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Component 4 Project-specific knowledge management and M&E	Technical Assistance	Outcome 4.1: Lessons learned and replicated in wider dryland landscape	Output 4.1.1: Lessons learned from land restoration and sustainable lands management best practices deployed in the three targeted wilayas are published and shared across the country for scaling up	GET	327,263	492,500
			Output 4.1.2: Knowledge-sharing events on restoring and conserving drylands natural capital are conducted			
			Output 4.1.3. A monitoring and information systems on LDN achievements using the LDN indicators developed and implemented			
Sub Total (\$)					3,727,263	19,018,000
Project Management Cost (PMC)						
GET					186,363	1,182,000
Sub Total(\$)					186,363	1,182,000
Total Project Cost(\$)					3,913,626	20,200,000



## C. Indicative sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Government	Autorité de la Zone Franche de Nouadhibou	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,000,000
Private Sector	Mauritania Copper Mines (MCM)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000
Private Sector	Tasiast Mauritania LTD.	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000
Government	National Agency of the Great Green Wall (ANGMV)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000
Government	Ministry of environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD)	Public Investment	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000
Donor Agency	The Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	9,000,000
Donor Agency	The Project Agropole Maraicher of Benichab (PAMB)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,200,000
			<b>Total Project Cost(\$)</b>	<b>20,200,000</b>

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

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## D. Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
IUCN	GET	Mauritania	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	3,913,626	352,226	4,265,852
Total GEF Resources(\$)					3,913,626	352,226	4,265,852

## E. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

PPG Required



PPG Amount (\$)

150,000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

13,500

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
IUCN	GET	Mauritania	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	150,000	13,500	<b>163,500</b>
Total Project Costs(\$)					<b>150,000</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>163,500</b>

## Core Indicators

### Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
9,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

### Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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### Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
9,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Parc National du Banc d'Arguin		National Park	9,000.00						



#### Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
70000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

#### Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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**Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes that meets national or international third party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations (hectares)**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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**Type/Name of Third Party Certification**

**Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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70,000.00			
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## Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

## Documents (Please upload document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title	Submitted
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## Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (direct)	245000	0	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (indirect)	0	0	0	0

## Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (direct)	245,000			

Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (indirect)	
Anticipated start year of accounting	2023
Duration of accounting	20

## Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

Total Target Benefit (At PIF) (At CEO Endorsement) (Achieved at MTR) (Achieved at TE)

Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (direct)
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (indirect)
Anticipated start year of accounting
Duration of accounting

## Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Total Target Benefit Energy (MJ) (At PIF) Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement) Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR) Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)

Target Energy Saved (MJ)
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Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	2,860			
Male	2,600			
Total	5460	0	0	0

## Part II. Project Justification

### 1a. Project Description

#### 1a.1 - The environmental problems, causes and barriers that need to be addressed and solution to that.

Mauritania is a developing country with a population of about 4.4 million people<sup>[1]</sup> and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$ 4.3 billion<sup>[2]</sup>, the economic growth in the country rely on natural resources, with the mining and agricultural sectors accounting for 38% and 20% of the GDP, respectively<sup>[3]</sup>. Recent economic growth, 3.6% in 2018<sup>[4]</sup>, is attributed primarily to development in the mining sector, which includes copper and gold mines in the *wilaya*<sup>[5]</sup> of Inchiri. The Adrar regions is also a rich place of tremendous minerals. Despite this recent economic growth, more than 40% of the population of Mauritania live in poverty, with about 70% of these people living in rural areas. The communities located in these rural areas rely on rainfall-dependent, natural resource-based livelihoods including agriculture and pastoralism. Indeed, more than half of Mauritania population rely on livestock and drought-prone subsistence agriculture.

The majority of Mauritania (77%) is considered arid. Land suitable for agriculture and pastoralism covers 397,110 km<sup>2</sup> (39%) while irrigated land covers only 2,500 km<sup>2</sup> (<1%) of the 1.03 million km<sup>2</sup> of Mauritania. The northern part of the country, including the wilayas of Adrar, Inchiri and Dakhlet Nouadhibou, is the most arid and is dominated by the Sahelian and Saharan ecoregions of the desert. Due to these arid conditions, farmers and pastoralists living in these three wilayas - about 10% of the national population - are highly dependent on ecosystem goods (eg fodder) and services (groundwater recharge) for their livelihoods and subsistence.

High level of poverty and a rapidly growing population (especially around the urban areas of Dakhlet Nouadhibou) have led to the degradation of local ecosystems, aggravated by drought-induced desertification. These threats are likely to continue, resulting in the degradation of the remaining natural resources in Adrar, Inchiri and Dakhlet Nouadhibou and a consequent reduction of ecosystem goods and services essential for local communities. In addition to that, mismanagement of rangelands and arable land and lack of good natural governance systems are leading to land degradation. This art of state is contributing to exacerbate climate change impacts on people livelihoods. The negative impacts of climate change in Mauritania are expected to worsen in the future. Climate change scenarios predict more frequent and severe droughts with further increases in mean annual temperature and decreases in average annual precipitation. In addition, other flash floods are expected as the frequency of intense rainfall increases. Expected intensification of current climate trends will include, inter alia: (i) a decline in the productivity of rained crops (eg, dates, millet, sorghum, rice and maize); (ii) reduced overall productivity and a likely change in the species composition of rangelands; (iii) reduction of the availability of drinking water and irrigation water; and (iv) increased soil erosion and dune migration due to dry soils, lack of vegetation cover and heavy rainfall. These impacts of climate change, combined with environmental degradation, will have a negative impact on the livelihoods of rural communities and lead to increased food insecurity in the arid regions of Mauritania.

The worsening climatic and socio-economic conditions in each of the target wilayas lead to various factors of degradation of the lands and ecosystems. In Adrar, low soil fertility combined with drought has led to overexploitation of land in the oasis areas, particularly through the cultivation of dates. Inchiri has better soils, but poor water management and overgrazing have led to the degradation of the wilaya's ecosystems. Finally, overgrazing aggravates the problem of sand encroachment in the desert areas of Trarza. Despite differences in the causes of environmental degradation, rural communities in the three wilayas depend on functional ecosystems to protect them from negative climate impacts, and it is therefore necessary to implement strategies for restoring land, establishing and scaling up sustainable land management systems and this concomitantly will enhance people and ecosystems resilience to climate change.

The area targeted by the project is an area that is largely contributing to the agriculture sector in Mauritania and livelihoods through the production and commercialization of dates, fruits and vegetables. For instance, the Adrar region contributes to 60% of the national production of dates. Also, in these oasis areas vegetables production is relatively good with yields estimated between 10 to 15 tons / hectares for Alfalfa, and 1.5 tons per hectares for cereals such as wheat or corn. The overall productive landscape in the combined region of INchiri and Adrar is estimated to 22,000 hectares and contributes to 50% of the local needs for food. Livestock is also a key part of the economy in the area and is mainly composed of bovine, goat and camels. Livestock constitutes the main livelihood for communities in the area. All these sectors productivity and sustainability are conditional to water availability and land productivity. These natural resources are degraded and as a consequence, are threatening agricultural productivity and related livelihoods in the area.

**The problem** that the proposed project seeks to reverse is the trend of degradation of land resources and arid lands ecosystems in Northern Mauritania in the region of Adrar, Inchiri and Dakhlet Nouadhibou, which are characterized by oasis ecosystems.

According to UNCCD (2019)[6], land degradation, a major handicap for agriculture in the Sahelian countries, leads to the abandonment of large areas that cannot be exploited, and, in extreme cases, to exodus. It also leads to the expansion of cultivated areas on marginal lands, and to an evolution in land use and production systems. Neither excess population pressure nor poverty are the only main underlying causes of land degradation in the Sahel. People's reactions to economic opportunities, influenced by institutional factors, rather determine interventions on degraded lands.

By reducing the productive capacity of soils, land degradation contributes to increased poverty and food insecurity. Without an appropriate response, this situation can lead to famine, social instability and even conflict in the long term. The need for an appropriate policy response is therefore undeniable and urgent in economically and ecologically viable models (Mohammed Rachid Doukkali et al., 2018)[7].

In these three targeted wilayas, increased pressure on natural resources due to agriculture, pastoralism and other economic development activities such as mining (as described above) have accelerated the level of degradation of these ecosystems, generating the loss of ecosystems services to the population and livelihoods who are already vulnerable to the impacts of land degradation, desertification and biodiversity loss. Farmers and pastoralists living in these three targeted wilayas are highly dependent on ecosystem goods and services for their livelihoods and subsistence. The extension of agricultural production areas remains limited by the availability of suitable soils and the quality of water. In the pastoral sector, the obstacles linked to the development of rural land, and right of access to water points have a very strong influence on the performance of the sector.

