

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

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10444

Countries

Mauritania

Project Name

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

Agencies

IUCN

Date received by PM

12/2/2019

Review completed by PM

4/17/2020

Program Manager

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

Focal Area

Land Degradation

Project Type

FSP

PIF

Part I – Project Information

Focal area elements

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

No.

Please make the information in the table A compatible with the information provided in the text (section 1a.4. Alignment with the focal areas). The table A refers to LD1.4 and LD2.5 - it is an option. However, in the text, several other GEF7 objectives are mentioned CCM2.6, LD1.1, LD2.5, LD-EA, and LD1.4.

- CCM2.6 cannot be used in MFA projects out of Impact Programs.
- LD-EA is not financed by GEF STAR allocations.
- Select and justify the right objectives under LD.

March 23, 2020

We take note of the focus on LD1.1 (SLM), LD1.4 (integrated landscape), and LD2.5 (LDN). However, please, see the cell 2 on the result framework. The budget repartition does not reflect the project contents, with \$900,000 for LD2.5, but no mention of LDN in the result framework. Please, confirm, or correct.

April 9, 2020

We take note that the project budget has increased up to \$3.9 million. The Project is aligned with LD1.1 (SLM), LD1.4 (Integration), and LD2.5 (LDN).

See item 2: the breakdown may be adjusted: reducing LD2.5, eventually LD1.4, and increasing LD1.1 on SLM.

April 15, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

Correction done. In section 1a.4, GE7 objectives now aligned with programming direction in Table A.

CCM2.6, LD-EA removed.

IUCN -04/02/2020

One outcome (1.2) and 3 outputs have been added on LDN. Additionally, an output (4.1.3) related to monitoring and information systems on LDN has been included in outcome 4 related to the knowledge management component. A revised endorsement letter has been issued, and amounts have been adjusted accordingly in the tables.

IUCN -09/14/2020

The breakdown between focal area objectives has been adjusted in the revised PIF.

Indicative project/program description summary

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

- *“Strengthening the resilience of rural communities in the wilayas of Adrar, Inchiri and Dakhlet Nouadhibou in Mauritania through sustainable land restoration and management, climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation”*: The project objective includes aspects that are not eligible under a GEF and LD project.
- “Sustainable Land Restoration and Management” is eligible and welcome as the core objective of the project;
- “Strengthening resilience of rural communities”: the notion of “resilience” can be acceptable to reflect it is a cross-cutting issue; it cannot be considered the main project objective; the verb “strengthen” is not recommended as a project objective – it is not enough accurate and it is difficult to evaluate;
- “Climate change adaptation” cannot be directly financed by the GEF trust fund and the LD focal area;
- “Biodiversity conservation” is not directly targeted by the LD focal area and cannot be the main objective of a LD project.
- Please, remind that the LD focal area basically finances Sustainable Land Management in productive landscapes to combat Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought, with a particular interest on desertification and deforestation to maximize the generation of global environment benefits.
- UNCCD has also a focus on drylands: we are not seeing how the National Park of Banc d’Arguin could benefit from a LD project.
- Once, the focal area objectives would be well identified and justified, revise the result framework focusing on eligible outputs. Those related to CCM, CCA, and BD should be removed. The outputs 1.3, 2.5, and 4.1 do not seem eligible per se; all are related to adaptation (risk assessment, climate resilience micro-projects, Ecosystem-based adaptation handbooks).
- Output 1.1: Arid land’s observatory is equipped for conducting assessments: the financing of an observatory is potentially a concern. Please explain the starting point (baseline situation and financing), explain the added value of GEF financing, explain the role of cofinancing, and anticipate sustainability issues.
- The formulation of the following outputs should be revised: 2.2, 3.2, and 3.3. Please remind that an output should reflect the result of activities and be formulated as such, being specific, if possible quantified, and reflect the value for money. The use of past participle should be reserved to the formulation of outcomes to reflect the consequences of several outputs (see the OECD’s glossary on project monitoring if needed).
- o Output 1.4: An online data platform developed for storage and continuously *updated*

