

Promotion of Integrated Biodiversity Conservation and Land Degradation Neutrality in Highly Degraded Landscapes of Iraq

Stakeholders Meeting Summary Report

27 June 2024 – Baghdad, Iraq

The UN Environment Programme, Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP ROWA) organized a meeting to discuss the implementation of the GEF project on 27th June 2024 in Baghdad, Iraq.

The meeting was attended by stakeholders from different ministries involved in the project implementation, namely the Ministry of Environment (MoE), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), and Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) (a list of participants is provided in Annex I). The workshop included presentations on overview of the project, components, timelines, land degradation trends and Iraq's Land Degradation Neutrality Commitments, as well as the GEF requirements (the presentations are provided in Annex II).

Mr. Dr Sinan Jaafar Mohammad, General Director of the Department of Environmental Protection and Improvement in the Middle Euphrates Region at the Ministry of Environment, in his opening remarks, reiterated the Ministry's commitment and full support to the implementation of the project. Following the detailed presentations of the project, representatives from the MoE highlighted the following:

- Lake Razzaza is a reservoir fed by excess water from Lake Habbaniyah in the Anbar Governorate in Western Iraq. However, as a result of the drought, one of the consequences of climate change, the impact of massive dams built by riparian countries, and deteriorating water infrastructure have led to severe depletion of water in Lake Habbaniyah. This, in turn, has led to inadequate or lack of water diversion to Lake Razzaza.
- Currently, Lake Razzaza doesn't receive water from Lake Habbaniyah. This has led to a massive reduction in the extent of the lake; currently, only the tail end of the lake remains.
- Ministry representatives highlighted the issue of untreated sewage from the City of Karbala being channeled to Lake Razzaza. There is no fishing or any other recreational use of this lake.
- Lake Sawa is a natural lake in southern Iraq, fed by underground water aquifers. However, due to poor management and overuse of groundwater extraction coupled with impact of climate change, the lake has almost disappeared.
- In both locations, currently there is no agriculture-reliant population.
- Given the main focus of the project is integrated biodiversity conservation and addressing the drivers of land degradation in the region, it is critical to address the shortage of water resources through engagement with the Ministry of Water Resources.

Following detailed discussions on the project activities, it was agreed to undertake the following:

- Collate information/data/assessment reports relating to

- Hydrology, climate risks and socio-economic studies done in the past in the project locations
- Historical management plans of the lake, if any.
- Water sharing regulations/decrees relating to two lakes
- Water shortages and any steps taken to address the issue
- Identify environmental projects implemented by other organizations, including NGOs and CSOs in the region
- The Ministry of Environment to discuss the project with high-level officials of the Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Agriculture
- The Ministry of Environment will constitute the Project Steering Committee (PSC), and the first meeting of the PSC will be held in September following the workshop.

The next workshop to discuss the project activities, implementation, and timeline will be held in September 2024. Decision makers from the Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Agriculture will be invited to the workshop.

The meeting was concluded with closing remarks from the MoE and UNEP, and all participants having a clear understanding of the project components, next steps and roles moving forward in the execution phase.

Annexe I – List of Participants

Full Name	Affiliation	Designation	Contact Information
Ministry of Environment, Iraq			
Dr Sinan Jaafar Mohammad	Ministry of Environment / Department of Environment Protection and Improvement in the Middle Region	General Director	
Dr. Chasib Latif Ali	Ministry of Environment / Department of Environmental Protection and Improvement in the Middle Euphrates Region	General Director	chasibali14@gmail.com 07901925667
Hamed Obeid Abdallah	Ministry of Environment / Karbala Environment Directorate	Director of Karbala Environment Directorate	kamaelrodun@gmail.com 07808440600
Sarab Wajaan	Ministry of Environment / Department of International Relations	Director of International Relations	moen.iraq@gmail.com 009647724584512
Abeer Dawod Hamid	Ministry of Environment / Technical Department		abeerdawod33@gmail.com 07830679430
Ahmed Alassaf	Ministry of Environment	Coordination Officer	ahmed.alassaf.1982@gmail.com 009647730035521
Ali Mohamad Abdelreda	Ministry of Environment / Department of Environmental Protection and Improvement	Director of Natural Ecosystems Division	alienviro2019@gmail.com 07902563531