Restoration of the productive capacity of degraded lands is a secure and sustainable lever for a profound transformation of economies and the well-being of populations. There are several SLM practices and techniques to help communities better manage their environments. To scale up these technologies, the establishment of adequate financing mechanisms is necessary for developing a massive investment in land restoration. This approach is a winning option for achieving LDN goals. Since 2 years, Mauritania is engaged on the integrated process to facilitate the enable environment for voluntary LDN target implementation in the country; this process need to be finilized in other not only to comply with international policies, but also and above all to maintain the productivity of land resources, support ecosystem functions and services and thus meet the needs of current and future generations in Mauritania. Currently, there are few initiatives supporting land restoration and sustainable land management approaches the arid regions of Mauritania. Not only the lack of initiative in support to land restoration and management but also lack of systematic way of monitoring and capitalizing on approaches overs the years. There is need have strengthen institutional bodies in charge land management in arid zone, especially the National Observation Centre for Arid Areas (CNOEZA).

The **main barriers** to addressing this problem are the following: (i) limited knowledge in drylands management in government structures including local authorities, (ii) limited knowledge and appropriate approaches and interventions in dryland ecosystems; (iii) the institutional and technical capacity of national and local governments to assess drylands ecosystems and to implement sustainable land restoration and management approaches that are adequate for dryland ecosystems; (iv) insufficient investment in land restoration and management; and (v) the limited capacity of vulnerable local communities to adopt livelihood strategies that that prevent land degradation. All this affects negatively the capacity of local stakeholders for planning and investments in these areas.

The proposed project is to address land and ecosystems degradation in arid regions of Mauritania through sustainable land restoration and management. The project will also enhance capacities of local communities to adopt drought smart land management practices and strategies in the three wilayas targets (Adrar, Inchir and Dakhlet Nouadhibou).

This project approach includes:

1. Capacities building for implementing arid lands assessments, planning and management. This is particularly important as this project will set long-term approaches and building capacities is an important basis.
2. Support local communities in the development of sust land management governance systems. The approach will build on traditional knowledge of communities and mainstream them with scientific approaches.
3. Value chains development. Indeed the project will support local communities in the identification of viable ecosystem-based value chains of dryland products and promote their development.
4. Participation which requires that decision-makers (central and local governments), the project providers (executing agencies, field staff and contractors), beneficiaries (men and women within local community) and private actors share roles and relationships in information flow, resources control and decision making, delivery mechanisms and accountability.

5. Private sector engagement in SLM and to leveraging funds for land restoration
6. Gender-sensitive that requires that both men and women, and marginalized members of community contribute to sustainable management of dryland and equitably share the benefits derived from.

The proposed **solution** will strengthen sustainable land management and restoration in arid wilayas of Adrar, Inchiri and Dakhlet Nouadhibou. The project will focus on improving governance and management systems of arid lands of the targeted wilayas, improving the management of water and other natural resources, identifying and scaling up SLM good practices for drylands rehabilitation, knowledge generation on ecosystem-based-adaptation approaches applicable to drylands, mainstreaming business approaches that are able to greater engage private sector in SLM and to leverage strong and long-term investment for land restoration and management in Mauritania.

These solutions are in line with those proposed by Mohammed Rachid Doukkali et al. (2018) which are : development of capacities to collect and process information soil conditions and local socio-economics; institutional cooperation between countries and within countries in support of technical transfers, capitalization on local know-how, adoption of ICT innovations, mobilization of financial resources and strengthening human capital.

## 1a.2 - The baseline scenario and associated baseline projects

Several baseline investments relevant to the proposed project concept are in place. First, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD), responsible for the development and implementation of environmental policies in Mauritania, created the **National Observation Centre for Arid Areas (CNOEZA)** and over the proposed project implementation period, US\$500,000 of MEDD operational budget is included as in-kind co-financing for this project. This institutional environment for drylands monitoring and development that exist is an important basis to build on for the current proposed project. However, CNOEZA, despite having the mandate to plan and implement sustainable drylands actions, currently it has limited capacities to fully accomplish its mandate.

The proposed project will work with the existing institutional structures within the MEDD and particularly with CNOEZA to increase their capacity for evidence-based decision making in arid ecosystems building on synergies with the public, NGOs and international bodies that are addressing arid lands issues.

The **National Agency of the Great Green Wall (NAGGW)** in Mauritania is a public body in charge of implementing the Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWSSI). The GGWSSI is drylands restoration approach that is focusing set of integrated actions addressing the multi-sectoral problems affecting the lives of people in African Sahelo-Saharan areas. These multi-sectoral and multidimensional actions transversally address a wide range of concerns, including natural resource management, sustainability of rural production systems (agriculture, breeding, forestry, etc.) and the development of rural production and trade infrastructures, diversifying economic activities and wealth creation; taking into account gender and wealth issues in development.<sup>[8]</sup> The goal of the initiative is to strengthen the resilience of the region's people and natural systems to desertification and drought through the sound management of ecosystems, sustainable

development of land resources, and protection of rural heritage and improvement of living conditions of the local population. The objectives of the initiative include the restoration of 100 million hectares of degraded land affected by desertification, sequestration of 250 million tons of carbon and creation of 350,000 jobs in rural areas by 2030.

The National Agency of the Great Green Wall in Mauritania is implementing drylands restoration activities funded by government in Chami and Chinguitty areas that are covered by this project. The public investment of about USD 500,000 for improving drylands resource management is a good start. However, it remains not enough to scale-up land restoration.

The proposed project will work with the NAGGW to scale-up rangeland rehabilitation actions, the identification of good practices to implement in the targeted wilayas. While the operational budget of NAGGW is included as co-financing, the proposed project will offer real opportunities to strengthen local communities' capacities in land restoration through micro-projects with specific focus on gender.

The « **Autorité de la Zone Franche de Nouadhibou** » (AZ-FN) is active in the project area. This institution was created to with objectives to attract investment and encourage the development of the private sector; develop infrastructure in the area; promote the development of Nouadhibou to make it a competitive cluster and a regional hub of international class; create new jobs and improve the professional skills of national workers; to boost the economic and social development of Mauritania as a whole. The AZ-FN is getting strong support by international partners. World Bank recently is planning to inject about USD14,000,000 for AZ-FN infrastructures development[9]. Even the AZ-FN is currently oriented towards costal ecosystem, its mandate to promote private sector goes beyond the costal sector. In this regards, the AZ-FN is expending is action to mining sector and is willing to promote private sector in agriculture value chains including pastoral products value chins. Water provision service for multiple use is also one of the priorities of the AZ-FN.

**The Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS).** PRAPS is a regional project covering the six Sahelian countries including Mauritania and is funded by the World Bank and the International Development Association. Imitated in 2015, the project is planned to end in 2021. The total budget for this project is about US\$250 million, of which US\$45 million is allocated to Mauritania. Within Mauritania, PRAPS is being implemented in ten wilayas, including Adrar, Inchiri. The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to "improve access to essential productive assets, services and markets for pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in selected trans-border areas and along transhumance axes across six Sahel countries, and strengthen country capacities to respond promptly and effectively to pastoral crises or emergencies". The five components of the project include: i) animal health improvement; ii) national resource management enhancement; iii) market access facilitation; iv) pastoral crisis management; and v) project management and institutional support.

The proposed project will build on the sustainable resource management objectives of PRAPS by introducing participatory rangelands and grasslands methodology (PRAGA)[10] and also lands management system such as HIMA[11]. The proposed project will complement PRAPS activities through (i) improving water management in the target wilayas by taking into account the issue of water points dispatching impacts in land degradation in the targeted wilayas. (ii) Disseminating information on adaptation best practices to community members, including pastoralists. Considering that the proposed project will only work in two of the ten wilayas targeted by PRAPS, US\$ 9 million of the total PRAPS budget is considered as co-financing.

**The Sustainable Development of Oases Programme (PDDO).** The results and outcomes of PDDO constitute a great basis for the current project implementation. PDDO costs, estimated at US\$38.66 million, were financed by an IFAD loan for US\$11.41 million and contributions from the GoM (US\$6.79 million), beneficiaries (US\$1.36 million), GEF (US\$4.1 million) and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (Fonds arabe de développement économique et social, FADES, US\$15 million). PDDO targeted the broad development of the oasian regions of Mauritania through an integrated approach combining the improvement of water and energy solutions and capacity building. The focal point of PDDO was date palm growing, which provides the foundation for oasis-based economies. PDDO project had four specific objectives: i) promote the effective participation of oasis populations, notably women and young people, in the process of community and local development; ii) strengthen the institutional framework at oasis level; iii) promote the sustainable exploitation of the productive potential of oases; and iv) develop a network of privately managed proximity financial services. The project ended in 2014 and gives large body of knowledge and experience on which the current project can build, especially in Adrar wilayas.