- o Output 2.1: Landscape management plans *informed by assessments* are *developed/revised* by local decision makers
 - o Output 2.2: Community natural resource rights are *strengthened* with particular attention to the resource rights of women and other marginal groups
 - o Output 3.2: Ecosystem-based value chains of dryland products are *developed/improved* to leverage environmental sustainability
- o Output 3.3: Investor forums and private sector consultations *carried out* to building capacities on value chain development and investment in dryland ecosystems
 - o Output 4.2: Knowledge-sharing events on conserving dryland natural capital and climate change adaptation *conducted*
- The formulation of the following outputs should also be revised to be more specific and reflect a result – “dialogue”, “development”... these words are not accepted formulation:
 - o Output 3.4: dialogue with government and mining companies to identify options for offsetting environmental impacts
 - o Output 3.5: Development /submission of investment proposal for each targeted wilayas
- Output 4.3: Please, clarify what this output includes – if KM for regional and global events means the payments of travels and missions to COP, it is not the right use of GEF STAR resources – please, develop a clear KM strategy fully related to the dissemination of project results in other wilayas of Mauritania – GEF STAR resources are for country-based LD activities.
- See the text on the component 2: the text is unfinished. Please, complete.
- Please include the notion of Drought-Smart Land Management interventions, D-SLM (cf. output 2.3)
- Component 3: please justify and explain the interest of output 3.1. We wonder if this activity will help to generate global environment benefits

March 23, 2020

Thanks for the modifications. The project result framework is more coherent, and avoid confusion of eligibility with CCM and CCA.

- However, we are surprised to not see any output related to LDN while \$900,000 is assigned under the LD2.5 objective on LDN. We suggest to 1) insert the notion of LDN in some of the outputs related to institutional development, capacity building, and KM and 2) if needed, revise the budget breakdown between LD1.1, LD1.4, and LD2.5.

April 9, 2020

- There are discrepancies between the result framework and the text: The announced modifications are not all reflected in the result framework (LDN?). please, check the numeration and the wording of outcomes and outputs. Not all the outputs seem included in the result framework.
- The project claims \$1.2 million under LD2.5 (LDN) and the word LDN is not used in the result framework. This comment was made at the last round of comments has not been addressed.
- Please, check the GEF7 programming strategies, the LD2.5 objective mainly deals with the institutional framework and capacity development for LDN. In general, a few hundred thousands of dollars are budgeted. Based on the budget proposed for the first and fourth component, a maximum of \$500,000-600,000\$ may be budgeted under LD2.5 (some capacity building and KM activities are also financed under 1.1 and 1.4).
- With the important work related to SLM, the proportion of budget under LD1.1 should be higher. Please, revise

April 15, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

Project objective and components reviewed. Correction of wordings to include accurate verbs that can be evaluated.

The notions of resilience, adaptation and biodiversity conservation have been removed from the logframe and components description. However, the project should generate some co-benefits in terms of adaptation and resilience.

The Banc d'Arguin National Park has a dry terrestrial landscape that can benefit from this project interventions especially land restoration and drylands resources protections.

Project objectives reviewed and CCM, CCA and BD removed

Outputs 1.3, 2.5, and 4.1 have been revised in order to focus on LD

The lack of 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 in order to monitor the evolution of the ecosystems and inform decision making. In this context, the Government has already put in place the CNOEZA and plans to invest about 900,000 \$ per year for the equipment and operating running cost for this institution from 2021. CNOEZA and the project will mutually reinforce themselves. The observatory and the project in general will ensure there is the basis for good planning. It will strengthen CNOEZA's capacities in terms of tested methods and approaches for assessing drylands, storing data and use of data for decision making and evidence based actions.