	in the Middle Euphrates Region		
Ali Wahhab Ahmed	Ministry of Environment	Coordinator	aliwahab17111980@gmail.com 07822208738
Arif Shamkhi Jaber	Ministry of Environment	National Focal Point for the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS)	arif.iraq@yahoo.com 07803115332
Hasan Kasar Kadhim	Ministry of Environment / Technical Department	Director of the Technical Department	82amdr@gmail.com 07802576329
Jinan Abbas Jawad	Ministry of Environment / Department of Environmental Protection and Improvement in the Middle Euphrates Region	Responsible of Ecosystems Division	noorjina6@gmail.com 07831959712
Khamael Latif Makki	Ministry of Environment / Karbala Environment Directorate / Natural Ecosystems Division	Responsible of Natural Ecosystems Division	kamaelrodun@gmail.com 07706300530
Mouaed Abdel Wahed Naji	Ministry of Environment / Department of Environmental Protection and Improvement in the Middle Euphrates Region	Assistant Director General of the Middle Euphrates	mouayed@gmail.com 07811253946
Qais Najeh Abd	Ministry of Environment / Al-Anbar Environment Directorate		rmqais@yahoo.com 07809125501
Ministry of Agriculture			
Mustafa Zouhair Abdelhamid	Ministry of Agriculture / Department of Forestry and Desertification	Director of the Environment Department	muzuab@gmail.com 009647705852479
Ministry of Water Resources			
Ali Rahim Wsin	Ministry of Water Resources / Centre for Restoration of the Iraqi Marshlands / Department of Studies and Designs		alirahim78engineer@gmail.com 07715424346
UNEP ROWA			
Geetha Nayak	United Nations Environment Programme - Regional Office for West Asia	Regional Coordinator for Biodiversity and Ecosystems	geetha.nayak@un.org

Annexe II – Presentations

Presentation 1 – Project Overview

Promotion of Integrated Biodiversity Conservation and Land Degradation Neutrality in Highly Degraded Landscapes of Iraq

تعزيز الحفظ المتكامل للتنوع البيولوجي وحيادية تدهور الأراضي في المناظر الطبيعية شديدة التدهور في العراق

PROJECT OVERVIEW

ملخص المشروع

Project Details

تفاصيل المشروع

Project title	Promotion of Integrated Biodiversity Conservation and Land Degradation Neutrality in Highly Degraded Landscapes of Iraq	تعزيز الحفظ المتكامل للتنوع البيولوجي وحيادية تدهور الأراضي في المناظر الطبيعية شديدة التدهور في العراق	عنوان المشروع
Country	Iraq	العراق	الدولة
Location	Middle Euphrates, Mesopotamian Plain	الفرات الأوسط	الموقع
Area	2 million ha	2 مليون هكتار	المساحة
Duration of project	48 months	48 شهراً	المدة
Commencement date	October 2023	أكتوبر 2023	تاريخ البدء
Completion date	September 2027	سبتمبر 2027	تاريخ الانتهاء
GEF Funding	USD 4.5M	4.5 مليون دولار أمريكي	تمويل فريق البيئة العالمية



Project Site

موقع المشروع

The identified project site is the Middle Euphrates landscape, which lies in the Mesopotamian Plain. The site is located across central and southern Iraq with a size of around 2 million ha. The region hosts 2 key eco-regions: Arabian desert and Mesopotamian Marshlands.

موقع المشروع المحدد هو منطقة الفرات الأوسط التي تقع في سهل بلاد ما بين النهرين. يقع الموقع في وسط جنوب العراق بمساحة تبلغ حوالي 2 مليون هكتار. يستضيف الموقع منطقتين بيئيتين رئيسيتين: الصحراء العربية وأهوار بلاد ما بين النهرين.

Project Site

موقع المشروع

The variety of natural habitats (lowlands, desert, steppes, plateaus and mountains wetlands habitats) provides the country with natural, biological, and economic diversity. Many species are threatened, and several are endemic. The Middle Euphrates Landscape is comprised of a few governorates of significant biodiversity importance, most notably, Karbala, Najaf, Babel, Diwaniyah, as well as Muthanna.

ان تنوع الموائل الطبيعية (الأراضي المنخفضة والصحراء والهضاب والجزيل والسهول المائية) يوفر للبلاد تنوعاً طبيعياً وبيولوجياً واقتصادياً. العديد من الأنواع الموجودة مهددة بالانقراض، والعديد منها مستوطنة. تتكون منطقة الفرات الأوسط من عدد من المحافظات ذات الأهمية الكبيرة للتنوع البيولوجي؛ أبرزها كربلاء و البغداد، ديوانية، وكذلك، ومثنى.



Project Goal and Approach

هدف المشروع والنهج المعتمد

PROJECT GOAL

هدف المشروع

Strengthen governmental and non-governmental capacities to achieve biodiversity conservation and land degradation neutrality in the Middle Euphrates landscape through integrated landscape management.