The proposed project will take advantage of the institutional mechanism set through PDDO, especially in Adrar Wilayas to strengthen SLM governance and keep key natural resource areas under improved climate-smart governance by communities and local government. The scaling up of the governance approach in the three target wilayas will lead to restore or put under improved management about 50,000 ha and impact more than 3,500 beneficiaries. Activities completed prior to the current project may be ineligible as co-finance, but the project is an important part of the baseline.

**The Project Agropole Maraicher of Benichab (PAMB).** Being implemented in Inchiri, the PAMB project is led by the Commissioner for Food Security, CSA Japanese Cooperation, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, and the Rahma Foundation. It is a project of USD 1.25 million and it is executed through a public-private partnership to benefit more than 300 local families. Among the project achievements, 200 hectares of agricultural lands have been fenced, divided in plots and equipped with irrigation infrastructure. Benefiting family was given a plot for its own use. The PAMB also supplied agricultural equipment to the target families and provides technical advice. Markets chains for products are also organized accordingly to local market and neighboring markets conditions. The PAMB is expected to be extended to other villages and communities in the wilaya of Adrar.

The proposed project will build on results and outcomes of PAMB project and strengthen ecosystem-based value chains of agricultural and dryland products, this not only in Inchiri but also in Adrar and Daklet Nouadhibou area. Furthermore drought smart land management practices (D-SLM) will be introduced to reduce the impacts of desertification. From lessons learned with the PAMB project, the current project will strengthen establishment drylands products value chains that will diversify local communities' income generation.

**Mauritanian Copper Mines (MCM) and Tasiast Mauritania LTD** are copper and gold companies active in Inchiri and Adrar region. Mauritanian Copper Mines (MCM) which is a subsidiary of First Quantum Ltd, a Canadian company, exploits the Guelb Moghrein Copper Gold Mine, the largest gold mine in Mauritania situated in the Inchiri region. As part of their obligations and corporate social responsibility, MCM implements small-scale projects in communities. The ongoing MCM Community Projects are community-based and focus on agriculture, pastoralism, water mobilization and capacity building. MCM supplies water for household use and livestock to communities of Bennichab and Akjoujt. MCM is also working to rehabilitate some thermal energy-powered water

wells and boreholes with new solar energy systems. In the same trend, Tasiast Mauritania LTD in the region is also supporting communities with small-scale water projects and other infrastructures. Mining development in Mauritania in these recent years constitute an important background for innovative projects that engage private sector and this, for communities resilient livelihood development.

Indeed, MCM and Tasiast Mauritania LTD community development projects have not integrated sustainable land restoration and management approaches into the planning and implementation of their interventions.

The proposed project will complement the ongoing MCM and Tasiast Mauritania LTD community development projects through the addition of s sustainable land restoration and management interventions, including communal water management based on structured charters and management plans. Communities will be capacitated to using ecosystem based adaptation tools in their plots and by doing so, it will enhance for example natural regeneration of soil cover.

**Local financing institutions:** It is also important to consider in the baseline scenario some local financing mechanisms, which communities can benefit from- These are Caisse des Dépôts et Développement (CCD) which is providing loans to communities in order to support i) income generating activities, 2) SMEs development, and 3) unemployed graduates. Les Mutuelles d'Investissements et de Crédit Oasiens play a great role in supporting communities in accessing financing but capacities need to be strengthened in order to provide better support to potential clients in the area. These will be supported mainly under component 3 of this proposed project.

During the PPG phase, the opportunity to identify and include other baseline investment in the targeted wilayas as source of co-financing will be further investigated.

### 1a.3 - The proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project.

The project rationale is described in the theory of change attached to this PIF as an annex.

Mauritania faces the following root barriers and gaps for restoration and sustainable management of drylands:

1. Limited knowledge of drylands management and of appropriate approaches and interventions for dryland ecosystems
2. Institutional and technical capacity gaps of national and local government to assess drylands ecosystems and to implement appropriate sustainable land restoration and management approaches
3. Weak engagement of actors to leverage enough investment for land restoration and management.

The baseline scenario as shown is partly addressing these problem.



The proposed project objective is to strengthen the resilience of rural communities in the wilayas of Adrar, Inchiri and Daklet Nouadhibou in Mauritania through sustainable land restoration and management. To achieve this goal, the project will deploy ecosystem-based approaches for drylands governance and restoration in order to address the above barriers and gaps in the target wilayas. The project will strengthen knowledge and capacity for more effective governance to enable sustainable land management by rural populations. It will support communal resource management arrangements in areas where resource competition is highest, including oases and water points. The project will also support consultations between other stakeholders in the arid landscapes, such as mining concessions, to identify safe guards and opportunities for ensuring net positive environmental outcomes.

Knowing that capacities building, at local level and government level is important to set a strong basis for sustainable land management, the current intervention will work to build government and local communities capacities for implementing arid lands assessments, planning and management. The project will also strengthen with local communities sustainable land management governance systems in the targeted wilayas. The approach will build on traditional knowledge of communities and mainstream them with scientific approaches. The project will develop and strengthen ecosystem-based value chains of dryland products to create incentives and income generation means for local communities. Private sector engagement in SLM will be a strong component in the current project and will be built on “business and biodiversity” approach that allows actors to realizing profit by protecting the environment and restoring lands. All interventions and project activities will be gender-sensitive and will give emphasis to women and marginalized members of community by fostering their contribution to sustainable management of dryland and ensuring equitably sharing of the benefits derived from the investments.

The project will promote interconnectedness between environmental objectives and the social and economic one. This requires providing with land users and local government, capacities, tools, frameworks, plans, collaborative agreements etc. For private sector, guidelines to implement actions to avoid land degradation and scale up ecosystems restoration, inclusive governance and develop sustainable value chains are necessary.

The proposed project consists of four components. The details of these components are described below.

### **Component 1: Capacity building and governance**

This component is aiming to increasing key stakeholders capacities at local level at government level and to equip them with evidence based decision-making tools for arid lands. Strengthening capacities will facilitate the integration of land restoration SLM into existing and future policies, regulations and strategies related to arid zone development. Institutional support will be provided to the newly established National Observation Centre for Arid Areas (CNOEZA). The component is aiming also to setting enabling conditions for sustaining SLM and enabling environment to support voluntary LDN target implementation. This component will deliver two outcomes, as follows.

The first outcome (1.1) to be achieved from this component will be that *Key stakeholders are trained and equipped for evidence based decision making for SLM in arid lands*. In order to do so, the project intends to deliver the four following outputs:

#### ***Output 1.1.1: Arid land's observatory is equipped for conducting assessments***

**Output 1.1.2:** 90 national and local experts are trained for implementing arid lands assessments

**Output 1.1.3:** Land degradation assessments carried out and validated in the target wilayas.

**Output 1.1.4:** An online data platform is created for storage of land assessment data and continuously updated

The ecosystems assessments proposed in this component, mainly under outputs 1.3 and 1.4 will be done under a hierarchical land ecosystems risk assessment (eg: Red List of Ecosystems), This will provide the country with ecosystems risks assessment, but also an analysis of opportunities for restorations. In targeted wilayas of the current project, detailed assessment will be done using Participatory Rangelands and Grasslands Assessment methodology (PRAGA) and ROAM (restoration opportunity assessment methodology). By doing, so the target wilayas will can easily develop evidence based restoration plans to be integrated in local policies for implementation. The outcomes of all these processes are: (i) Ecosystems of Mauritania are assessed and Risks and threats of ecosystems are identified including land degradation risks; (ii) Detailed ecosystems risks, threats including land degradation are mapped in the targeted wilayas; (iii) Targeted wilayas have developed evidence based restoration plans and integrated in policies for implementation; (iv) stakeholders capacities are built in conducting ecosystems assessment.

The second outcome (1.2) expected from this component will be to create an *Enabling environment to support voluntary Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets implementation*. The Mauritanian government has started the implementation of LDN process; but this need to be completed through the political endorsement of the NDT targets, mainstreaming the LDN tool into the existing planning frameworks and participatory land-use planning, promotion of political measures to address land degradation and good governance on land tenure and the setting up of a monitoring and information systems on LDN achievements. This specific outcome will contribute to deliver the four following outputs:

**Output 1.2.1.** Policy work at national levels supported to address obstacles to LDN objectives

**Output 1.2.2.** LDN tool integrated into the existing planning frameworks and participatory

land-use planning

**Output 1.2.3.** Measures to address land degradation and good governance on land tenure identified and promoted

## Component 2: Land and ecosystem restoration

This second component will ensure that *key resource areas in targeted wilayas are under improved climate-smart governance and land restoration by communities and local government*. Component 2 will support the development of landscape management plans, using participatory rangeland assessment to evaluate the health of rangelands, identify areas for rehabilitations, and propose actions. Component 2 will apply the IUCN Participatory Rangeland Management Planning approach (PRAGA) and the IUCN Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF) to strengthen community natural resource governance, with particular attention to the resource rights of women and other marginalized resource rights holders. The project will build on experiences in applying the Hima approach, under the GEF6 project “HERD” and other IUCN initiatives. Component 2 will be implemented through local government planning fora to strengthen public sector capacity for coordinating landscape-level actions. This will include improved planning of critical water resources within rangeland landscapes.