The outputs have been reformulated in order to reflect the results of activities

Outputs 3.4 and 3.5 reviewed and words like “dialogue” “development” removed. Outputs focussing on actions that can be evaluated, measured

Output 4.3 is reviewed focussing on events that the project will conduct for dissemination of project results in other wilayas of Mauritania.

Text on component 2 completed

Drought-Smart Land Management interventions taken into account in output 2.3

Drylands are mostly understood or seen as zones of climate uncertainty, risks and that fact is diverting most investment from drylands. There is evidence in Mauritania that drylands are under low investment. In order to revert the situation, there is a need need to show the value of drylands ecosystem and the services they can generate to nature and people. This demonstrated evidence is currently lacking and needs to be strengthened in order to support marketing activities for the mobilisation of investments. This is the purpose of Output 3.1 with the Publication of Total Economic Valuation (TEV) that demonstrate value of drylands ecosystem services and the investment and marketing opportunities in Mauritania to attract investment in Mauritania Drylands.

Activities under output 3.1 will indirectly contribute to generate global environmental benefits through the investment in protecting ecosystems for ecosystem services generated; the protections of drylands ecosystems will enhance land restoration, Carbone sequestration, food security, etc.

Output 3.1 will induce evidence based decision making concerning actions for investment and drylands restoration.

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Output 3.1 will induce evidence based decision making concerning actions for investment and drylands restoration.

IUCN -04/02/2020

4 outputs inserted on LDN; one output related to the monitoring and information systems on LDN achievements See also response to item 1 above.

IUCN -04/14/2020

Our apologies, this was an omission in the previous submission. The portal has been updated accordingly with outcome 1.2 focusing on the establishment of the institutional framework for LDN with 3 outputs and one output on LDN specifically included in component 4 on knowledge management and M&E. This is all related to the establishment of the institutional framework related to LDN and is aligned with the GEF 7 programmatic directions.

The budget under LD 1.1 has been increased as recommended here, while budget under LD 2-5 and LD 1-4 has been reduced accordingly. See response to comment 1.

Co-financing

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

- All the cofinancing is proposed in recurrent expenditure and in-kind... It is a little disappointing and surprising with partners as two private sector entities, the national agency for the GGW, and two significant projects (PRAPS and PAMB). Could you not mobilize more ambitious investments, including grants?
- Mauritania is a flagship country in the GGW initiative, because of the Panafrican Agency located in Nouakchott and an active national agency: Don't you think that the national agency, with the support of the government could bring grants and cash cofinancing?
- In the text, it is mentioned that the project approach includes private sector engagement in SLM to leverage funds for land restoration. Could you expect cofinancing in grant/cash from these private or economic partners?
- With the cofinancing mainly in recurrent expenditures and in-kind, what the cofinancing would cover in the project management costs (\$1.182 million)?

March 23, 2020

Can you please clarify the notion of "investment mobilized" when you talk about cofinancing in-kind from private partners?

April 9, 2020

to be confirmed at CEO endorsement.

Agency Response

IUCN discussed with Mauritania about the co-financing of the project. The government, the execution agency and other co-financing partner are willing to mobilize in cash and event more investment contribution for the project. The table on part C have been modified accordingly.

The National Great Green wall agency is providing co-financing in cash to this project.

Two private sector institutions have confirmed their co-financement in kind to project: Mauritania Copper Mines (MCM) and Tasiast Mauritania LTD. Discussions were also conducted with these institutions and agreement is reached for their co-finance (in kind) to this project of about USD 3,000,000 to support SLM in the project region

IUCN - 04/02/2020

The description of investment mobilized has been adapted to the table and the description of how the private sector will be mobilized to be involved further into SLM and restoration activities promoted from the project.

GEF Resource Availability

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

The resources are available. However, we recommend to the GEF Agency to discuss with Mauritania on the way to potentially increase the resources (with LDCF?).

March 23, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response IUCN discussed with Mauritania regarding the possibility to add more resources from LDCF but unfortunately, Mauritania has no remaining funds on LDCF because a new PIF is being developed by UNDP based on an endorsement in May 2019.

