

## Annex E: Social and Environmental Screening Report

### Project Information

<b>Project Information</b>	
1. Project Title	Restoring degraded forest landscapes and promoting community-based, sustainable and integrated natural resource management in the Rora Habab Plateau, Nakfa sub-Zoba, Northern Red Sea Region of Eritrea
2. Project Number	PIMS 5519
3. Location (Global/Region/Country)	Eritrea

### Part A. Integrating Overarching Principles to Strengthen Social and Environmental Sustainability

#### **QUESTION 1: How Does the Project Integrate the Overarching Principles in order to Strengthen Social and Environmental Sustainability?**

##### ***Briefly describe in the space below how the Project mainstreams the human-rights based approach***

This project mainstreams the human rights-based approach through interventions that address poverty, social equity and equality and promotes approaches to natural resources governance that empower local people to have more control over the natural resources that their livelihoods depend on. It works to uphold human rights and improve the living conditions and general well-being of some 22,477 people (11,576 males and 10,901 females) people currently living within the project footprint, as well as contributing regionally and nationally to improved food and water security as well as protection of ecosystems, forests and biodiversity. It includes interventions designed to improve access to natural resources (e.g. water, arable land/soils and forests) and to empower communities to use and manage these in ways that improve their livelihoods without compromising the ecological integrity of the catchments and ecosystems. By strengthening the capacity for developing and implementing land-use plans that explicitly take into account consideration of water usage, and building the capacity of community, local authorities and state institutions to monitor and promote restoration and rehabilitation interventions, mainstream resource protection (e.g. through mainstreaming of biodiversity and SLM into agricultural production) and adopt a landscape approach to land use and management, the project aims to reduce the impacts of agricultural activities on the integrity of ecosystems and biodiversity and also build the resilience of these ecosystems and reduce the vulnerability of communities against the impacts of land degradation and climate change. The project also includes elements that are designed to ensure that duty bearers within the project are adequately capacitated to perform their roles. The project seeks to enhance the livelihoods and well-being of communities living in the Nakfa sub-Zoba (sub-region) by promoting uptake of sustainable income-generating activities (IGAs) and the adoption of SLM and SFM technologies and biodiversity-friendly approaches that improve economic, food and water security. Through promotion of reforestation activities, the project will also support initiatives that increase community participation in forestry management and promote increased benefits to communities from reforestation and conservation activities. It will put in place deliberate pro-poor measures to ensure the participation of the poorest households and will strive to ensure that the benefits of the project are equitably distributed within participating communities.

##### ***Briefly describe in the space below how the Project is likely to improve gender equality and women's empowerment***

The project design includes specific measures to address gender empowerment and equality, whilst respecting the norms, values and customs of the receiving communities. Specific targets have been set to ensure the inclusion and participation of women and girls both in site-based project activities (such as the development of alternative income-generating activities, capacity building programmes, developing farmer-led extension services and mainstreaming the SLM, SFM and biodiversity conservation messages within local communities), as well as ensuring that opportunities are created for women to take up positions of leadership in relevant institutions within the water and natural resources governance hierarchy (e.g. Water

User Associations) and project management structures (e.g. Project Steering Committee). Based on lessons learned from other projects that have been implemented in Eritrea, the project will adopt an approach in which gender is viewed as part of a wider discussion of vulnerability and in which attention will also be given to the rights and special needs of other vulnerable groups (such as the elderly, youth and other marginalised groups).

***Briefly describe in the space below how the Project mainstreams environmental sustainability***

This project mainstreams environmental sustainability in two principal ways: (i) through making investments that will collectively contribute to the medium and long term restoration of forest and agricultural landscapes, watershed services and land and soil quality through reforestation, improving land cover and soil fertility, reducing human-induced pressures on forests, reducing vulnerability to climate change, and introducing SLM in agriculture and livestock management systems; and (ii) the project will develop the capacity of farmers, agricultural extension agents, water basin managers and water users to effectively plan, monitor and adapt land management and leverage investments for integrating SLM, biodiversity and forest protection into agricultural production practices within the Nakfa sub-Zoba and wider Rora Habab plateau.

Under Component 1, the project will ensure that local-scale environmental gains can be sustained into the future by putting in place integrated land-use and restoration plans that give simultaneous consideration to environmental and social gains, the location of land-uses at the landscape scale, and the long-term impacts of land-use and watershed management on land quality, forestry and water resources. Implementing SLM, forest restoration and priority watershed rehabilitation in the context of carefully-crafted Integrated Landscape Restoration Plans will mean that the environmental gains at particular sites contribute to maintaining ecological functionality at a landscape-scale and over time. It will also help ensure that environmental gains achieved at one site are not compromised later by inappropriate location of other land uses or developments. Environmental sustainability will be further enhanced by the development of spatial decision-support systems and tools that make it possible to track the impacts of SLM, forest restoration and watershed rehabilitation on land degradation, soil health and water quality and quantity and agricultural productivity, as this will enable the adaptive land and water resource management approach that will be required to sustain environmental gains over the longer term. Attention will also be given to strengthening capacity for integrated planning and management as well as promoting knowledge-exchange.

Under Component 2, the Project investments will collectively contribute to the medium- and long-term restoration of degraded forests and upper watersheds and land quality through interventions that: (a) alleviate the prevailing negative impacts of unsustainable land-use practices on habitats and ecosystem services; (b) limit the loss of remaining natural habitats; (c) restore degraded forests and re-connect currently fragmented forest patches; (d) improve land cover and soil fertility in agricultural lands and rangelands; and (d) restore and protect hydrological functioning within the landscape. Environmental sustainability will be further enhanced by implementing SLM and reforestation activities at sites that will not only make the greatest contribution to securing hydrological processes, but that also deliver the most direct socio-economic gains, because poverty is a key driver of land degradation and biodiversity loss.