Component 2 will support field-based actions for land and ecosystem restoration using validated good practices for restoration and SLM which will include Drought-Smart Land Management interventions and will, be guided by decisions made through the support of local governance institutions. The project targets improved governance, sustainable management, and land restoration actions, including natural and assisted regeneration, on 70,000 ha of arid landscape (including woodlands, rangelands and riparian wetlands). The project will support improved management of water resources through integrated land and water resource planning. Component 2 will also support implementation of 800 households livelihoods to implement sustainable land management and land restoration projects through seed funding (with specific focus on gender).

The main outcome to be delivered under component will result from the five outputs detailed below:

**Output 2.1:** *Per targeted wilayas, an updated landscape management plan informed by assessments available*

**Output 2.2:** *Communities' rights and access to natural resources with particular attention to the resource rights of women and other marginal groups are improved*

**Output 2.3:** *70,000 ha of arid landscape (including woodlands, rangelands and riparian wetlands) are under improved governance and Drought-Smart Land Management interventions*

**Output 2.4:** *Improved water management interventions implemented in the three target wilayas, following established guidelines for Nature Based Solutions to drought*

**Output 2.5:** *800 households supported to implement sustainable land management and land restoration projects through seed funding*

The targets set in this PIF (70,000 hectares) are based on the assumption that cost of restoration from other projects in similar context (ex: WACAT) was estimated between 20 to 4,000 USD/Ha<sup>[12]</sup>. For this PIF, it is estimated that if assessments are done and that natural resource governance systems are in place in the targeted wilayas, the cost of restoration can stand around 20 USD/hectares. Based on this, restoring 70,000 hectares of arid lands will need approximately USD 1,4 million (direct investment for land restoration and SLM under component 2).

### Component 3: Financing scaling-up of SLM

This component aims to develop investment strategies for Mauritania drylands rehabilitation and management. In this process, activities that will be carried out in the framework of this component will support, not only to identifying pipelines for funding opportunities, but also engagement of private sector partners into Sustainable Land Management activities and land restoration. Private sector engagement will encompass various types of value chains development and financing mechanisms such as micro-finance or insurance systems for smallholders and relevant stakeholders involved. This will include working with local financing institutions in the project area. It will also be looking at local users as private actors. Indeed, local users are those sustaining in a daily-basis livelihoods of the communities. Entrepreneurship approaches helping them to bringing together land/ecosystem conservation, maintaining soils functions and business will be of great importance to sustaining SLM in the arid areas of Mauritania. Investors forums organized in the framework of this project will also

contribute in leveraging funds for land restoration, SLM and water management in Mauritania. The project will support dialogue between government and mining companies to identify options for integrating land degradation risk management into business operations and to develop actions for achieving no net loss of soil. This component will enable the achievement of the following five outputs.

***Output 3.1.1:** Per target wilayas, a Total economic valuation and cost-benefit analysis study is published*

***Output 3.1.2:** Within the targeted wilayas, three main dryland products and value chains of those products are improved to leverage environmental sustainability*

***Output 3.1.3:** An active investors forum in place to build capacities on value chain development and enhance investment in drylands ecosystem*

***Output 3.1.4:** Options for offsetting environmental impacts in targeted wilayas are identified through consultations with government and mining companies*

***Output 3.1.5:** For each targeted wilayas, a proposal for an investment plan is elaborated*

#### **Component 4: Project-specific knowledge management and M&E**

This component aims to upscaling good practices in sustainable land and water management (SLWM) and the project lessons to wider public at national and international level. It aims to establishing collaborative learning process through community learning actions. A monitoring system will be put in place to track project results and measure outcomes, and this with the aim to identifying policy actions to influence implementation of existing SLWM or to generate new policies.

***Output 4.1.1:** Lessons learned from land restoration and sustainable lands management best practices deployed in the three targeted wilayas are published and shared across the country for scaling up*

***Output 4.1.2:** Knowledge-sharing events on restoring and conserving drylands natural capital are conducted*

***Output 4.1.3:** A monitoring and information systems on LDN achievements using the LDN indicators developed and implemented*

The proposed project will build on the favorable environment of private sector promotion and boost the development of drylands value chains. In this regards, the project will focus on setting a strong coordination system of private investors in the sector of agriculture and drylands products. Guidelines for private sector investment in drylands will be developed and investor forums and private sector consultations carried out to building capacities on value chain development and investment in drylands ecosystem. The add value of that is to structured private investment for long-term in Mauritania drylands and to promote SLM. It will also set incentive and income generation mechanism for local communities. Without incentives and income generation mechanism land management and restoration, approaches will lack sustainability.

#### **1a.4- Alignment with GEF focal area**

The proposed project is aligned with GEF Land Degradation focal area. Indeed the project framework is designed to improve and maintain flow of agro-pastoral-ecosystem services in Mauritania drylands in order to sustain food production and livelihoods through Sustainable Land Management (SLM) (LD-1-1) and implementation of good practices rehabilitating land and restoring ecosystems functions in Mauritania drylands. The proposed project gives priority to governance system for sustainable land management and to capacity building for assessing landscape and for evidence based decision making in arid lands. This contributes to reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and increase resilience in the wider landscape (LD-1-4). The project is also aligned with LD 2-5 as it will contribute to enabling the environment for LDN targets implementation (mainly under outcome 1.2) by strengthening the related policy framework for that purpose.

### 1a.5 - Incremental/additional cost reasoning

The project development objective is to improve rural communities' livelihoods in the wilayas of Adrar, Inchiri and Dakhlet Nouadhibou in Mauritania through sustainable land restoration and management.,

**Without the GEF:** In the absence of GEF funding, activities under the ongoing programmes identified in the baseline scenario will be able to reach their objective and possibly generate significant socio-economic benefits and, to a certain extent, contributes towards an improved perspective of the dryland's environmental problems Mauritania. However, with an investment of about USD 20 million, they will not ensure effective prevention and control of degradation and desertification. Specifically, the baseline investments are not oriented establishing integrated governance system that takes into account government, local communities, private sector in a way to support ecosystem-based approaches and Drought-Smart Land Management interventions into planning to planning and management of dryland landscapes and at the same time developing drylands products values chains. The area will still lacks to driving and leveraging enough investment for restoring lands on with local communities is depending. Without GEF funding through the proposed project, anthropogenic pressures will continue to negatively impact and degrade the environment in the targeted wilayas and put at risk the ecological and livelihood systems upon which local communities directly depend on.

**With the GEF:** Building on the existing baseline projects, the proposed project will strongly use an integrated and ecosystem-based approach to dryland landscape planning, use and governance. Thus, the GEF will finance the integration of ecosystem restoration actions and actions to avoid degradation. GEF investment of about USD 3.9 million will insure multiply ecosystem services of drylands in the area and to combatting drivers of land degradation. It will also address institutional gaps for sustainable landscape management, including cross-sectoral planning and compliance as well as local level governance of land and land-based resources by rural communities. The rationale of this project is to build on the existing knowledge base, using a landscape and integrated ecosystem management approach as an integrating framework to identify and scale-up relevant sustainable land management approaches and practices in response to specific local landscape degradation issues and characteristics. The project will contribute to implement existing policies and complement ongoing baseline activities in the three targeted wilayas.

### 1a.6 - Global environmental benefits

This project will generate global environmental through the restoration of 70,000 hectares of degraded land and contribute to the sequestration of 245,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. This will contribute to the preservation of arid ecosystems, which are critical for livelihoods in the area. The project will also maintain the fertility of land, improve water resources management and reduce deforestation, which will then contribute to enhancing biodiversity benefits through the maintenance of local fauna and flora. This will be done by strengthening the effectiveness of SLM interventions on the ground and in policy and will improve synergy between multiple sustainable development targets and MEAs. The project will link stakeholders to improve recognition of and support for the multiple benefits of SLM including poverty reduction and food security, conservation of biodiversity, and protection of ecosystem services. It will also enhance national environmental governance through the engagement of key stakeholders from multiple sectors, government levels and ministries. The project will enhance the capacity of Mauritania to implement MEAs (especially SDGs 15.3) and mainstream them into national and sub-national policy, planning financial and legal frameworks. By doing so, the project will therefore contribute to achieving the shared obligations of the Rio and other Conventions in Mauritania. The project is designed to contribute to combatting drought and desertification through drought smart land management practices scaling up.