The STAR allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

Agency Response

The focal area allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

Agency Response

The LDCF under the principle of equitable access

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

LDCF resources are not included. However, the current proposal is mainly an adaptation project. Check with the GEF OFP if there are ways to increase the resources with LDCF resources.

As the project will not be considered eventually before the June 2020 work programme, it is worth to explore different ways to increase the resources.

March 23, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

Discussion were held with the GEF OFP in the context of this comment related to mobilizing more funding from the LDCF but unfortunately, Mauritania has no remaining funds on LDCF.

The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

NA

Agency Response

Focal area set-aside?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

NA

Agency Response

Impact Program Incentive?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

NA

Agency Response

Project Preparation Grant

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes

Agency Response

Core indicators

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

- It is not clear how a LD project may contribute to a more effective management of the Banc d'Arguin National Park. In addition this national park is is mainly a wetland and coastal area not really eligible under LD. We suggest removing this indicator which is related to the use of BD resources.
- 100,000 ha under SLM seems ambitious for a \$2.8 million project with investments only in the component 3 and for 600,000 US\$. Please, justify the calculation and/or revise.
- Carbon: Please, note that the duration of accounting should be 20 years, and not 4. Please, correct.
- Please, explain the way you calculate beneficiaries. The number of people (3,500) seems relatively low in comparison of the expected 100,000 ha under SLM.

March 23, 2020

We take note on the modifications. However, please, note that there is a discrepancy between the numbers in the portal (175,000t tons of CO2) and the text (59,000 tons of CO2). Please, correct.

April 9, 2020

- The explanations given below and information in the portal are not coherent:
- The precedent comment on carbon was not fully addressed: please refer to a 20-year period, and not a 4-year period in the portal.
- Again, can you justify the low number of beneficiaries (5,460) in regards to 70,000 ha under SLM and 9,000 ha of the Banc d'Arguin better managed?

April 15, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

Banc d'Arguin National Park has a dry terrestrial landscape that is expected to benefit from this project interventions especially land restoration and drylands resources protections. Drylands is an integral part of the National Park and ecosystem services between the wet and the drylands must be maintained. And this project will contribute to sustaining the ecological connectivity between these two types of ecosystems.

The figures presented in the PIF have been re-estimated. 100,000 ha under SLM is reviewed to 50,000. Basis of calculation are using GEF TF investment in component 2 of about USD 1 million. Assumption is made that if assessments are done and that natural resource governance systems are in place, cost for restoring or getting 1 ha under SLM can be estimated at USD 20. This based on WOCAT estimations to restoring 1 ha that range from 20 to 4,000 USD. Under this project, a minimum of direct investment to getting land under SLM is estimated at USD 1 million. So, $1,000,000/20 = 50,000$.

Correction done. 20 years used for accounting carbon sequestration and not 4 years. Cf. "F. PROJECT'S TARGET CONTRIBUTIONS TO GEF 7 CORE INDICATORS" See additional explanation to Project Core Indicators.

50,000 ha will be under SLM with the project. Based on the population density (estimated at 15.6 persons / km² by the recent socioeconomic studies of the regions), the total population living in the target sites is estimated at 7,800 people and about 50% of this population are the beneficiaries of the project. This number of beneficiaries have been changed in the PIF.

IUCN -04/02/2020

The numbers in the portal have been corrected and harmonized

IUCN – 04/14/2020

- Sorry for the oversight. The portal has been updated.
- This an area with population density is very (15 habitant per square kilometre in average). It is also mainly populated by pastoralist population, which provides also some uncertainties on the level of people in the area given the time of the year. For this project, it is estimated that 50% of the population will benefit from the project. These figures will be re-estimated during PPG phase.

Project/Program taxonomy

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

With the revisions of the initial PIF, please revise the project taxonomy.

