

Terminal Review of the Project

Development of an improved and innovative management system for sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods in Mauritania

GEF ID 5580

2017 - 2022



UNEP CLIMATE CHANGE DIVISION

October 2024

**Photos Credits:**

Front cover: © UNEP/ (Cheikh Dieng), Terminal Review Consultant, Terminal Review Mission (2023)

This report has been prepared by an external consultant as part of a Terminal Review, which is a management-led process to assess performance at the project's operational completion. The UNEP Evaluation Office provides templates and tools to support the review process and provides a formal assessment of the quality of the Review report, which is provided within this report's annexed material. In addition, the Evaluation Office formally validates the report by ensuring that the performance judgments made are consistent with evidence presented in the Review report and in-line with the performance standards set out for independent evaluations. As such the project performance ratings presented in the Review report may be adjusted by the Evaluation Office. The findings and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Member States or the UN Environment Programme Senior Management.

For further information on this report, please contact:

UNEP Division/ Unit etc
Address
Email
Telephone

(Development of an improved and innovative management system for sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods in Mauritania)

(5580)

(Date MM/YY)

All rights reserved.

© (2024) UNEP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Terminal Review was prepared for UNPE by Jon Garcia and Cheikh Dieng.

The reviewers would like to express their gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this review, as listed in Annex III.

The review team would like to thank the project team and in particular Ms Anna Kontorov for their contribution and collaboration throughout the review process. The reviewers would also like to thank Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD).

The review consultants hope that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project, formulation of a next phase and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No

Report Language(s): English.

Review Type: Terminal Review

Brief Description: This report is a management-led Terminal Review of a UNEP/GEF-funded project implemented between 2017 and 2022. The project's overall development goal was to reduce the vulnerability to climate change of national government and local communities in the forests and rangelands of the Sahelian Acacia Savanna Ecoregion. The review sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Key words: Mauritania; Climate Change; Ecosystem-based Approach; Sustainable Forest Management; Income Generating Activities; Capacity-building.

Primary data collection period: July 2023 – September 2023

Field mission dates: 06/08/2023 – 13/08/2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
ABOUT THE REVIEW	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
LIST OF ACRONYMS	6
PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE.....	8
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	10
I. INTRODUCTION.....	16
II. REVIEW METHODS	17
A. Review Objectives	17
B. Main Review Criteria and Questions	17
C. Review Methods.....	18
D. Limitations.....	19
III. THE PROJECT	20
A. Context	20
B. Project objectives and components.	21
C. Stakeholders	23
D. Project implementation structure and partners	23
E. Changes in design during the implementation	24
F. Project financing	25
IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW	26
V. REVIEW FINDINGS	29
A. Strategic Relevance	29
B. Quality of Project Design	35
C. Nature of the External Context.....	39
D. Effectiveness.....	39
E. Financial Management	52
F. Efficiency	56
G. Monitoring and Reporting.....	63
H. Sustainability	64
I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues	65
VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	68
A. Conclusions	68
B. Summary of project's terminal review findings and ratings.....	70
C. Lessons learned	73
D. Recommendations.....	77
ANNEX I. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW	81
ANNEX III. REVIEW FRAMEWORK/MATRIX	84
ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED	100
ANNEX V. INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS	101
ANNEX VI. MISSION AGENDA	111
ANNEX VII. EXAMPLES OF EBA AND INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES	113
ANNEX VIII. REVIEW TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES).....	117
ANNEX IX. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT (PROVIDED BY THE UNEP EVALUATION OFFICE)	118

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGLC	Local Collective Association for the Management of Natural Resources
AGRN	Association for the Management of Natural Resources
APCBF	Annual Program against Bushfires in Mauritania
CCAU	Climate Change Adaptation Unit
CCPNCC	Coordinating Unit of the National Programme of Climate Change
CREDD	Regional environment and sustainable development committee
CSLP	National Strategy Against Poverty
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DCEV	Directorate for Climate and Green Economy (MEDD)
DIMS	Development of an improved and innovative management system for sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods in Mauritania (project)
DPN	Directorate for Nature Protection
DREDD	Regional Environment Delegation
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IGA	Income Generating Activity
KSQ	Key strategic questions
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
LDP	Local Development Plan
MEDD	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development
MTR	Mid-term Review
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NEA	National Executing Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTA	National Technical Advisor
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
PARSACC	Enhancing Resilience of Communities to the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on Food Security in Mauritania (project)
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PC	Project Coordinator
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PM	Project Manager

PMU	Project Management Unit
PoW	Programme of Work
ProDoc	Project Document
ProGRN	Natural Resources Management Project
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDSR	Strategy for Rural Sector Development
SNDD	National Sustainable Development Strategy
SNIG	National Gender Strategy
SNSA	National Strategy for Food Security
SPANB	National Action Plan to Combat Desertification
SWP	Solar-powered Water Pumps
SQ	Strategic Question
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TR	Terminal Review
TNC	Third National Communication to the UNFCCC
TM	Task Manager
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNS	United Nations System
WFP	World Food Programme

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1. Project Identification Table

UNEP PIMS ID:	PMS: 5580		
DONOR (GEF/GCF etc) ID:	GEF ID: 5580	Umoja no.: S1-32LDL-000045-SB-006602	
Division(s) Implementing the project	Ecosystems Division, Climate Change Adaptation Unit, Freshwater, Land and Climate Branch		
Implementing Partners	Ecosystems Division, Climate Change Adaptation Unit, Freshwater, Land and Climate Branch		
Executing Agency(ies)	Directorate for Climate and Green Economy (DCEV), Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD)		
Names of Other Project Partners	Ministry of Agriculture (MA) Ministry of Livestock (ME) Ministry of Hydraulics and Sanitation (MHA) Ministry of Habitat, Urbanism and Land Management (MHUAT) Regional administrations of the project target regions ("wilayas"): Guidimaka, Assaba, Hodh El Gharbi, and Hodh El Chargui		
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG 13: Climate Action and SDG 15: Life on Land		
Sub-programme:	Climate Change; Healthy and Productive Ecosystems subprogrammes; Resource Efficiency priority areas	Expected Accomplishment(s):	Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans which integrate ecosystem-based adaptation
UNEP approval date:	26 January 2017	Programme of Work Output(s):	
Expected start date:	2017	Actual start date:	15 September 2017
Planned completion date:	31 December 2021	Actual operational completion date:	30 June 2022
Planned project budget at approval:	USD 5,000,000	Actual total expenditures reported as of June 2022:	USD 4,934,535, i.e. 98,6%
First disbursement:		Planned date of financial closure:	30 June 2022
No. of formal project revisions:		Date of last approved project revision:	
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	5	Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:	Last: Next:
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	2020	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	2022
Terminal Review (planned date):	2023	Terminal Review (actual date):	2024
Coverage - Country(ies):	Mauritania	Coverage - Region(s):	Africa

Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A. However, a GCF-funded National Adaptation Plan (NAP) project implemented by UNEP started in the country.
-----------------------------------	-----	----------------------------------	---

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

1. The project “Development of an improved and innovative management system for sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods in Mauritania”, also called the “DIMS” project¹, was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) through a USD 5,000,000 grant, with a planned co-financing of USD 8,500,000. The project was launched in December 2017, and was technically completed in June 2022. It was implemented by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and executed by the Directorate for Climate and Green Economy (DCEV) of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) of Mauritania.
2. The project aims to enhance national, local and community-level capacity to adapt to climate change in the Sahelian Acacia Savanna forests and rangelands of Mauritania by: i) increasing the institutional and technical capacity of government sectors to plan for adaptation and promote the implementation of best adaptation practices, including EbA throughout the country; and ii) guiding rural communities to adopt climate-resilient livelihoods based on natural and agropastoral ecosystems through the development of an innovative system for the sustainable management of natural resources.

This review

3. In line with UNEP’s Evaluation Policy, the Terminal Review was conducted with two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, MEDD, and other key regional and local partners.
4. Consultants engaged by UNEP Climate Change Adaptation Unit (CCAU) conducted the review from July 2023 to March 2024 through document studies, stakeholder interviews, site visits and focus group discussions with differentiated groups within the beneficiary communities. This review has been conducted in line with the ToR presented in Annex VIII, the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual.

Key findings

5. The project was found to be highly relevant, satisfactorily designed, facing a moderately unfavourable external context, was effective and efficient, with satisfactory financial management and monitoring and reporting, and the sustainability of its results and impacts are likely.
6. The project was very relevant at the donor level, at the level of the implementing agencies, and in regard to the national priorities of Mauritania related to both development and climate change adaptation priorities. It was implemented in continuation of other interventions in the country and built on some of their outcomes during implementation.
7. The project’s logical framework was designed in a clear and well-integrated manner. Overall, the objective, outcomes, outputs and activities of the project were consistent. However, the geographic scope was somewhat overambitious, and there was room

¹ Projet de Développement d’un système de gestion amélioré et Innovant pour des Moyens de Subsistance résilients au changement climatique en Mauritanie (DIMS).

for further linking the livelihoods promoted (the income-generating activities, IGAs) and the way they were promoted with the protection and restoration of ecosystems. Several IGAs, by responding to the population's most urgent socio-economic development needs, were not designed to enhance ecosystem conservation and restoration.

8. By and large, project objectives, outcomes and outputs were realistic within the available budget and timeframe. They were also consistent with similar GEF projects. The monitoring and evaluation system was overall adequate. It was clearly presented in the project document, including responsibilities. The indicators in the results framework were overall SMART, but there was significant room for further gender-disaggregation.
9. The most important external factors that have influenced project performance were: i) limitations in local capacities, which affected the coordination and synergies between the various stakeholders and the implementation of EbA interventions despite the de-centralization process underway in the country²; and ii) the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown, which caused the delay of several activities, particularly ones related to capacity building and EbA interventions under Outcomes 1 and 2.
10. The project objective is assessed as achieved. Outcome 2 is assessed as achieved, whereas Outcomes 1 and 3 are assessed as partially achieved.
11. Under Component 1, activities that focused on the development of a NAP and on the revisions to key sectoral policies, strategies and plans were dropped due to the overlap with the GCF-funded UNEP-implemented project aiming at developing a NAP. Instead, activities under this outcome focused on the organization of training events to increase technical capacity of institutions to implement EbA measures, on the establishment of natural resource management associations and on the training of the latter on the use of EbA and the sustainable management of natural resources. Due to the lack of national mainstreaming of EbA related to this component, the lack of existing AGLCs in the project areas, and the delay in the establishment and training of new associations (Output 1.3), local management plans for natural resources including EbA interventions (Output 2.1) could not be elaborated as planned in the logical and results frameworks.
12. Under Component 2, EbA interventions were successfully implemented within the project timeframe, with two (Outputs 2.2 and 2.3) of the three expected outputs achieved and one (Output 2.1) not achieved. Pilot EbA interventions included: the restoration of degraded watersheds, acacia forests and protected forests, the stabilization of dunes, and the restoration of rangelands through set-aside interventions. Sand dune stabilization and forest protection targets were exceeded; and the benefits of the set-aside technique supporting the regeneration of rangelands was acknowledged by stakeholders consulted during the Terminal Review field mission. Training, technical support and equipment were successfully provided to rural communities for the establishment of climate resilient livelihoods (Output 2.3). The livelihood diversification activities under this output exceeded the indicator target by 121%. Overall, these IGAs were well-appreciated by the local communities across the four wilayas, and generally met their needs and expectations. The various microprojects benefitted all local populations but in particular women, who had the lead on the management of many of the activities, e.g. for most the shops.

² Terminal Review field mission, August 2023.

13. The knowledge management strategy to capture and share information on the benefits of adaptation practices to rural communities (Output 3.1) was not developed as planned. As an adaptation knowledge management strategy was included in the GCF NAP project, it was omitted from the workplan of this project to avoid duplications. Several studies and knowledge-sharing activities were conducted to raise awareness on the benefits of an EbA approach and associated climate-resilient livelihoods. The long-term strategy to upscale and sustain best practices (Output 3.3) was not elaborated as not considered necessary, considering the close linkages of this project with the NAP process.
14. Financial management practices of the project were adequate. The project spent 100% of the total amount of the project (USD 5,000,000). Expenses were slightly below the expected amounts planned in the Project Document and budgets between 2018 and 2020, but the gap was closed from 2021 when social gathering restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic were eased. Furniture and equipment represent the biggest part of the overall budget (77% of the total budget), followed by staff, training, miscellaneous and subcontracts. As of June 2022, 109% of the planned co-financing had materialized, i.e. USD 9,263,000³.
15. UNEP had the responsibility for overall project oversight. This was ensured in an efficient manner, though it seems that the scope of work sometimes exceeded the remit of the TM, especially regarding financial and budget revisions. The Project Management Unit (PMU), responsible for the execution of the project, was also efficient. Overall, the Executing Agency and implementing partners were efficient and effective in ensuring the implementation of activities. There were close links, fluid communication and good relationships between the national and regional levels, through the DREDDs. As the DREDDs' role grew in importance in project implementation, NGOs played an important supporting role.
16. The Project Document mentioned that the project risks and assumptions would be regularly monitored both by project partners and UNEP. The ProDoc did not include an ESS plan, and there was no management framework or official system put in place to monitor potential environmental and social risks, but no major negative environmental or social impacts have been identified. The project did incorporate some of the lessons it was learning during implementation.
17. Some aspects of the project management structure were very cost effective, in particular, the streamlined national PMU that delivered on its tasks in an effective manner. Also, the relatively low costs of the DREDD supervision vis a vis the major support and monitoring that they provided in project sites resulted in cost-effectiveness. In addition, the project used the capacities built in the DREDDs by PARSACC in the same project intervention areas. However, long distances between the project sites affected costs and time efficiency. There were attempts at reducing those costs and bulking several shipments together and using vehicles and motorcycles from other projects but in the end, there were still significant costs to be covered.
18. During implementation, strong attention was given to women's participation in the project, in particularly regarding EbA interventions and local socio-economic development through IGAs. However, the project did not meet its targets on the engagement of women in the more formal trainings related to EbA, in particular at the regional and local levels. Under Component 1, women's participation in formal training events did not exceed 15% of the participants, far from the 30% female

³ PIR 2022.

representation rate targeted. Some efforts were made to organize more trainings at the community level, but the design had budgeted regional workshops, leaving limited flexibility in that regard. Moreover, it was also difficult to involve women in decision making bodies.

19. The Project Document elaborated a monitoring plan. The planned budget was low, and the actual costs ended up being higher. In general, the design of the monitoring plan was adequate. The project complied with its reporting requirements and provided good quality reports on time.
20. The Project Document includes quite a comprehensive exit strategy. However, it disregarded the financial aspects related to funding the maintenance of the infrastructures developed and the refreshment of the capacity and awareness built by the project. The field mission conducted in August 2023, more than one year after the technical completion of the project, found that ecosystem restoration works were well maintained and that IGAs were still running, due to substantive social ownership, availability of technical knowledge, the profitability of the businesses and the establishment of a saving rule in IGA-related businesses. It should be noted that overall, the EbA interventions and IGAs remain limited geographically and scattered throughout the four wilayas, which raises the question of concentrating the project interventions on a lower number of wilayas for a greater impact. Still, several aspects of the project have the potential to be replicated, both within Mauritania and outside of the country.

Conclusions

21. The project performance is assessed as Satisfactory overall. A full table of ratings is presented in the Conclusions section of the report (see Table 144).
22. The project has demonstrated strong performance in contributing to the development of climate-resilient livelihoods in Mauritania, in particular through the overall successful implementation of EbA interventions generating socio-economic benefits for rural communities and supporting the conservation of ecosystems. These interventions, including restoration of degraded watersheds, forest restoration, set-aside, and stabilization of dunes, were reported during the Terminal Review field mission to generate benefits for local communities. The various microprojects benefitted all local populations but in particular women. The project also managed to increase awareness and knowledge on EbA through capacity-building activities on EbA approaches in the four wilayas of the project, from regional DREDDs to local management committees and civil society organizations.
23. 216. Overall, the EbA interventions and IGAs are likely to continue to benefit the local populations in the four wilayas. The field mission conducted more than one year after the technical completion of the project, found that ecosystem restoration works were well maintained and that IGAs were still running, due to substantive social ownership, availability of technical knowledge, the profitability of the businesses and the establishment of a saving rule in IGA-related businesses. The establishment and training of local associations further contributed to strengthening the community ownership and sustainability of project interventions.
24. Several aspects of the project have the potential to be replicated, both within Mauritania and outside of the country. Examples of non-target communities replicating the project's interventions, both autonomously and with external support, were identified during the review mission.
25. The project management structure and execution arrangements ensured effective and efficient project implementation. Close links and fluid communication between the national and regional levels, through the DREDDs, were crucial in this regard. The

involvement of subnational stakeholders in the provision of technical advice and in project monitoring and supervision was important, as the distances are long and infrastructure limited. The full engagement of subnational partners also contributed to the cost-effectiveness of the project.

26. Weaknesses identified by the review include the limited implementation of activities in the policy and knowledge management domains; the focus on socio-economic IGAs rather than environmental IGAs generating benefits for biodiversity and ecosystems; and the geographic dispersion and the small scale of EbA interventions throughout the four wilayas, instead of concentrating interventions to ensure their long-term impact and ownership.

Lessons Learned

27. Lesson learned #1: Linkages between administrative levels are key for effective and efficient project execution, as these levels have different yet complementary capacities and functions. It is indeed fundamental to link the national level with the regional level and this with the municipal level.
28. Lesson learned #2: The definition of implementation structures needs to be based on a sound assessment of the execution capacities of the different entities, to identify strengths and gaps, and determine if the latter can be overcome in the short or medium to long term.
29. Lesson learned #3: When local associations do not exist, creating them tends to be strategic for strengthening the ownership and sustainability of project interventions.
30. Lesson learned #4: It is critical that lessons learned from projects are identified, systematized and disseminated and inform development plans, policies and strategies, particularly when a topic is innovative in a given context.
31. Lesson learned #5: It is often useful to have an output related to fostering sustainability at mid-term or a little bit later, to ensure a strategic and systematic approach to enhancing sustainability.
32. Lesson learned #6: When designing adaptation projects with EbA approaches, it is key to ensure certain scale of interventions. In this sense, it is important to strike a balance between benefiting many stakeholders slightly and benefiting fewer stakeholders more significantly.
33. Lesson learned #7: If promoted as part of an EbA project, IGAs should be directly based on natural resources and ecosystem goods, thus incentivizing their protection, restoration and sustainable use.
34. Lesson learned #8: It is key to ensure that IGAs do not inadvertently have a negative environmental effect. In arid areas, this is particularly important when water-intensive livelihood activities or supporting infrastructures are introduced or expanded.
35. Lesson learned #9: When aiming to strengthen community livelihoods, it is critical that EbA projects assess value addition and access to environmentally friendly inputs and markets, build partnerships with key intermediaries and the private sector, ensure adequate technical, business management and financial planning capacity, and establish saving rules.
36. Lesson learned #10: In many countries and especially in rural areas, promoting gender equality requires additional financial resources, and often, where and when possible or culturally acceptable, establishing quotas.
37. Lesson learned #11: To promote gender equality, it is fundamental to conduct a gender analysis, develop a gender action plan and include gender disaggregated indicators in the results framework.

38. Lesson learned #12: Communication and knowledge management strategies are critical to effectively and strategically convey messages and build capacity. Monitoring the reach and impact of knowledge products and awareness campaigns is important to better understand their effectiveness, challenges and success factors.

Recommendations

Table 2. Summary of recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Type	Responsible party	Priority	Timeframe
1	Strengthen knowledge dissemination and awareness raising of the general public at the national level on the project achievements and the EbA approach, including through the completion of the online knowledge platform.	Project level	MEDD, DREDDs UNEP CCAU	High	6 months
2	Integrate the lessons learned, approaches and experiences of the DIMS project into the NAP document and its complementary documents, promoting their scaling up	Project level	MEDD, UNEP CCAU	High	12 months
3	Grant legal status to the proposed natural resource management associations	Partner level	MEDD	High	3 months
4	Seek collaboration with other projects and initiatives to develop the local natural resource management plans that the DIMS project did not develop	Partner level	MEDD and DREDDs	High	6 months
5	Conduct regular monitoring and technical advisory missions to project areas	Partner level	DREDDs	Medium	12 months

I. INTRODUCTION

39. The project “Development of an improved and innovative management system for sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods in Mauritania”, was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) through a USD 5,000,000 grant, with a planned co-financing of USD 8,500,000. The project was launched in December 2017, and was technically completed in June 2022. It was implemented by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and executed by the Directorate for Climate and Green Economy (DCEV) of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) of Mauritania.
40. The Terminal Review (TR) of the project “Development of an improved and innovative management system for sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods in Mauritania” was conducted following a structured process of data collection and analysis to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. This report provides an overview of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned and rates project results using the scales specified in the ToR. The Review focuses on the implementation of the project since its launch in December 2017 to June 2022, its technical completion date.

II. REVIEW METHODS

A. Review Objectives

41. The objective of this assignment is to conduct the Terminal Review of the above-mentioned UNEP project. The Terminal Review assesses project performance to date considering its Strategic Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability, and more broadly the nine review criteria mentioned in the ToR, each criterion being rated on a six-point scale⁴: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues. This Review was carried out in accordance with the ToR presented in **Error! Reference source not found.VIII**, and in line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁵ and the UNEP Programme Manual⁶.
42. The primary audience for this review is UNEP, MEDD, the Regional Environmental Delegations (DREDDs by their initials in French) and other key partners.

B. Main Review Criteria and Questions

43. The review is structured around a review matrix that covers the nine review criteria to be evaluated, namely: i) Relevance, ii) Quality of project design, iii) Nature of external context, iv) Effectiveness, v) Financial management, vi) Efficiency, vii) Monitoring and reporting, viii) Sustainability, and ix) Factors affecting project performance.
44. In addition to the nine review criteria mentioned above, the Review addresses the following Strategic Question (SQ) which are of interest to UNEP:

SQ1: What are the most important actions to be taken, as part of the project exit strategy, to enhance the longer-term sustainability and upscaling potential of the project interventions and results? What partnerships could be developed or strengthened to support sustainability and upscaling?

45. The Review also aims to answer the five key strategic questions (KSQ) required when reporting in the GEF Portal, as provided in the ToR, namely:
 - KSQ1: What was the performance at the project's completion against **Core Indicator Targets**?
 - KSQ2: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding **engagement of stakeholders** in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR?
 - KSQ3: What were the **completed gender-responsive measures** and, if applicable, actual gender result areas?
 - KSQ4: What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the **Safeguards Plan** submitted at CEO Approval?
 - KSQ5: What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed **Knowledge Management Approach**, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g.

⁴ Most criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). *Sustainability* and *Likelihood of Impact* are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and *Nature of External Context* is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU).

⁵ <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies>

⁶ <https://wecollaborate.unep.org>

website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions?

46. These strategic and key strategic questions are integrated in the review matrix either as standalone questions or as indicators for a broader question (indicated in the matrix by their acronym SQ1, KSQ1, KSQ2...). For each criterion, the matrix identifies review criteria and sub-criteria, review questions, indicators, means of verification and sources of information. This matrix was the backbone of the review, from the documentation review to the analysis and report writing and is presented in **Error! Reference source not found..**

C. Review Methods

47. The Review was conducted following three main phases: (i) Inception; (ii) Data collection including literature review and a field mission; and (iii) Reporting.

Inception Phase

48. A kick-off meeting was held on the 25th of July 2023 between the Baastel team and the UNEP Task Manager with the aim of discussing the documentation, the dates of the field mission, the list of stakeholders to be consulted; and of receiving an overview of the project performance. An inception report was prepared following the kick-off meeting, based on a rapid document review of the project documents and Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) to become familiar with the project context, activities, and objectives. The inception report allowed the Review team to clearly define the Review framework and methodology. The Inception Report was approved on August 7th, 2023.

In-depth Documentation review

49. The Review team reviewed all project-related documentation and extracted information relevant to each of the review questions and indicators. Reviewed documents include project design documents, baseline report, final monitoring report, annual work plans, budgets and cash advances, progress reports (including PIRs, half-yearly reports and financial reports), Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting minutes, the project Mid-Term Review (MTR), and the activity reports, technical studies and deliverables produced by the project. The review also comprised relevant background and context information, including donor as well as implementing and executing agencies' programmatic documents.