The project will maximize global environment benefits by enhancing land health in a Natural Park (the Banc D'Arguin Natural Park) and through this mainstream biodiversity benefits. Land degradation affects considerably the loss of biodiversity, the functioning of the ecosystems and their capacity for resilience. Within the Banc d'Arguin National Park, the terrestrial part hosts highly diversified ecosystems and habitats, which contribute to global ecological cycles such as species conservation as this is an area where species migrate. Also, maintaining land health through restoration activities will enable the regulation of hydrological processes, gas exchanges and carbon sequestration. These activities will also contribute to reinforce symbiotic and non-symbiotic relationships between plants and their roots. Healthy soil will contribute to biodiversity benefits by maintaining fauna and flora that would disappear otherwise.

### 1a.7 - Innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up

**Innovation:** the project is using ecosystem-based approaches to drylands that includes drought smart land management practices that provide favorable cost-benefit ratios compared with hard infrastructure approaches. In addition, bringing positive changes in land use and management demands strong functional institutions, not only at government level but also at community level. The proposed project is building capacities in both levels to insure coordination and coherence in actions. The project is targeting land restoration and sustainable land management but the co-benefits of it are numerous including reducing local communities' climate change vulnerability, increasing carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation. At social level, the project is bringing alternative livelihoods opportunities and contributing to poverty reduction.

Other innovation in this project lies in the use of new methodology in assessing drylands ecosystems. Indeed, the project will implement the newly developed PRAGA methodology for evidence-based decision making in actions for land restoration and management.

Another project innovation will be through the demonstration of LDN implementation on the ground (outcome 1.2), which will trigger some potential for replication at the national level.

Private sector engagement in land restoration and SLM is fundamental in this project. In Adrar, Inchiri and Daklet Nouadhibou recent development of mining sector is important but few projects implemented in the region consider engaging private sector in SLM. This project, based on experiences in other countries and knowledge and approaches developed by IUCN to engaging private sector in biodiversity conservation, will engage the private sector and explore new opportunities for increasing investment in lands restoration and SLM in Mauritania. The project will also collaborate with relevant stakeholders to optimize knowledge transmission and promote complementarity and cost-effectiveness.

**Sustainability:** The sustainability of the proposed project will be enhanced by: (i) the governance approach for SLM, involving local communities in decision making and implementation to ensure buy-in and sharing of benefits; (ii) building the technical and institutional capacity of national and local government to assist local communities in the continued planning and implementation of SLM and ecosystem based adaptation approaches; (iii) Interventions and measures will be tailored to arid conditions and based on consultations and therefore applicable throughout the target wilayas; (iv) mainstreaming land restoration and drought smart land management into policies and strategies at local and national level; (v) providing knowledge base and guidelines for designing and implementing lands restoration and SLM in drylands ecosystems. The investments on the ground will sustain as they will be identified based on consultations with local communities and to respond to their real need. Meaning that after the project life time, communities will continue applying drought smart land management approaches, value chains developed and engagement with private sector will strengthen the socio-economic fabric of the communities. The project intend to support and fund some land restoration projects. Those projects will be selected based on transparent and fair criteria, among others their expected impact, their sustainability and their potential for restoration and scaling up.

The sustainability of the project will also be enhanced by sharing data and lessons learned from the project and by the learning process that will influence behavioral changes.

Another aspect of this project sustainability is that a drylands observatory is a particular concern for Mauritania. Evidence is made that drylands are under low investment and to reverting the situation, the Arid and Drylands Center will be of great support and the Government of Mauritania put in place CNOEZA (Centre National d'Observation Environnemental des Zones Arides). CNOEZA is already supported by the Government that constitute a great step for sustainability of the initiative. The government plans to invest about 900,000 \$ per year for the equipment and operating running cost for this institution from 2021. CNOEZA became an asset for this project in terms of co-financing. The current project investing to enhance CNOEZA capacities in terms of tested methods and approaches for assessing drylands, storing data and use of data for decision making and evidence based actions will strengthen the basis of the CNOEZA sustainability.

A multi-stakeholder platform will be set up and supported during the project implementation to facilitate dialogue between all the stakeholders (government institutions, private sector, CSO, etc.), build interactions amongst all participants, stimulate engagement of these actors on the project, and in fine their contribution to the transformational change. This platform will be involved in the project implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Their representatives will be a member of the Project Steering Committee and will ensure the considerations of interests and needs of the various actors, notably indigenous people (if applicable) and women.

**Potential for scaling up:** the proposed project is designed for scaling up at national and global level. At national level, 77% of Mauritania is arid zones and the intervention model to sustainably restore and manage land is replicable in other region of Mauritania. The activities proposed will enhance the knowledge on interventions in arid regions to increase the resilience of communities. The outreach activities, publications and monitoring efforts will be communicated to the relevant stakeholders in the country and by doing so, it will promote the upscaling of the best approaches for restoration and SLM.

At the global level, the proposed project will provide an example of intervention model to drylands restoration and with focus to long-term planning as a means of supporting sustainable development while increasing the resilience of communities and improving their livelihoods. Documenting and disseminating Mauritania's experience will benefit other countries with arid ecosystems. Additionally, the information generated through outreach activities and publications will benefit the global community and will enhance adoption and upscaling of validated good practices for land restoration and SLM in future projects.

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[1] Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/mauritania>

[2] Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/mauritania>

[3] World Bank. 2014. Note de Politique – La Transition vers une Croissance Verte Inclusive en Mauritanie. Nouakchott.

[4] <https://tradingeconomics.com/mauritania/gdp-growth-annual>

[5] Mauritania is divided into 15 *wilayas* (or provinces).

[6] UNCCD, 2019. The Global Land Outlook, West Africa Thematic Report, Bonn, Germany.

[7] Mohammed Rachid Doukkali et al., 2018. Is Land Degradation Neutrality in Africa Possible? Policy Brief, OCP Policy Center PB-18/31

[8] Harmonized regional strategy for implementation of the "Great Green Wall Initiative of the Sahara and the Sahel",  
[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/europeanunion/pdf/harmonized\\_strategy\\_GGWSSI-EN\\_.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/europeanunion/pdf/harmonized_strategy_GGWSSI-EN_.pdf)

[9] <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/446701552021465270/pdf/EIES-Final-Eco-Ple-Nouadhibou-28-10-18.pdf>

[10] Participatory Rangelands and Grassland assessment Methodology (PRAGA). PRAGA is developed by IUCN and FAO taking into account remote sensing, scientific approaches and traditional approaches of assessing rangelands health in order to include lands users' perspective. The methodology is being tested in five countries and funded by GEF.

[11] The HIMA is a traditional rangelands management system. An Arabic word, "Hima" means "a protected area" that is used for the public good, and it takes into consideration the interaction between nature conservation and human well-being. IUCN has worked to successfully revive HIMA in Jordan and the approach is being recognized globally.

[12] <http://www.csf-desertification.org/files/pdf/news/restauration-des-terres-degradees-A-CORNET.pdf>



#### 1b. Project Map and Coordinates

**Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.**

See annex attached (as the map cannot be pasted in the portal!)

## 2. Stakeholders

Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Civil Society Organizations Yes

Private Sector Entities Yes

If none of the above, please explain why:

**In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.**

The private sector is considered to be a key partner in the project in order to ensure sustainability and scaling up. The involvement of CSOs as well as representative of the non-organized civil society at community level is equally important, as this will ensure that proposed land planning and management mechanism will be inclusive and participative and inclusive. During the PPG phase the project will expand the existing draft stakeholder analysis in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of relevant actors, assessing their interest in the project, the ways in which these stakeholders may influence the project's outcomes and how they might be impacted by project activities, positively or negatively. The analysis will provide the foundation for defining stakeholder engagement in project preparation, but also later during implementation and monitoring and evaluation. An important element of the engagement strategy is to set-up a multi-stakeholder platform to facilitate dialogue between all relevant stakeholders, build interactions amongst all participants, stimulate engagement of these actors on the project, and in fine-tuning their contribution to the transformational change. This platform will be initiated during project preparation and then fully implemented during the implementation phase. It is foreseen that the platform will be represented in the Project Steering Committee to ensure the considerations of interests and needs of the various actors, notably local communities and women.

During the preparation of this PIF, IUCN and the executing agency – CNOEZA – ensured that all relevant stakeholders are consulted on the project design, which now considers their inputs. These consultations have taken place in February, September, October 2019, and January 2020. These consultations have involved representative of the private sector, including the mining companies active in the area, the local authorities and civil society. The process leading to this PIF has been participative, including beneficiaries throughout the cities, villages and representatives of local communities. The aim of this process has been about getting feedback on the proposal but also identifying where these stakeholders can participate in the implementation of the project.

Stakeholders consulted have been: Regional Direction for Sustainable Development in Inchir, Nouadhibou and Adrar, MCM, Kinross Tasiast Ltd, Autorité de la zone franche de Nouadhibou, Great Green Wall Agency, AMB project representatives, Banc d'Arguin National Park Representatives, Oceanographic and fisheries Institute of Mauritania, WACA project, NGOs (EPI, Carbon Action, Naforé), Women groups in the project area, Ecole Normale Supérieure (University), Nouakchott University, Representatives of the cities of Binichaab, Akjoujt, Atar, Chaami, Nouadhibou.