- Is it relevant to maintain Climate Change adaptation, Disaster Risk Management, etc.
- We potentially agree with the keywords "Theory of Change" and "Transforming Policy & Regional Environment", but the text and the result framework should well reflect these aspects.

April 9, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

Part II – Project Justification

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Partially.

Because of the climate change scenarios with more frequent and severe droughts, we suggest to include some aspects related to the ways to combat droughts: including plans, at least partially, and drought smart land management practices (D-SLM), as recently recommended at the UNCDD COP14.

March 23, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response The suggestions to include aspects related to the ways to combat droughts are taken into account in the project results framework and narrative.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

See the comments on the result framework: either you can add LDCF resources and only remove the BD aspects of this project.

Or, you will have to remove BD and adaptation aspects.

Please, revise.

March 23, 2020

- Some explanations are lacking between the description of the problems, the barriers, and the formulation of a solution. We suggest to include a draft Theory of Change to highlight the proposed solution. Please, refer to the following STAP publications: <http://www.stagef.org/theory-change-primer>

This Theory of Change should help to highlight the strategy to transform policy & regional environment (one of the keywords you used in the taxonomy, but without enough demonstration).

- We suggest reinforcing the demonstration from the problem identification to the proposed solution by including robust scientific references: See the Global Land Outlook (2019), IPBES (2019), as well as their Assessment Report on Land Degradation and Restoration; Mc Sweeney R., 2019. Desertification and the role of climate change; Thiam A., 2003. The causes and spatial pattern of land degradation risk in southern Mauritania using multitemporal AVHRR-NDVI imagery and field data, Land Degradation & Development, 14(1):133 – 142; Mohammed Rachid Doukkali et al., 2018. Is Land Degradation Neutrality in Africa Possible? Policy Brief, OCP Policy Center,...

April 9, 2020

- Addressed, but now this is a \$3.9 million project, and not a \$2.7 million. Please, correct.

April 15, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

BD and adaptation aspects removed. LDCF funds are already fully allocated.

IUCN -04/02/2020

See the Theory of change in annex

The demonstration from the problem identification to the proposed solution have been strengthened using two scientific references. The Global Land Outlook, West Africa Thematic Report (2019) and the policy brief produce by Mohammed Rachid Doukkali et al. (2018).

IUCN – 04/14/2020

Thanks for spotting this out. This is now addressed.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Not yet. to be revised.

March 23, 2020

Not fully addressed.

We acknowledge that the project can be developed under LD1.1, LD1.4, and LD2.5 objectives.

- However, the result framework should reflect these changes, and especially LDN (LD2.5).
- The budget breakdown between the different objectives may be adjusted.

April 9, 2020

The text under "1a.4- Alignment with GEF Focal Area" has not been revised and only mentions LD1.1 and LD1.4 objectives on SLM and Integrated Landscape. The text could be improved by the way, now that the project shows a greater ambition.

- In any case, you must elaborate a justification under the LD2.5 objective on the institutional framework and capacity development related to LDN.

April 15, 2020

Addressed. Please, note there is a typo and it is the LD2.5 objective that is focused on LDN (and not the LD1.5 objective - there is no LD1.5 objective).

April 17, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

Alignment with focal area reviewed. Cf. 1a.4.

IUCN -04/02/2020

Alignment with focal area reviewed. Cf. 1a.4. This has been reflected by adding clearly an outcome on LDN in the logframe and adjusting the theory of change accordingly.

04/14/2020 – IUCN

The text under 1a.4 has been now revised by including LDN and how the outcome 1.2 as well as 4.1 (through output 4.1.3) will contribute partly to LD 2.5 objective.

Outcome 1.2 *Enabling environment to support voluntary Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets implementation* - is focusing on LDN and is justified under component 1 and in the theory of change.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes. The baseline situation is well described, with a justification of the use of GEF resources. However, all the cofinancing "in-kind" and in recurrent expenses strongly weaken the reasoning. Cash cofinancing would be welcome. Please, see how to mobilize new resources.