Field mission in Mauritania

50. The regional consultant, on behalf of the review team, collected first-hand information by conducting interviews and direct observation in Mauritania. A field mission in the capital and in the project sites in the four wilayas (regions) of the project (Guidimaka, Assaba, Hodh El Gharbi, and Hodh El Chargui) was conducted from August 7th to August 13th, 2023. The objectives were to: (i) meet and interview key project stakeholders; (ii) meet with communities at the various project sites; and (iii) conduct direct observation.
51. Throughout this Terminal Review, the following stakeholders were consulted:
- Government representatives at the national level, including Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development and the General Secretary of MEDD (former chair of PSC);
 - Project Coordinator (PC);
 - Former regional directors of the project;

- Former technical experts involved in project implementation (e.g. M&E expert, local associations manager)
- Regional authorities (e.g. Governors and regional delegations such as DREDDs) in the four wilayas;
- Local governments (e.g. municipalities);
- Rural communities;
- Representatives from local associations and cooperatives in the alternative income-generating activities sector;
- Women's groups;
- Other relevant key stakeholders.

52. A list of people consulted is provided in Annex **Error! Reference source not found..**

Remote interviews

53. As a complement to the site visits and in-person interviews in the capital, an interview was conducted remotely with the UNEP Task Manager. The interviews were conducted based on interview protocols aligned with the review matrix and tailored to each stakeholder. The interview protocols are available in Annex **Error! Reference source not found..**

Reporting Phase

54. The Review team has carefully reviewed, triangulated and analysed all data collected for this Review in order to generate evidence-based answers to the review questions. As this is a Terminal Review, particular attention has been given to learning from the experience.
55. The Review team ensured validation and triangulation of data and findings to have robust, credible and useful conclusions, lessons and recommendations. The draft review report was elaborated following the guidance on the structure and contents specified in Annex 4 of the ToR: (i) Introduction; (ii) Review methods; (iii) The Project; (iv) Theory of Change at Review; (v) Detailed analysis of the review findings organized by review criteria and supported with evidence; (vi) Conclusions, including lessons learned and recommendations, based on the review findings; (vii) Annexes.
56. The review team has prepared this draft review report to be shared with the UNEP Task Manager and the Project Coordinator. The review team will then review, and address comments received before finalizing the report. The Executive Summary will be provided with the final version of the report.

D. Limitations

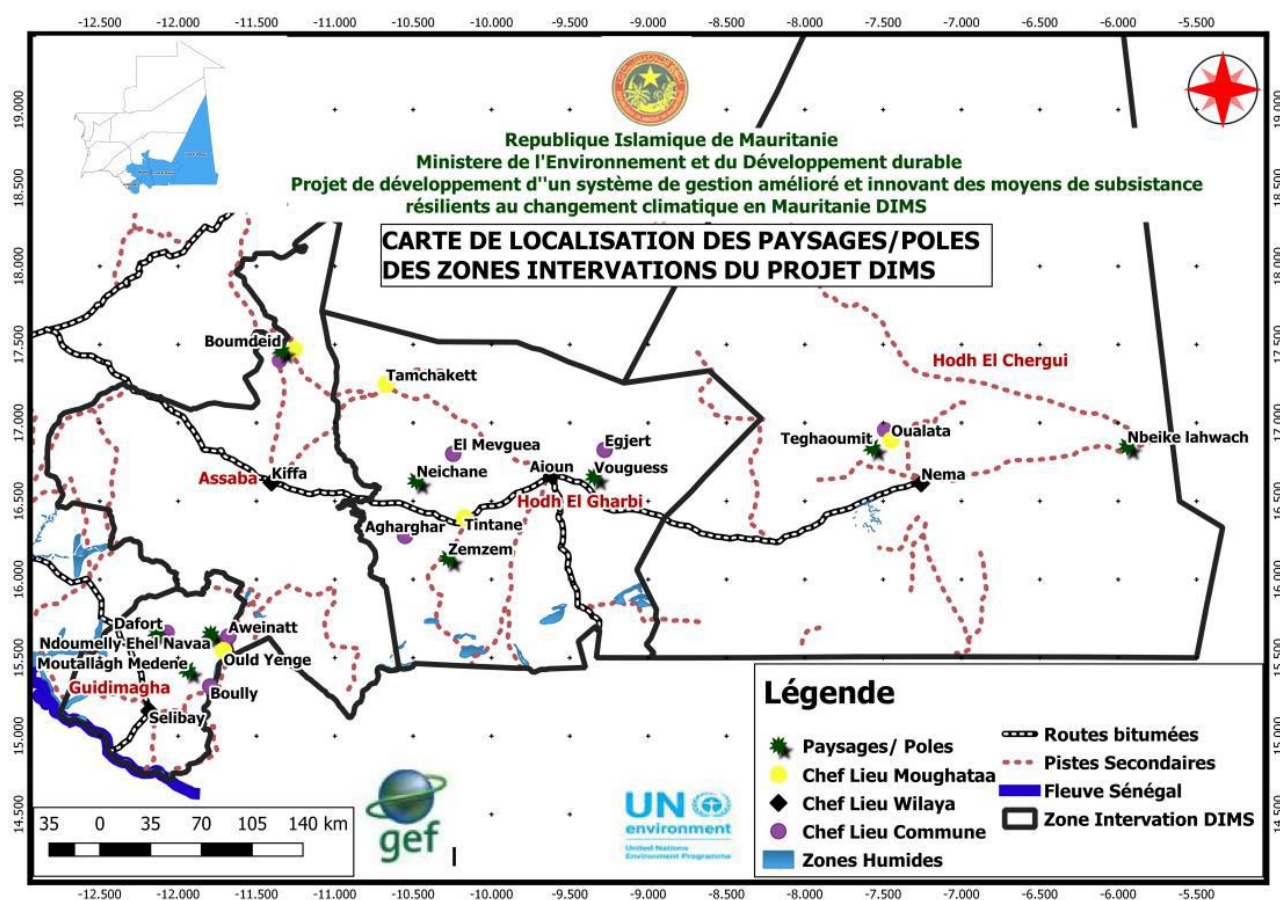
57. The review has been affected by several limitations regarding data collection, which restricted the diversity of sources to be triangulated and to build on during the reporting phase. Only one member of the Review team, the regional consultant, was able to visit the project intervention sites, due to the security situation in those areas. The available documentation did not have specific gaps.

III. THE PROJECT

A. Context

58. **Problem the project aims to address.** In Mauritania, 70% of the population live in rural areas and heavily rely on natural and agropastoral ecosystems for their livelihood. Combined with rapid population growth, widespread and unsustainable use of ecosystem services and goods has resulted in overexploitation and degradation of natural resources. Additionally, overgrazing by livestock and frequent occurrence of bushfires have resulted in degradation and reduced productivity of rangelands and other negative effects on ecosystems. As a result, rural communities in the Sahelian Acacia Savanna ecoregion experience chronic food shortages and nutritional insecurities. These challenges are exacerbated by climate changes experienced in Mauritania since 1960, including reduced annual precipitation, longer drought periods, increased mean annual temperature, and increased occurrence of extreme weather events. These changes in climate are predicted to worsen, having a negative effect on crop and livestock productivity and further increasing the vulnerability of rural communities.
59. The national, sub-national and community-level capacity to adapt to these changes is low. Several barriers prevent adaptation in Mauritania, including: i) Limited knowledge on the value of viable ecosystems and Ecosystem based Adaptation (EbA); ii) Limited institutional and technical capacity of national and local governments to support rural communities to implement EbA in forests and rangelands; iii) Limited funding available to implement EbA; and iv) Limited technical capacity of rural communities to adopt climate-resilient livelihood strategies.
60. The project was implemented with strong involvement of the DREDDs in the four target wilayas (Guidimaka, Assaba, Hodh El Gharbi, and Hodh El Chargui) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Map of the project intervention sites⁷



B. Project objectives and components.

61. In this context, the GEF-funded project aims to enhance national, local and community-level capacity to adapt to climate change in the Sahelian Acacia Savanna forests and rangelands of Mauritania by: i) increasing the institutional and technical capacity of government sectors to plan for adaptation and promote the implementation of best adaptation practices, including EbA throughout the country; and ii) guiding rural communities to adopt climate-resilient livelihoods based on natural and agropastoral ecosystems through the development of an innovative system for the sustainable management of natural resources.
62. In order to remove the above-mentioned barriers and reach its objective, the project was designed according to the three following components (as per Project Document):
63. **Component 1:** Institutional and technical capacity to address climate change risks through EbA. This component focuses on building institutional and technical capacity to implement EbA interventions at the national and local levels. In particular, this component focuses on strengthening the capacity of: i) national government authorities; ii) deconcentrated government institutions, including Regional environment and sustainable development committees (CREDD), DREDDs and other regional delegations; and iii) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including Local Collective Associations for the Management of Natural Resources (AGLCs), to plan and implement EbA interventions.

⁷ Mapping of the DIMS Project's Landscapes activities Report, DIMS Project, January 2019.

64. **Component 2:** Climate-resilient livelihoods for rural communities using an EbA approach in rangelands in four wilayas in the Sahelian Acacia Savanna Ecoregion. These pilot EbA interventions include, inter alia: the restoration of degraded watersheds, acacia forests and protected forests, the restoration of rangelands, the stabilization of dunes, as well as livelihood diversification options and alternative income-generating activities.
65. **Component 3:** Awareness and knowledge of EbA and climate-resilient livelihoods. This component aims at disseminating knowledge and awareness about EbA and climate-resilient livelihoods through i) a national awareness-raising campaign on the EbA approach and corresponding livelihood opportunities; ii) strengthening the knowledge-sharing platform of the MEDD, both for MEDD staff and other relevant ministries; and iii) through an upscaling strategy for the replication of the best adaptation interventions.
66. The project document (ProDoc) includes a results framework which defined the project outcomes and outputs as well as related indicators, baseline and targets, and means of verification.

Table 3: Project planned objective, outcomes and outputs⁸

Outcome	Output
Project Objective: To reduce the vulnerability to climate change of national government and local communities in the forests and rangelands of the Sahelian Acacia Savanna Ecoregion	
Outcome 1: Strengthened capacity at the national, provincial and local levels to use EbA measures to address climate change risks in rangelands.	<u>Output</u> 1.1 A national adaptation strategy to inform adaptation planning developed.
	<u>Output</u> 1.2 Training events organised to increase technical capacity of national, provincial and local institutions to facilitate the implementation of appropriate adaptation measures.
	<u>Output</u> 1.3 New AGLCs established and existing AGLC management committees trained on the use of EbA for the sustainable management of natural resources including pastoral resources.
Outcome 2: Increased provision of pastoral resources and climate-resilient livelihoods via an EbA approach.	<u>Output</u> 2.1 Management plans for natural resources including EbA interventions developed in collaboration with AGLCs.
	<u>Output</u> 2.2 EbA and other adaptation practices implemented to decrease vulnerability of pastoral resources to droughts, bushfires and sand dune encroachment within the management areas of the AGLCs selected under Output 2.1.
	<u>Output</u> 2.3 Training, technical support and equipment provided to rural communities for the establishment of climate-resilient livelihoods.
Outcome 3: Increased awareness and knowledge of climate change risks, benefits of EbA and opportunities for climate-resilient livelihoods in Mauritania.	<u>Output</u> 3.1 A knowledge management strategy – including long-term data collection, analysis and archiving – developed to capture and share information on the benefits of adaptation practices to rural communities.
	<u>Output</u> 3.2 Awareness-raising campaigns via different media – including radio and TV – on the benefits of an EbA approach and associated climate-resilient livelihoods developed and implemented for government staff and rural communities.
	<u>Output</u> 3.3 A long-term strategy to upscale and sustain best adaptation measures including EbA.

⁸ As per CEO Endorsement.

C. Stakeholders

67. Three groups of stakeholders can be identified: i) Institutions at the national, regional and local levels; ii) Communities affected by project interventions; and iii) Civil society.

Table 4: Types of stakeholders

Category	Stakeholders
Institutions (national level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MEDD• More broadly: Ministry of Livestock Husbandry, Ministry of Hydraulics and Sanitation, Ministry of Agriculture
Institutions (regional and local levels)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Delegations of relevant Ministries, including DREDDs• Local Government at the communal levels
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rural communities
Civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NGOs• Local Associations, including AGLCs and AGRNs

D. Project implementation structure and partners

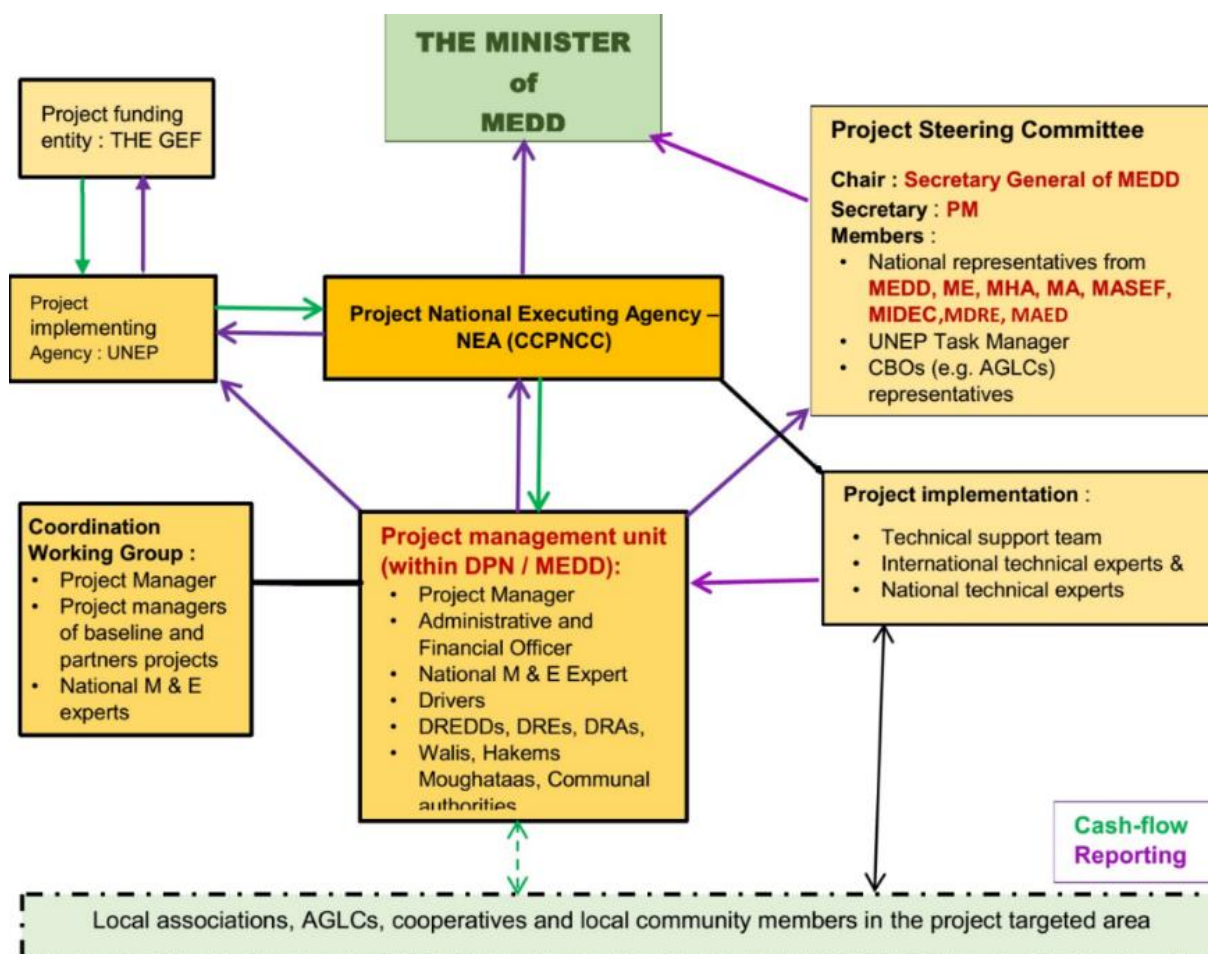
68. The project was implemented by UNEP, with oversight and guidance provided by a Task Manager in its Climate Change Adaptation Unit (CCAU), Nature for Climate Branch, Ecosystems Division. It was executed by the MEDD, and the Project Management Unit (PMU) was located in its DCEV.

69. The management structure of the project was composed of the following entities:

- The PSC, overseeing project implementation;
- The National Executing Agency (NEA), namely the Coordinating Unit of the National Programme of Climate Change (CCPNCC) under the MEDD;
- The PMU, led by the Project Coordinator (PC) in the Directorate for Climate and Green Economy (DCEV), who executed day-to-day management of the project;
- The national Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) specialist;
- Field officers, in charge of executing activities and achieving expected deliverables as well as promoting dialogue between stakeholders and facilitating the participation of rural communities in project activities;
- An administrative assistant;
- A finance assistant;
- National technical experts, hired for specific tasks requiring specific expertise which cannot be undertaken by government staff.

70. During implementation, at least one representative of the management team of the baseline and partner projects were to be invited to the PSC meetings. The PC of the LDCF project was to meet on a regular basis (at least twice a year in addition to the PSC meetings) with the management team of the baseline projects to identify opportunities for complementarity.

Figure 2: Organigram of the project management structure⁹



E. Changes in design during the implementation

71. From the start of project implementation in December 2017, and throughout the four years of project operation, several changes occurred that could have encouraged the project management team to improve the design of the project. However, although corresponding adjustments were made to project implementation as reported in the annual PIR reports, the changes that occurred were never formally incorporated into the project in that the results framework was never formally revised.
72. A baseline study that was carried out at the beginning of the project allowed the project to be adjusted to actual needs, particularly regarding site selection. Secondly, the approval of the GCF support project for the development of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) with a budget of over \$2.6 million in July 2018 made the output on the national adaptation strategy obsolete. Output 1.1 and its indicators 1.1.2 and 1.2 which aimed at the development of a national adaptation strategy (NAS), and the revision of policies for sectoral strategies, plans and laws to integrate adaptation were therefore dropped. However, these changes did not lead to a formal revision of indicators and targets.

⁹ Source: CEO Endorsement Request document.

F. Project financing

73. The project was financed by a GEF grant of USD 5,000,000, from December 31st 2017 to June 30th 2022, including a 6-month no-cost extension.
74. The ProDoc identified a total of \$8,500,000 in in-kind co-financing which comes from the Annual Program against Bushfires in Mauritania (APCBF) (USD 8,000,000) and the government of Mauritania (USD 500,000). As of June 2022, 109% of the co-financing had materialized, i.e. USD 9,263,000¹⁰.

Table 5: Project funding sources (USD)

Funding source	Planned funding
Cash	
Funds from the GEF/LDCF	5 000 000
<i>Sub-total: Cash contributions</i>	5 000 000
Co-financing	
Co-financing in-kind contribution	8 000 000
Co-financing in-kind contribution	500 000
<i>Sub-total: Co-financing contributions</i>	8 500 000
Total	13 500 000

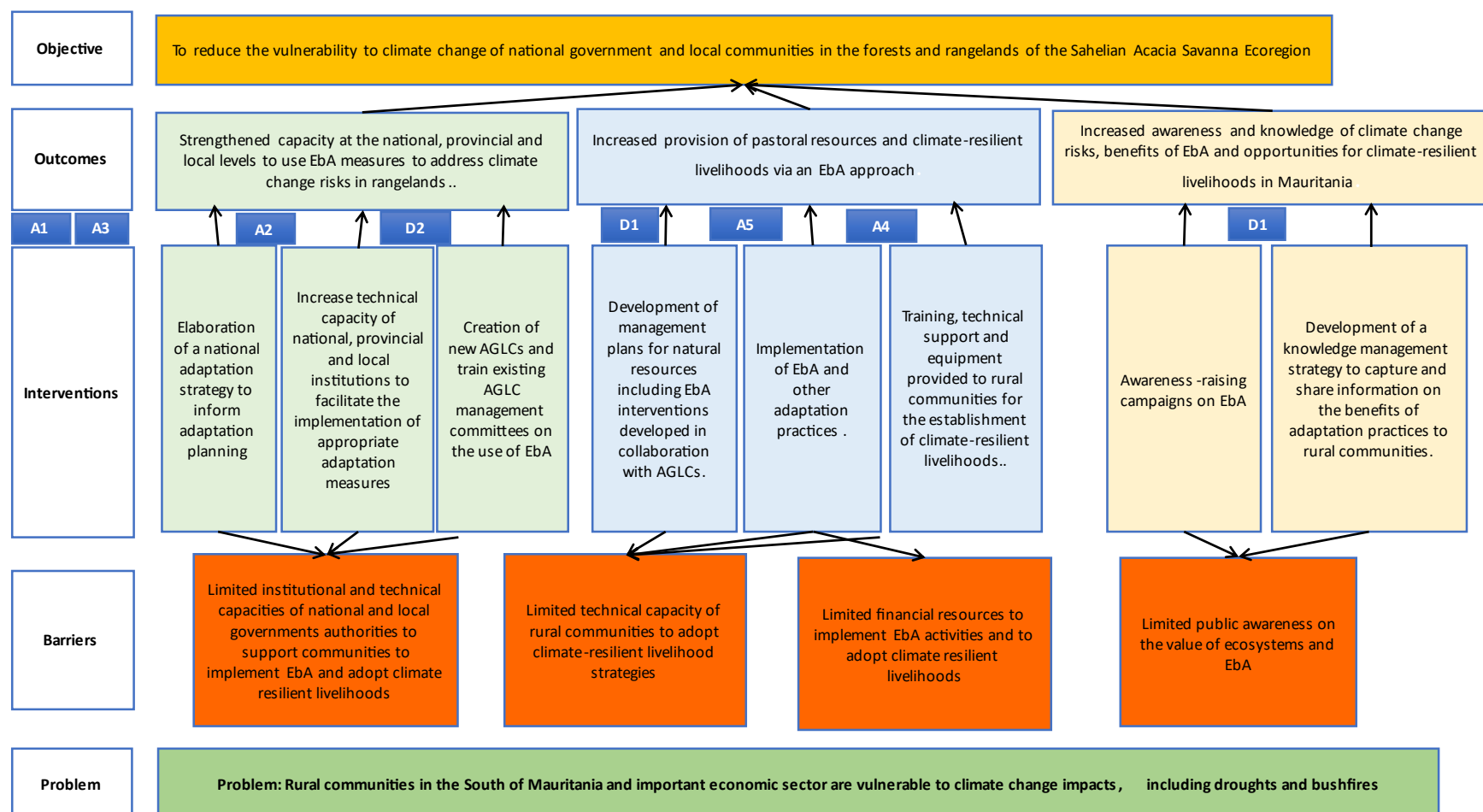
75. Of this budget, according to revisions in 2021, USD 573,997, or 12% of the budget, were allocated to component 1, USD 3,754,458 to component 2 (75%) and USD 238,900 to component 3 (5%). As explained in the Review findings section, expenditure by outcome is not available (also see section on Financing).
76. By the third quarter of 2022, USD 4,934,535 or 98% of the GEF allocation was disbursed. Budget execution was slightly lower in 2019 and 2020, mainly due to the COVID pandemic, which caused delays in activities, as well as to the postponement of certain activities and training courses.

¹⁰ PIR 2022.

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW

77. The ProDoc included a Theory of Change (ToC), which was reconstructed in French for the Mid-Term Review (MTR). The Terminal Review team reconstructed the ToC in English (see the Figure 3 below).
78. The Theory of Change reconstructed for this Terminal Review includes eight interventions, based on the three outcomes. These three outcomes addressed the four barriers as listed in the ProDoc:
- Limited knowledge on the value of viable ecosystems and EbA.
 - Limited institutional and technical capacity of national and local government to support rural communities to implement EbA in forests and rangelands.
 - Limited funding available to implement EbA.
 - Limited technical capacity of rural communities to adopt climate-resilient livelihood strategies.
79. When successfully implemented, the interventions should not only address the above-mentioned barriers, but feed into the three outcomes. The achievement of each of the three outcomes will contribute to the overarching objective of the programme which is: *"To reduce the vulnerability to climate change of national government and local communities in the forests and rangelands of the Sahelian Acacia Savanna Ecoregion."*
80. The whole result chain is grounded on four assumptions which were crucial to the achievement of the interventions and outcomes of the project:
- 1) Relatively stable security, economic, political and sanitary context;
 - 2) Adaptation to climate change remains a priority for the government;
 - 3) The government supports the project in the long-term;
 - 4) No large-scale infrastructure development in the project area.

Figure 3: Reconstructed Theory of Change of the project



Assumptions:

A1 – Relatively stable security, economic, political and sanitary context

A2 – Adaptation to climate change remains a priority for the government

A3 – The government supports the project in the long-term

A4 – No large-scale infrastructure development in the project area

Drivers:

D1 – Consideration of traditional practices

D2 - Pre-existence of local natural resources management groups and cooperatives

V. REVIEW FINDINGS

A. Strategic Relevance

Alignment to UNEP's UNEP Medium Term Strategy¹¹ (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

To what extent was the project aligned with the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (PoW) and Strategic Priorities?