تعزيز القدرات الحكومية وغير الحكومية لتحقيق الحفظ على التنوع البيولوجي وتعويض تدهور الأراضي في منطقتي الفرات الأوسط من خلال الإدارة المتكاملة للمناظر الطبيعية

PROJECT APPROACH

النهج المعتمد

Ecological landscape approach with full involvement of local communities (focus on gender and youth) and robust cross-sector capacity building (central and local level).

نهج المناظر الطبيعية البيئية مع المشاركة الكاملة للمجتمعات المحلية (التركيز على التنوع الاجتماعي والشمول) وبناء القدرات القوية عبر القطاعات (على المستوى المركزي والمحلي).

Project Components

مكونات المشروع

Component 1

Strengthening national policies and framework to mainstream biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and protected area management into sectoral national policies and strategies.

المكون الأول

تعزيز السياسات والاطار الوطني لإدخال الحفظ على التنوع الحيوي والإدارة المسدامة للأراضي، وإدارة المناطق المحمية في السياسات والخطط القطاعية الوطنية.

Component 2

Implementation of measures to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss and promote land rehabilitation to improve delivery of ecosystem services to some wellbeing and health of local communities.

المكون الثاني

تنفيذ تدابير لتجنب وتقليل وتكثيف تدهور الأراضي وفقدان التنوع الحيوي، وتعزيز استعادة الأراضي لتأمين خدمات النظم الإيكولوجية وتحسين رفاهية المجتمعات المحلية وصحتها.

Component 3

Implementation of nature-based solutions (NBS) and sustainable land management (SLM) techniques to improve flow of agro-ecosystem services in the Middle Euphrates Landscapes and contribute to land degradation neutrality (LDN).

المكون الثالث

تنفيذ الحلول القائمة على الطبيعة وإدخال الإدارة المسدامة للأراضي، وذلك من أجل تحسين خدمات النظم الإيكولوجية الزراعية في المناظر الطبيعية في منطقة الفرات الأوسط، والمساهمة في حيادية تدهور الأراضي.

Component 4

Capacity building and knowledge management.

المكون الرابع

بناء القدرات وإدارة المعرفة



Partners

الشركاء

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – Ecosystems Division برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة – قسم النظم البيئية		Implementing Entity الجهة المسؤولة عن تنفيذ المشروع
UNEP – Regional Office for West Asia برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة – مكتب غرب آسيا	Ministry of Environment - Iraq وزارة البيئة - جمهورية العراق	Executing Entities الجهات المسؤولة عن تنفيذ المشروع
The United Nations and other regional organizations الأمم المتحدة والمنظمات الإقليمية: - منظمة الأغذية والزراعة (FAO) - برنامج الأمم المتحدة للتربية والتعليم والثقافة (UNESCO) - صندوق الأمم المتحدة للسكان (UNFPA) - برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي (UNDP) - المجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي (ECOSOC) - المجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي (ECLA)	At the National level على المستوى الوطني: - وزارة البيئة - وزارة الزراعة - وزارة التخطيط - وزارة الموارد المائية - وزارة الزراعة - المجلس الوطني للتربية والتعليم - المجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي - المنظمات والمنظمات الحكومية	At the local level على المستوى المحلي: - محافظة كربلاء والحكومة - كربلاء - محافظة ذي قار والحكومة - مثنى - محافظة بابل والحكومة - بابل
International and Local Partners الشركاء الدوليون والمحليون		

Thank you

شكراً

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
 Regional Office for West Asia
 برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة
 مكتب غرب آسيا



Presentation 2 – Project Components



Promotion of Integrated Biodiversity Conservation and Land Degradation Neutrality in Highly Degraded Landscapes of Iraq

تعزيز الحفظ المتكامل للتنوع الحيوي وحيدانية تدهور الأراضي في العراق الطبيعية شديدة التدهور في العراق

PROJECT COMPONENTS

مكونات المشروع

Component 1

المكون الأول

Strengthening national policies and framework to mainstream biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and protected area management into sectoral/national policies and strategies

تعزيز السياسات الوطنية وإطار العمل الوطني لإصلاح الخطط على المستوى الوطني والسياسات الوطنية القاعدية، وإدارة المناطق المحمية في السياسات والإستراتيجيات القطاعية الوطنية القاعدية.