March 23, 2020

Addressed (see the cell 3 and the comment on the lack of ToC).

April 9, 2020

The Theory of Change is much welcome and helps a lot to understand the overall strategy.

Agency Response The co-financing table has been updated to reflect the various forms of co-financing mobilized through this project.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

See the section on the core indicators.

March 23, 2020

Not fully addressed: In the section about the Global Environment Benefits, explain how the project strategy will support the maximization of GEB, contributing to SLM, BD, and carbon benefits (it is important to highlight, as recommended by the GEF STAP).

April 9, 2020

Not addressed: there is a reference of the 70,000 ha under SLM and the carbon benefits, but not mention/explanation/justification of the 9,000 ha of the Banc d'Arguin NP under better management. It is pretty uncommon to have quantified BD benefits on protected areas in a LD project: you must explain. Note, it is

potentially a very good point if SLM and LDN can catalyze multiple GEB, including on carbon and biodiversity, but you need to explain the approach that leads to these GEB.

April 15, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

Core indicators targets have been revised in this new version

IUCN -04/02/2020

The section has been restructured to show how GEBs will be achieved through the project strategy.

04/14/2020 – IUCN

Section 1.a6 on GEBs has been updated with a paragraph explaining how the better management of the Banc D'arguin within this project will contribute to enhancing GEBs.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

- The section on innovation should be revised to include droughts and the appropriate mitigation responses (D-SLM).
- Sustainability issues need to be reinforced, notably related to the observatory and the investments on the ground.
- Scaling up aspects should focus on country-based aspects - not regional or global aspects.

March 23, 2020

Thanks for the revisions. However, we suggest better highlighting the role of multi-stakeholder platform and the role of the private sector. Please, refer the following STAP information: <http://www.stapgef.org/multi-stakeholder-dialogue-transformative-change>

April 9, 2020

Not fully addressed: LDN implementation on the ground is certainly an innovation to highlight. Please, correct.

The role of multi-stakeholder platforms has not been mentioned. It may be included in the proposed approach (PRAGA?), but it is not self-explanatory. Please, revise.

April 15, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

The section on innovation has been revised. Droughts and mitigation responses have been included.

Addressed. Cf. paragraph on sustainability under 1a.7

This is addressed in the revised version. Scaling up activities using GEF TF finance will be done at the country level. However, documenting and disseminating Mauritania's experience will benefit other countries with arid ecosystems. In this regards, we can assume that the lessons learned will benefit other countries beyond Mauritania.

IUCN -04/02/2020

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.

04/14/2020 – IUCN

Section 1a7 of the project has been updated by referencing LDN and the role of multi stakeholders platforms in the revised version.

Project/Program Map and Coordinates

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

to be completed.

April 9, 2020

A map is available in the document with the geographical coordinates of the three targeted landscapes:

Adrar wilaya coordinates: [20° 30' North, 10° 04' West](#)

Inchri coordinates 20° 04' North, 15° 04' West

Daklet Nouadhibou coordinates 20° 57' North, 16° 14' West

Cleared.

Agency Response

Stakeholders

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes. We appreciate the inclusion of vulnerable groups and the private sector.

April 15, 2020

Please note that the Policy on Stakeholder Engagement (effective date July 1, 2018), requires that at PIF stage : "Agencies provide a description of **any consultations conducted** during project development..."

Please provide a description of the consultations that took place during the project identification phase, as stated in the PIF with Civil Society Organizations and Private Sector Entities.

April 17, 2020

Addressed.

1.

Agency Response

04/16/2020

The description of the consultations done during the preparation of the PIF have been detailed in the relevant section of the portal. An entire paragraph providing details on dates and process for consultation has now been added to the revised version

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Is the articulation of gender context and indicative information on the importance and need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, adequate?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes.

Agency Response

Private Sector Engagement

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes.