81. The project was consistent with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2018-2021, which aims "to reduce environmental risks and increase the resilience of societies and the environment as a whole". The project was especially aligned with the following subprogrammes outlined in the Strategy:

- *Climate Change* subprogramme, aiming at "transitioning to low-emission economic development, enhancing adaptation and building resilience to climate change". To achieve this objective, UNEP committed to support adaptation responses that integrate ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation.
- *Healthy and Productive Ecosystems* subprogramme, aiming at "managing ecosystems to protect and restore their long-term functioning and supply of goods and services".
- *Resource Efficiency* priority areas, by "promoting sustainable consumption and production and supporting the transition to inclusive green economies".

82. The project also contributed to UNEP's POW and budget for the biennium 2022-2023, to the following subprogrammes: Climate Action and Nature Action. It is aligned with the related indicators as presented in **Error! Reference source not found.6**.

Table 6: Alignment of the project with UNEP's POW Indicators (2022-2023)¹²

Strategic objectives	PoW 2022-2023 Indicators
Climate stability	<p>(i) Number of national, subnational and private-sector actors that adopt climate change mitigation and/or adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies and policies with UNEP support</p> <p>(ii) Amounts provided and mobilized in \$ per year in relation to the continued existing collective mobilization goal of the \$100 billion commitment through to 2025 with UNEP support</p> <p>(iv) Positive shift in public opinion, attitudes and actions in support of climate action as a result of UNEP action</p>
Living in harmony with nature	<p>(i) Number of national or subnational entities that, with UNEP support, adopt integrated approaches to address environmental and social issues and/or tools for valuing, monitoring and sustainably managing biodiversity</p> <p>(iii) Number of countries and national, regional and subnational authorities and entities that incorporate, with UNEP support, biodiversity and ecosystem-based approaches into</p>

¹¹ UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>.

¹² UNEP Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023.

	<p>development and sectoral plans, policies and processes for the sustainable management and/or restoration of terrestrial, freshwater and marine areas</p> <p>(iv) Increase in territory of land- and seascapes that is under improved ecosystem conservation and restoration</p>
--	--

83. The project was also coherent with UNEP Strategic Priorities, including with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building¹³, an inter-governmental framework for strengthening the capacity of governments in developing countries in the field of the environment. As part of this Plan, the South-South Cooperation cross-cutting mechanism was designed and carried out to enhance UNEP's ability to deliver environmental capacity-building and technology-support activities in developing countries.

To what extent was the project aligned with the UN system priorities in the country?

84. The project was aligned with the Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018-2022, agreed between the Government of Mauritania and the UN System (UNS), which provided a strategic and legal framework for UN activities in the country for the above-mentioned period. It aimed to provide a response to the humanitarian and development challenges faced by the country, taking into account the roles and responsibilities of existing UN agencies and partners. The project was particularly consistent with the first priority of the framework "Inclusive growth" and two of its outcomes: *Outcome 2: People have access to improved livelihoods, decent jobs, increased economic opportunities and enhanced food security*; and *Outcome 3: Institutions and communities contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources, to anticipate and address climate change impacts*.

Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities

To what extent was the project aligned with the GEF priorities?

85. The support provided by the project to reduce climate vulnerability and increase climate-resilient livelihoods via EbA was in line with the GEF strategic priorities on Adaptation for Climate Change for the Least Developing Countries Fund (LDCF) (and SCCF) for 2018-2022.

86. The project was in tune with two of the three strategic objectives for the LDCF (and SCCF)¹⁴:

- i) Objective 1: Reduce vulnerability and increase resilience through Innovation and Technology Transfer for Climate Change Adaptation.
 - *Outcome 1.1: Technologies and innovative solutions piloted or deployed to reduce climate-related risks and/or enhance resilience*, via the implementation of EbA, the support provided for the adoption of climate-

¹³ Initially adopted by the 23rd Session of UNEP's Governing Council in February 2005.

¹⁴ GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate change for the LDCF and Operational improvements (2018-2022).

- resilient livelihoods and the diversification of sources of income (Outcome 2).
- ii) Objective 3: Foster Enabling Conditions for Effective and Integrated Climate Change Adaptation.
- *Outcome 3.2: Institutional and human capacities strengthened to identify and implement adaptation measures*, by strengthening capacities of institutions to plan and implement EbA interventions and supporting the establishment of local associations to manage natural resources sustainably (Outcome 1).

Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

To what extent was the project aligned with the Agenda 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)), the Paris Agreement and COP27?

87. The project was in tune with the Agenda 2030 and four of the seventeen SDGs, as indicated in the PIRs. On indicator 13.2, although the integration of EbA into national policies and strategies was removed from project scope due to the overlap with the GCF project, their integration in local strategies, in particular natural resources management plans, was maintained.

Table 7: Level of alignment of the project with the SDGs

SDGs	Targets as per PIRs	Project alignment
SDG 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries	By increasing the technical capacity of national, regional and local institutions to facilitate the implementation of appropriate adaptation measures
	13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning	By integrating EbA in management plans for natural resources in collaboration with AGLCs and other natural resource management committees.
	13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	By increasing awareness and knowledge of climate change risks, benefits of EbA and opportunities for climate-resilient livelihoods.
	13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities	By conducting training events to facilitate the implementation of EbA practices and the establishment of climate-resilient livelihoods.
SDG 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and	15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests,	By restoring degraded forests and rangelands using EbA practices such as reforestation practices.

reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements	
	15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world	By implementing EbA and other adaptation practices which will decrease the vulnerability of pastoral resources to droughts, bushfires and sand dune encroachment.

88. The project was aligned with the global priorities as mentioned in the Paris Agreement, in particular the following articles:

- Article 7 on adaptation, resilience and vulnerability to climate change. The article acknowledges that adaptation action should follow “a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems”.
- Article 8 which recognizes the importance of addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including through “resilience of communities, livelihoods and ecosystems”.
- Articles 11 and 12 pledging for enhancing capacity-building in developing countries and enhancing climate change education and public awareness.

89. In this framework, the project was consistent with the COP27 decisions, that pledged, among others, for: i) Maintaining clear intention to keep 1.5°C within reach; ii) Mobilizing more financial support for developing countries; iii) Making the pivot toward strengthening action by countries to cut greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, as well as boost the support of finance, technology and capacity building needed by developing countries¹⁵.

To what extent did the project respond to the national environmental and climate change needs and priorities?

90. The project is relevant to national plans for adaptation to climate change, including the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA, 2004) and five of its priorities:

- Priority 7 “Reorganisation of the communities adversely affected by climate change”;
- Priority 11 “Participatory reforestation for energy and agroforestry in agricultural zones”;
- Priority 20 “Development of fodder crops”;
- Priority 25 “Improved knowledge on forest resources and their sustainable management”;
- Priority 28 “Institutional reinforcement of the body responsible for nature conservation”.

¹⁵ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/sharm-el-sheikh-climate-change-conference-november-2022/five-key-takeaways-from-cop27>

91. The project was also aligned with the Third National Communication (TNC) on Climate Change for Mauritania (July 2014). The adaptation measures recommended under the TNC that are consistent with the project include:

- i) Managing surface- and ground-water for the sustainable restoration and promotion of rangelands;
- ii) Promoting technologies for ecosystem restoration and participatory monitoring; and
- iii) Managing sustainably pastoral resources.

92. The project is furthermore in tune with the revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) (2021), which lists this project as one of the adaptation projects implemented by the country¹⁶.

93. The project was also linked to the strategies and plans on sustainable development, such as the Mauritania's National Sustainable Development Strategy (SNDD) (2006-2015), on the following aspects:

- Axis 1: Integrated environmental governance adapted to challenges
 - Strengthening the institutional and technical capacities of national and local institutions in planning, financing and environmental management, including climate change adaptation activities.
- Integrated management of natural resources and biodiversity (Axis 2), and two of its sub-axes: i) Sustainable management of natural resources integrating climate change (2.1), and ii) Local management of natural resources.

The first sub-axis identifies resilience of agro-pastoral systems a priority, via:

- Restoring natural environments through set aside and management of rangelands, support to livestock mobility systems and protection against bushfires.
- Restoring and rehabilitating degraded areas;
- Supporting and strengthening living conditions of local populations
- Protecting villages and socio-economic infrastructures against sand encroachment
- Implementing the Great Wall national strategy, including Promoting income-generating activities to protect natural resources and local products and Strengthening the resilience of vulnerable populations to the effects of climate change.

The second sub-axis promotes the local management of natural resources and strengthened mechanisms for local consultation, e.g. increasing coordination between MEDD services and local communes.

94. In addition, the project addressed the issues identified in the National Strategy against Poverty (CSLP) (2001), the Strategy for Rural Sector Development (SDSR) (2013-2015); the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification in Mauritania (PAN-LCD) (1987), the National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity (SPANB) (1999), the National Strategy for Food Security (SNSA) (2012-2015), and the National Gender Strategy (SNIG) (2006).

¹⁶ Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), 2021-2030, p.41.

95. The issues addressed by the project are very much coherent with the climate change needs and priorities in the country, as degradation of the ecosystems, sand encroachment and droughts have important negative impacts on the agriculture and socio-economic activities of local communities, which live in very arid areas. In that sense, the project had a solid rationale on how EbA and Income Generating Activities (IGAs) could improve natural resources management while enhancing the resilience of local communities against climate change impacts.
96. The project was developed in close consultation with government stakeholders at the national, regional and local level. When identifying the project's intervention sites, a baseline study including a climate change vulnerability assessment targeting the most vulnerable areas of the country, was conducted in September 2018 with a participative approach ensuring that all relevant stakeholders were consulted¹⁷. A commission brought together the various stakeholders of the wilayas, including administrative authorities, government technical services, village chiefs and heads of local development organizations to identify the most relevant activities to be conducted to address environmental challenges and needs.
97. During implementation, the project ensured the participation of all relevant stakeholders, in particular at the regional and local levels. The regional authorities were capacitated to monitor the implementation of project activities, and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were also engaged in supporting the DREDDs in their functions and building their technical capacities in the fields of intervention of the project. During implementation, key stakeholders were consulted intensively to ensure the project answered their needs, and to clarify few activities, e.g. the role of DREDDs in the project.

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

To what extent was the project complementary and coherent to other interventions?

98. The DIMS project was implemented in part in continuation of the Enhancing Resilience of Communities to the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on Food Security in Mauritania (PARSACC)¹⁸, a project funded by the Adaptation Fund and implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP) between 2014 and 2018. The project was executed in 75 communes of the country, including in Assaba (14), Guidimaka (4), Hodh El Gharbi (13) and Hodh El Chargui (6), wilayas also covered by the DIMS project. PARSACC interventions were grouped into three components: i) Strengthening technical capacity of government and local communities to understand the risks and impacts of climate change, and developing plans and adaptation measures; ii) Developing and implementing on-the-ground adaptation interventions through the creation of community-based adaptation plans against desertification and degradation of natural resources; and iii) Developing and implementing on-the-ground interventions to diversify and improve the livelihoods of local communities that are vulnerable to climate change. The DIMS project built on the achievements of PARSACC, especially regarding the capacity-building of the DREDDs, which had already been trained in that project. Lessons learned from the PARSACC on DREDDs in providing support to the local communities were also taken on board by the DIMS project. In 2018, the DIMS project also benefited from the

¹⁷ DIMS project, Baseline study, September 2018 (revised in July 2019).

¹⁸ <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/project/enhancing-resilience-of-communities-to-the-adverse-effects-of-climate-change-on-food-security-in-mauritania/#:~:text=The%20project%20aims%20to%20improve,change%20impacts%20and%20prepare%20detailed>

sharing of resources such as vehicles and motorbikes with PARSACC, bringing cost-effectiveness to the project.

99. The DIMS project also built on the lessons learned from the Natural Resources Management Project (ProGRN), funded by the GIZ and implemented between 2014 and 2017. The project sought the sustainable management of natural resources in the country through policy advice and technical and organizational assistance to MEDD, strengthening biodiversity management in marine and coastal areas, and strengthening the decentralised management of natural resources in the agricultural, woodland and pasture areas in the south of the country¹⁹. The lessons learned from ProGRN informed particularly the DIMS activities related to the establishment of AGLCs²⁰.
100. The DIMS project is also complementary to the GCF-funded National Adaptation Plan (NAP) project implemented by UNEP that started soon after DIMS, aiming at developing and implementing a NAP in the country. To avoid the duplication of NAP project activities with Outcome 1 of the DIMS project related to the development of sectoral strategies and plans (Indicator 1.1.2.) and the elaboration of a national adaptation strategy (Indicator 1.2.), several activities of the DIMS project were dropped. Under the management of the same person at UNEP, the two projects coordinated and exchanged lessons learned, building the continuity between the two projects.

Rating for Strategic Relevance:	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
--	---------------------------------

B. Quality of Project Design

Logical framework and results framework

How clear and well-integrated were the project's objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities?

101. The project's logical framework included in the project document was designed in a clear and well-integrated manner, entailing i) the strengthening of capacities at the national, regional and local levels to use EbA measures to address climate change risks (Outcome 1); ii) the implementation of EbA interventions and the support to climate-resilient livelihoods for local populations (Outcome 2); and iii) awareness-raising, communication outreach and knowledge sharing on climate change risks, benefits of EbA and opportunities for climate-resilient livelihoods (Outcome 3). Overall, the objective, outcomes, outputs and activities of the project were consistent. A baseline study²¹ conducted at the beginning of the project supported the refinement of the logical framework and of some indicators. The assessment included a climate risk analysis of each intervention zone, considering the level of vulnerability of the population, and the assessment of current capacities and needs of DREDDs in the four wilayas. Some of the indicators of the DIMS' logical framework that were still a bit vague at the design phase became more concrete when adjustments were made at the inception stage. That said, there was room for further linking the livelihoods promoted and the way they were promoted (the IGAs) with the protection and restoration of ecosystems. Furthermore, there was room to more strategically support livelihoods based on a value chain study assessing value

¹⁹ https://www.giz.de/projektdaten/projects.action?request_locale=en_GB&pn=201221753

²⁰ Terminal Review field mission, August 2023.

²¹ Elaboration de la situation de référence du projet DIMS, Septembre 2018.

addition and the access to inputs and markets and, on that basis, further support value addition and greater and more sustainable access to environmentally friendly inputs and markets, building partnerships with key intermediaries and the private sector.

How feasible and realistic were the project objectives, outcomes and outputs within the available budget and time frame?

102. By and large, project objectives, outcomes and outputs were realistic within the available budget and timeframe. They were also consistent with similar GEF projects. That said, the geographic scope of the project was somewhat over ambitious, and resources were spread a bit too thinly, with room for further concentrating resources in fewer locations to more meaningfully restore fragile ecosystems and build resilience, which also requires more time. During the field mission, communities and presidents of NGOs expressed that the budget allocated to the project was below their needs, which is a rather common feature of this type of projects, which support pilot activities. The policy and knowledge management objectives were perhaps over ambitious and unrealistic timewise. They were also very reliant on external factors, particularly the political buy-in. Some activities under Component 1 were not executed because the new natural resource management associations that were established by the project still did not have the required legal status, which limited the ability to develop the expected local management plans. The approval of the GCF NAP project significantly changed the context and therefore the approach of the project. It is worth noting that the logical framework was never officially revised to formalize the changes in the project design, even those that occurred at the early stage of the project implementation.

Were the indicators SMART²² and consistent with the project objectives, outcomes and outputs?

103. The project document presented clearly the monitoring and evaluation system, attributing the responsibility of the supervision of the project to the Project Coordinator (PC), M&E officer and Field officers. The description of the M&E system comes along with an indicative cost, timeframe and responsible parties of the M&E activities. In addition, a report specific to the M&E system was elaborated at the beginning of the DIMS project, in June 2018²³. It specifies the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders for the M&E of the project, reporting requirements and frequency, as well as M&E tools and templates.
104. The indicators in the results framework were SMART. Mid-term and End-of-project targets were identified as well as means of verification. However, the means of verification for indicator 1.1.1. on the "Degree to which capacity of targeted governments (...) is strengthened" could be clearer, even if based on five-step criteria of questions. It is also worth noting that its measurement does require a high level of capacity and expertise, which is often not present in projects' M&E teams. This was also the case in the DIMS project.

Were indicators and targets gender relevant?

²² For specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-based.

²³ Proposition d'un dispositif de suivi-évaluation, Projet DIMS, Juin 2018.

105. Although the results framework included some gender-disaggregated indicators, there was significant room for further gender-disaggregation. The results framework included three gender-disaggregated mid-term and end-of-project targets: one at the Outcome level aiming at 40% of women to be direct beneficiaries of the project's EbA activities; and two at the Output level: 40% of women of local government officials, staff members from DREDDs and NGOs to be trained on EbA interventions (Outputs 1.2); and 50% of women in the four wilayas of the project with increased awareness on climate change effects (Output 3.1). However, some other indicators should have been disaggregated by gender. Targets for indicators on the number of AGLCs established could have included the proportion of women part of the AGLCs (1.4), as well as their proportion in the training events for AGLC committees (1.5). Likewise, under component 2, there was no indicator or target on gender, although it could have been relevant to integrate a target on the proportion of women part of the individuals receiving training, technical support and equipment to adopt climate-resilient livelihoods (2.3). Lastly, indicator 3.3 could have indicated an estimation of the number of individuals reached via the communication tools, including the proportion of women.

106. The Project Document planned a gender analysis of climate change and environment-related policies at the inception stage, to investigate the integration of gender in these policies, and to adjust the activities under Output 1.1 accordingly. The gender analysis was conducted in March 2019, identifying gender-relevant activities in several outcomes. However, no formal changes were made in the project design to address these recommendations. Even if only a few gender-sensitive indicators were explicitly identified in the logical framework at the design stage, stakeholders paid strong attention to women's participation in the project during implementation, in particular by implementing IGAs specifically dedicated to women.

Implementing and executing agencies

How clear was the operational structure defined?

107. The operational structure is clearly defined in the Project Document, which defines the roles and responsibilities of the following entities:

- The PSC in charge of overseeing the project implementation.
- The National Executing Agency (NEA) from the Directorate for Nature Protection (DPN) of the MEDD, to lead the PMU and execute day-to-day management of the project.
- The PMU in charge of implementing and monitoring project activities.
- The M&E specialist to establish a monitoring framework to meet the targets and measure project indicators.
- The field officers, in charge of the timely execution of activities and the facilitation of the participation of rural communities in project activities.
- The administrative assistant and the financial assistant, supporting the PC for technical, logistical and administrative matters.
- National technical experts.

108. During the implementation, the overall management structure was refined, especially regarding the coordination at the regional and local levels. The role of the following entities was clarified:

- The DREDDs took a greater role in the implementation and monitoring of the project, and facilitated the coordination with the national level.
- Local NGOs stepped in to support the DREDDs in the implementation of the project at the local level especially for capacity building events targeting the communities.

Assumptions and risks

Were the project assumptions and risks well identified in the project document? Did they help determine the planned activities and outputs?

109. Overall, the risks to the achievement of the project's objectives were adequately identified in the Project Document, and this helped determine the project outputs and activities. The ProDoc identified the potential consequences of each risk, its level, rating them from Low to High, the risk category (economic, socio-environmental, technical...) and its probability and impact, as well as the mitigation measures. The high and medium risks included: i) the limited capacity of institutions to undertake rigorous scientific research, limiting the long-term efficiency of the activities of the project (high risk); ii) rural communities do not support the proposed EbA interventions, resulting in continued degradation of forests and rangelands (medium risks); iii) high staff turnover in PSC, PMU and government departments, leading to limited institutional memory (medium risk); and iv) limited technical capacity to implement the project (medium risk). The ProDoc did not foresee a major external shock, such as a health pandemic, which is relatively reasonable. However, the COVID-19 pandemic considerably affected project activities, in particular meetings and capacity-building activities that had to be suspended during the lockdown. In contrast, the ProDoc should have paid more attention to the risk of low political buy-in, particularly for the policy and institutional aspects related to the scaling up and replication of the approaches of the project. The Project Document did not describe in detail the assumptions related to the project.

Linkages with other projects

Were other interventions within the sector clearly identified in the project document?

110. Several GEF and non-GEF interventions that were under implementation at the time of DIMS project's design were identified in the Project Document, such as: the project to Increase Capacity for Adaptation to Climate Change in Rural Areas (funded by the GIZ and the European Union (EU)), the Mauritania Sustainable Landscape Management Project (funded by the GEF, LDCF and SCCF), and the Regional Project to Support Pastoralism in the Sahel (funded by the World Bank). For each project, a summary was made and the opportunities for synergies, collaboration and knowledge exchange with the DIMS project were described. However, the consultations undertaken under this Terminal Review did not identify specific linkages made with these projects during DIMS implementation.

Were relevant lessons learned from other projects properly incorporated into the project design?

111. The lessons learned from the PARSACC project (funded by the Adaptation Fund) informed the DIMS project, in particular regarding the coordination with the DREDDs and the engagement of local communities and NGOs.

Rating for Project Design: Satisfactory (S)
--

C. Nature of the External Context

What external factors have influenced project performance? Have the externalities that are relevant to the results been adequately taken into account?

112. The most important external factors that have influenced project performance were the following:

- i) Despite the de-centralization process underway in the country, there are persistent limitations in local capacity, which affects the coordination and synergies between the various stakeholders and the implementation of EbA interventions²⁴. These limitations are due to the institutional framework and not to the project itself.
- ii) The COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown caused the delay of several activities, particularly the ones related to capacity building and EbA interventions under Outcomes 1 and 2. The travel restrictions slowed down monitoring activities. However, when the restrictions were eased, the project could fully resume its activities, in particular under Outcome 2.

Rating for Nature of the external context: Moderately Favorable (MF)

D. Effectiveness

Availability of Outputs

113. The project has nine outputs divided over three outcomes. According to the PIR 2022, the final targets of six outputs (67%) were achieved. Two outputs (22%) were partially achieved, and one output (11%) was not achieved.

Component 1

114. **Output 1.1** Activities focused on the development of a National Adaptation Strategy and on the revisions to key sectoral policies, strategies and plans were dropped due to the overlap, after the approval of this project, with the GCF-funded UNEP-implemented project aiming at developing a NAP. Activities 1.1.1 to 1.1.5 were dropped. Activity 1.1.6 targeting the organization of training events to increase technical capacity of institutions to integrate EbA approaches in Local Development Plans (PDLs) was initiated in 2021. Three workshops specifically focused on building institutional capacity to integrate EbA in PDLs. The first two brought together local authorities (regional and commune), DREDDs, and civil society representatives, covering two wilayas each. The third one targeted commune representatives.

- i) 5-6 July 2021 in Kiffa (for Assaba and Guidimaka), with 25 participants (2 women);
- ii) 7-8 July 2021 in Nema (for Hodh El Gharbi and Hodh El Chargui), with 25 participants (3 women); and
- iii) 30-31 March 2022 in Ajoun (for communes in all wilayas), with 40 participants (6 women).

²⁴ Terminal Review field mission, August 2023.

115. However, due to the project timeframe and the irregular PDL revision cycles, it was not deemed possible for the project to support the actual integration process. Therefore, the possibility of advancing this in some of the project communes either through the ongoing NAP project or a possible partnership with UNDP was explored.

116. **Output 1.2** was achieved at 100% as of June 2022²⁵. Between 2018 and 2022, five sets of workshops specifically focusing on increasing technical capacities of national, provincial and national institutions to facilitate the implementation of adaptation measures were organized²⁶, as summarized in Table 8:

- i) In November 2018, two 3-day regional training workshops were organized, each covering two of the four wilayas, with a total of 43 participants from the DREDDs and village management committees. The training workshops focused on how to plan, budget, implement and monitor EbA approaches and interventions.
- ii) In November 2019, a national workshop was organized in Nouakchott to raise awareness of EbA approaches, targeting decision-makers and other key actors. The 70 participants included representatives from the MEDD and other Ministries (31 participants), the DREDDs of the four target wilayas (4) and mayors of the project communes (9), as well as non-government representatives (4).
- iii) In March 2019, 24 AGLC members and 6 DREDD staff were trained in the wilaya of Guidimaka on EbA approaches and their practical applications. The training was organized with technical inputs from NGO Naforé.
- iv) In March 2019, 12 staff members across the four DREDDs were trained on environmental monitoring, following the provision of data collection and monitoring equipment.
- v) In December 2019, a training workshop on EbA approaches was organized in Kiffa (Assaba) for a total of 20 participants across the four project wilayas (4 from DREDDs, 12 from village management committees and 4 from AGLCs).

117. In addition, one workshop on ecological monitoring was organized in March 2019 across the four DREDDs for twelve executives of the four DREDD of the project following the environmental monitoring training, with technical support from BIS consulting (Activity 1.2.3). The training included general information on ecological monitoring, monitoring of water levels, water birds, wildlife, etc. Under this output, a batch of data collection material was acquired for each DREDD, including seven (7) rain gauges with stand, two (2) dendro meters, two (2) compasses, one (1) binocular²⁷.