### 3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

**Briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis).**

Indeed, Mauritania is a developing country and at 77% drylands with high poverty rate of about 59%<sup>[1]</sup>. Gender inequality index is 0.617<sup>[2]</sup> in 2017. The Human Development Index (HDI) was 0.446 for females and 0.546 for males<sup>[3]</sup>. Due to some restrictions, the participation of women in the formal economic sector is limited and that is reducing their financial resources and technical capacity as compared to men. This compromises women's ability to meet their livelihood requirements.

Therefore, the project will actively promote women empowerment and gender equality and encompasses special outputs to contribute to closing the gender gap in access to and control over natural resources, to improve participation in decision making and socio-economic benefits and to demonstrate how women champions can impact positive changes.

During the project development phase a gender analysis will be conducted as part of baseline development with gender-disaggregated data in order to complete the understanding of gender-relevant barriers and opportunities and to lay to ground for the gender-sensitive project design. The consultations with different gender groups will be organized in a way to ensure that women are able to raise their concerns and contribute effectively to the fine-tuning of project design and its results framework. This might involve consultation in separate gender groups. Special emphasis will be given to identify and agree on appropriate results indicators and targets for providing evidence of the expected gender achievements. This includes defining participation targets for the project's training and awareness-raising activities as well as for socio-economic benefits. Emphasize on the involvement of youth will be made. The preparation phase will be guided by GEF Gender policy and guidance<sup>[4]</sup>.

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[1] <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/MRT/mauritania/poverty-rate>

[2] <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/MRT.pdf>

[3] UNDP, 2014. Human Development Reports 2014.

[http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/MRT.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/MRT.pdf)

[4] <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/policy-gender-equality> and <https://www.thegef.org/publications/gef-guidance-gender-equality>.

**Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes**

closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; Yes

improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or Yes

generating socio-economic benefits or services for women. Yes

Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

#### 4. Private sector engagement

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

**Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.**

The innovative aspects of the proposed project include private sector engagement in SLM. The project implementation area has the largest deposits of minerals of the country (gold, iron, copper, etc.) and mining sector is developing. Nouadhibou Free Zone attracts more and more companies due to policies that are offering advantages to companies settling in this zone. Engaging private sector is emphasized in stakeholders' engagement policies in Mauritania. This constitute ground and opportunity for engaging private sector in SLM and to leveraging funds for land restoration through a greater understanding and implementation of Business and Biodiversity concepts, including soil biodiversity that is crucial for soil conservation and land restoration. Already, primary consultation with Kinross Tasiast Ltd, MCM have open rooms for co-financing in this project of about USD 3million. These companies are already implementing initiatives aiming to improve local communities' livelihoods in the area. The business model of this project requires that private sector be engaged. Indeed, the proposed project is building on the favorable environment of private sector promotion to boost the development of drylands value chains. In this regards, the project will focus on setting a strong coordination system of private investors in the sector of agriculture and drylands products. A platform of these investors will be created and organized around the concepts of "business and biodiversity". The add value of that is to structured private investment for long-term in Mauritania drylands and to promote SLM.

5. Risks

Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the Project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the Project design (table format acceptable)

#	Description of risks	Mitigation measure	Probability (1 - 5) 1 = Low; 5 = High	Magnitude of impact (1 - 5) 1 = Low; 5 = High	Significance of risk Low, moderate, high

Technical & operational risks					
	Unwillingness to work together among stakeholders and disagreement on the allocation of project roles might cause delays in project implementation	Stakeholder consultation carried out during the PPG phase with relevant institutions and stakeholders will ensure that roles, responsibilities and priorities are discussed, agreed and documented – among other through the project validation workshop.	2	3	Low
	Limited technical project management capacity of local partners to develop and implement the project might cause delay in project implementation	Project management capacities of implementation partners will be strengthened through capacity building measures at project inception. Gaps in technical capacities of implementing partners as well as other relevant stakeholders will be addressed through trainings delivered under outcome 1 and 2 (e.g. land restoration based on EbA measures etc.)	2	3	Low
	Local communities may not be willing to adopt interventions during or after the project and will lead to a continuation of anthropogenic pressures, degrade of the environment	Embedded: the participatory nature of the land assessment and the land use planning process will ensure that plans and measures are highly relevant and desired by local communities. Regular monitoring will ensure continued validation and adaptation where needed.	2	3	Low
Political, macroeconomic and security risks					
	Emergencies at national level or in the targeted wilayas might derail policy discourse and focus all attention on emergency response and as such delay project implementation and reduce activities' effectiveness	The project is explicitly designed to demonstrate the value of appropriate SLM approaches at landscape level. Hence, these will be less dependent on decision and actions taken at the national level.	1	3	Low
	Increasing security risks leading to project areas being mapped as insecure and increasingly defended to access with the consequence of stalling project implementation	The project will coordinate with all stakeholders including Government officials at the national and local level, as well as communities at the local level to understand the level of risks and adapt project activities accordingly.	2	4	Moderate
	Investment opportunities in SLM may be unattractive to private sector actors in case of expected low returns or high transaction costs which would affect the project's effectiveness in scaling up SLM through creation or improving drylands products value chains	Embedded: Through the ecologic and economic valuation techniques appropriate investment options will be identified. Improved negotiation skills will ensure greater understanding of the value of investing in SLM. The investors forums will promote investment opportunities.	2	3	Low

	Given the situation caused by the epidemic of COVID 19 in 2019 and 2020 around the world, the probability that an epidemic threat ens project advancement is not unlikely.	The project will ensure that all staff can respect hygiene and mitigation measures in the case of such an epidemic. The project will also be designed in a manner that components can be implemented independently so delays are not too high, should the case happen.	2	4	Moderate
Financial risks					
	Lack of funding available after the project end might affect the sustainability of the promoted approaches and practices	The project is designed to upscale SLM practices by leveraging additional funding for land restoration and ecosystem based adaptation and by engaging the private sector who would continue implementing the practices due to expected financial returns.	2	3	Low
Reputational risks					
	Engagement with private sector partners may affect the reputation of IUCN, GEF and the project in case policies, practices and performance of these partners do not align with sustainable management practices and social and environmental safeguards and/or in case of accidents or other structural failures (e.g. failing of tailing dam)	IUCN and the execution partner will do the due diligence assessment of the private sector involved before accepting their engagement on the project	2	5	Moderate
Environmental and social safeguards					
	Increasing security risks in the project areas might cause health and safety threats to project workers including staff of implementing partners and third parties	A security master plan will be developed by the project team with clear measures and responses.	3	4	Moderate
	Targeted landscape management plan might require restrictions	Embedded: the management plans will take the results of the participatory landscape assessment (PLA) into account.			



	on resource use and as such affect livelihoods of vulnerable individuals/ groups that are highly depended on the resources	patory rangelands and grasslands assessment (PRAGA) into account; this methodology includes an assessment of social vulnerabilities and as such provide recommendation how to avoid affecting vulnerable groups	2	3	Low
	Project might exacerbate existing barriers for women's participation in land use planning process	Embedded: the project will actively promote women empowerment and gender equality – this is reflected through the design process (ensuring participation of women) as well as through explicit outputs, indicators and activities aiming at increasing participation in decision making, access to socio-economic benefits and promoting women leadership.	2	2	Low
	Investment strategies promoted by the project will benefit those who are already privileged (e.g. land owners, business owners etc.) and as such lead to unjustified preferential treatment	The ability to access services provided by the project will be guided by transparent and fair criteria; for private sector partners cost contributions will be established. These procedures will be established during the PPG phase.	2	2	Low
	Lack of commitment and interest of mining companies and government agencies in relation to the options for offsetting environmental impacts of mining operations in targeted wilayas proposed by IUCN would jeopardize the effectiveness of output 3.1.4	The project will establish stakeholders platform which will include private partners such as the companies involved in the region so they are included in the decision making process.	2	2	Low

The table also depicts risks which are already addressed by the project design. In these cases the column describing the mitigation measures will indicate that measures have already been embedded in project design.