Agency Response

Risks

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

- Please, include in the PPG a comprehensive risk analysis, including climate change risks and security issues.
- Based on the current situation, we wonder if it is recommended to include the whole wilaya of Adrar, as it is considered a red alert area in terms of security, and especially along the border with Mali.
- Please, include a risk about the security level, and the best ways to protect project staff, local communities, and partners.
- Include reputation risks if you develop partnerships with the private sector on potentially controversial areas as mining (gold, copper).

March 23, 2020

Thanks for the complement of information. Any information or potential risks associated to the private sector and the exploitation of natural resources in Mauritania?

April 9, 2020

Thanks for the complement of information and the rating of each risk: is there not an average rating for the whole project? Please, complete if available.

April 15, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

This will be addressed during the PPG phase

Insecurity risk included. Cf. Table of risks and mitigation measures.

IUCN -04/02/2020

An environment and social risk added to the risk analysis.

04/10/2020 – IUCN

The overage risk rating for the project is “Moderate”. It is highlighted in the section on risks in the revised version of the project.

Coordination

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

To be developed during the PPG.

Agency Response

Consistency with National Priorities

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

National priorities – please put the NAP and LDN first and build the reasoning on these strategic documents under UNCCD. Again, the GEF LD allocations aim to implement the NAP under UNCCD to promote SLM to combat Desertification, Land Degradation and Droughts.

It is important to explain the connection between the NAP and other national documents as the SNEDD, the PANEDD, and the SDRS. Other strategic documents are welcome, but secondary.

March 23, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response Reasoning is built on NAP and LDN. Cf. point 7 of the PIF. The section has been updated to reflect on how this proejct is aligned with national priorities.

Knowledge Management

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

to be revised. see comments above.

March 23, 2020

The KM component should include reference to LDN. Please revise.

April 9, 2020

Not addressed in the section 8 on KM (p48). Please revise the text and explain how LDN is going to support KM.

April 15, 2020

Addressed.

Agency Response

Addressed. Cf. corrections in component 4 regarding outputs and consistency with Knowledge management narrative in point 8.

IUCN Response

This has been addressed by adding a specific outcome on LDN monitoring and information systems See output 4.1.3 in the logframe.

04/10/2020 – IUCN

This is addressed in the revised version with Output 4.1.3 focusing on LDN, which will complement the outputs under outcome 2.1.2.

Part III – Country Endorsements

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Yes.

April 9, 2020

The letter of endorsement was revised to reflect the use of the marginal adjustment with the CCM allocation. We had a discussion with the GEF OFP who confirmed his willingness to increase the budget. It is just curious that both letters are dated January 15, 2019.

Cleared.

Agency Response

Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

NA

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

The PIF is not recommended for the time being, please address the comments formulated in this review.

March 23, 2020

Please, address the pending comments above.

We understand there is a portal issue to enter the geographical information in the right space. At the the next submission, please, check if the system is operational. We acknowledge that the requested information was available and logged as a document in the portal.

April 9, 2020.

No. We would like to alert the GEF Agency that several comments were partially responded in the review, but the changes were not reflected in the appropriate sections in the portal.

Please, do not use the new item 5b on ESS risks.

April 15, 2020

Please address the pending comment related to stakeholder engagement and correct the typo highlighted in the part II, item 4. Upon receipt of a revised PIF, the technical clearance will be recommended.

April 17, 2020

The PIF is recommended for clearance, as well as the PPG.

April 20, 2020

Please, address the following two comments:

- 1- On co-financing: All the private sector co-financing is classified as “in-kind” and “investment mobilized”- where co-financing truly meets the definition of "in-kind", it should typically be classified as "recurrent expenditures" rather than "investment mobilized". For further details, please refer to the Co-Financing Guidelines.

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	Investment mobilized	4,000,000
Private Sector	Mauritania Copper Mines (MCM)	In-kind	Investment mobilized	2,000,000
Private Sector	Taslast Mauritania LTD.	In-kind	Investment mobilized	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
Total Project Cost(\$)				20,200,000

2 On Environmental and Social Safeguards: The PIF, Section 5, includes information on environmental and social risks, and the overall project rating is estimated as moderate. However, at this stage, you should be able to provide the Preliminary ESMS Screening. Please attach that checklist, which classified the project's environmental and social risk as well as the types and risk classification of any identified risks and impacts including any preliminary measures to address identified risks and potential impacts.