118. The organization of training events was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the activities resumed progressively when the restriction measures were eased.

119. The proportion of female participants, however, remained low, with only around 10% on average²⁸. This low figure is due to the long distance to get to each training

²⁵ PIR, 2022.

²⁶ PIR, 2022.

²⁷ Half yearly progress report, 2018.

²⁸ PIR, 2022.

event, and the length of the trainings which are usually one full day, when local customs limit the capacity of women to do such travels within the country.

Table 8: Total of participants at EbA training events, disaggregated by gender²⁹

Workshop dates	Location	Wilayas covered by training participants	Total of participants	Number of women (%)
November 2018	Kiffa (Assaba)	Assaba, Guidimaka	20	N/A
	Nema (Hodh El Chargui)	Hodh El Chargui, Hodh El Gharbi	23	N/A
20-21 November 2019	Nouakchott	All project wilayas	70	N/A
March 2019	Guidimaka	Guidimaka	30	N/A
March 2019	Kiffa (Assaba)	All project wilayas	12	N/A
December 2019	Kiffa (Assaba)	All project wilayas	20	N/A

120. In order to increase and support technical capacity of national, regional and local institutions to facilitate the use of EbA measures to address climate change risks, training deliverables and awareness-raising materials were disseminated to stakeholders attending the workshops.

121. In addition to these trainings strengthening institutional capacities, training events on the implementation of disaster risk / climate resilience strategies were organized in two wilayas in 2021, with a total of 40 participants (of which 24 women, i.e. 60%)³⁰. Furthermore, two workshops targeting natural resource management associations and DREDDs to catalyse the replication of good adaptation practices took place on 7-9 July, 2021 (for Assaba and Guidimaka) and 2-3 February, 2022 (for Hodh El Gharbi and Hodh El Chargui), totalling 40 participants (of which 4 women, i.e. 10%).

122. The activity aiming to support and engage the DREDDs and other regional authorities to design and implement awareness raising campaigns on EbA (1.2.4) was particularly successful, as DREDDs became key stakeholders in guiding and overseeing the project at the regional and local levels. Their capacity was strengthened through training, technical support, guidance and provision of relevant monitoring and awareness-raising equipment such as projectors, flip charts, computers, printers³¹ which, in the end, increased the capacity to plan, implement and monitor EbA interventions (Outcome 2).

123. Under **Output 1.3**, a diagnostic review of government and community-based organizations in the targeted wilayas was conducted. The project supported the establishment of Associations for the Management of Natural Resources (AGRN), instead of AGLCs as originally planned (Activity 1.3.2), as administrative procedures to create AGRNs are lighter than those for AGLCs. Nonetheless, while this activity was supposed to be executed in year 2, it took longer than expected for the team to establish the AGRNs due to delays in administrative procedures. Due to limitations of time, it was decided that 6 new AGRNs would be sufficient (even though 15 AGLCs had originally been planned), as the project decided to focus specifically on the project sites rather than covering all of the four wilayas: 1 in Assaba, 3 in Hodh El Gharbi, and 2 in Hodh El Chargui. By selecting this type of AGRNs, the procedures were more flexible but did not grant management rights on an area. Training and guidance were provided to the AGRNs to formalize their establishment and the

²⁹ Source: PIRs.

³⁰ PIR, 2021.

³¹ HYPR, 2018.

various administrative steps required. Training was also provided to support the operation and management of the associations.

124. As of 2022, trainings on climate-resilient practices with a focus on EbA interventions and sustainable resource management were provided to the six newly-established AGRNs and existing AGLCs (Activity 1.3.3), instead of nine as initially planned. The initial target of the number of AGLCs to be established being lower than planned (downsized from 15 to 6), the number of training events targeted decreased as well. The training including members of existing AGLCs was conducted in March 2019 in the wilaya of Guidimaka and gathered 30 participants, among which 24 AGLC members from two AGLCs³². The last training workshop on 16-17 March 2022 in Aioun (Assaba), focused on EbA approaches and the sustainable management of natural resources for the six new associations. The training was attended by 42 participants, of which 23 were women (i.e. 55%).

Component 2

EbA interventions

125. Overall, this component performed well in delivering outputs within the project timeframe, as two (Outputs 2.2. and 2.3) of the three expected outputs were achieved (Output 2.1 was not achieved). Pilot EbA interventions included: the restoration of degraded watersheds, acacia forests and protected forests, the stabilization of dunes, and the restoration of rangelands through set-aside interventions (also see Annex **Error! Reference source not found.** for an overview of EbA interventions).
126. The overall indicator target of “EbA measures implemented across at least 1200 hectares – 150 hectares of watersheds, 300 hectares of rangelands, 390 hectares of sand dunes, 210 ha of *Acacia* forests and 150 hectares of protected forests – to address climate change effects such as droughts, bushfires and sand dune encroachment” (**Output 2.2**) was reached. With a total of **1,490 ha** of EbA measures implemented, the target of 1,200 of hectares of pastoral ecosystems benefiting from EbA measures was exceeded by 24%. However, there was great variation in meeting specific ecosystem targets. Of the six interventions considered, one (agroforestry) was not allocated targets. Of the other five, the project exceeded targets in two (sand dune fixation and forest protection), but did not achieve targets in three (degraded rangelands, acacia forests and watersheds restoration), as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Number of hectares under restoration through EbA measures, against initial targets³³

Type of EbA measures	Target (ha)	Actual level implementation (ha)	Percentage (%)	Target achieved
Watersheds restoration	150 ha	130 ha ³⁴	87%	
Restoration of degraded rangelands	300 ha	260 ha	87%	
Sand dune fixation	390 ha	568 ha	146%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

³² PIR, 2022.

³³ PIR, 2022.

³⁴ This includes the 32 ha of gabions and riverbank stabilization, as well as the establishment of 98 ha of stone rows (“cordons pierreux”) for reducing rainwater runoff and increasing infiltration rates.

Acacia forests	210 ha	176 ha	84%	
Forest protection	150 ha	178 ha	119%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Additional measures	N/A	178 ha of agroforestry interventions	N/A	N/A
Total	1200 ha	1490 ha	124%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

127. The EbA measures included³⁵:

- Restoration activities in 32 ha of watersheds through riverbank revegetation (22 ha additional in the last reporting period of July 2021 to June 2022) (in this same area, 32 ha gabions have been put in place for reducing rainwater runoff and increasing infiltration rates);
- Restoration activities in 260 ha of degraded rangelands through set-aside and replanting (55 ha additional in the last period);
- Fixation activities in 568 ha of sand dunes (168 ha additional in the last period) (target exceeded);
- Restoration activities in 176 ha of Acacia (gum tree) forests (35 ha additional in the last period); and;
- Restoration activities in 178 ha of protected forests (10 ha additional in the last period) (target exceeded).
- Agroforestry interventions in 178 ha (cumulative since 2018), 98 ha of stone rows ("cordons pierreux").

128. The Terminal Review field mission highlighted the benefits of the set-aside technique which supported the regeneration of rangelands, building up fodder stocks to feed livestock unable to transhumance and enabling local populations to reduce the amount of fodder they need to buy. However, the field mission also found that the fodder stocks generated by the set-aside approach remain too low to significantly influence grazing practices. This is partly due to the size of set-aside areas, considered as too small by some stakeholders consulted³⁶.

129. Dune fixation was also a highlight of the EbA interventions, which was carried out using local species adapted to the local environment, such as *Leptadenia* and *A. raddiana*, and provided fodder for livestock and firewood. The return of wildlife (hares in the village of Tasla in Boumdeid departement, in the wilaya of Assaba) has been reported by local population, which is an important indicator of ecosystem recovery. *Euphorbia balsamifera* stems used for claying in dune-fixing operations have grown and contributed to strengthen soil fixation. These species have the particularity to be adaptable to the most vulnerable soils and offer opportunities for agronomic research for future dune-fixing operations³⁷.

130. Other EbA interventions, such as watershed management activities using "cordons pierreux" in the village of Legleibatt, helped to preserve grazing land for livestock.

³⁵ DIMS PIR, 2022.

³⁶ DIMS Terminal Review field mission report, 2023.

³⁷ DIMS Terminal Review field mission report, 2023.

131. Overall, there was a sufficient level of technical expertise in the country to conduct EbA interventions. An additional national consultant was recruited to support the implementation³⁸.

Income-generating activities

132. Training, technical support and equipment were successfully provided to rural communities for the establishment of climate resilient livelihoods (**Output 2.3**). The livelihood diversification activities under this output exceeded the indicator target of 300 individuals receiving training, as 364 individuals received training, technical support and equipment to adopt climate-resilient livelihoods (target exceeded by 121%). As of 2022, a total 124 of climate-resilient livelihoods and/or income-generating activities have been introduced by the project³⁹, with the related provision of equipment and technical support (also Annex **Error! Reference source not found.**). These included:

- 16 vegetable gardens, benefiting 800 families, which improved nutritional levels of the population and supported food security;
- 15 solar water pumping systems;
- 1 water storage tower;
- 8 solar lighting microprojects for 8 villages, with solar lighting kits benefiting 325 families;
- 3 solar freezer microprojects;
- 11 butcheries, providing meat for 11 villages;
- 7 community carts, benefiting 7 villages;
- 20 community shops, benefiting 20 villages (and 224 women);
- 6 bakeries providing bread for 6 villages;
- 6 animal fattening micro-projects;
- 3 fabric-dyeing operations;
- 4 couscous-production micro-projects;
- 2 aviculture micro-projects, providing avian meat for 2 villages;
- 2 micro-projects for processing and value-addition of *Balanites* and *Ziziphus* fruits, benefiting 9 villages;
- 20 gas (butane) access points, contributing to reduce pressure on ecosystems from firewood collection.

133. Overall, these IGAs were well-appreciated by the local communities across the four wilayas, and generally met their needs and expectations, as noted by themselves and by the various stakeholders of the project (DREDDs, Walis, NGOs). The community shops provided access to daily consumer goods to the populations who could not have access to them otherwise, due to the isolation and remoteness of shops. The person in charge of managing each shop had to select the products to be sold in the shop according to the local demand. The initial investment of 25,000 MRO (around USD 630) provided by the project was however perceived as sometimes too low given the supply needs.

134. The various microprojects benefitted all local populations but in particular women, who had the lead on the management of many of the IGAs, such as vegetable gardens and the shops in most cases. The shops would be led by two to four women, and sometimes a rotation process was put in place to give the opportunity to a wider

³⁸ DIMS PM Consultation, 2023.

³⁹ DIMS project PIR, 2022.

group of women to benefit from the economic value generated by the shops. The field mission found that women from the village of Legleibatt (Hodh El Chargui) received an income equivalent to 200,000 to 600,000 MRO (USD 5,000 to 15,000 approximately) per season. The profits generated allowed the village inhabitants either to reinvest the profits generated for individual consumption, or to create a new community shop.

135. Although, as explained, progress on Outputs 2.2 and 2.3 was significant and the corresponding final targets were achieved, these activities were not based on local management plans for natural resources including EbA interventions (**Output 2.1**), as planned in the logical and results frameworks. These plans were not developed due to (i) the lack of existing AGLCs in the project areas, and (ii) the delay in the establishment and training of new AGRNs and/or other associations (Output 1.3). The last PIR (2022) expects the management plans to be developed in the future, as key instruments for the long-term sustainability of the project interventions, drawing on the project experiences and lessons learnt.

Component 3

136. The knowledge management strategy – including long-term data collection, analysis and archiving – to capture and share information on the benefits of adaptation practices to rural communities (**Output 3.1**) was not developed as planned. This was to avoid duplications with the GCF project, where the development of such a strategy was also included.
137. The knowledge management strategy implementation focused on the development of archiving systems for the four wilayas (Activity 3.1.4). The four DREDDs received support from a data archiving expert, who undertook a scoping study and provided recommendations for setting up an archiving system for each DREDD⁴⁰. These databases document and detail the project interventions and aim to be built upon to include further data on relevant activities.
138. In terms of awareness-raising campaigns on the benefits of an EbA approach and associated climate-resilient livelihoods developed and implemented (**Output 3.2**), several studies and knowledge-sharing activities were conducted:
- Around 15 awareness-raising and training workshops on the EbA approach were organized,
 - Four final workshops in the four wilayas were organized towards the end of the project. They targeted DREDDs and natural resource management associations, and included one day on discussing good adaptation practices, and a second day focused on their replication,
 - Training on ecological monitoring,
 - A study on gender aspects which identified recommendations for the integration of gender considerations in the project,
 - Technical studies were undertaken for the DRS/CES interventions; geomatics (mapping); natural resource management; and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP).
139. In terms of knowledge products, various studies and training workshop reports were made available on the project's website⁴¹. Documentary films on the project and

⁴⁰ DIMS project PIR, 2022.

⁴¹ DIMS project's website, Section "Exchange area". <https://www.projetdims.org/en/exchange-area/>

its activities were developed⁴² at project mid-term (in 2020) and completion (in 2022) and shared on the project platform as well as on UNEP's page dedicated to the project.

140. The long-term strategy to upscale and sustain best practices (**Output 3.3**) was not elaborated as it was not considered necessary, considering the close linkages of this project with the NAP process. The focus was rather on disseminating knowledge and good practices to support their upscaling, such as the activities described under the previous Output 3.2.

Achievement of Project Outcomes

To what extent have the project's outcomes been achieved? Why were the project outcomes achieved? What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets?

141. The project has three outcomes: Outcome 2 is assessed as achieved, Outcomes 1 and 3 are assessed as partially achieved. The project objective is assessed as achieved (see Table 1111).

Outcome 1: *Strengthened capacity at the national, provincial and local levels to use EbA measures to address climate change risks in rangelands.*

142. Between 2018 and 2022, the eight training workshops focusing on EbA capacity-building benefited the four wilayas of the project, from regional DREDDs to local management committees and civil society organizations. However, a very limited number of trainings were held at the national level (see Table 1010 below). Moreover, the target of building capacities of at least 40% of women was not reached, the proportion of female participants being only around 10-15% in average (also see Table 88).

Table 10: Type of stakeholders capacitated to EbA implementation (2018-2022)⁴³

Workshop dates	Location	Wilayas targeted	MEDD/ Other ministries	DREDDs	Communes	NGOs/ civil society
November 2018	Kiffa	Assaba, Guidimaka		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Nema	Hodh El Chargui, Hodh El Gharbi		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
20-21 November 2019	Nouakchott	All wilayas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
March 2019	Guidimaka	Guidimaka		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
March 2019	Kiffa	All wilayas		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
December 2019	Kiffa	All wilayas		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5-6 July 2021	Kiffa	Assaba, Guidimaka		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

⁴² Documentary film on the DIMS project, 2022. <https://www.projetdms.org/film-documentaire/?preview=true>

⁴³ DIMS PIRs.

7-8 July 2021	Nema	Hodh El Gharbi, Hodh El Chargui		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
30-31 March 2022	Ajoun	All wilayas			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

143. At the project development stage, the estimated level of capacity to identify, prioritize, implement, monitor and assess effectiveness of EbA interventions was estimated at 2 over 5. It was estimated that institutions had limited capacity to monitor and identify climate risks, and that they were able to design, budget and implement restoration interventions but not EbA interventions. The score of 2 was a simple estimate that did not use the methodology as planned in the Project Document⁴⁴, and it was not verified by the project's baseline study. The PIR as of June 2022 indicated that the capacity score at project completion would be calculated in advance of the project Terminal Evaluation (TE), but at the time of writing this report, the project team had considered that calculating the capacity score at the end of the project was meaningless, since there was no baseline grounded in a solid methodology.

144. Based on the interviews and field mission, the review team estimates that these training sessions have enabled a fairly good and solid understanding of climate change and EbA concepts and strengthened capacity at the regional and local levels (DREDDs, AGLCs, AGRNs, and NGOs) to use EbA, compared to the baseline situation. The limited participation of women in the trainings remained a challenge throughout the project.

145. The creation of six natural resource management associations (AGRN) was a first milestone to engage and support local communities in improving the management of natural resources. The difference of legal status between the initially planned AGLCs and of natural resource management associations (AGRN) is to be taken into consideration, as this latter status does not give the same roles, rights and authority to this type of association compared to AGLCs. Nonetheless, the creation of natural resource management associations (AGRN) remains a relevant alternative to AGLCs, considering the complexity and length of administrative procedures to establish AGLCs.

Outcome 2: Increased provision of pastoral resources and climate-resilient livelihoods via an EbA approach.

146. The great majority of stakeholders consulted on the ground were satisfied or highly satisfied with the implementation of EbA measures. Set-aside plots and dune stabilization work seemed to be the most appreciated interventions by the local population, helping in building up fodder stocks and in fighting against sand

⁴⁴ Calculated through scoring methodologies developed by the TAMD and PPCR and adapted from the GEFSec - AMAT (2014). The indicator is based on a five-step criteria of a capacity assessment framework (expressed as questions):
Are the institutions in the process of identifying climate change risks and appropriate EbA interventions?
Are the institutions prioritising EbA interventions and specifying budget allocations and targets for these interventions?
Have the institutions defined clear roles and responsibilities for the coordination and implementation of EbA interventions?
Is there evidence of effective implementation of EbA interventions by the institutions?
Is there evidence of adequate institutional capacities for the continuous assessment, learning and review of adaptation strategies and measures?
Each question is answered with an assessment and score for the extent to which the associated criterion has been met: not at all (= 0), partially (= 1) or to a large extent/ completely (= 2). An overall score is calculated, with a maximum score of 10 given to five criteria. These five criteria will be reviewed and validated at inception phase of the project (Source: DIMS Project Document).

encroachment. The project management team even extended the activities to sites that were not initially planned. There seemed to be awareness among local people that the EbA activities initiated by the project can improve their living conditions, as it could be the case for the regeneration of pasture resources through set-aside. Moreover, these interventions provided the opportunity to the DREDDs, local populations and NGOs to master technical tools such as reforestation and market garden production. Ecosystem restoration is nevertheless a medium- to long-term process, so the outcomes of the restoration activities conducted by the project will be more evident in a few years. As of 2023, this Terminal Review can only indicate some preliminary benefits in terms of the provision of ecosystem services, which will likely expand in the future. Moreover, in view of the community's needs, some of the available fodder reserves made available by the set-aside techniques remain insufficient to have a significant influence on pastoral practices at the wilaya level, the areas dedicated to set-aside plots being limited.

147. IGA activities were widely adopted by the local population and enabled the creation of livelihood chains and alternative sources of income to natural resources. The introduction of gas depots enabled a large-scale energy substitution in a context of scarcity of firewood and charcoal. Vegetable production, in addition to the income it generated through sales, helped to improve nutritional conditions in villages. However, it is important to note that not all IGAs were directly related to ecosystems or could be considered as EbA interventions that would necessarily incentivize communities to protect or manage well natural resources and ecosystems (butcheries, couscousseries, community shops...).

148. IGAs particularly benefitted women, who took the lead of many of them, including the community shops, and received, in exchange, higher incomes. At the time of the Terminal Review (9 months after the technical completion of the project), IGAs were still ongoing and instances of ceasing of activity have not been reported. This was assessed to be due to substantive social ownership, availability of technical knowledge, the profitability of the businesses, financial and business management trainings provided to support the IGAs, and the establishment of a saving rule in IGA-related businesses (the project set up community funds to which 20% of the income from IGAs has to be allocated to finance the maintenance and renewal of equipment).

Outcome 3: Increased awareness and knowledge of climate change risks, benefits of EbA and opportunities for climate-resilient livelihoods in Mauritania

149. The project could have benefitted from the development of a clear knowledge management strategy, that initially was to be aimed at “gathering data and support analysis on the benefits of adaptation practices to rural communities”⁴⁵. The project focused on archiving systems for each of the DREDDs in the four project wilayas, which document and detail the project interventions. However, there is no specific document related to the databases in the documentation made available to the Terminal Review team by the project management team that could inform how these databases will be built upon, specifically in the context of the NAP process as mentioned in the PIR 2022⁴⁶.

150. Workshops and communication products supported the dissemination of information on EbA at national, regional and local levels, through documentary films and reports accessible on the project website. It remains difficult to estimate how

⁴⁵ DIMS Project Document.

⁴⁶ PIR, 2022.

many individuals were reached by these knowledge products and to what extent they increased their awareness of climate change risks and benefits of EbA.

151. All these impacts, although significant and with a potential of replication, seem to remain localized and limited to the area where the project was carried out. This localized nature cannot be expected to bring about significant qualitative changes on the scale of the wilayas concerned.

152. Based on the desk review, the interviews and direct observation, the assessment of the review team is summarized in **Error! Reference source not found.**¹¹. Compared to the baseline levels, the capacities to use EbA measures to address climate change in rangelands increased, particularly at the local scale. Local populations are benefiting from enhanced access to ecosystem services or improved protection as a result of rehabilitation of natural resources and/or from the introduction of IGAs, although these results are rather incipient and will likely be more substantive in the medium to long term. Overall, the level of knowledge on EbA and climate change risks increased at the national, regional and local levels, compared to the baseline situation, with less progress made at the national level.

Table 11: Summary of the level of achievement of final targets as of June 2022⁴⁷

Component	Outcome and outputs	Level of achievement	%
Project Objective: To reduce the vulnerability to climate change of national government and local communities in the forests and rangelands of the Sahelian Acacia Savanna Ecoregion		Achieved	89,4%
Component 1	<u>Output 1.1.</u> A national adaptation strategy to inform adaptation planning developed.	Achieved	100%
	<u>Output 1.2</u> Training events organised to increase technical capacity of national, provincial and local institutions to facilitate the implementation of appropriate adaptation measures.	Achieved	100%
	<u>Output 1.3</u> New AGLCs established and existing AGLC management committees trained on the use of EbA for the sustainable management of natural resources including pastoral resources.	Achieved	100%
	Outcome 1: Strengthened capacity at the national, provincial and local levels to use EbA measures to address climate change risks in rangelands.	Achieved	
Component 2	<u>Output 2.1</u> Management plans for natural resources including EbA interventions developed in collaboration with AGLCs.	Not achieved	15%
	<u>Output 2.2</u> EbA and other adaptation practices implemented to decrease vulnerability of pastoral resources to droughts, bushfires and sand dune encroachment within the management areas of the AGLCs selected under Output 2.1.	Achieved	100%

⁴⁷ PIR 2022.

	<u>Output 2.3</u> Training, technical support and equipment provided to rural communities for the establishment of climate-resilient livelihoods.	Achieved	100%
	Outcome 2: Increased provision of pastoral resources and climate-resilient livelihoods via an EbA approach.	Partially achieved	
Component 3	<u>Output 3.1</u> A knowledge management strategy – including long-term data collection, analysis and archiving – developed to capture and share information on the benefits of adaptation practices to rural communities.	Partially achieved	90%
	<u>Output 3.2</u> Awareness-raising campaigns via different media – including radio and TV – on the benefits of an EbA approach and associated climate-resilient livelihoods developed and implemented for government staff and rural communities.	Achieved	100%
	<u>Output 3.3</u> A long-term strategy to upscale and sustain best adaptation measures including EbA.	Partially achieved	90%
	Outcome 3: Increased awareness and knowledge of climate change risks, benefits of EbA and opportunities for climate-resilient livelihoods in Mauritania.	Partially achieved	

Achievement of Likelihood of Impacts

How likely is it that the project will achieve its desired impacts?

153. In total, the project's climate change adaptation interventions benefitted more than 3,000 households across the four wilayas, i.e. over 18,000 individuals. Women constitute over 50% of the project beneficiaries, and over 80% of the community members engaged in the implementation of project interventions. However, the beneficiaries of capacity-building or knowledge sharing activities (Outcomes 1 and 3) seemed to be mainly local and regional stakeholders, and less national government staff, as suggested by the number of workshops targeting national officials. This could jeopardize the dissemination of information on EbA and the sharing of lessons learned within and between the relevant ministries of the government, potentially reducing the upscaling potential of the intervention. This gap might be currently bridged by the GCF project on the NAP, if some activities are specifically focusing on EbA measures.
154. The project succeeded in raising awareness on the ability of EbA measures (i.e. dune fixation, set-aside plots...) to improve living conditions of local populations. Also, the local populations were able to generate new incomes through IGAs and benefited from the consumer goods produced.
155. The creation of natural resource management associations recognized at the national level represents an important step for appropriate resource management at the local level. However, none of the natural resources management associations elaborated a management plan for natural resources that could strengthen both the sustainability and replication of project results.