Table : Model for significance rating

		<i>Likelihood of occurrence</i>				
		<i>Very unlikely to occur (1)</i>	<i>Not expected to occur (2)</i>	<i>Likely – could occur (3)</i>	<i>Known to occur - almost certain (4)</i>	<i>Common occurrence (5)</i>
<i>Impact</i>	<i>Severe (5)</i>	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	High
	<i>Major (4)</i>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
	<i>Medium (3)</i>	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

<i>Minor (2)</i>	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
<i>Negligible (1)</i>	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

The environmental and social safeguard risks have been included in the above risk table. Some of the risk issues are already addressed by the project design as indicated by adding “embedded”. Other risk will require the development and implementation of dedicated mitigation measures. The table already provides first suggestions for mitigation measures and an early judgement of the significance of the risk issues, based on their probability of the risk occurring and the expected magnitude of the impacts. Based on this early judgement the safeguard risk rating of the project is likely to be moderate risk level. However, at this stage it is not clear yet to what extent it will be possible to identify all project interventions during the PPG phase; some of the interventions might only be known during project implementation as these depend on decisions taken by project stakeholders or depend on specific information which might not be available during the PPG phase. For instance, the selection of the value chain products will be jointly decided by private sector partners and communities. Sites and concrete SLM interventions will depend on the outcome of the participatory rangelands and grasslands assessment which will be implemented only during the project. These aspects will be revisited during the PPG phase and a decision taken whether an ESMF will be needed to describe the procedure for assessing risks during project implementation. In case it will become clear during the PPG phase that there is already a good understanding of the potential activities or the possible activities are judged as small-scale and benign, IUCN might come to the conclusion that the development of an extended ESMP during the PPG phase might be sufficient. A preliminary ESMS screening is attached to this submission as per GEF guidelines.

## 6. Coordination

**Outline the institutional structure of the project including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level. Describe possible coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.**

Institutional structure and coordination of the project is designed as following. The Implementing Agency (IA) of the project will be the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The National Observation Centre for Arid Areas (CNOEZA) at Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) will be the Executing Agency. IUCN will support the CNOEZA to ensure execution of administrative and financial matters and will assist in key technical and scientific issues. The project will be implemented in partnership with the National Agency of the Great Green Wall (NAGGW). A national Steering Committee (SC) of the project will be in place and will serve as advisory and efficiency monitoring board for implementation of the project. The Steering Committee will be shared by IUCN, the Executing Agency CNOEZA will act as secretariat for the Steering Committee. Members of the Steering Committee will include representatives of the relevant Ministries in charge of rural development, local government, civil society, private sector, research institutes. As the project is gender sensitive, the gender balance will be ensured at the Steering Committee level. The Project Management Unit (PMU) will be responsible for planning operational and day-to-day implementation of the project components.

The coordination of the project also includes taking into account GEF-financed projects and other initiatives and working in synergy. The baseline scenario has shown the linkage and the add value of the proposed project with the existing non-GEF projects (cf.1a.2). The following project are GEF-Funding projects in Mauritania and the proposed project will work to maximize synergies and avoid duplication of activities. These initiatives are described below.

**The Sustainable Management of Landscapes Project (PGDP, 2014–2020)** under the Sahel and West Africa Program in Support of the Great Green Wall Initiative (SAWAP) is funded by the GEF (US\$4.81 million) and the GoM (US\$1.35 million) and implemented by World Bank. PGDP's Project Development Objective is to strengthen sustainable landscape management in targeted productive ecosystems in the wilayas of Brakna, Gorgol and Trarza. These are degraded ecosystems with high potential for the preservation and regeneration of economically important gum arabic producing acacia species (including *Acacia senegalensis*). The project targets the following ecosystem goods and services: i) gum Arabic; ii) other non-timber forest products (NTFPs); iii) fodder production; iv) water and soil conservation; and v) carbon storage in vegetation and soil.

The proposed project and the PGDP project are not targeting the same wilayas. However, the current project will build on the ongoing activities of the PGDP by expanding similar activities in Adrar, Inchiri and Daklet Nouadhibou wilayas. The proposed project will benefit from lessons learned and NTFP markets developed by the PGDP, while generating additional knowledge on land restoration, SLM and ecosystem-based adaptation.

**The project for Improvement of the Investments in the Water Sector to Increase the Resilience of Pastoral and Forest Resources in the Southern Regions of Mauritania (REVUWI )** is funded by GEF and AfDB for the period 2015–2018. The project has a total budget of US\$6,350,000 and focuses on the sustainable management of natural resources within the sectors of forestry and pastoralism to increase the resilience of local communities and their livelihoods to climate change. The project's activities are mainly focused on eight wilayas including Hodh El Chargui, Hodh El Gharbi, Assaba, Guidimaka, Gorgol, Brakna, Tagant and Trarza.

The REVUWI project is recently closed but the current project can build on outcomes of REVUWI. The proposed project will benefit from lessons learned from REVUWI and generate additional knowledge.

The LDCF-funded project (budget of US\$5 million) entitled “**Development of an improved and innovative management system for climate resilient livelihoods in Mauritania**” is being implemented from 2017 to 2021 in the Mauritanian *wilayas* of Guidimaka, Assaba, Hodh El Gharbi and Hodh El Chargui. The project is implemented by UN Environment and executed by MEDD. Objectives of the project are to increase the institutional and technical capacity of government stakeholders to enable the systematic planning and implementation of adaptation practices including EbA. Rural communities will implement the project's EbA interventions with the support of NGOs, and communal and provincial authorities. The proposed project will benefit from lessons learned this project while generating additional knowledge and contribute to increase the institutional and technical capacity of stakeholders to enable systematic planning and implementation of land restoration, SLM and ecosystem-based adaptation.

**The Inclusive Value Chain Development Project (PRODEFI)** has a budget of US\$45.2 million (of which US\$21 million is grant funding from IFAD) and is executed by the Ministry of Agriculture. PRODEFI was implemented in the wilayas of Brakna, Assaba, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Hodh El Gharbi and Hodh El Chargui in 2016 and will be completed in 2024. The main objective of the project is to strengthen the incomes and food security of poor rural people (particularly women and young people) in the targeted wilayas. Components of PRODEFI include: (i) revitalisation of value chains and development of pro-poor public-private-producer partnerships; (ii) development and promotion of production models; and (iii) coordination M&E and knowledge management. The activities related to management of natural resources, value chains, private sector under the proposed project should be designed and implemented in collaboration with PRODEFI.

**The Poverty Reduction Project in Aftout South and Karakoro Phase 2 (PASK2)** was initiated in 2012 and will end in 2020. It is funded by IFAD and has a budget of US\$22.9 million. The objective of PASK2 is to improve income and living conditions for targeted communities. PASK2 will help to increase economic and social security based on sustainable natural resource management by and for poor rural households. The project includes the following four components: (i) increased institutional and management capacity; (ii) development of infrastructure in rural areas, including road and water infrastructure; (iii) promotion of income-generating activities; (iv) coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the project. The interventions of PASK2 will focus on: (i) soil restoration; (ii) surface water management; (iii) crop and livestock management; and (iv) local development support. This project is implemented in three wilayas, namely Gorgol, Guidimaka and Assaba. The proposed project will benefit from the lessons learned and knowledge gained during the implementation of PASK2, particularly those related to the management of natural resources, soil restoration, livestock management, institutional capacity building and the promotion of income-generating activities.

**Building core capacity for the implementation, monitoring and reporting of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Mauritania** is a GEF-funded project currently under development. The project will have a budget of US\$ 950,000, and will be implemented by UN Environment and executed by MEDD. This three-year project has started on 2018. The objective of the project will be to strengthen national capacity for environmental information and knowledge management for the implementation, monitoring and reporting of MEAs and relevant SDGs. The

project will have two components: (i) Development of a coordinated environmental/natural resources knowledge and information management system; and (ii) Enhancement of institutional and technical capacities to mainstream, develop, and utilize policies, plans and programmes for effective implementation of the Rio Conventions, other MEAs and relevant SDGs. The proposed project will be able to draw on the data and information from this project to support rangelands assessments and knowledge-sharing events and products.

**Closing the Gaps in Great Green Wall: Linking sectors and stakeholders for increased synergy and scaling-up.** This project is a GEF funded project implemented by UN-Environment and Executed by IUCN. It is a regional project covering 11 Great Green Wall Initiative countries including Mauritania. With a total GEF TF budget of USD 1.7 million, the project aims for Greater implementation of policies for sustainable land management in the Sahel (Great Green Wall (GGW) countries) through enhanced investment, inter-sectoral coordination, and engagement of marginalized groups. The project has started in 2016 and is ending in 2020. The project objectives are: (i) GGW countries adopt a common set of indicators for cross-sectoral monitoring to inform planning and policy-making; (ii) National governments in GGW countries increasingly establish inclusive mechanisms to engage civil society in GGW and SLM; (iii) Stakeholders actively promote appropriate investment partnerships to scale up SLM good practices.

The current project will closely benefits from lessons learnt from the “Closing the gaps in the GGW” project, especially regarding stakeholder’s engagement and establishment of inclusive governance system for land restoration and SLM proposed in component 1. It will also build on knowledge results “Closing the gaps in the GGW” project, especially regarding the private sector engagement in SLM.