Outcome	Objective	Activity
3.1.1. Assessment of national/subnational policies, legislation and procedures that identify integration of biodiversity conservation and land degradation neutrality into national policies and plans with consideration to the impact and role of women's participation.	3.1.1.1. Assessment of national/subnational policies, legislation and procedures that identify integration of biodiversity conservation and land degradation neutrality into national policies and plans with consideration to the impact and role of women's participation.	3.1.1.1.1. Assessment of national/subnational policies, legislation and procedures that identify integration of biodiversity conservation and land degradation neutrality into national policies and plans with consideration to the impact and role of women's participation.
3.1.2. A national cross-sector and multi-stakeholder Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF) designed and approved by the key Ministries (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources).	3.1.2.1. A national cross-sector and multi-stakeholder Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF) designed and approved by the key Ministries (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources).	3.1.2.1.1. A national cross-sector and multi-stakeholder Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF) designed and approved by the key Ministries (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources).
3.1.3. Joint multi-stakeholder/multisectoral working groups established to form a coordination mechanism for the implementation of the ICMF (consisting professional of private sector, gender balance and training and workshops targeted for women and girls).	3.1.3.1. Joint multi-stakeholder/multisectoral working groups established to form a coordination mechanism for the implementation of the ICMF (consisting professional of private sector, gender balance and training and workshops targeted for women and girls).	3.1.3.1.1. Joint multi-stakeholder/multisectoral working groups established to form a coordination mechanism for the implementation of the ICMF (consisting professional of private sector, gender balance and training and workshops targeted for women and girls).
3.1.4. Increased capacity on Integrated Conservation Management and landscape planning to identify and reduce the pressures on natural resources particularly women on the field.	3.1.4.1. Increased capacity on Integrated Conservation Management and landscape planning to identify and reduce the pressures on natural resources particularly women on the field.	3.1.4.1.1. Increased capacity on Integrated Conservation Management and landscape planning to identify and reduce the pressures on natural resources particularly women on the field.
3.1.5. Economic incentives and disincentives designed to promote the implementation of ICMF.	3.1.5.1. Economic incentives and disincentives designed to promote the implementation of ICMF.	3.1.5.1.1. Economic incentives and disincentives designed to promote the implementation of ICMF.
3.1.6. The Integrated Conservation Management Plan for the Middle Euphrates Landscape developed to identify and reduce the pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and disseminated to all relevant stakeholders (Implementation of the Plan formulated under Components 2,3 and 4).	3.1.6.1. The Integrated Conservation Management Plan for the Middle Euphrates Landscape developed to identify and reduce the pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and disseminated to all relevant stakeholders (Implementation of the Plan formulated under Components 2,3 and 4).	3.1.6.1.1. The Integrated Conservation Management Plan for the Middle Euphrates Landscape developed to identify and reduce the pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and disseminated to all relevant stakeholders (Implementation of the Plan formulated under Components 2,3 and 4).

Component 2

المكون الثاني

Implementation of measures to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss and promote land rehabilitation to improve delivery of ecosystem services to serve well-being and health of local communities.

تعزيز تدابير تجنب وتقليل وتعمير الأراضي المتدهورة والترويج الحيوي، وتعزيز إعادة تأهيل الأراضي المتدهورة وتحسين خدمات النظم الإيكولوجية وترسيخها في السياسات المجتمعات المحلية وسد احتياجاتها.

Outcome	Objective	Activity
2.1.1. The National Protected Area Network of Iraq is expanded by 176,292 ha through the declaration and establishment of 2 new NPAs that are sustainably managed.	2.1.1. The National Protected Area Network of Iraq is expanded by 176,292 ha through the declaration and establishment of 2 new NPAs that are sustainably managed.	2.1.1.1. The National Protected Area Network of Iraq is expanded by 176,292 ha through the declaration and establishment of 2 new NPAs that are sustainably managed.
2.1.2. Management plans formulated for the resilience to climate change developed and implemented for the Razzaiza Lake and Lake Sara.	2.1.2. Management plans formulated for the resilience to climate change developed and implemented for the Razzaiza Lake and Lake Sara.	2.1.2.1. Management plans formulated for the resilience to climate change developed and implemented for the Razzaiza Lake and Lake Sara.
2.1.3. Operationalization of habitat, biodiversity and land monitoring system aligned with the Integrated Conservation Management Plan in collaboration with key government stakeholders (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Planning) taking into account gender disparities and empowering women in decision making processes.	2.1.3. Operationalization of habitat, biodiversity and land monitoring system aligned with the Integrated Conservation Management Plan in collaboration with key government stakeholders (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Planning) taking into account gender disparities and empowering women in decision making processes.	2.1.3.1. Operationalization of habitat, biodiversity and land monitoring system aligned with the Integrated Conservation Management Plan in collaboration with key government stakeholders (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Planning) taking into account gender disparities and empowering women in decision making processes.