156. Overall, the EbA interventions and IGAs are likely to continue to benefit the local populations in the four wilayas. However, although more easily operationalized, the creation of natural resources management associations (AGRN) instead of AGLCs may limit their influence and authority at some point in their process of implementing EbA measures. Moreover, the financial sustainability of IGAs raise questions, e.g. the reinvestment of profit made through selling, as well as the access of IGAs to markets at the country-level, to ensure that the demand and the offer are met. In this sense, there was room for more strongly supporting value addition and greater and more sustainable access to environmentally friendly inputs and markets, building partnerships with key intermediaries and the private sector.
157. Lastly, the Terminal Review field mission underlined the limits of the project's concrete impacts, due to the relatively limited geographical scale of the local EbA interventions in the four wilayas, as noted in the section on the quality of project design.

Scaling up and replication

Are activities, demonstrations and/or techniques being replicated within or outside the project, nationally or internationally? Are some of the approaches developed through the project, which are being widely accepted, and perhaps legally required, being adopted at regional/national level?

158. There is yet no evidence of scaling up of activities at the national level, but the TR field mission noted some examples of replication of activities at the local level. For instance, the manager of the community bakery in the village of Dibay (Guidimakha wilaya) trained two young people, and each of them opened another bakery in Daffar and Oldyenge. In the village of Tamshekatt (Hodh El Gharbi), which did not benefit from the project's intervention, populations took inspiration from the pasture set-aside activities and reproduced them. Similarly, some NGO managers consulted reported that some villages (Taref, Zira and Galieub in Boumdeid in the wilaya of Assaba) are requesting NGO partners to support them to benefit from dune fixation activities in view of the impacts observed in the DIMS project. The PROGRN project also replicated some of the DIMS project activities, in particular the set-aside plots process.
159. Regarding knowledge sharing and capacity-building processes, NGO partners reported during the TR field mission that an increased number of individuals from the civil society and NGOs should benefit from training events in the future. As civil society representatives, their frequent contact with the local population for the implementation of various projects give them regular opportunities to disseminate knowledge and raise awareness among the local population⁴⁸.
160. Several aspects of the project have the potential to be replicated, both within Mauritania and outside of the country. The three most prominent aspects are: i) The establishment of EbA measures and IGAs; ii) Supporting the engagement of regional authorities; and iii) Supporting the establishment and capacity-building of natural resource management associations.
161. Moreover, during the TR field mission, it was observed that innovations are emerging in some project localities to improve fodder availability. In the village of Dhlaim (Hodh El Chargui) for example, local people have introduced pigeon pea - a perennial shrub - in set-aside plots, to enrich fodder quantity and quality. However, to

⁴⁸ DIMS Terminal Review field mission, 2023.

date, innovations do not seem to have been replicated in other villages as a result of increased awareness and knowledge at the wilaya level.

Unintended effects

Has the project led to or contributed to unintended positive or negative effects (environmental, social and economic effects)?

162. No major unintended positive or negative effects were reported to the Terminal Review team. That said, the TR field mission identified that some activities related to dune fencing and fixation were strongly demanded by local populations, to the extent that new sites were integrated in the project. For example, during the field visit, the Hassi El Abass (Hodh El Chargui wilaya) village chief maintained that with the seeds they had left over from the project allocation, supplemented with empty water bottles with the bottoms cut out, they produced more than 1,000 seedlings in 2022, extending the dune fixation over 2.5 ha without any external support.

Rating for Effectiveness: Satisfactory (S)

E. Financial Management

Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

Did financial management happen in compliance with UNEP's financial policies?

163. The project adheres to UNEP financial policies and rules and applicable audit policies. Audit reports were carried out consistently from 2018 to 2022. The overall financial control environment was assessed as accurate and in accordance with international accounting rules and standards and Mauritanian procedures for the use of project funds. The accounting had room for improvement, as underlined by the audit report 2022 that recommends improving the performance of the accounting system, and to acquire an appropriate accounting software to report on operations more efficiently.

Is there a difference between planned and actual expenditure, and why?

164. As of June 2022, the total disbursement amounted USD 4,549,190. The total expenditure was USD 4,934,535, i.e. 98,6% of the total amount of the project (USD 5,000,000), including the six-month extension of the project until June 2022.
165. The expenditures are not presented by Project Outcomes, but by the following categories: i) Project personnel (consultants recruited); ii) Subcontracts; iii) Training component; iv) Furniture and heavy equipment; v) Reporting and miscellaneous components (Table 12 below). This makes the clear distinction of expenditures per Project Outcome difficult.

Table 12: Annual actual expenditure and planned budget (USD)

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
------	------	------	------	------

Total actual expenditure⁴⁹	1 018 323	1 363 181	1 143 623	1 022 873	386 536
Estimated cost (ProDoc)	1 038 370	1 965 385	1 504 740	491 505	N/A
Estimate cost (Yearly work program)⁵⁰	1 091 255	1 897 435	1 275 540	735 770	N/A
Expenditure ratio against revised budget (Prodoc)	100%	100%	86%	99,8%	N/A

Has the rate of disbursement been consistent with the work plan and the outputs delivered?

166. Overall, the rate of disbursement was consistent with the work plan and the outputs delivered. Expenses were slightly below the expected amounts planned in the Project Document and budgets between 2018 and 2020 (Table 12), but the gap was closed from 2021 when gathering restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic were eased.
167. According to budget revisions in 2022, furniture and equipment represent the biggest part of the overall budget (77% of the total budget), followed by staff, training, miscellaneous and subcontracts.

⁴⁹ Expenditure report, 2022.

⁵⁰ Yearly budget revisions, 2018.

Table 13: Budget and expenses of the project between 2018 and 2021⁵¹

Component	2018		2019		2020		2021		Total project
	Budget	Expenses	Budget	Expenses	Budget	Expenses	Budget	Expenses	Budget
Staff	130 605	112 014	154 955	135 690	103 040	110 114	94 270	90 633	521 935
Subcontracts	15 000	/	48 000	40 929	43 100	18 908	4 000	24 000	130 100
Training	65 500	53 131	125 000	35 261	97 000	/	39 000	75 769	326 500
Furniture and equipment	797 350	790 533	1 500 480	1 101 982	1 007 900	999 641	519 000	833 403	3 824 730
Reporting and miscellaneous	82 800	62 646	69 000	49 318	24 500	14 960	59 500	22 370	235 800
Total	1 091 255	1 018 323	1 897 435	1 363 181	1 275 540	1 143 623	1 022 872	1 022 873	5 000 000

⁵¹ Expenditure report, 2022, and budget revisions as of 2018.

Figure 4: Budget and expenses in 2022 (as of June 2022)⁵²

Component	2022		Project Total budget as of June 2022	Total project expenses
	Budget	Expenses	Budget	
Staff	94 060	79 659	521 935	542 529
Subcontracts	66 514	61 376	130 100	127 048
Training	92 941	92 941	326 500	257 102
Furniture and equipment	107 291	107 291	3 824 730	3 832 830
Reporting and miscellaneous	91 195	21 195	235 800	175 023
Total	452 001	362 463	5 000 000	4 934 535

⁵² Expenditure report 2022.

Did the leverage of funds (co-financing) occur as planned?

168. The ProDoc identifies a total of \$8,500,000 in co-financing that is in-kind and comes from the APCBF (USD 8,000,000) and the government of Mauritania (USD 500,000).
169. The implementation of the DIMS project seems to have significantly benefited from the APCBF annual programme, which protects pastoral and forestry resources against bushfires through the implementation of three approaches: i) a defensive approach which maintains a network of firebreak infrastructure, combined with a network of manual firebreaks created and maintained by local communities around pastoral routes; ii) a preventative approach which raises awareness – in nomad and sedentary communities living within and around rangelands – on the risk of bushfires and methods of reducing this risk; and iii) a proactive approach which allocates appropriate financial and human resources to manage controlled fires. Approximately USD 8,755,000 of co-financing materialized during project implementation, which represents a 9.5% increase in co-financing from this source.
170. In addition, the USD 500,000 that were originally identified as in-kind co-finance from the Government of Mauritania, supported the implementation of the project interventions through: i) covering the salary of additional local government staff in the intervention sites if required; ii) providing complementary equipment for local government institutions, including DREDDs – e.g. vehicles, office equipment; iii) renting office and meeting venues; and iv) maintaining and running local government infrastructures – e.g. electricity, water, land line, construction work to maintain buildings. As of project completion, USD 508,000 have materialized.
171. As of June 2022, 109% of the co-financing had materialized, i.e. USD 9,263,000⁵³

Completeness of Financial Information

Has the project delivered comprehensive financial information and reporting?

172. The project delivered financial information and reporting on the following: i) Audits (2018-2022), ii) Budget revisions in one file (2018-2021) and the 2022 budget revision, iii) Cash-advance requests (2018-2022), iv) Co-finance reports (2022), v) Quarterly expenditure reports (2017-2022), and vi) non-expendable equipment reports. The documents were comprehensive and delivered on time.
173. The quality of the reports is satisfactory. The financial reporting presents some limits and insufficiencies in the fact that budget revisions and expenditures are presented by staff contracted and equipment acquired, but not by activities, outputs and outcomes, which, although the standard UNEP format, makes reading difficult. It seems that financial and administrative capacities were quite low, as some financial reporting requirements, such as budget revisions, required significant support from the UNEP team.

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory (S)

F. Efficiency

Quality of implementation

⁵³ PIR 2022.

Readiness

Were appropriate measures taken to address weaknesses in project design or respond to changes which took place between project approval, securing of funds and project mobilization?

174. During the inception phase, a baseline study was conducted to refine some of the indicators, and better address the needs of the beneficiaries. The launch of the GCF-funded project led to cancelling outputs related to the development of a NAP and revisions of laws and policies to integrate EbA. Despite these changes, the logical framework was not revised.

Quality of project management

What is the quality of project implementation by the implementing agencies? What is the quality of project execution by the execution agencies?

175. UNEP had the responsibility for overall project implementation. This was ensured in an efficient manner, though it seems that the workload sometimes exceeded the remit of the Task Manager (TM), especially regarding financial and budget revisions for which additional support from the TM was required.
176. The project management unit, responsible for the execution of the project, consisted of a project coordinator, a part time National Technical Advisor (NTA) and a part time M&E Officer. Consultations highlighted the proactive and efficient role of the NTA and M&E Officer. The decision to recruit an NTA rather than an international consultant had mixed results. While recruiting a national who knew the country situation was an asset, the project could have benefitted from an international consultant to increase the efficiency of the project's administrative processes and budget revisions, and could have provided technical support on Component 3.

How effective was the collaboration between the institutions responsible for the implementation of the project?

177. UNEP conducted a supervision mission in February 2019 which covered most of the sites across the four wilayas of the project: Moutallagh and N'Doumolly (Guidimakha), Boumdeid (Assaba), Neichane and Vouguess (Hodh El Gharbi), and N'Beikett Lahwach and Taghoumit (Hodh El Chargui). Garfa (Guidimakha) and Zem Zem (Hodh El Chargui) were not visited⁵⁴. Observations on the level and quality of achievement of the project were made, and recommendations for the remaining time of the project were elaborated in collaboration with national and regional stakeholders. Recommendations included: 1) Mapping the villages and water points, specifying water quality levels; 2) Relocation of certain site activities closer to water sources of good quality and sufficient quantity for various uses; 3) Training IGA beneficiaries in administrative and financial management; 4) Integrating the climate change dimension into local development plans as necessary; and 5) Strengthening/supporting DREDDs' supervision of project activities. Recommendations 2, 3 and 5 were incorporated into the implementation of the project.
178. Overall, the Executing Agency was efficient and effective in ensuring the implementation of activities. There were close links, fluid communication and good

⁵⁴ Compte-rendu de la visite du PM, 2019.

relationships between the national and regional levels, through the DREDDs, who had a more concrete perspective on what was happening on the ground. Given the long distances between the capital and the project sites, and between the project sites, and the under-developed infrastructure, close coordination with and involvement of DREDDs in project implementation contributed to effective and efficient delivery, although capacity needed to be strengthened and investments in equipment, such as computers, had to be made upfront.

179. As the DREDDs role grew in importance in the project implementation, the implementation of the project sometimes seemed to rest too heavily on the DREDDs' shoulders for some of the wilayas, in particular on the regional delegates at the head of the DREDDs. Strengthening the DREDDs' role was specifically challenging if new regional delegates taking their positions were not familiar with the project, as it took them more time to take ownership of the project. This partly explains how and why local NGOs also became key stakeholders in supporting the DREDDs at the local and regional levels.

180. One of the main methods of collaboratively implementing the project was the operationalization of the PSC, comprising representatives of ministerial departments intervening in rural areas. The role of the PSC was i) overseeing project implementation; and ii) reviewing annual workplans and project reports⁵⁵. Set up during the inception phase, it was planned to meet twice a year, but rather met once a year on a regular basis from 2018 to 2021. The minutes of the PSC meetings were elaborated in a systematic manner. The fifth meeting of the PSC took place on 19 May, 2021. It was well attended, with representation from all main ministries and departments. In line with its expected function, during implementation, the PSC validated the project work plans and approaches, and ensured their coherence with national policies in the various fields of intervention, to seek synergies and avoid duplications. It played an important role at the national level in terms of coordination, acting as a forum where the different ministries could dialogue and share what they were doing and share their guidance to the project based on their own experiences.

Timeliness

Were the timing and sequence of activities realized as planned? Could project extensions have been avoided?

181. The project management made the necessary budget available on time to kickstart the activities as soon as the project started, resulting in a rapid and effective start. Even though the COVID-19 pandemic slowed down physical gatherings, such as training events and supervision missions, Component 2 was already at an advanced level of implementation and some coordination mechanisms were in place when the pandemic struck. The activities resumed soon after the gathering restrictions were eased. Almost all programmed actions were carried out on schedule. However, delays limited the achievement of the following outputs and outcomes:

182. The elaboration of management plans for AGLCs and AGRNs relied on the creation of the associations. As their establishment took longer than expected, the planned results of this activity were not achieved.

183. The knowledge management strategy in Outcome 3 was not fully completed due to time constraints. Its scope was reduced at the beginning of the project and postponed to the last months of the project implementation. It could have been more

⁵⁵ DIMS Project Document.

efficient to prepare this strategy upstream, so as to have a plan in place for capturing and communicating these learnings.

184. Due to the delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic, a 6-month extension was granted to the project implementation, which was generally considered as a fair and reasonable period of time. The corresponding amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) was signed between UNEP and the MEDD on December 29th, 2021.

Stakeholder engagement

To what extent were effective partnerships for project implementation established with relevant stakeholders at different levels? To what extent were relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation and monitoring of the project?

185. Partners were strongly involved during implementation of the project. As mentioned above, the DREDDs played an important role in the implementation in the four wilayas. Even though their function was not clearly described in the Project Document, once capacitated they became key for the long-term monitoring and maintenance of project interventions. Likewise, local NGOs were successfully engaged to support the DREDDs in the coordination of project interventions and provided valuable support in capacity-building.

To what extent did the project use local skills, experience and knowledge in the design, implementation and review of project activities?

186. Local stakeholders were widely engaged in the project activities especially under Component 2, as local communities were the main beneficiaries of EbA interventions and IGAs, and local NGOs played a major role in implementation. Local knowledge, skills and experience were incorporated in the implementation of EbA interventions such as dune fixation or set-aside plots. The project called on the skills of the communities to set up, manage and supervise the maintenance of community shops and other IGAs.

Adaptive management

How were risks monitored and managed during implementation?

187. The Project Document mentioned that the project risks and assumptions would be regularly monitored both by project partners and UNEP. The risks identified in the ProDoc were re-evaluated each year in the risk rating section of PIRs, being either downgraded or upgraded.
188. Five risks identified in the Project Document were downgraded from High or Medium to Low risk in the PIRs: i) Rural communities do not support the proposed EbA interventions; ii) High staff turnover in Project Steering Committee; iii) Limited capacity of institutions to undertake scientific research; iv) Limited technical capacity to implement the project; and v) The selected sites for on-the-ground interventions are not chosen efficiently and do not address the needs of most vulnerable communities or the distance between sites makes the implementation difficult⁵⁶.
189. The risk "Climate and seasonal variability and/or hazards prevent the implementation of planned activities", originally rated as Low risk in the Project Document, was rated as a High risk in the first PIR and Significant in the second PIR, and was finally reduced to Medium risk in the last PIR. At the beginning of the project, arid conditions indeed posed a risk to the survival of planted seedlings, and

⁵⁶ DIMS PIR, 2022.

community water points were not always sufficiently close for easy watering of seedlings, and heavy rains associated with the onset of rains could have caused damages to seedlings. This risk was overall well-managed. Sufficient watering and protection of the seedlings were ensured by the project teams in all targeted wilayas. For instance, protection of seedlings was achieved through strong protection systems such as fences with concrete poles to protect these areas from animal encroachment⁵⁷. To limit the impact of arid conditions on planted seedlings, seedling survival and replacement rates were closely monitored and assessed⁵⁸. Risk mitigation measures also included avoiding planting in the hottest season, trying to place interventions closer to water points so that watering could be provided, and more importantly, replacement of the seedlings that didn't survive from the previous growing season⁵⁹.

190. One other risk was identified as a Medium risk after the beginning of the project. It only partially affected the project activities, and was overall well-managed by the project management team. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated measures in Mauritania affected all aspects of project implementation, in particular restrictions on large gatherings of individuals, resulting in delays in the implementation of some training workshops in 2020-2021 and limiting the ability of both DREDDs and the PMU to undertake project supervision and guiding missions. Overall, the pandemic did not have an important impact on activities under Component 1, which were in the end executed under the GCF project, nor Component 2, as stakeholders still managed to implement EbA and IGA interventions. However, the delays due to the pandemic and related time constraints did affect the implementation of Component 3. The risk was downgraded from Medium to Low in the last year of the project.

191. Two other risks that were not included in the original risk identification in the Project Document were identified during implementation. They were not totally mitigated by the project and remained a threat to the quality of implementation of the project:

- i) The limited participation of women in the more formal project training activities, as well as in decision-making regarding some of the project activities, potentially affecting the distribution of benefits from the project. For the larger and more formal trainings provided by the project to date, women's average participation rate was only around 10%.
- ii) The long-term sustainability of the livelihood diversification and income-generating activities being dependent on the capacity of cooperatives and other groupings to manage these microprojects and to engage in sustainable financial planning. This capacity varies between the cooperatives, as some of them already have well-established systems in place for e.g. rotating management systems and for setting aside funds for maintenance costs, while others may face challenges as a result of e.g. internal conflicts or disagreements among participants, unexpected maintenance costs, or inadequate financial planning. As a mitigation measure of this risk, additional training was provided to the cooperatives regarding business management and sustainable financial planning.

How have key lessons learned from the project been incorporated during implementation?

⁵⁷ PIR 2019.

⁵⁸ DIMS PIR, 2019.

⁵⁹ DIMS's TM interview, 2023.

192. The project did incorporate some of the lessons it was learning during implementation, in particular regarding the role of the DREDDs, which took the lead in the implementation and monitoring of project activities at the regional level. Likewise, engaging the local NGOs to support the DREDDs was a relevant way to adjust to the long distances between project intervention sites. As mentioned above, in order to strengthen cooperatives capacities, additional training was provided regarding microproject management and sustainable financial planning.
193. As a mitigation measure for women's low participation in formal trainings, the project team tried to ensure that trainings were organized at the project sites, maximizing the chances of women's participation and attracting increased number of women at trainings. For instance, a women's participation rate of over 50% was indeed observed for the trainings on water and soil conservation/ soil protection and restoration (CRS/DRS) organized at project sites⁶⁰.
194. However, no specific adaptive management processes were formally documented. Moreover, the stakeholders consulted pointed out the significant delays in the delivery of UNEP's feedback, particularly for the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the project. As a result, stakeholders do not mention any strategic changes made during implementation that arose from the MTR's recommendations. It is worth noting that the lack of integration of MTR recommendations is also due to the delays in delivering the MTR which was completed only few months before completion of project activities, having been delayed due to COVID-related travel restrictions.

Cost-effectiveness

To what extent have the outputs been achieved in a cost-effective manner?

195. Some aspects of the project management structure were very cost effective. These include, in particular, the streamlined national PMU that delivered on its tasks in an effective manner, as well as the relatively low costs of the DREDD supervision vis-a-vis the major support and monitoring that they provided in project sites. In addition, the project used the capacities built in the DREDDs by the PARSACC project in the same project intervention areas.
196. However, long distances between the project sites affected costs and time efficiency, which was money spent both by the DREDDs and the PMU at the national level. There were attempts at reducing those costs and bulking several shipments together and using vehicles and motorcycles from other projects (PARSACC) but in the end there were still significant costs to be covered.

Gender and human rights

To what extent did the project adhere to UN, UNEP and UNDP policies on human rights and gender? To what extent did the project design and monitoring take into account human rights, as well as gender inequalities and differentiation? Which gender-responsive measures were implemented? Were they implemented as planned? What were the actual gender results?

197. Overall, the project was aligned with the UN's Guiding Principles of Human Rights, Social Inclusion and Gender Equality, UNEP's policy guidance on Gender and Human Rights and UNDP's Gender equality strategy 2018-2021.
198. The project design did not adequately integrate gender equality. The ProDoc did not include a gender analysis and a gender action plan and the results framework

⁶⁰PIR, 2022.

did not systematically include gender-disaggregated indicators (see section above in Relevance section). To compensate this, a technical gender report was elaborated after project start, in March 2019, one year after the beginning of the project, which was a bit late. The study analyzed the socio-economic conditions of women in the country, assessed capacity-building needs of women in the project intervention zone and proposed gender-disaggregated indicators to be integrated in the project, at the activity level⁶¹. However, although some of the gender report's recommendations were considered in project implementation, in particular in livelihood diversification and income-generating activities, a stronger use of these indicators could have been made, to inform some revisions to the outcome indicators or to support closer tracking of gender integration in activities.

199. That said, during implementation, strong attention was given to women's participation in the project. This was particularly the case regarding EbA interventions and local socio-economic development through IGAs. On reforestation, women were involved in most of the planting and maintenance work. A large majority of IGAs were managed by women, such as vegetable gardening and community stores. However, the project did not meet its targets on the engagement of women in the more formal trainings related to EbA, in particular at the regional and local levels. Under Component 1, women's participation in formal training events did not exceed 15% of the participants, far from the 30% female representation rate targeted. This low participation is related to the selected workshop approach (regional workshops) and the cultural and security context in Mauritania, as women are traditionally in charge of domestic duties and usually do not travel far from their home for such training events. Some efforts were made to organize more trainings at the community level, but the design had budgeted regional workshops, leaving limited flexibility in that regard.
200. Without quotas, it was also difficult to involve women in decision making bodies. Although women make up more than 50% of the members of the six new natural resource management associations, and represent 55% of women participants in trainings for associations, they remain inadequately represented in the executive decision-making bodies of these associations, with most of them only having 1-2 women on their boards out of 7-9 members in total⁶².

Communication

Did the project develop a communication strategy and a knowledge management plan?⁶³ Were they implemented as planned? Are there effective external communication mechanisms in place? What were the deliverables? How effective were communications and knowledge management in ensuring stakeholder awareness of the project and its approach?

201. The project delivered several communication and knowledge products. In particular, the project produced technical studies, training workshop reports and documentary films, developed a website and regional databases and conducted workshops at the national and regional levels. These products are overall useful. The final documentary film on the project⁶⁴, which was produced by a recruited firm in 2022 and was shared on the project platform as well as on UNEP's page dedicated to the project, is particularly informative. The systematization and dissemination tools,

⁶¹ Enquête pour l'intégration du genre dans les activités du projet DIMS, p.18-24

⁶² PIR 2022.

⁶³ What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions?

⁶⁴ Documentary film on the DIMS project, 2022. <https://www.projetdims.org/film-documentaire/?preview=true>

such as the project's website⁶⁵ and the regional databases, add value. However, some were not fully completed (i.e. the online platform seems to have several tabs under construction) and more importantly the portfolio of products was not informed by a communication strategy and a knowledge management plan, which affected the strategic nature and timeliness of the portfolio and the individual products, regarding the types of knowledge to be gained, the audiences to target, and the communication channels to use. For instance, while the film and the website might be useful for the national and international public, it is unlikely that these products raised awareness in rural areas, due to connection issues and even the limited access to electricity in some villages or remote areas. Overall, there is limited information on how many individuals were reached by and use the knowledge products delivered by the project. No specific document on lessons learned was elaborated by the project, which negatively affects the scaling up potential of the project.

Environmental and social safeguards

Was the project in compliance with UNEP's ESS requirements? Was the Safeguard plan consistent with the project outputs/outcomes and risks identified?

What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? Were the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks?