**Integrated ecosystem management project for the sustainable human development in Mauritania.** This project is a GEF funded project, implemented by FAO and Executed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD). The project started in 2018 and will end in 2023 with a total budget from GEF TF of USD 8,222,505. The project outcomes include (i) the use of land and natural resources is informed and governed by an integrated, participatory and gender sensitive approach; (ii) land degradation is reduced and vegetation cover is restored through a participatory and integrated ecosystem approach; (iii) sustainable use and management of water reserves for increased water availability during dry spells; (iv) increased, diversified and stable sources of income for the local population through more sustainable exploitation of natural resources; (v) the achievements and lessons of the program are documented and replicated.

The proposed project is aligned with this “integrated ecosystem management” project. So, at the development phase of the current project, coordination efforts will be made to closely look at this “integrated ecosystem management” project to prevent any overlap maximize collecting lessons learned and knowledge products, collaboration systems with stakeholders that is put in place and land restoration and SLM intervention/approaches deployed.

## 7. Consistency with National Priorities

### Is the Project consistent with the National Strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions

Yes

**If yes, which ones and how: NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc**

The proposed approach is consistent with the existing policy especially with the **National Action Plan to fight against desertification (PAN-LCD) and LDN targets**. Indeed, the PAN-LCD and LDN targets are two legal instruments that aim in preventing natural resource degradation and propose means at national level to combatting desertification and to restoring degraded land. The PAN-LCD is adopting an integrated and participatory approach to fight against degradation of soils, forest resources and biodiversity loss. Implementation of the PAN-LCD is based on various fundamental principles, including: (i) adoption of an integrated approach covering physical, biological, institutional and socio-economic aspects; (ii) integration of poverty reduction into desertification control programmes; (iii) coordination of activities to be carried out under the PAN-LCD with those of other United Nations framework conventions, such as UNFCCC and CBD; (iv) more closely targeted international assistance in order to respond better to local needs in the framework of partnership agreements; (v) participatory approach, with close collaboration of grassroots communities, especially local government and non-governmental organizations; (vi) encouragement of scientific research and the use of its results in the rehabilitation of degraded land and the improvement of the agro-sylvo-pastoral production.

The proposed project is aligned with this PAN-LCD and will directly contributing to strengthening implementation of principles 1, 2 and 5.

Mauritania is participating the LDN targets setting programme that aims to halt the ongoing loss of healthy land through degradation. To doing so, participating countries have to set targets to manage land degradation, through a dual-pronged approach of measures to avoid or reduce degradation of land, combined with measures to reverse past degradation. However, delivering LDN by 2030 requires action on the following fronts: (i) Scaling up of finance; (ii) Strengthening of the institutional environment for sustained investment in sustainable land management; (iii) Developing national capacities for sustainable land management and restoration; (iv) Building synergy between related restoration initiatives and targets for more efficient use of resources; (v) Establishing monitoring systems to track progress and identify opportunities and bottle-necks.

The proposed project is aligned with LDN targets setting programme and will give strong boosting in Mauritania by responding directly to require front action 2, 4 and 5. The project will build capacities of CNOEZA, government and local experts on assessing drylands/rangelands build synergy with restoration initiatives in the country especially in the targeted wilayas and set monitoring system to track the progress. The project will contribute directly in feeding into LDN programme in Mauritania with data regarding drylands/rangelands health.

In addition to the National Action Plan to fight against desertification (PAN-LCD) and LDN targets, other national policies exist and are supportive to the restoration and participatory sustainable management of land. These include the **“Strategie Nationale de l’Environnement et du Developpement Durable (SNEDD)”**, the **National Action Plan for Environment and Sustainable Development (PANEDD)**. These policies emphasize the need of protecting the natural capital and biodiversity conservation, restoring the ecosystems structures and functions.

**The SNEDD** is focused on synergistic relationships between effective environmental policy, economic growth, good governance and poverty reduction. The priority themes identified in the SNEDD include: (i) managing and promoting sustainable development and environmental protection in line with international commitments, agreements and conventions; (ii) strengthening institutional capacity and creating an enabling policy environment to effectively manage the environment and natural resources; (iii) promoting the sustainable development of basic services as a strategy to reduce poverty; (iv) raising awareness of the multi-sectoral and multi-scale challenges (at both local and national levels) associated with sustainable development; (v) promoting integrated and participatory management for the sustainable use of natural resources for multiple sectors and levels; (vi) developing funding mechanisms.

**The PANEDD** is an overall strategic framework for guiding sectoral policies on natural resources and environmental management. The primary objectives of PANEDD are to: i) highlight the importance of natural resources for the economy and ecology of Mauritania, particularly in the rural environment; and ii) integrate environmental considerations into economic and social development, with an emphasis on sustainable economic growth, social equity and ecological viability. The PANEDD also emphasizes threats to natural capital linked to: i) the widespread dependence on wood fuel; ii) desertification and other effects of drought; iii) the unsustainable use of water on agricultural and pastoral land; v) biodiversity declines; and vi) physicochemical degradation of soils.

The proposed project aligns with the SNEDD and the PANEDD by contributing to the achievement of the following strategic goals: i) promoting sustainable development and environmental protection in line with international commitments, agreements and conventions; ii) strengthening the institutional capacity of government staff at the national and local level to effectively manage the environment and the natural resources; iii) promoting the development of service delivery as a strategy to reduce poverty; iv) promoting integrated and participatory management for sustainable use of natural resources; and v) raising awareness of the risks associated with climate change, and the benefits of EbA as a means to increase climate resilience.

**The proposed project is aligned also with the “Stratégie de Développement du Secteur Rural Horizon 2025 - SDRS ” (Rural Sector Development Strategy for 2025).** Indeed, the SDRS focuses on: i) improving agro-sylvo-pastoral productivity; ii) providing fair access to development resources – water, land and pastoral resources – for the most vulnerable local communities as well as their sustainable use; and iii) strengthening institutional capacities to improve the participatory aspect of rural development policies. Assessments of previous SDRS programmes have noted that insufficient emphasis had been placed on natural resource management as opposed to environmental protection and conservation. The ongoing SDRS has been designed to address this concern, by including a focus on sectoral growth to benefit the rural poor. The proposed project is thus fully aligned with the priorities highlighted in the SDRS.

**The proposed project is consistent with the National Plan for Agricultural development (PNDA) 2015-2025.** Indeed, the global objective of the PNDA is to promote a modern, competitive and sustainable agriculture through the development of plants value chains with high potential for growth. The specific objectives of the PNDA are: (i) Promote intensification and diversification of agricultural production to meet national needs by 2025; (ii) Promote the competitiveness of agricultural value chains; (iii) Promote sustainable and participatory management of natural resources; (iv) Increase functional capacities of institutions in to agricultural sector.

The proposed project aligns with the PNDA specific objectives 2 and 3 through promotion of sustainable and participatory management of natural resources, and development of drylands products value chains to enhance local communities' livelihood resilience.



## 8. Knowledge Management

**Outline the Knowledge management approach for the Project, including, if any, plans for the Project to learn from other relevant Projects and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.**

Knowledge management is a major element of this project. The project will generate knowledge products, information, and lessons learnt on drylands restoration and management in Mauritania. The knowledge management system will consist in raising stakeholders' awareness to consider integrating SLM activities into their sectoral activities to strengthen SLM initiatives—particularly those related to land restoration and land governance in Mauritania. In the project architecture, outreach and awareness activities are planned to communicate the achievements of the different SLM initiatives.

Mauritania's lack of necessary environmental data and statistics, including related to MEAs and the SDGs and their synergies, restricts the ability of its policy makers to make informed decisions. Mauritania has recognized the importance of environment statistics in the context of the MEAs and SDGs and its demand for data emphasizes the need for improved data collection, increased use of administrative and other data sources, and enhanced national capacity to turn the data that is collected into information that can be used for policy analysis. The M&E plan that the project will put in place will take into account those needs and the environmental information that will be collected under this project will be shared and used by government and all stakeholders.

Relevant knowledge dissemination platforms (e.g. Africa Adaptation Knowledge Network – AAKNet, Réseau Associatif de Développement Durable des Oasis – RADDQ, Réseau Sahel Desertification (ReSaD, etc.)

This project will contribute to strengthen CNOEZA capacities and among those capacities are the collection and dissemination of evidence-based knowledge. CNOEZA will be equipped with knowledge management platform that the project will support to create. That knowledge management platform will be instrumental for managing in a greater way all knowledge that the project will generate but also for all other information and knowledge on drylands, SLM, Water etc. This platform will enable easy access to information to all relevant policy makers, researchers and all development actors in Mauritania and other countries.

Finally, the project knowledge management system will develop and implement a monitoring and information system on LDN achievements using LDN indicators (output 4.1.3).

**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 Point endorsement letter with this template).**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Date</b>
Mohamed Yahya OULD LAFDAL	OFP	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	1/15/2019

**ANNEX A: Project Map and Geographic Coordinates**

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project intervention takes place

See annex A attached as the portal does not allow pasting the map