Component 3

المكون الثالث

Implementation of nature-based solutions (NBS) and sustainable land management (SLM) techniques to improve flow of agro-ecosystem services in the Middle Euphrates Landscape and to contribute to land degradation neutrality (LDN).

تعزيز الحلول القائمة على الطبيعة وإجراءات الإدارة المستدامة للأراضي، وذلك من أجل تحسين خدمات النظم الإيكولوجية في منطقة الأراضي المتدهورة وتحسين صحة النظم الإيكولوجية وإسهامها في تحقيق الحيادية لانهيار التربة (LDN).

Outcome	Objective	Activity
3.1.1. Decision support tools for locally adapted LDN measures presented to support decision-making through assessments (ecological and socio-economic).	3.1.1.1. Decision support tools for locally adapted LDN measures presented to support decision-making through assessments (ecological and socio-economic).	3.1.1.1.1. Decision support tools for locally adapted LDN measures presented to support decision-making through assessments (ecological and socio-economic).
3.1.2. Locally adaptive LDN measures to enhance water conservation and prevent changes in the characteristics of soil, wind erosion, salinization and loss of natural fertility of soil identified and validated by the government and Ministry of Environment.	3.1.2.1. Locally adaptive LDN measures to enhance water conservation and prevent changes in the characteristics of soil, wind erosion, salinization and loss of natural fertility of soil identified and validated by the government and Ministry of Environment.	3.1.2.1.1. Locally adaptive LDN measures to enhance water conservation and prevent changes in the characteristics of soil, wind erosion, salinization and loss of natural fertility of soil identified and validated by the government and Ministry of Environment.
3.1.3. Techniques and management practices including but not limited to the restoration of existing policies and possibly adoption of new practices for sustainable land management developed and tested in 10,000 ha (initially will be monitored through the monitoring system developed under Output 2.1).	3.1.3.1. Techniques and management practices including but not limited to the restoration of existing policies and possibly adoption of new practices for sustainable land management developed and tested in 10,000 ha (initially will be monitored through the monitoring system developed under Output 2.1).	3.1.3.1.1. Techniques and management practices including but not limited to the restoration of existing policies and possibly adoption of new practices for sustainable land management developed and tested in 10,000 ha (initially will be monitored through the monitoring system developed under Output 2.1).
3.1.4. In collaboration with the Office of Agricultural Extension Services and Training (AEST), capacity development program established and local stakeholders (i.e. farmers, farmer cooperatives, agroforestry and agro-pastoralists) trained on the implementation of SLM, biodiversity conservation, water conservation, climate smart agriculture and agro-ecology.	3.1.4.1. In collaboration with the Office of Agricultural Extension Services and Training (AEST), capacity development program established and local stakeholders (i.e. farmers, farmer cooperatives, agroforestry and agro-pastoralists) trained on the implementation of SLM, biodiversity conservation, water conservation, climate smart agriculture and agro-ecology.	3.1.4.1.1. In collaboration with the Office of Agricultural Extension Services and Training (AEST), capacity development program established and local stakeholders (i.e. farmers, farmer cooperatives, agroforestry and agro-pastoralists) trained on the implementation of SLM, biodiversity conservation, water conservation, climate smart agriculture and agro-ecology.
3.1.5. Training sessions on sustainable finance for the local banks in the Middle Euphrates landscape organized.	3.1.5.1. Training sessions on sustainable finance for the local banks in the Middle Euphrates landscape organized.	3.1.5.1.1. Training sessions on sustainable finance for the local banks in the Middle Euphrates landscape organized.

Component 4

المكون الرابع

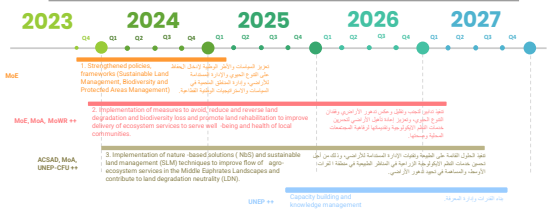
Capacity building and knowledge management

بناء القدرات وإدارة المعرفة.