202. The ProDoc did not include an ESS plan, and there was no management framework or official system put in place to monitor potential environmental and social risks. During implementation the project identified a risk regarding invasive alien species, as one specie is very commonly used for dune stabilization in the country. Implementation and executing agencies monitored and regularly followed up with teams on the ground to mitigate this risk, using *Prosopis* only in areas of low water availability, which restricts its spread. As of August 2023, no cases of invasion were detected. Unlike this risk, the risk related to water availability was not adequately managed. The project promoted some water intensive IGAs, such as vegetable gardening, and provided Solar-powered Water Pumps (SWPs), which encourage significant water extraction as, unlike fuel-powered pumps, they do not involve major extraction costs, in arid areas where availability of water is already scarce and climate change will likely worsen this. The project did not assess this risk in detail. Overall, it seemed that in all the project sites the water tables were stable and the groundwater recharge was high enough to support the water use at least in the project timeframe, but there is a risk, as the provision of SWPs was not structurally compensated with water conservation and water efficiency methods (e.g. drip irrigation) or training. In addition, the generation of waste or pollution by IGAs was not directly addressed, although given the small scale of the activities there is no particular challenge in this regard (unlike regarding water), and this environmental risk is rather minor.

Rating for Efficiency: Satisfactory (S)

G. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring of Project Implementation

Was the monitoring plan operational and effective to track results and progress towards objectives?

⁶⁵ DIMS project's website, Section "Exchange area". <https://www.projetdims.org/en/exchange-area/>

203. The Project Document elaborated a monitoring plan. A budget of USD 142,300 was planned to execute it. It is assessed as low, and the budget ended up actually being higher.

204. In general, the design of the monitoring plan is assessed as adequate. The pillars of the monitoring plan were the following:

- Recruitment of a part-time monitoring and reporting officer.
- The results framework with an indicator, baseline and target for each output, outcome and the project objective. An inception workshop was held to discuss the results framework with all relevant stakeholders.
- The TM will develop a project supervision plan during the inception phase of the project.
- The project team would visit the project sites based on an agreed schedule to assess first hand the progress.
- Yearly audits will be conducted by an independent third party.
- A mid-term review and final evaluation will be conducted by an independent third party.

Project reporting

Did the project comply with the progress documentation and monitoring reporting requirements/ schedule, including quality and timeliness of reports?

205. The project did comply with its reporting requirements and provided good quality reports on time.

- A baseline study was carried out at the beginning of the project.
- For each year a PIR was developed, as well as half-yearly progress reports;
- Project Steering Committee minutes were produced for each PSC meeting. Those took place once a year, instead of twice a year as indicated in the Project Document.
- Financial reporting, including budget revisions and expenditure reporting, was executed as planned, but required additional support from the UNEP team.
- The audits were carried out each year between 2018 and 2022.
- The inception workshop minutes were produced.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Satisfactory (S)

H. Sustainability

Exit strategy

How effective were the exit strategies and approaches to phase out assistance provided by the project?

206. The project document includes a section (section 3.8) on the sustainability of project's results. This states that the sustainability of these results would be achieved through: i) the active participation of relevant government and community stakeholders, including AGLCs, in decision-making and implementation; ii) strengthened institutional and technical capacities at national, regional and local levels ensuring stakeholders have adequate knowledge and skill to maintain the benefits of the project; iii) increased public awareness of the benefits of EbA and strengthened policy framework, including a National Adaptation Strategy, the integration of the EbA approach into cross-sectoral and sectoral strategies and development plans, and the periodic revision of these documents to support

adaptation planning beyond the project lifespan at the national level, ensuring willingness and commitment to support and maintain the activities of the project; iv) the creation of community-led livelihood strategies that are sustainable and compatible with ecosystem conservation; and v) the implementation of long-term data collection, analysis and dissemination on the benefits of EbA in the country. This exit strategy is quite comprehensive. It comprises legal, political, institutional, social and technical aspects, and implicitly considers to a certain extent economic aspects, in the sense that IGAs would generate revenues preventing the unsustainable use of natural resources. However, the exit strategy included in the ProDoc disregarded the financial aspects related to funding the maintenance of the infrastructures developed and the refreshment of the capacity and awareness built by the project.

207. Importantly, the ProDoc integrated the exit strategy into the project implementation strategy. Indeed, the ProDoc sought to ensure the sustainability of project's results through the implementation of all or most of the activities in the logical framework rather than dedicating one or a few activities to it. While this approach allows more systemic efforts towards sustainability, it also dilutes the sustainability angle, and increases the sensitivity of the sustainability of the project to changes in the implementation strategy. In fact, given how embedded this was in the project implementation strategy, during implementation the implementing and executing agencies had the sense that an exit strategy was not included in the ProDoc. In the last year of implementation, they indeed agreed on putting in place an exit strategy checklist, although this did not materialize. This general approach also affected the implementation of actions and strategies strengthening the sustainability of project's results. Some of the planned drivers of sustainability, such as the training of national government officials, the awareness raising of the general public at the national level, and the development of local natural resources management plans, were not fully implemented (a national level training workshop was organized), affecting the sustainability of project's results. The strengthening of the national policy framework, most notably the development of the National Adaptation Strategy, was not pursued by the project either, but in this case for good reasons, as the GCF-funded NAP project is promoting it in a more systematic way.

Rating for Sustainability:	Likely (L)
-----------------------------------	-------------------

I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Are the actions and results from project interventions likely to be sustained?

What are the key factors that enable or hinder the achievement of sustainability of project results?

208. The field mission conducted in August 2023, that is, more than one year after the technical completion of the project, found that ecosystem restoration works, such as reforestation and dune fixation, were well maintained and that IGAs were still running, due to substantive social ownership, availability of technical knowledge, the profitability of the businesses and the establishment of a saving rule in IGA-related businesses (the project set up community funds to which 20% of the income from IGAs has to be allocated to finance the maintenance and renewal of equipment). The field mission found that businesses were being successful⁶⁶ and that community

⁶⁶ The village of Rag (Assaba wilaya) has been able to build a shop from its own funds, replacing the original rental shop. Similarly, the village of Boumdeid (Assaba wilaya) has increased its initial stock of 25 gas cylinders to 30 by diversifying the range of sizes, thanks to the profits made.

funds were regularly replenished in accordance with the rule established, with the exception of a single site where all the income from market gardening is paid into the working capital fund, as the work provided is voluntary. In terms of social ownership, for example, during the field visit, the Hassi El Abass (Hodh El Chargui) village chief maintained that with the seeds they had left over from the project allocation, supplemented with empty water bottles with the bottoms cut out, they produced more than 1,000 seedlings in 2022, extending the dune fixation over 2.5 ha without any external support. This example illustrates the determination of the local people to maintain the gains they have made despite the limited resources available. One of the Walis emphasised the financial support granted this year by the Department of Agriculture, on his instructions, to support the DIMS market gardeners. Factors affecting the longer-term sustainability of the project's results are discussed below.

Legal and policy framework and institutional setting

209. As mentioned, the project did not make a great contribution to strengthening the legal and policy framework. At the national level, the NAP project is however pursuing this in a systematic way. The NAP and the broader integration of adaptation and EbA into cross-sectoral and sectoral strategies and development plans promoted by the NAP project will contribute to the sustainability of the DIMS project's results, although the limited progress made by the project in identifying, systematizing and disseminating lessons learned hinders this. At the local level, the failure to develop local natural resources management plans and integrate them and EbA in general in local development plans, which was originally planned but was not completed, constitutes a lost opportunity for the sustainability of the project's results. On the institutional front, the formal establishment of AGRNs (their legal recognition by the Ministry of Interior) and the institutional connections built at the local level, between DREDDs and AGLCs / AGRNs, but also with agriculture extensionists, favour sustainability, although the limited involvement of the national government is a pity.

Political and social ownership

210. The political context at the national level is conducive to the sustainability of the project's results. The coordinator of the DIMS project is indeed now the director of the Climate Change and Green Economy Directorate in the MEDD, which implies high-level awareness of the importance of the results of the project and high-level willingness to support their sustainability, even if the project did not greatly ensure the wide ownership of these results at the national level. At the local level, social ownership seems to be significant, especially on dune fixation, fodder reserves and vegetable farming, with the AGLCs and AGRNs further disseminating the importance of the interventions of the project and their results. Future impacts, which will likely be greater, could further increase social ownership of project's actions and results. However, there seems to be room for improvement in terms of municipal ownership.

Technical capacity

211. The capacity built through trainings and learning by doing and the strengthened connection between DREDDs, the agriculture extensionists, AGLCs / AGRNs and local communities contribute to the existence of technical capacity to support the sustainability of project's results, although continued regular monitoring missions from DREDDs would be convenient.

Financial capacity

212. Given its current leadership, the Climate Change and Green Economy Directorate in the MEDD will likely mobilize resources for the sustainability of project's results. However, the local planning framework will not particularly contribute to this,

as local natural resources management plans were not developed and these and EbA more broadly were not integrated into local development plans, which would have been a vehicle for inclusion into local budgeting processes, contributing to mobilize government resources to support and maintain project's results.

213. In terms of IGAs, the limited training in financial planning and business management, and the limited access to markets and value chains and partnerships with the right kind of intermediaries are risks to the sustainability of the project's results, in terms of the businesses making enough profit to maintain the equipment and the business managers dedicating the sufficient resources to sustain them. The saving rule, which so far seems to be followed, compensates this though, and has proven so far a good mechanism to sustain the businesses. However, depending on the profits and the magnitude of external shocks, savings could be insufficient to sustain businesses.

214. Nevertheless, external resources will likely compensate this. Although not all ongoing or planned projects cover the areas targeted by the DIMS project⁶⁷, some follow up projects will cover it. UNEP has submitted project proposals to the GEF and GCF Secretariats covering the wilayas supported by the DIMS project. The proposed GEF project covers 8 wilayas, including the four wilayas supported by the DIMS project, while the GCF project overlaps with two of these four wilayas. Beyond UNEP, there are also projects implemented by other organizations. Most of them, at least those funded by multilateral funds, such as GEF and GCF, are overseen by MEDD, which can promote synergies between the projects, and support the sustainability of DIMS's results.

Bio-physical sustainability

215. The physical interventions were informed by best practices in the region. However, as noted, the scale was in some cases limited. Furthermore, there could be risks related to water availability, especially in the more arid areas. Although the scale of the interventions is small, their promotion was not informed by a water availability feasibility study. Moreover, the target ecosystems and populations are extremely fragile and are greatly exposed and sensitive to climate change, and projections foresee severe changes. Although the project has increased their resilience, climate risks are still significant, which could affect the sustainability of the project's results.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

⁶⁷ The other UNEP LDCF project that is currently underway is in a different area, as it was designed to target three regions where there really haven't been many initiatives in the past at all, particularly the arid regions in the north.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

Main strengths of the project

216. The issues addressed by the project are very much coherent with the climate change needs and priorities in the country, as degradation of the ecosystems, sand encroachment and droughts have important negative impacts on the agriculture and socio-economic activities of local communities, which live in very arid areas.
217. The project has made significant contribution for the development of climate-resilient livelihoods in Mauritania, in particular through the overall successful implementation of EbA interventions generating socio-economic benefits for rural communities and supporting the conservation of ecosystems. These interventions including restoration of degraded watersheds, forest restoration, set-aside, stabilization of dunes which were reported during the Terminal Review field mission to generate benefits for local communities. The various microprojects benefitted all local populations but in particular women, who had the lead on the management of the shops in particular.
218. The project also contributed to increasing awareness and knowledge on EbA through capacity-building activities on EbA approaches in the four wilayas of the project, from regional DREDDs to local management committees and civil society organizations.
219. The project management structure and execution arrangements ensured effective and efficient project implementation. Close links and fluid communication between the national and regional levels, through the DREDDs, were crucial in this regard. The involvement of subnational stakeholders in the provision of technical advice and in project monitoring and supervision was important, as the distances are long and infrastructure limited. The full engagement of subnational partners also contributed to the cost-effectiveness of the project.
220. Overall, the EbA interventions and IGAs are likely to continue to benefit the local populations in the four wilayas. The field mission conducted in August 2023, that is, more than one year after the technical completion of the project, found that ecosystem restoration works were well maintained and that IGAs were still running, due to substantive social ownership, availability of technical knowledge, the profitability of the businesses and the establishment of a saving rule in IGA-related businesses. The establishment and training of local associations further contributed to strengthening the community ownership and sustainability of project interventions.
221. Several aspects of the project have the potential to be replicated, both within Mauritania and outside of the country. The three most prominent aspects are: i) the establishment of EbA measures and IGAs; ii) supporting the engagement of regional authorities; and iii) supporting the establishment and capacity-building of natural resources management associations. Several examples of non-target communities replicating the project's interventions, both autonomously and with external support, were identified during the review mission.

Main weaknesses of the project

222. Besides the successful achievements outlined above, several project activities could not be implemented as planned in the project documents. The local management plans for natural resources including EbA interventions (Output 2.1) could not be elaborated as planned in the logical and results frameworks. These plans were not developed due to (i) the lack of existing AGLCs in the project areas, and (ii)

the delay in the establishment and training of new associations (Output 1.3.). Secondly, the knowledge management strategy to capture and share information on the benefits of adaptation practices to rural communities (Output 3.1) was not developed and rather integrated in the GCF-funded project to avoid duplications. Likewise, the activities on the development of a National Adaptation Strategy and on the revisions to key sectoral policies had to be dropped due to the overlap with the GCF-funded and UNEP-implemented NAP project. Only a very limited number of trainings were held at the national level.

223. This limited focus on the planning and policy domains and knowledge management may have negative implications on the sustainability and upscaling potential of the project interventions. While the project's sustainability approach was integrated across its activities, the lack of a specific standalone sustainability plan or exit strategy resulted in the lack of a coherent and systematic sustainability approach.
224. It should be noted that external factors influenced the project's performance negatively, such as the COVID-19 pandemic which delayed several activities (EbA interventions under Outcomes 1 and 2); or the limitations in local capacities which affected the coordination and synergies between the various stakeholders and the implementation of EbA Interventions.
225. Several of the IGAs promoted by the project, by answering the population's most urgent socio-economic development needs, did not directly contribute to the protection or sustainable use of ecosystems, as could be expected from an EbA-focused project. Furthermore, the possibility of water-intensive IGAs (which involved the installation of solar-powered water pumps) resulting in the unsustainable use of groundwater resources was not sufficiently assessed.
226. The project's EbA interventions and IGAs remain limited geographically and scattered throughout the four wilayas, which raises the question of concentrating the project interventions on a lower number of wilayas for a greater impact and cost effectiveness.
227. The target of building capacities of at least 40% of women was not reached, the proportion of female training participants being only around 10-15% on average for regional trainings that brought in participants from across one or several wilayas. Conducting instead a greater number of local workshops, closer to where women live, increases women's attendance. This, however, is more costly, and therefore requires an adequate budget allocation from project design.

Strategic Review Questions

228. The following paragraphs provide a summary response to the questions required for the GEF Portal as mentioned in the ToR of this review.

- KSQ1: What was the performance at the project's completion against **Core Indicator Targets**?

N/A.

- KSQ2: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding **engagement of stakeholders** in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR?

229. Implementation partners were strongly involved to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the project, in particular the DREDDs at the regional level, who had a more concrete perspective on what was happening on the ground and played an important role in the four wilayas of the project. Even though their function

was not clearly described in the Project Document, once capacitated they became key for the long-term monitoring and maintenance of project interventions. Likewise, local NGOs were successfully engaged to support the DREDDs in the coordination of project interventions and provided valuable support in capacity-building. The national level was less involved, partly due to the implementation of the NAP project.

- KSQ3: What were the **completed gender-responsive measures** and, if applicable, actual gender result areas?

230. During implementation, strong attention was given to women's participation in the project, in particularly regarding EbA interventions and local socio-economic development through IGAs. However, the project did not meet its targets on the engagement of women in the more formal trainings related to EbA, in particular at the regional and local levels. Under Component 1, women's participation in formal training events did not exceed 15% of the participants, far from the 30% female representation rate targeted. Some efforts were made to organize more trainings at the community level, but the design had budgeted regional workshops, leaving limited flexibility in that regard. Moreover, it was also difficult to involve women in decision making bodies.

- KSQ4: What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the **Safeguards Plan** submitted at CEO Approval?

231. The ProDoc did not include an ESS plan, and there was no management framework or official system put in place to monitor potential environmental and social risks, but no major negative environmental or social impacts have been identified. During implementation the project identified a risk regarding invasive alien species, that was monitored and regularly by implementation and executing agencies who followed up with teams on the ground to mitigate this risk.

- KSQ5: What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed **Knowledge Management Approach**, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions?

232. The project delivered several communication and knowledge products, including studies, training workshop reports, a documentary film, a website and regional databases and workshops at the national and regional levels. These products are overall useful. However, some were not fully completed, partly due to the lack of a knowledge management strategy, that was not developed as planned in the ProDoc. It was rather included in the GCF project to avoid duplications. This change affected the strategic nature and timeliness of the knowledge product portfolio and individual products.

B. Summary of project's terminal review findings and ratings

233. Based on the findings presented in section **Error! Reference source not found.**, this review concludes that the performance of the project has been satisfactory. The project was highly relevant, satisfactorily designed, facing a moderately unfavourable external context, was effective and efficient, with satisfactory financial management and monitoring and reporting, and the sustainability of its results and impacts are likely. Table 1414 provides more details.

Table 14: Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Strategic Relevance		HS
<i>1. Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities</i>	The project was consistent with several subprogrammes of UNEP's MTS 2018-2021 and POW for 2022-2023	HS
<i>2. Alignment to GEF/LDCF strategic priorities</i>	The project was in tune with two of the three strategic objectives on adaptation of GEF for 2018-2022.	HS
<i>3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities</i>	The project addressed relevant environment and climate change needs and priorities, and was developed in close consultation with stakeholders at the national, provincial and local levels.	HS
<i>4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions</i>	The project was complementary to and built synergies with other relevant projects.	HS
B. Quality of Project Design	The logical framework, the timeline and budget, the M&E system, the operational structure and the risks were overall adequately defined in the ProDoc, but there was room for improvement in terms of the geographic scope, the integration of IGAs with ecosystem-based activities and the promotion of gender equality and human rights, and assumptions were not identified.	S
C. Nature of External Context	COVID 19 and limitations in local capacities negatively affected project delivery.	MF
D. Effectiveness		S
<i>1. Availability of outputs</i>	67% of output level targets were achieved, 22% were partially achieved and 11% were not achieved.	S
<i>2. Achievement of project outcomes</i>	The outcome-level targets were partially achieved for each of the three outcomes.	MS
<i>3. Likelihood of impact</i>	Environmental, socio-economic and climate resilience impacts are likely at the local level, but moderately likely at the national level.	L
E. Financial Management		S
<i>1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures</i>	The project adhered to UNEP's policies and procedures, as confirmed by audits.	HS
<i>2. Completeness of project financial information</i>	Project financial information was complete.	HS

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
<i>3. Communication between finance and project management staff</i>	Communication between finance and project staff was fluid, although the TM had to significantly support financial management.	S
F. Efficiency	Adaptive management was overall good. Project implementation and execution were efficient and cost effective although long distances negatively affected this. Work planning was overall adequate, and risks were appropriately monitored and managed.	S
G. Monitoring and Reporting		S
<i>1. Monitoring design and budgeting</i>	The design of the M&E system was overall adequate, although the budget was a bit low.	S
<i>2. Monitoring of project implementation</i>	Monitoring was adequate.	S
<i>3. Project reporting</i>	The project delivered good quality reports on time.	S
H. Sustainability		L
<i>1. Socio-political sustainability</i>	There is strong ownership at the regional, social and national levels, with room for improvement at the municipal level, and in more sectors at the national level.	L
<i>2. Financial sustainability</i>	Although local financial support is moderately likely, national and international financial support is highly likely.	L
<i>3. Institutional sustainability</i>	There is institutional ownership at the regional and MEDD level, but room for improvement at the national and municipal levels.	L
I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues		MS
<i>1. Preparation and readiness</i>	Assessments were made, but they did not fully inform project implementation.	MS
<i>2. Quality of project management and supervision</i>		S
<i>2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:</i>	Administrative, management and technical oversight was provided.	S

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
2.2 <i>Partners/Executing Agency:</i>	Management was adequate, including technical aspects and monitoring and reporting aspects.	S
3. <i>Stakeholders participation and cooperation</i>	Stakeholders' participation and cooperation was adequate at the regional and local levels, but engagement was limited at the national level, due to NAP implementation.	MS
4. <i>Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality</i>	The project was aligned with the corresponding guidelines, but it was not fully informed by specific assessments. Contribution to gender equality was significant in EbA and IGAs, but limited on trainings and decision making.	MS
5. <i>Environmental and social safeguards</i>	No ESS plan and management system was designed or implemented, but no major negative environmental or social impacts have been identified.	MU
6. <i>Country ownership and driven-ness</i>	The project was owned and driven by regional and local stakeholders, but involvement of the national level was more limited.	MS
7. <i>Communication and public awareness</i>	The project delivered several useful communication and knowledge products, but these were not informed by a communication strategy and a knowledge management plan, which affected the strategic nature and timeliness of the portfolio and the individual products.	MS
Overall Project Rating	The project was highly relevant, satisfactorily designed, facing a moderately unfavourable external context, was effective and efficient, with satisfactory financial management and monitoring and reporting, and the sustainability of its results and impacts are likely.	S

C. Lessons learned

Lessons learned #1: Linkages between administrative levels are key for effective and efficient project execution, as they have different yet complementary capacities and functions. It is indeed fundamental to link the national level with the regional level and this with the municipal level. In this regard, the involvement of subnational stakeholders in the provision of technical advice and in project monitoring and supervision is key, especially when the distances between the capital and project sites, and between project sites, are long and infrastructure limited.

Context: For DIMS, the involvement of MEDD promoted learning from and upscaling of best local practices, while the involvement of subnational stakeholders ensured that technical

and financial resources were channelled down. Moreover, given that in Mauritania distances are long and infrastructure underdeveloped, close coordination with and involvement of DREDDs, municipal governments and existing local associations in project implementation contributed to effective and efficient delivery of the DIMS project. Indeed, the involvement of subnational stakeholders increased the relevance and frequency of implementation support and reduced costs (see Section Quality of project management).

Lesson learned #2: The definition of implementation structures needs to be based on a sound assessment of the execution capacities of the different entities, to identify strengths and gaps, and determine if the latter can be overcome in the short or medium to long term. In some cases, for the benefits of subnational delivery to be realized, capacity building and short-term investments need to be made up front, and planned and budgeted in advance, so that local stakeholders can support grass-root stakeholders.

Context: As noted above, the involvement of subnational stakeholders was key for DIMS. However, for this to be effective, the project strengthened capacity and invested in equipment, such as computers, upfront. (see Section Quality of project management)

Lesson learned #3: When local associations do not exist, creating them tends to be strategic for strengthening the ownership and sustainability of project interventions.

Context: In most of DIMS project's intervention areas, local association did not exist. The project created them, establishing AGRNs for the sustainable management of natural resources. This proved key to organize the community and avoid a diluted, inactive responsibility over natural resources. (see Section Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues)

Lesson learned #4: It is critical that lessons learned from projects are identified, systematized and disseminated and inform development plans, policies and strategies, particularly when a topic is innovative in a given context.

Context: The project did not pay enough attention to the policy domain, in the sense that lessons from local EbA interventions were not appropriated, compiled and promoted through the development of specific plans and integration into sectoral and cross-sectoral development plans at national and subnational levels. Given that EbA is still relatively innovative in Mauritania, this negatively affected the capacity of DIMS to promote and consolidate the sought paradigm shift, both vertically (downwards and upwards, across levels) and horizontally (e.g., across sectors and types of stakeholders in a given level), so that EbA measures are prioritized and sufficient human, technical, physical and financial resources are assigned to scale them up. (see Section Achievement of Likelihood of Impacts)

Lesson learned #5: It is often useful to have an output related to fostering sustainability at mid-term or a little bit later, to ensure a strategic and systematic approach to enhancing sustainability.

Context: It is fundamental that development projects promoting innovative approaches develop sustainability strategies, as the scaling up potential relies to a great extent on the degree to which results have been sustained and expanded after the end of the project. Integrating sustainability into the implementation strategy during the design of a project

allows its systemic promotion. This was the approach followed by DIMS, but the sustainability dimension ended up diluted and, in some respects, inadvertently disregarded during implementation. It also increased the sensitivity of the sustainability of the project to changes in the implementation strategy. (see Section Exit strategy)

Lesson learned #6: When designing adaptation projects with EbA approaches, it is key to ensure certain scale of interventions, particularly if ecosystems are severely degraded and are very fragile, as it will require a certain scale of activity in addition to some time to restore them to a meaningful extent. In this sense, it is important to strike a balance between benefiting many stakeholders slightly and benefiting fewer stakeholders more significantly.