April 22, 2020

The two points are addressed. The project is recommended for clearance, as well as the PPG.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

- Confirm cofinancing;
- Confirm core indicators;
- Confirm the connection with the UNCCD NAP and LDN targets;
- Provide a comprehensive risk analysis;

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		

PIF Recommendation to CEO

Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval

Cover Memo

Context

Mauritania is a developing country of about 4.4 million people. Its economic growth relies on natural resources, with the mining and agricultural sectors respectively accounting for 38% and 20% of the GDP. The northern part of the country, including the wilayas of Adrar, Inchiri and Dakhlet Nouadhibou, is the most arid and dominated by Sahelian and Saharan ecoregions. Farmers and pastoralists living in these three wilayas - about 10% of the national population - are highly dependent on ecosystem goods and services for their livelihoods and subsistence.

High level of poverty, unsustainable land management practices, and a rapidly growing population have led to the degradation of local ecosystems, aggravated by drought-induced desertification. The current situation, combined with expected climate change scenarios, will increase the difficulties for rural communities and may lead to increase food insecurity in the arid regions of Mauritania.

Project

The proposed project aims to address land and ecosystem 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 financing strategies in the three targeted wilayas of Adrar, Inchir and Dakhlet Nouadhibou.

The project is designed on the four following technical components: 1) Capacity building and governance (institutional support on SLM and LDN, LDN integration in national policies, planning, and land tenure), 2) Land and ecosystem restoration (planning, governance, SLM and Drought-smart land management interventions), 3) Financing scaling-up of SLM (economic valuation, improved dryland product value chains, multi-stakeholder platforms, financing strategies) 4) Project-specific knowledge management and M&E

The proposed project will work with the existing structures within the Ministry of Environment and particularly CNOEZA (National Centre for Drylands, and future Observatory) to increase their capacity for evidence-based decision making in arid ecosystems and develop synergies with the public, NGOs and partners. The project includes a strategy for gender, marginalized people, and the private sector, notably to boost private investment for dryland product value chains and SLM.

Global Environment Benefits

The project targets SLM in 9,000 ha in the Banc d'Arguin National Park and 70,000 ha of landscapes under improved practices out of protected areas, also generating carbon gains (245,000 tCo2e). The number of beneficiaries, 5,460, is structurally limited as the density of population in the targeted wilayas is low (#15 inhabitants per km2).

GEF Strategy

The project is designed under a coherent set of GEF7 LD objectives: LD1.1 on SLM, LD1.4 on integrated landscape, and LD2.5 on LDN.

Country Priorities

Under GEF7, Mauritania prioritized two projects with their STAR allocations, including this stand-alone LD project using the full LD allocation + the CCM allocation (marginal adjustment): \$3,913,626 (GEF project grant).

Innovation, sustainability & scaling up

Innovation: the project is using a set of innovations -ecosystem-based approaches, drought smart land management, etc- to bring positive changes and integrate SLM and LDN at every level of governance. New tools for decision-making will be tested including LDN. Another innovation is the empowerment of the private sector to contribute to SLM and land restoration with off-setting systems.

Sustainability is anchored in the project by empowering technical and institutional capacities from the national to local level, with planning, multi-stakeholder platforms, and participatory approaches tailored to the local situations. Sustainable financing strategies and mechanisms, particularly with the private sector, will be proposed to the three regions.

Potential for scaling up: 77% of Mauritania is covered with arid zones and the proposed intervention model will be promoted for replication in other regions of Mauritania thanks to a robust KM approach. The National Centre for Drylands (CNOEZA) will be reinforced in its function of observatory supporting evidence-based decision making.