Outcome	Objective	Activity
4.1. Stakeholders apply their increased knowledge and take actions on land use planning, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services and LDN.	4.1.1. An information/knowledge management system developed and made accessible to stakeholders enabling learning from and speaking of pilot activities (ensuring accessibility by men, women, and youth).	4.1.1.1. An information/knowledge management system developed and made accessible to stakeholders enabling learning from and speaking of pilot activities (ensuring accessibility by men, women, and youth).
4.1.2. A communication and awareness strategy is developed to support implementation of Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF).	4.1.2.1. A communication and awareness strategy is developed to support implementation of Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF).	4.1.2.1.1. A communication and awareness strategy is developed to support implementation of Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF).
4.1.3. Awareness raising and technical materials, based on best practices identified through Component 2 and 3, developed in local languages, disseminated and used for training of local stakeholders, dissemination and used for training of local stakeholders, dissemination and used for training of local stakeholders.	4.1.3.1. Awareness raising and technical materials, based on best practices identified through Component 2 and 3, developed in local languages, disseminated and used for training of local stakeholders, dissemination and used for training of local stakeholders.	4.1.3.1.1. Awareness raising and technical materials, based on best practices identified through Component 2 and 3, developed in local languages, disseminated and used for training of local stakeholders, dissemination and used for training of local stakeholders.

Timeline

الجدول الزمني



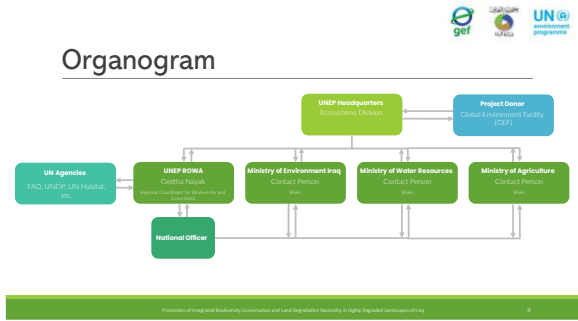
Key questions

- Hydrological assessment
- Socio-economic assessment
- Climate risks assessment
- Management plans (historical)

Next Steps

- Stocktaking exercise for data, documents and other relevant information (July-Aug '24)
- Operational Planning and multistakeholder workshop (Sep 24)
- First Project Steering Committee meeting (Sep '24)
- Project implementation





Thank you
شكراً

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
Regional Office for West Asia
برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة
مكتب غرب آسيا

Presentation 3 – GEF Requirements for Project Implementation



Preparatory meetings of the Project in Iraq
25-27 June 2024

Lesya Nikolayeva, UNEP
lesya.nikolayeva@un.org

SDGs



Three interconnected crises

UNEP For People and Planet Strategy for 2022-2025

- Climate action
- Nature action
- Chemicals and pollution actions
- Science-policy
- Environmental governance
- Finance and economic transformations
- Digital transformations

GEF Focal Areas

Our expertise

To catalyze action on crucial environmental issues, we bring together the world's best scientific and traditional knowledge to build:

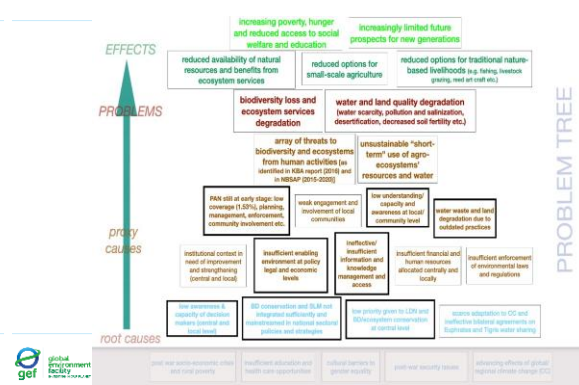
- Global policy**
 - International agreements and local policy to protect and restore our shared environment
- Technical expertise**
 - The data, knowledge and experience needed to monitor and manage the world's environmental challenges
- Innovative approaches**
 - New thinking and science-based policy and action on the environment from the global to the local level

About GEF

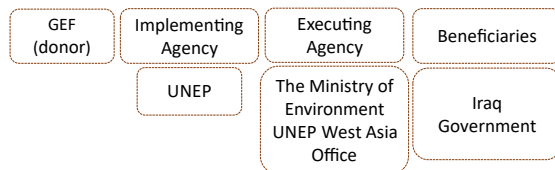
- GEF is a multilateral environmental fund that provides grants and blended finance for projects on biodiversity, climate change, international water, land degradation, persistent organic pollutants, mercury, sustainable forest management, food security and sustainable cities in developing countries.
- Established in 1991, endorsed by countries at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit, 1992).
- Goal: To address global environmental issues while supporting national sustainable development initiatives.
- Mission: The GEF is a mechanism for international cooperation for the purpose of providing new, and additional, grant and concessional funding to meet the agreed incremental costs of measures to achieve agreed global environmental benefits.
- 18 Agencies



Project's Theory of Change (title in Arabic)



How does the GEF operate?