Context: The project covered a wide area with relatively limited resources. While it achieved some positive impact at the level of the project sites, more impact could have been made with less scattered activities. More concentrated activities would have also allowed greater cost-effectiveness. (see Section Achievement of Likelihood of Impacts)

Lesson learned #7: If promoted as part of an EbA project, IGAs should be directly based on natural resources and ecosystem goods, thus incentivizing their protection, restoration and sustainable use.

Context: An EbA project, DIMS directly promoted the improvement of target communities' livelihoods. This makes sense, as poverty is one of the underlying causes of ecosystem degradation and, thus, climate vulnerability in project areas. However, the livelihoods promoted and the way they were promoted (the IGAs) were disconnected from the ecosystem-related work, only indirectly supporting the protection, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems. This limited the contribution of the promoted IGAs to the project objectives. (see Section Achievement of Likelihood of Impacts)

Lesson learned #8: It is key to ensure that IGAs do not inadvertently have a negative environmental effect. In arid areas, this is particularly important when water-intensive livelihood activities or supporting infrastructures, such as solar water pumps, are introduced or expanded. In these cases, it is critical to study the medium- and long-term water availability in a climate context, and structurally pair the increased ability to extract water with water conservation and water efficiency methods (e.g. drip irrigation) or training.

Context: DIMS promoted some water intensive IGAs, such as vegetable gardening, and provided Solar-powered Water Pumps (SWPs), which encourage significant water extraction as, unlike fuel-powered pumps, they do not involve major extraction costs. Medium- and long-term water availability studies were not conducted, and training on water use efficiency and conservation and equipment was not incorporated. Although it is unlikely in this case (it seemed that in all the project sites the water tables were stable and the groundwater recharge was high enough to support the water use at least in the project timeframe), the promoted IGAs could potentially result in the depletion of limited and diminishing water resources, in particular considering climate change projections. (see Section Unintended effects)

Lesson learned #9: When aiming to strengthen community livelihoods, it is critical that EbA projects assess value addition and access to environmentally friendly inputs and

markets, build partnerships with key intermediaries and the private sector, ensure adequate technical, business management and financial planning capacity, and establish saving rules.

Context: DIMS project's support to IGAs was not informed by value chain studies, with a focus on environmentally friendly inputs and markets. This limited the capacity of the project to build partnerships with key intermediaries and the private sector, and reduced its socio-economic, environmental and resilience impact. However, the field mission found that IGAs were still running after project completion, due to substantive social ownership, availability of technical knowledge, training on business management and financial planning, the profitability of the businesses and the establishment of a saving rule in IGA-related businesses (the project set up community funds to which 20% of the income from IGAs has to be allocated to finance the maintenance and renewal of equipment). (see Sections Achievement of Likelihood of Impacts)

Lesson learned #10: In many countries and especially in rural areas, promoting gender equality requires additional financial resources, and often, where and when possible, or culturally acceptable, establishing quotas.

Context: Conducting formal and large regional capacity building workshops contributes to knowledge dissemination and is more cost effective than smaller local workshops. However, in the DIMS project areas, it would reduce the attendance of women, given the travel time implications, their other socially-defined duties and security issues (in Mauritania local customs limit the capacity of women to do such travels within the country). The project thus decided to conduct instead a greater number of local workshops, closer to where women live, which increased women's attendance. This, however, is more costly, and therefore requires an adequate budget allocation from project design. Furthermore, given the culture in the country, it was difficult to ensure significant women's participation in decision making bodies - establishing quotas may have helped increase women's empowerment. (see Section Gender and human rights)

Lesson learned #11: To promote gender equality, it is fundamental to conduct a gender analysis, develop a gender action plan and include gender disaggregated indicators in the results framework.

Context: The ProDoc did not include a gender analysis and a gender action plan and the results framework did not systematically include gender-disaggregated indicators. To compensate this, a technical gender report was elaborated after project start, but while livelihood diversification and income-generating activities were incorporated following it, the results framework was not modified, negatively affecting reporting on gender impacts. (see Section Gender and human rights)

Lesson learned #12: Communication and knowledge management strategies are critical to effectively and strategically convey messages and build capacity. Monitoring the reach and impact of knowledge products and awareness campaigns is important to better understand their effectiveness, challenges and success factors.

Context: The project delivered several communication and knowledge products, many of which were useful and added value. However, the portfolio of products was not informed by a communication strategy and a knowledge management plan, which affected the strategic nature and timeliness of the portfolio and the individual products, regarding the

types of knowledge to be gained, the audiences to target, and the communication channels to use. (see Section Communication)

D. Recommendations⁶⁸

Recommendation #1:	Take the opportunity of implementing the NAP project in Mauritania to strengthen knowledge dissemination and awareness raising of the general public at the national level of the project achievements and the EbA approach, including through the completion of the online knowledge platform. The implementation of this recommendation should build on the strong partnership between UNEP and MEDD, but should involve reaching out to stakeholders outside of MEDD. MEDD should support this process.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project focused on archiving systems for each of the DREDDs in the four project wilayas, but knowledge management was limited at the national level. For instance, some of the tabs of the online platform seemed to be under construction. This and the limited efforts on awareness raising at the national level negatively affect both the impact of the project and the sustainability of its results.
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation:	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP CCAU in partnership with MEDD
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Next six (6) months

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section: Communication

Recommendation #2:	Take the opportunity of implementing the NAP project in Mauritania to integrate the lessons learned, approaches and experiences of the DIMS project into the NAP document and its complementary documents, promoting their scaling up. The implementation of this recommendation should consider national and (to the extent possible) subnational policies (the
---------------------------	---

⁶⁸ This section only includes recommendations directly related to the sustainability of DIMS' results. It is worth noting that some of the lessons mentioned above do have operational implications for UNEP CCAU from a programming perspective, regarding the design and implementation of projects both in Mauritania and elsewhere. The draft terminal review included explicitly and specific recommendations for UNEP CCAU regarding these aspects, based on lessons 1, 2, 4-7, 9 and 10. The review team considers them critical, but has removed them from the final version of the report to more closely follow the guidelines. The review team recommends however that lessons are considered not just as an interesting learning that is never applied, but as an orientation for concrete action to be taken in the short term by UNEP CCAU.

	integration of EbA measures in regional and municipal development planning and budgeting should be promoted through the NAP process). Given their mandates, MEDD should support this process at the national level, while DREDDs should promote it at the regional and local levels.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The integration of lessons learned, approaches and experience of the DIMS project at the national, regional and local levels was limited.
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation:	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP CCAU in partnership with MEDD and DREDDs
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Next twelve (12) months

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section: Scaling up and replication

Recommendation #3:⁶⁹	Grant legal status to the proposed natural resource management associations
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The non formal establishment of the proposed natural resource management associations prevented the development of local natural resources management plans, which is key for the sustainability of the project's results.
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation:	Partner level
Responsibility:	MEDD
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Next three (3) months

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section: Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

⁶⁹ If not agreed by MEDD, UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to them in an effective manner.

Recommendation #4: 70	Seek collaboration with other projects and initiatives to develop the local natural resource management plans that the DIMS project did not develop
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The DIMS project did not develop the expected local natural resource management plans, which negatively affects the sustainability of the project's results.
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation:	Partner level
Responsibility:	MEDD and DREDDs, with support from UNEP CCAU
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Next six (6) months

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section: Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Recommendation #5: 71	Conduct regular monitoring and technical advisory missions to project areas
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While the capacity built through trainings and learning by doing and the strengthened connection between DREDDs, the agriculture extensionists, AGLCs / AGRNs and local communities contribute to the existence of technical capacity to support the sustainability of project's results, continued regular monitoring missions from DREDDs would add value in this regard.
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation:	Partner level
Responsibility:	DREDDs
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Next twelve (12) months

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

⁷⁰ If not agreed by MEDD and relevant DREDDs, UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to them in an effective manner.

⁷¹ If not agreed by relevant DREDDs, UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to them in an effective manner.

- Section: Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

ANNEX I. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW

The review team interviewed the UNEP Task Manager on October 11, 2023 and multiple stakeholders in Mauritania in July 2023, as presented in **Error! Reference source not found..**

Table 15: People consulted during the Review

Date	First Name, Name	Function	Location
07/08	Sidi Mouhamed El Wavi	Project Coordinator	DCEV, Nouakchott
07/08	Ms Laila Camara	Minister of Environment	MEDD, Nouakchott
07/08	Moulay ibrahimould Moulay Ibrahim	SG Ministry, president of PSC/Copil	SG MEDD, Nouakchott
07/08	Ba Amadou	Monitoring and Evaluation expert, NGO President	Nouakchott
07/08	Baye Abdalah	Supervision of associations, Consultant	Nouakchott
07/08	Mouhamed Vall Dabalahi	Former Regional (Hodh El Chargui) Project Manager (Currently CC Focal point at MEDD)	Nouakchott
07/08	Chérif Ndiaye	Former Regional (Assaba) Project Manager	Nouakchott
07/08	Mouhamed Yedihih	Natural Resources management trainer, Consultant	Nouakchott
08/08	Ahmed Sidi Mouhamed	NGO President	Nouakchott

Date	First Name, Name	Function	Location
08/08	Jidou Traoré	NGO President GRADD	Guidimakha
08/08	Mouhamed Fadel Eliman	Regional Project Manager	Guidimakha
08/08	Djibril Mouhamed	Regional Project Manager	Guidimakha
08/08	Ahmed Ould Dah	Wali	Guidimakha
08/08	Cheikh Ould Bamba	President AGLC	Doumadji (Guidimakha)
08/08	Ely Mbarack Eid	Community Bakery Manager	Dibay (Guidimakha)
09/08	Zeid Massoud	President, Sahel Vert NGO	Assaba
09/08	Abdarahmane Hassan	Wali	Assaba
09/08	Salim vazz	Chairman Village Management Committee	Rag (Assaba)
09/08	Maouloud Nteih	President of the Management Committee	Gueimbeid (Assaba)
09/08	Aichatou Bilal	Community Shop Manager	Gueimbeid (Assaba)
09/08	Salim Mouhamed	President of the Management Committee	Tasla (Assaba)
09/08	Issel Mou Mouhamed	President of the Management Committee	Lemneiguar (Assaba)
09/08	Djibril Mouhamed	Youth Inspector	Lemneiguar (Assaba)
10/08	Aboubacry Abdi	Village Chief	Hassel Abdi (Hodh El Gharbi)
10/08	Mouhamed Sidi Mouhamed	Project consultant	Hassel Abdi (Hodh El Gharbi)
10/08		Village Chief	Hassel El Aboura (Hodh El Gharbi)

Date	First Name, Name	Function	Location
10/08	Makhfoud Cheikh	Wali	Hodh El Gharbi (Hodh El Gharbi)
10/08	Hintou Chartat	Regional committee Réseau Développement President	Néma (Hodh El Chargui)
10/08	Sidi Bailay	Néma farmers cooperative President	Néma (Hodh El Chargui)
10/08	Hassan Vataghnia	Village chief	Legleibatt (Hodh El Chargui)
10/08	Sheikh Ahmed Hassan	Village chief	Dhline (Hodh El Chargui)
11/08	Colonel Ahmadou Ould Bilal	Regional Project Manager	Hodh El Gharbi
12/08	Aicha Zbaz	Couscousserie manager	ZamZam (Hodh El Gharbi)
12/08	Sidi Ali	Market garden manager	ZamZam (Hodh El Gharbi)
12/08	Lal Arbi	Community butcher's shop	Beze Laghdaf (Hodh El Gharbi)

ANNEX III. REVIEW FRAMEWORK/MATRIX

The Strategic Questions (SQ) and Key Strategic Questions (KSQ) are identified within the matrix in the column of the review questions.

Table 15: Evaluation matrix

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
A. Strategic Relevance				
1) Alignment to UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was the project aligned to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (PoW) and Strategic Priorities? To what extent was the project aligned with the UN system priorities in the country? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of alignment between the MTS priorities and project outcomes. Level of alignment between the SP priorities and project outcomes. Level of alignment between the UN system country priorities and project outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ProDoc and project planning documents UNEP MTSS and POWs MTR UNEP TM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews
2) Alignment with GEF/LDCF priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was the project aligned with the GEF priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of a clear link between the project objectives and GEF strategic priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ProDoc and project planning documents GEF-7 Strategy MTR UNEP TM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews
3) Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was the project aligned with the Paris Agreement, Agenda 2030 (SDGs) and COP27? To what extent did the project respond to the national environmental and climate change needs and priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of alignment between the Paris agreement and project outcomes. Level of alignment between the Agenda 2030 (SDGs) and project outcomes. Level of alignment between COP27 priorities and project outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ProDoc and project planning documents, PIRs Paris Agreement SDGs Agenda 2030 COP27 National development plans and climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of alignment between the project outcomes and priorities of national development plans and climate change strategies. • Perception of the level of country ownership of the project • Perception of the level of stakeholder participation in project design and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> change strategies (NAPA and NDC) • GEF FP, Government partners, regional/local authorities • UNEP TM, PD, PC 	
4) Complementarity with other interventions ⁷²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent was the project complementary and coherent to other interventions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of complementarity and coherence between the project and other existing initiatives addressing the needs of the same target groups, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization • Adequacy of coordination mechanisms / Efforts made to optimize synergies with other initiatives and avoid duplication of effort during project implementation • Synergies or overlap between the project and other existing initiatives during project implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ProDoc and project planning documents, progress reports • UNEP TM, PC • GEF FP • National, regional and local governments Communities, CSOs • Representatives of similar projects (GCF funded project, WFP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews • Focus groups

⁷² Strongly linked to sub-criteria on “Linkages with other projects”.

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
B. Quality of project design				
5) Logical framework and results framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How clear and well-integrated were the project's objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities? • How feasible and realistic were the project objectives, outcomes and outputs within the available budget and time frame? • Were the indicators SMART⁷³ and consistent with the project objectives, outcomes and outputs? • Were indicators and targets gender relevant? (KSQ3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency between the objective, outcomes, outputs and activities of the project • Feasibility of objectives, outcomes and outputs within the project's budget and time frame • Quality of the monitoring and evaluation system in the project document • Understanding by the project management unit of the objectives, outcomes and outputs and the timetable • Understanding of objectives, outcomes, outputs and timelines by national, provincial and municipal implementation partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ProDoc and project planning documents, progress reports • UNEP TM, PC • GEF FP • National, regional and local governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
6) Implementing and executing agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How clear was the operational structure defined? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which planning documents detail the operational structure • Understanding of the operational structure by key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ProDoc and project planning documents, progress reports • UNEP missions • UNEP TM, PC • GEF FP • National, regional and local governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews

⁷³ For specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-based.

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
7) Assumptions and risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the project assumptions and risks well identified in the project document? • Did the identified assumptions and risks help to determine the planned activities and outputs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completeness of risk identification and assumptions during project planning and design • Degree and nature of the influence of external factors on the planned activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ProDoc and project planning documents, progress reports • UNEP TM, PC • GEF FP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
8) Linkages with other projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were other interventions within the sector clearly identified in the project document? • Were relevant lessons learned from other projects properly incorporated into the project design? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other interventions in the sector duly described and their possible synergies with the project analysed • Examples of consideration of relevant lessons learned/project recommendations in project design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme document • Project document and other planning documents • UNEP TM, PC • Representatives of similar projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
C. Nature of external context				
9) Externalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What external factors have influenced project performance? • Have the externalities that are relevant to the results been adequately taken into account? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples and evidence of external factors • Extent to which planning documents anticipated or reflected the risks/externalities already faced by the project during implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ProDoc and project planning documents, progress reports • Progress reports and monitoring reports, MTR, PSC meeting minutes, UNEP missions • UNEP TM, PC • GEF FP • National, regional and local governments • Civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews • Focus groups

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
			• Communities, incl. women and marginalized groups	
D. Effectiveness				
10) Availability of outputs <i>Note: Formal modifications made during implementation will be considered part of the project design</i>	• Has the project successfully delivered the programmed outputs and achieved milestones as per the project design?	• Number and type of outputs delivered against the results framework's final targets • Timeliness of output delivery against the work plan • Quality of outputs delivered • Ownership by and usefulness of outputs to intended beneficiaries	• Project planning documents (annual work plans) • Progress reports and monitoring reports, MTR, PSC meeting minutes • GEF Tracking Tool • Technical reports, training workshops, communication materials • GEF FP and other PSC members • UNEP TM, PC • National, regional and local governments • Local stakeholders and communities • Civil society • Communities, incl. women and marginalized groups	• Desk review • Interviews • Focus groups • Direct observation
11) Achievement of Project outcomes	• To what extent have the project's outcomes been achieved? • Why were the project outcomes achieved?	• Level of capacity of targeted government institutions at national and sub national levels (outcome 1) • Number of trainings provided (outcome 1, <i>why</i>)	• Project planning documents (annual work plans) • Progress reports and monitoring reports, MTR, PSC meeting	• Desk review • Interviews • Focus groups • Direct observation

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (KSQ1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of implementation of EbA measures in project sites (outcome 2) Evidence of climate resilient livelihoods (outcome 2, <i>why</i>) Extent to which population has access to EbA and climate-resilient livelihoods information (outcome 3) Evidence of use of EbA approach in the country (outcome 4, <i>why</i>) Outputs delivered against GEF-7 core indicator targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> minutes, UNEP missions Technical reports, workshop and training reports, communication materials GEF FP and other PSC members UNEP TM, PC National, regional and local governments Local stakeholders and communities Civil society Communities, incl. women and marginalized groups 	
12) Achievement of Likelihood of impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How likely is it that the project will achieve its desired impacts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validity of assumptions and drivers identified between the outcome and the impact level of the TOC Evidence and extent of additional barriers or enabling conditions towards achievement of impact indicators (not considered in the TOC) Overall likelihood of the project contributing significantly to increasing climate resilience of national government and local communities in the forests and rangelands of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and reporting documents, MTR PSC minutes UNEP TM, PC Government stakeholders (all levels) Local stakeholders and communities Civil society Communities, incl. women and marginalized groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews Focus groups Direct observation

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
		Sahelian Acacia Savanna Ecoregion		
13) Scaling up and replication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are activities, demonstrations and/or techniques being replicated within or outside the project, nationally or internationally? • Are some of the approaches developed through the project, which are being widely accepted, and perhaps legally required, being adopted at regional/national level? • What are the most important actions to be taken, as part of the project exit strategy, to enhance the longer-term sustainability and upscaling potential of the project interventions and results? What partnerships could be developed or strengthened to support sustainability and upscaling? (SQ1)⁷⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of activities, demonstrations and/or techniques being replicated within or outside the project, nationally or internationally • Evidence of some of the approaches developed through the project, which are being widely accepted, and perhaps legally required, being adopted at regional/national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and reporting documents, MTR • PSC minutes • UNEP TM, PC, CTA • Government stakeholders (all levels) • Local stakeholders and communities • Civil society • Communities, incl. women and marginalized groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews • Focus groups • Direct observation
14) Unintended effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the project led to or contributed to unintended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature and likelihood of adverse or positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews

⁷⁴ This question will be addressed in the recommendations section, rather than in the findings section, based on the findings of questions 29 and 30.

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
	positive or negative effects (environmental, social and economic effects)?	unintended environmental, social and economic effects from the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and reporting documents, MTR • PSC minutes • UNEP TM, PC • Government stakeholders (all levels) • Local stakeholders and communities • Civil society • Communities, incl. women and marginalized groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups • Direct observation
E. Financial Management				
15) Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did financial management happen in compliance with UNEP's financial policies? • Is there a difference between planned and actual expenditure, and why? • Has the rate of disbursement been consistent with the work plan and the outputs delivered? • Did the leverage of funds (co-financing) occur as planned? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of reporting and accounting practices in line with UNEP's financial policies • Level of discrepancy between planned budget and expenditures • Budget execution per year, component and output, against total budget • Level of discrepancy between planned and actual co-financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEP's reporting requirements • Monitoring and reporting documents (HYPR, annual reports), cash advance requests, updated budgets, audit reports, management letters • UNEP task manager and PC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
16) Completeness of financial information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the project delivered comprehensive financial information and reporting? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion and types of standard financial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial reporting/auditing documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
		documentation submitted a) correctly and b) on time • Quality of financial reporting/auditing materials	(quarterly, annual reports) • UNEP task manager and PC	
F. Efficiency				
17) Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were appropriate measures taken to address weaknesses in project design or respond to changes which took place between project approval, securing of funds and project mobilization? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of adjustments made during the inception phase • Evidence of confirmation of partner capacity • Number and types of partnership agreements, staffing arrangements and financial agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning documents • Monitoring and reporting documents, MTR • PSC minutes, UNEP mission • UNEP TM, PC • Government stakeholders (all levels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
18) Quality of project management <i>Note: Design of the operational structure is considered in 'Quality of project design'.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the quality of project implementation by the implementing agencies? • What is the quality of project execution by the execution agencies? • How effective was the collaboration between the institutions responsible for the implementation of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of supervision of implementing and executing agencies, respectively. • Perception of the quality of project management by key stakeholders and partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress reports and monitoring reports, MTR, PSC meeting minutes • GEF FP and other PSC members • UNEP TM, PC • National, regional and local governments • Local stakeholders and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews • Focus groups
19) Timeliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the timing and sequence of activities realized as planned? • Could project extensions have been avoided? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing and sequence of outputs against work plan • Nature and total delays (in months) generated by implementation bottlenecks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning documents (annual work plans) • Progress reports and monitoring reports, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews • Focus groups

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of appreciation of the timeliness by the programme team 	MTR, PSC meeting minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEP TM, PC • National, regional and local governments • Local stakeholders and communities 	
20) Stakeholder engagement ⁷⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent were effective partnerships for project implementation established with relevant stakeholders at different levels? • To what extent were relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation and monitoring of the project (especially since MTR)? (KSQ2) • To what extent did the project use local skills, experience and knowledge in the design, implementation and review of project activities? (KSQ2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and types of partnerships established between the project and local bodies/organizations • Extent and quality of interaction/exchange between project implementers and local partners • Number, type and quality of mechanisms implemented to promote stakeholder participation at each stage of project design, implementation and monitoring • Number and level of participation in workshops • Perception of the use of local skills, experience and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) • Progress reports and monitoring reports, MTR, PSC meeting minutes • GEF FP and other PSC members • UNEP TM, PC • National, regional and local governments • Local stakeholders and communities • Civil society • Communities, incl. women and marginalized groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews • Focus groups

⁷⁵ This sub-criterion relates strongly to 'Stakeholder participation and cooperation' under Criterion 'I. Factors affecting project performance and cross-cutting issues' of the ToR. KSQ2 reads: "What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR?"

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
21) Adaptive management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have key lessons learned from the project been incorporated during implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsiveness of implementing and executing agencies to recommendations made through the review process (mid-term review) • Examples of changes in project strategy/approach as a direct result of recommendations made • Proportion of adaptive management processes documented and shared with partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) • Progress reports and monitoring reports, MTR, PSC meeting minutes • GEF FP and other PSC members • UNEP TM, PC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
22) Cost-effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have the outputs been achieved in a cost-effective manner? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of project management costs over the total budget / Level of discrepancy between the actual and planned amount of budget and staff time spent on the project • Evidence of cost-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • Evidence of the project building synergies with existing or previous initiatives, programmes or institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial reporting/auditing documents (quarterly, annual reports) • Monitoring documents • UNEP TM and CTA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
23) Gender and human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did the project adhere to UN, UNEP and UNDP policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence and extent of adherence to UN HRBA, and UN RIP, as well as UNEP and UNDP gender policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews • Focus groups

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
	<p>on human rights and gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did the project design and monitoring take into account human rights, as well as gender inequalities and differentiation? • Which gender-responsive measures were implemented? Were they implemented as planned? (KSQ3) • What were the actual gender results? (KSQ3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of execution of mitigation- or responsive measures regarding inequalities (incl. gender), specific vulnerabilities and roles of disadvantaged groups • Number and quality of measures in project design, implementation and monitoring that address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possible gender inequalities in access to and control over natural resources; - The role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes, and engaging in environmental protection • Perception of the implemented gender-responsive measures • Impacts of gender-responsive measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress reports and monitoring reports, MTR, PSC meeting minutes • GEF FP and other PSC members • UNEP TM, PC • National, regional and local governments • Local stakeholders and communities • Civil society • Communities, incl. women and marginalized groups 	
24) Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the project develop a communication strategy and a knowledge management plan? (KSQ5)⁷⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of a communication strategy and knowledge management plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) • Progress reports and monitoring reports, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews

⁷⁶ What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions?

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were they implemented as planned? Are there effective external communication mechanisms in place? (KSQ5) • What were the deliverables? (KSQ5) • How effective were communications and knowledge management in ensuring stakeholder awareness of the project and its approach? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of execution of communication strategy and knowledge management plan Communication and knowledge management deliverables (e.g. website/platform; knowledge Products/Events; Lessons Learned and Good Practice documents) • Level of awareness perceived by stakeholders about project results and activities • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTR, PSC meeting minutes • GEF FP and other PSC members • UNEP TM, PC 	
25) Environmental and social safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the project in compliance with UNEP's ESS requirements • Was the Safeguard plan consistent with the project outputs/outcomes and risks identified? (KSQ4) • What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? Were the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks? (KSQ4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of project compliance with social and environmental safeguards • Consistency of Safeguards plan with results framework and risks. • Level of implementation of the ESS plan • Responsiveness of the ESS plan to changes in context and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) • Progress reports and monitoring reports, MTR, PSC meeting minutes • GEF FP and other PSC members • UNEP TM, PC • Local stakeholders and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews • Focus groups

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
G. Monitoring and Reporting				
26) Monitoring of project implementation <i>Note: Design of the Results framework is discussed under Quality of project design</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the monitoring plan operational and effective to track results and progress towards objectives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robustness of the M&E plan Financing of the M&E plan Evidence of collection of relevant and quality baseline data Evidence of collection of monitoring data from disaggregated groups (including gendered, vulnerable and marginalised groups) in activities Quality of the information generated by the monitoring system and evidence of use of the information to adapt and improve project delivery, results achievement and sustainability Proportion of executed monitoring budget against planned monitoring budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning documents Planning meeting minutes/review procedures Monitoring and reporting documents (quarterly, annual reports) PMU, UNEP TM Local implementing staff, partners Technical staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews Desk review
27) Project reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the project comply with the progress documentation and monitoring reporting requirements/ schedule, including quality and timeliness of reports? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types and quality of reporting materials submitted a) correctly and b) on time Evidence of measures put in place to address identified risks and impacts Evidence of effectiveness of such measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and reporting documents UNEP TM, PM UNEP reporting requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews Desk review
H. Sustainability				

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
28) Exit strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective were the exit strategies and approaches to phase out assistance provided by the project? • What are the most important actions to be taken, as part of the project exit strategy, to enhance the longer-term sustainability and upscaling potential of the project interventions and results? What partnerships could be developed or strengthened to support sustainability and upscaling? (SQ1)⁷⁷ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence and quality of an exit strategy • Level of implementation of the exit strategy • Partnerships to be developed or strengthened to support sustainability and upscaling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) • GEF FP and other PSC members • UNEP TM, PC, CTA • National, regional and local governments • Local stakeholders and communities • Civil society • Communities, incl. women and marginalized groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues				
29) Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the actions and results from project interventions likely to be sustained? • What are the key factors that enable or hinder the achievement of sustainability of project results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of legal, policy and regulatory framework supporting sustainability of project achievements • Evidence of robust institutional structures and governance frameworks • Level of technical capacities displayed by national counterparts in accordance with the levels required to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) • GEF FP and other PSC members • UNEP TM, PC, CTA • National, regional and local governments • Local stakeholders and communities • Civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews • Focus groups

⁷⁷ This question will be addressed in the recommendations section, rather than in the findings section, based on the findings of questions 29 and 30.

Review criteria	Review questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection method
		<p>sustain project results and benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of ownership among social and political stakeholders (government and other stakeholders) to take the project achievements forward • Number and type of organizational arrangements and partnerships that support or hinder the continuation of project activities or results⁷⁸ • Level of dependence of achievements on future funding for their sustainability and likely availability of such resources • Evidence of other inhibiting or enabling factors for the sustainability of project results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities, incl. women and marginalized groups 	

⁷⁸ This indicator is related the question “What partnerships could be developed or strengthened to support sustainability and upscaling?”

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

The review team has reviewed the following documents, *inter alia*:

- Annual Work Plans and Budgets;
- Baseline Study;
- Communications;
- Financial documents (including audits, budget revisions, cash advance requests, co-finance reports, expenditure reports, etc);
- Progress reports, such as the annual GEF Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), the half-yearly progress reports (HYPRs);
- Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA);
- Project documents, including the adaptation tracking tool;
- Project procedures manual;
- Project Steering Committee minutes;
- Project deliverables: Technical reports, including studies, assessments, and other consultancy reports;
- Terms of reference;
- Mid-Term Review of the project;
- Training workshops;
- UNEP Missions.

ANNEX V. INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Questions are based on the review matrix and are open ended. They are aimed at driving a fluid conversation on the project. Questions will guide interviews, but it is not expected that every interviewee will be able to respond to all questions. Questions will be tailored to each type of stakeholder, depending on the level and nature of involvement in the project. Interviews will be conducted in confidentiality and responses are considered anonymous. Answers will be analysed and presented in an aggregated form. Answers will be used to triangulate other sources of information.

If a question is aimed at gathering information for the key strategic questions, it is indicated with a corresponding acronym (e.g., Key Strategic Question 1 = KSQ1).

A common introduction is used at each interview which includes the following questions:

- What is your position?
- What is your relationship to the project and for how long have you been involved?

Implementing and executing agency (UNEP, MEDD, DCEV)

Relevance

- How was the project aligned with global priorities on climate change (Paris Agreement, Agenda 2030, COP27)?
- How was the project aligned with UNEP/UNDP policies and strategies?
- How was the project aligned with GEF/LDCF priorities?
- How was the project aligned with climate change national policies and strategies and the needs of Mauritania?
 - In what ways have stakeholders participated in the identification of the needs during project design?
- Was the program complementary to other national processes and initiatives on EbA and climate-resilient livelihoods? How so?
- Has anything changed in the project design since the MTR based on (1) new and emerging needs or (2) the MTR recommendations?

Quality of project design

- Were the roles and responsibilities of the different actors clearly defined in the project design?
- How realistic were the project objectives, outcomes and outputs within the budget and timeline?
- How clear was the operational structure and monitoring and evaluation system defined?
- Were indicators and target gender-relevant? (**KSQ3**)
- Were the assumptions and risks taken into account at project design realistic?
- In what ways has the project design taken into account lessons from other projects?
- Were relevant lessons learned from other projects incorporated into the project design?

External context

- What risks and external factors have affected the project's performance (since the MTR)? How were these managed? What changes have it resulted in?

Effectiveness

- To what extent did the project deliver the outputs and achieved milestones as per the project design?
- What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (**KSQ1**)
- Outcome 1: To what extent were the capacities of the national, provincial and locals levels strengthened to use EbA measures?
- Outcome 2: To what extent were the provision of pastoral resources and climate-resilient livelihoods increased?
- Outcome 3: To what extent were awareness and knowledge of climate change risks, benefits of EbA and opportunities for climate resilient livelihoods increased?

"Interviewer should probe for the main reasons behind the level of achievement per outcome – i.e. Why did the programme achieve/or not achieve these outcomes?"

- Objective: Have the climate resilience of national government and local communities increased in the project areas?
- Impact: What is the likelihood that the project results will increase adaptive capacities and reduce vulnerabilities to climate change in Mauritania? What is the added value of this project?
- Scaling up and replication: Are activities, demonstrations and/or techniques being replicated within or outside the project, nationally or internationally? What are the most important actions to be taken, as part of the project exit strategy, to enhance the longer-term sustainability and upscaling potential of the project interventions and results? What partnerships could be developed or strengthened to support sustainability and upscaling? (**SQ1**)⁷⁹
- Unintended effects: Has the project led to or contributed to unintended positive or negative effects.

Financial management

- Are adequate accounting and financial systems in place for project management and the production of accurate and timely financial information?
- Is there any difference between planned and actual expenditures? Why?
- Did the leveraging of funds (co-financing) occur as planned? How did this affect project progress?

Efficiency

- Readiness: Which challenges or changes were experienced during inception phase? Were measures taken to address challenges or to respond to changes?

⁷⁹ This question will be addressed in the recommendations section, rather than in the findings section, based on the findings of questions 29 and 30.

- Project Management: How efficient and effective has the project governance system proved to be during implementation for decision making, communication flows and coordination? How was the partnership and collaboration between UNEP and MEDD on the implementation of the project?
- Timeliness: Was the timing and sequence of activities realistic and contributing to the efficiency of the project?
- Stakeholder engagement/complementarity: Were other partners and stakeholder collaborative and engaging? What kind of roles did they play? Were partnerships used, were they complimentary, and did it help maximize results? (**KSQ2**)
- Adaptive management: How and what key lessons learned from project implementation were gathered and integrated during implementation. Could anything have been done differently?
- Cost-Effectiveness: Was the budget aligned with the activities and level of effort? What cost-saving measures were put in place, and how did this affect program implementation?
- Gender and human rights: Were gender-responsive measures implemented as planned? (**KSQ3**) What were the actual gender results? (**KSQ3**)
- Communication: Did the project develop a communication strategy and a knowledge management plan and if yes, were they implemented as planned? (**KSQ5**)? What were the deliverables? How effective are communications in ensuring stakeholder awareness of the project and its approach? Was the knowledge management approach implemented as planned? (**KSQ5**)
- Environmental and social safeguards: Was the Safeguard plan consistent with the project outputs/outcomes and risks identified? Was the plan implemented as planned? (**KSQ4**)
- What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? Were the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks? (**KSQ4**)

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Was the monitoring plan operational and effective to track results and progress towards objectives? Where necessary, was the M&E plan revised in a timely manner?
- How was the information from the M&E system used during the project implementation?

Sustainability

- What is the exit strategy of the project? Do you think that it will hold? Why/why not?
- What are the most important actions to be taken, as part of the project exit strategy, to enhance the longer-term sustainability and upscaling potential of the project interventions and results? What partnerships could be developed or strengthened to support sustainability and upscaling? (**SQ1**)⁸⁰
- Will the results be sustainable?

⁸⁰ This question will be addressed in the recommendations section, rather than in the findings section, based on the findings of questions 29 and 30.

- Socio-political sustainability: Does Mauritania have any legal, policy or regulatory frameworks that may favor or hinder the project results?
- Financial sustainability: Has Mauritania allocated budgets towards EbA and climate resilient livelihoods?
- Institutional sustainability: Are technical capacities and arrangements sufficient to sustain project results? To what extent is their ownership among stakeholders?

Lessons and recommendations

- Which lessons can be learned from the design and implementation of this project?
- Do you have any recommendations for the sustainability of the results and long-term impacts of this project, including scaling up and replication?
- Do you have any recommendations for the design and implementation of future similar projects?

Project Partners (National, regional and local authorities, including Ministries, DREDDs and municipalities)

Relevance

- How was the project aligned with climate change national policies and strategies and the needs of Mauritania?
 - In what ways have stakeholders participated in the identification of the needs during project design?
- Was the program complementary to other national processes and initiatives on EbA and climate-resilient livelihoods? How so?
- What do you see as existing or new emerging needs related to EbA and climate resilient livelihoods that are not presently being supported by the project?

Quality of project design

- Were the roles and responsibilities of the different actors clearly defined in the project design?
- How realistic were the project objectives, outcomes and outputs within the budget and timeline?
- How clear was the operational structure and monitoring and evaluation system defined?
- Were indicators and target gender-relevant? **(KSQ3)**
- Were the assumptions and risks taken into account at project design realistic?
- Were relevant lessons learned from other projects (or phase I) incorporated into the project design?

External context

- What risks and external factors have affected the project's performance (since the MTR)? How were these managed? What changes have it resulted in?

Effectiveness

- To what extent did the project deliver the outputs and achieved milestones as per the project design?
- What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? **(KSQ1)**
- Outcome 1: To what extent were the capacities of the national, provincial and locals levels strengthened to use EbA measures?
- Outcome 2: To what extent were the provision of pastoral resources and climate-resilient livelihoods increased?
- Outcome 3: To what extent were awareness and knowledge of climate change risks, benefits of EbA and opportunities for climate resilient livelihoods increased?

"Interviewer should probe for the main reasons behind the level of achievement per outcome – i.e. Why did the programme achieve/or not achieve these outcomes?"

- Objective: Have the climate resilience of national government and local communities increased in the project areas?

- Impact: What is the likelihood that the project results will increase adaptive capacities and reduce vulnerabilities to climate change in Mauritania? What is the added value of this project ?
- Scaling up and replication: Are activities, demonstrations and/or techniques being replicated within or outside the project, nationally or internationally? What are the most important actions to be taken, as part of the project exit strategy, to enhance the longer-term sustainability and upscaling potential of the project interventions and results? What partnerships could be developed or strengthened to support sustainability and upscaling? **(SQ1)**⁸¹
- Unintended effects: Has the project led to or contributed to unintended positive or negative effects.

Efficiency

- Readiness: Which challenges or changes were experienced during inception phase? Were measures taken to address challenges or to respond to changes?
- Project Management: How efficient and effective has the project governance system proved to be during implementation for decision making, communication flows and coordination? How was the partnership and collaboration between UNEP and MEDD on the implementation of the project?
- Timeliness: Was the timing and sequence of activities realistic and contributing to the efficiency of the project?
- Stakeholder engagement/complementarity: Were other partners and stakeholder collaborative and engaging? What kind of roles did they play? Were partnerships used, were they complimentary, and did it help maximize results? **(KSQ2)**
- Adaptive management: How and what key lessons learned from project implementation were gathered and integrated during implementation. Could anything have been done differently?
- Cost-Effectiveness: Was the budget aligned with the activities and level of effort? What cost-saving measures were put in place, and how did this affect program implementation?
- Gender and human rights: Were gender-responsive measures implemented as planned? **(KSQ3)**
- Communication: Did the project develop a communication strategy and a knowledge management plan and if yes, were they implemented as planned? **(KSQ5)**? What were the deliverables? How effective are communications in ensuring stakeholder awareness of the project and its approach? Was the knowledge management approach implemented as planned? **(KSQ5)**
- Environmental and social safeguards: Was the Safeguard plan consistent with the project outputs/outcomes and risks identified? Was the plan implemented as planned? **(KSQ4)** What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? Were the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks? **(KSQ4)**

⁸¹ This question will be addressed in the recommendations section, rather than in the findings section, based on the findings of questions 29 and 30.

Sustainability

- What is the exit strategy of the project? Do you think that it will hold? Why/why not?
- What are the most important actions to be taken, as part of the project exit strategy, to enhance the longer-term sustainability and upscaling potential of the project interventions and results? What partnerships could be developed or strengthened to support sustainability and upscaling? (SQ1)⁸²
- Will the results be sustainable?
 - Socio-political sustainability: Does Mauritania have any legal, policy or regulatory frameworks that may favor or hinder the project results?
 - Financial sustainability: Has Mauritania allocated budgets towards EbA and climate resilient livelihoods?
 - Institutional sustainability: Are technical capacities and arrangements sufficient to sustain project results? To what extent is their ownership among stakeholders?

Lessons and recommendations

- Which lessons can be learned from the design and implementation of this project?
- Do you have any recommendations for the sustainability of the results and long-term impacts of this project, including scaling up and replication?
- Do you have any recommendations for the design and implementation of future similar projects?

⁸² This question will be addressed in the recommendations section, rather than in the findings section, based on the findings of questions 29 and 30.

Rural communities and other on-site stakeholders (communities, CSOs, women groups)

Relevance

- How was the project aligned with climate change national policies and strategies and the needs of Mauritania?
 - In what ways have stakeholders participated in the identification of the needs during project design?
- Was the program complementary to other national processes and initiatives early warning systems? How so?
- What do you see as existing or new emerging needs related to the early warning system that are not presently being supported by the project?

Quality of project design

- How realistic were the project objectives, outcomes and outputs within the budget and timeline?
- How clear was the operational structure and monitoring and evaluation system defined?
- Were the assumptions and risks taken into account at project design realistic?

External context

- What risks and external factors have affected the project's performance (since the MTR)? How were these managed? What changes have it resulted in?

Effectiveness

- Outcome 1: To what extent were the capacities of the national, provincial and locals levels strengthened to use EbA measures ?
- Outcome 2: To what extent were the provision of pastoral resources and climate-resilient livelihoods increased?
- Outcome 3: To what extent were awareness and knowledge of climate change risks, benefits of EbA and opportunities for climate resilient livelihoods increased?

"Interviewer should probe for the main reasons behind the level of achievement per outcome – i.e. Why did the programme achieve/or not achieve these outcomes?"

- Objective: Have the climate resilience of national government and local communities increased in the project areas?
- Impact: What is the likelihood that the project results will increase adaptive capacities and reduce vulnerabilities to climate change in Mauritania? What is the added value of this project?
- Scaling up and replication: Are activities, demonstrations and/or techniques being replicated within or outside the project, nationally or internationally? What are the most important actions to be taken, as part of the project exit strategy, to enhance the longer-term sustainability and upscaling potential of the project interventions and

results? What partnerships could be developed or strengthened to support sustainability and upscaling? (SQ1)⁸³

- Unintended effects: Has the project led to or contributed to unintended positive or negative effects.

Efficiency

- Readiness: Which challenges or changes were experienced during inception phase? Were measures taken to address challenges or to respond to changes?
- Project Management: How efficient and effective has the project governance system proved to be during implementation for decision making, communication flows and coordination? How was the partnership and collaboration between UNEP and MEDD on the implementation of the project?
- Timeliness: Was the timing and sequence of activities realistic and contributing to the efficiency of the project?
- Stakeholder engagement/complementarity: Were other partners and stakeholder collaborative and engaging? What kind of roles did they play? Were partnerships used, were they complimentary, and did it help maximize results? (KSQ2)
- Adaptive management: How and what key lessons learned from project implementation were gathered and integrated during implementation. Could anything have been done differently?
- Cost-Effectiveness: Was the budget aligned with the activities and level of effort? What cost-saving measures were put in place, and how did this affect program implementation?
- Gender and human rights: Were gender-responsive measures implemented as planned? (KSQ3) What were the actual gender results? (KSQ3)
- Communication: Did the project develop a communication strategy and a knowledge management plan and if yes, were they implemented as planned? (KSQ5)? What were the deliverables? How effective are communications in ensuring stakeholder awareness of the project and its approach? Was the knowledge management approach implemented as planned? (KSQ5)
- Environmental and social safeguards: Was the Safeguard plan consistent with the project outputs/outcomes and risks identified? Was the plan implemented as planned? (KSQ4) What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? Were the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks? (KSQ4)

Sustainability

- What are the most important actions to be taken, as part of the project exit strategy, to enhance the longer-term sustainability and upscaling potential of the project

⁸³ This question will be addressed in the recommendations section, rather than in the findings section, based on the findings of questions 29 and 30.

interventions and results? What partnerships could be developed or strengthened to support sustainability and upscaling? (SQ1)⁸⁴

- Will the results be sustainable?
 - Socio-political sustainability: Does Mauritania have any legal, policy or regulatory frameworks that may favor or hinder the project results?
 - Financial sustainability: Has Mauritania allocated budgets towards EbA and climate resilient livelihoods?
 - Institutional sustainability: Are technical capacities and arrangements sufficient to sustain project results? To what extent is their ownership among stakeholders?

Lessons and recommendations

- Which lessons can be learned from the design and implementation of this project?
- Do you have any recommendations for the sustainability of the results and long-term impacts of this project, including scaling up and replication?
- Do you have any recommendations for the design and implementation of future similar projects?

⁸⁴ This question will be addressed in the recommendations section, rather than in the findings section, based on the findings of questions 29 and 30.

ANNEX VI. MISSION AGENDA

Table 16: Mission agenda

Date	Séquence
06/08/2023	Arrivé et Installation du consultant à Nouakchott
07/08/2023	Réunion de cadrage de la mission et d'échange avec l'UCP
	Réunion de courtoisie avec son Excellence Madame la Ministre (Ms Laila Camara)
	Réunion avec le Président du CoPil (Moulay ibrahim ould Moulay Ibrahim)
	Réunion avec un Point Focal CC, Ex-Directeur régional de Hod El Chargui (Dabalahi)
	Réunion d'échange avec le chargé du Suivi-Evaluation (Bah Amadou) et le Consultant en encadrement des associations (Baye Abdalah)
	Départ pour Guidimaka
08/ 08/2023	Guidimaka Wilaya
	Rencontre du Wali
	Visite de la DREDD
	Réunion avec une ONG Locale parmi les acteurs du projet
	Visite des Pôles du projet
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visite des sites de restauration - Visite des Activités Génératrices de Revenu - Rencontre avec les populations bénéficiaires - Rencontre avec les AGRN et AGLC
09/08/2023	Assaba Wilaya
	Rencontre du Wali
	Visite de la DREDD
	Réunion avec une ONG Locale parmi les acteurs du projet
	Réunion les acteurs régionaux chargé du genre, de l'Elevage, Agriculture etc..
	Rencontre avec le consortium d'ONGs d'encadrement

	<p>Visite des Pôles du projet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visite des sites de restauration - Visite des Activités Génératrices de Revenu - Rencontre avec les populations bénéficiaires - Rencontre avec les AGRN
10/08/2023	<p>Hodh El Gharbi Wilaya</p> <p>Visite des Pôles du projet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visite des sites de restauration - Visite des Activités Génératrices de Revenu - Rencontre avec les populations bénéficiaires
11/08/2023	<p>Hodh El Chargui Wilaya</p> <p>Visite des Pôles du projet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Réunion avec la DREDD - Visite des sites de restauration - Visite des Activités Génératrices de Revenu - Rencontre avec les populations bénéficiaires
12/08/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retour sur Nouakchott et Réunions de restitution avec le coordinateur, conseiller technique (Mouhamed Yedhid) et le chargé du SE (Ba Amadou)
13/08/2023	Fin mission - Départ du consultant

ANNEX VII. EXAMPLES OF EBA AND INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES

i) Women-led community shop

Location: ZamZam (Hodh El Chargui)

Type of intervention: Community shop exclusively managed by women (5 women/ 2 month). Each of the 3 neighborhoods of the village nominates 5 women every two months.

The shop's initial capital of MRO 600,000 (around 1,700 USD) was increased to MRO 680,000 (around 1,900 USD). 50% of the sales profit was reinvested in the capital and 50% was distributed among the shop's employees.

Year of intervention: 2019-ongoing

Cost/Amount mobilized: 800,000 MRO (around 2,300 USD) including 200,000 MRO (around 570 USD) for gas

Complementary services provided: Daily consumer goods, Availability of 25 bottles of gas

Figure 5: Community shop



ii) Vegetable garden

Location: Gueumbeid (Assaba)

Type of intervention: Vegetable garden

Year of intervention: 2018-ongoing

Cost/Amount mobilized: 25,000,000 MRO (around 71,500 USD)

Contribution to gender equality and human rights: Exclusively female activity

Economic performance: Revenue from vegetable sales covers maintenance needs and the purchase of inputs and small farm equipment.

Other observations: In addition to the collective income from the communal plots, women had an individual plot providing them with income and vegetables for their household.

Figure 6: Vegetable garden



iii) Set-aside plots

Location: Dhiline (Hodh El Gharbi)

Type of intervention: 42 ha of pasture set-aside

Year of intervention: 2018 and 2019

Cost/Amount mobilized: N/A

Complementary services provided: Low availability of fodder for livestock, Regeneration of woody vegetation in set-aside areas

Type of benefits provided: i) Protection of livestock; ii) Reduction in feed costs

Figure 7: Set-aside area



iv) Bank stabilization

Location: Ndoumally (Guidimakha)

Type of intervention: Bank stabilization

Year of intervention: 2021-ongoing

Cost/Amount mobilized: 100.000 MRO (290 UDS)/m over 2 years
Complementary services provided: Conservation of grazing land
Type of benefits provided: Conservation of grazing land

Figure 8: Bank stabilization (Ndoumally)



v) Community shop

Location: Dibay (Guidimakha)
Type of intervention: Couscousserie
Year of intervention: 2020-ongoing
Cost/Amount mobilized: 150.000 MRO (around 430 USD)
Complementary services provided: Food availability
Type of benefits provided: Nutrition conditions improvement
Contribution to gender equality and human rights: Exclusively managed by women

Figure 9: Cousousserie (Dibay)



vi) Dune stabilization intervention

Location: Hassel El Abass (Hodh El Gharbi)
Type of intervention: Dune stabilization
Year of intervention: 2020-ongoing
Cost/Amount mobilized: 600.000 MOR (around 1,700 USD)
Complementary services provided: Livestock feed (herbaceous regeneration), future production of firewood.

Type of benefits provided: Dune stabilization of 20 ha

Contribution to gender equality and human rights: Women's participation in reforestation and plant watering

Other observations: Extension of the site to 2.5 ha by the management committee using its own resources in 2022

Figure 10: Dune stabilization in Hassel El Abass



ANNEX VIII. REVIEW TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

Please see the Terms of Reference in the file below:



TERMS%20OF%20RE
FERENCE.docx

**ANNEX IX. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT (PROVIDED BY
THE UNEP EVALUATION OFFICE)**

UNEP Evaluation Office to insert