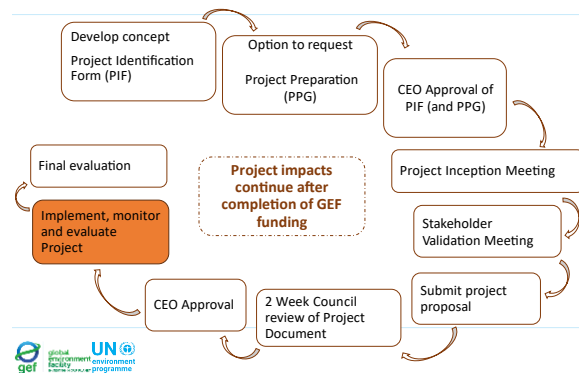
Role of UNEP

- Project oversight
 - to ensure that GEF policies and criteria are adhered to
 - the project meets its objectives and achieves expected outcomes in an efficient and effective manner
- Provide cash advance
- Have a representative in the project governance
- Perform the liaison function with the GEF Secretariat on the project
- Rate progress in meeting project objectives, project implementation progress, and risk
- Report to the GEF Secretariat
- Review and clear manuscripts prepared by the Executing Agency before publication
- Undertake an independent terminal evaluation
- Clearance of procurement and service contracts which are not included in the procurement plan

Required Terms and Obligations of the Executing Agency

- Adhere to the GEF Communication and Visibility Policy, including the Brand Guidelines and Graphics Standards of the GEF
- Establish all subcontracts in writing, maintain primary responsibility for ensuring successful completion of the project and monitor the performance of the contractors
- Notify in writing, about any expected variations on the project budget or cofinance
- Maintain complete and accurate records of nonexpendable equipment
- Financial**
 - Total expenditures do not exceed the GEF approved budget
 - Any variations exceeding 10 per cent on any budget line shall be consulted with the implementing agency
 - Project Management budget cannot exceed 10% of the total budget
 - Sub-contracts shall follow the UNEP and GEF rules
 - The EA shall return the unspent funds

GEF Project Cycle



UNEP Project at Risk System

UNEP reviews:

- Whether the identified risks have changed
- Whether the planned management responses need to be modified and
- Whether any new risks have emerged or become known

UNEP/GEF monitors and assessed three types of risks through 15 thresholds

1. Budget and Delivery

Overspending: Project disbursement is in excess of GEF approved budget

Underspending: Projects with accumulative expenditure less than 50% of the current year's accumulative allotment (exclude first six months as project is starting up).

Receivables: Projects with receivable older than 12 months ("aged receivables")

Audit certificates: Projects whose audit certificates are delayed more than 12 months

Progress/financial reports: Such reports are more than 8 months behind schedule, incomplete or inaccurate

Mismanagement and corruption: Annual Audit reports flag major problems.



UNEP Project at Risk System

2. Performance

Off track: Projects with a red (off-track) project performance rating in project management system (less than 60% of milestones met in the last 6-month reporting period)

PIR ratings: Projects where PIR ratings are marginally satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Special attention is paid to those projects that continue to be in this range over several years

Environmental and Social impacts: Projects that fail to implement their Environmental and Social Mitigation Plans, or have unanticipated negative impacts

Force majeure: Country at risk due to catastrophe, political unrest, etc.



UNEP Project at Risk System

3. Project Cycle Management

Mid-term Evaluation/Review: Projects who fail to conduct the MTE/MTR at the mid-point of the project life

Ageing Projects: Projects are ongoing and extended more than 6 months past the originally approved project completion date

Unclosed Projects: Completed projects pending administrative closure for more than 6 months

Suspension: Project is suspended and all disbursements frozen

Terminal Evaluations: Completed projects whose TEs are not conducted within 6 months of project completion



Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

- Continuous process to ensure project implementation activities and achievements are in line with project planning
- Main documents that inform the M&E process:
 - Project Supervision Plan
 - M&E Plan (PRODOC Appendix 7)
 - Deliverables and benchmarks (Appendix 6)
 - Results framework (Appendix 4)
 - GEF Core Indicators (it should be updated at midterm and at project closure) (Annex F)
- Project activities and achievements are reported twice per year (Progress Report, PIR)
- Project Midterm review after 24 months (2 years of execution period)
- Further, there will be the Terminal evaluation/review (organized by UNEP)



Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

- Clear attribution of results, internal consistency, transparency
- Enhanced results monitoring: Completing missing baseline data
 - Identification of 'means of verification' for Outcome indicators, GEF Core Indicators, Gender Action indicators, Indigenous Peoples Plan indicators, and indicators in the Grievance Redressal Mechanism
 - Shared responsibilities of each partner in collecting and compiling information
- Greater clarity in M&E tasks among partners
- Understand that Theory of Change as a "living document" that can be reviewed and revised (in particular the assumptions and drivers) and changes to the Results Framework justified, if needed (and duly recorded)



Implementation of Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework

- ESS Project Cooperation Agreements (PCAs)
- Implement activities in line with the UNEP ESSF
- Inform UNEP of any safeguard risks that may arise
- Communicate with UNEP of any ESS-complaints, claims, investigations or proceedings
- Continuously screen and monitor potential safeguard impacts & report annually
- Comply with requirements of the Gender Action Plan
- Establish a local Grievance Redress Mechanism and proactively address grievances from affected communities, if needed
- Submit to UNEP evidence that FPIC from the indigenous communities has been obtained, if needed
- Operationalize community-level stakeholder engagement
- Build culture of risk management and problem solving
- Monitor any new and known risks and take the adaptive risk management



Implementation of Gender Policy

- Minimum: **sex-disaggregated** targets and data collection
- Gender-sensitive processes and products; be considerate of:
 - **Equal/appropriate** participation or representation of women and men – in **decision-making** as well as project implementation activities.
 - Women's and men's **different needs** based on their concerns, experiences (including with regards to their roles and responsibilities) and constraints
 - Whether proposed activities/approaches will lead to gender-responsive results (and not unintendedly reinforce gender inequity)
- **Gender-sensitive communication:** language, images, apply perspectives from men and women, etc.
- Gender-sensitive organization of events: time/duration (including overnight stay), place, education/literacy, etc.
- Allocate human and financial resources



Reporting requirements

- Progress report (Semi-annual)
 - Consolidated report on national and international activities
 - Project progress and risk management
 - Assessment against project implementation plan and agreed targets
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Inventory of staff, contracts, meetings and outputs
 - **Timeline:** (January-June)(July-December) shall be submitted before 31 July/January
- Annual Project Implementation Review (PIR)
 - Full report covering all activities and expenditure for the GEF fiscal year
 - Joint evaluation and rating of project performance, progress and risk
 - Capturing lessons learned (institutional, social and financial sustainability; country ownership; and stakeholder involvement; project governance; capacity building; scientific issues; outreach and communications; project management
 - **Timeline:** Annual (July -June) shall be submitted before 31 July; will be accepted in lieu of progress report for the period January -June



Reporting requirements

- Co-financing report
 - amount of **cash and in-kind** co-financing realized compared to the committed.
 - **Timeline:** Annual(July (Y-1) –June Y) shall be submitted before 31 July;
- Final report
 - Detailed report on national project activities, objectives achieved, and lessons learned; expenditure of project funds and co -financing; inventory of supplies and equipment
 - **Timeline:** 2 months after the operational completion
- Financial reports
 - Detailed account of project funds spent, incl. co -financing received, committed and spent per quarter
 - **Timeline:** 30 days after completion of each quarter (30 April, 31 July, 31 October and 31 January)
- Inventory of non-expendable equipment
 - **Timeline:** Annually, before 31 January
- Signed final statement of accounts
 - within 3 months of operational completion of project activities



Reporting on cash and in-kind co-financing

- The Project agreed co-funding: US\$ 25,500,000
- To be delivered 'over life of project'
- No audit on co-funding but to be reported at least once annually
- True co-funding contributes directly in implementing the workplan & achieving the project objective
- Co-funding handled by EAs & partners



Promotion of Integrated Biodiversity Conservation and Land Degradation Neutrality in Highly Degraded Landscapes of Iraq

Project Details

GEF Project ID	Country	Implementing Agencies	Approval FY
10672	Iraq	United Nations Environment Programme	2022
Status	Region	Executing Agencies	GEF Period
Project Approved	Europe and Central Asia	The Ministry of Environment in partnership GEF - 7 with UNEP West Asia Office	
Project Type	Focal Areas	Funding Source	
Full-size Project	Biodiversity Land Degradation	GEF Trust Fund	

- Project Documents**
- CED Endorsement/Approval Review Sheet Document
 - 10672_Screen
 - FSP CED endorsement document
 - GEFSEC Review

Thank you!

Lesya Nikolayeva, UNEP
lesya.nikolayeva@un.org
www.unep.org