Component 3 will ensure that learning and knowledge exchange, awareness-raising, communication and monitoring remain integral parts of everyday natural resources management and agricultural production practices at all levels (households, farm-level, community, kebab (regional) administration and national levels). Knowledge produced at the project site level will be packaged such that it is shared with other parts of Eritrea and with decision-making structures at the national level and used to improve the expertise of state institutions, local authorities and community organizations within the country. Diverse and innovative communication strategies will be adopted by the project to ensure that all stakeholders are reached, as literacy levels among the rural farming communities is relatively low, therefore limiting the up-take of knowledge-based practices at farm and local community levels.

## Part B. Identifying and Managing Social and Environmental Risks

<p><b>QUESTION 2: What are the Potential Social and Environmental Risks?</b>  <i>Note: Describe briefly potential social and environmental risks identified in Attachment 1 – Risk Screening Checklist (based on any “Yes” responses). If no risks have been identified in Attachment 1 then note “No Risks Identified” and skip to Question 4 and Select “Low Risk”. Questions 5 and 6 not required for Low Risk Projects.</i></p>	<p><b>QUESTION 3: What is the level of significance of the potential social and environmental risks?</b>  <i>Note: Respond to Questions 4 and 5 below before proceeding to Question 6</i></p>			<p><b>QUESTION 6: What social and environmental assessment and management measures have been conducted and/or are required to address potential risks (for Risks with Moderate and High Significance)?</b></p>
<p><b>Risk Description</b></p>	<p><b>Impact and Probability (1-5)</b></p>	<p><b>Significance (Low, Moderate, High)</b></p>	<p><b>Comments</b></p>	<p><b>Description of assessment and management measures as reflected in the Project design. If ESIA or SESA is required note that the assessment should consider all potential impacts and risks.</b></p>
<p>Risk 1: The capacity of state institutions, notably in Government agricultural extension services and for natural resource management, is inadequate and under-resourced.</p> <p>Principle 1, item 5 (checklist): Is there a risk that duty-bearers do not have the capacity to meet their obligations in the Project?</p>	<p>I = 3 P = 3</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>		<p>The project will have a strong focus on building the staff, resource and technical capacity of farmers, agricultural extension agents, local authorities, across the natural resource management and agricultural production spectrum, to ensure that they are adequately capacitated to design and manage SLM and landscapes/watershed/forest restoration interventions. Training and capacity building activities will focus on ensuring that decision-making on resource use and management (e.g. agricultural extension services and watershed rehabilitation) integrates knowledge, science and best-practice to promote environmental sustainability of management interventions.</p>
<p>Risk 2: Stakeholder capacity for participation in decision-making is inadequate. All land in Eritrea belongs to the state, and citizens only have user rights to resources on it.</p> <p>Principle 1, item 6 (checklist): Is there a risk that rights-holders do not have the capacity to claim their rights?</p>	<p>I = 2 P = 2</p>	<p><b>Low</b></p>		<p>The project will support communities and land users to gain skills and capacity to participate in local level decision-making process about the use of land and other natural resources within community control. Community institutions and resource-user groups such as farmers’ associations and water user associations will also be trained/capacitated with skills to adopt and take up improved agroecological and land use practices that position them to better benefit from the use of</p>

				natural resources and ecosystem goods and services.
<p>Risk 3: Project-supported reforestation activities are intended to promote ecological and watershed benefits, but unintended consequences (e.g. excessive abstraction of groundwater by trees) is possible if fast-growing tree species are planted in areas with low precipitation.</p> <p>Standard 1, 1.5 - Would the Project pose a risk of introducing invasive alien species?</p> <p>1.6 Does the Project involve harvesting of natural forests, plantation development, or reforestation?</p>	I = 3 P = 3	<b>Moderate</b>		<p>The project is designed by biodiversity, SLM, SFM and climate change experts to promote reforestation and regeneration of degraded forests and watersheds. Only indigenous plant species will be promoted by the project for enrichment planting and nurseries. It should be noted, however, that in Eritrea the practice of using exotic tree species for reforestation is common and widespread and the project will respect the local communities' control of the production in their nurseries and plantations. The project will actively engage the relevant state agencies on the pros and cons of this approach and ensure that project funds are only used to promote interventions that enhance rather than jeopardise ecosystem integrity. Where exotic species are used, UNDP will ensure that these are procured using government co-financing, and not UNDP or GEF funds.</p>
<p>Risk 4: Increased frequency and intensity of droughts under climate change conditions negatively impact the habitability of the Rora Habab Plateau for water-dependant wildlife species (such as Nubian ibex) and may affect the restoration interventions that are dependent on rainfall such as reforestation.</p> <p>Standard 2 - Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, 2.2 Would the potential outcomes of the Project be sensitive or vulnerable to potential impacts of climate change?</p>	I = 2 P = 2	<b>Low</b>		<p>Training on DRM and early warning; (ii) Improved water harvesting practices combined with SLM/SFM.</p> <p>Under Output 2.1.1 of the project, interventions will be implemented to improve water availability in the Rora Habab Plateau through inter alia: i) increased infiltration to strengthen groundwater reserves; ii) improved river flows through the restoration of upper catchment areas; and iii) enhanced filling of storage ponds, micro-dams and wadis through the introduction of innovative landscape-level water harvesting technologies. Consequently, water availability within the project area will be strengthened, reducing the impacts of droughts on wildlife. This risk will also be mitigated through the identification of natural wildlife corridors connecting the project area to neighbouring areas. For example, the project area is connected to the Semienawi and Debubawi Bahri – which has been targeted for the establishment of a protected area – through the central highland zone. Restoration activities implemented</p>

				under Output 2.1.3 will improve the ecological functioning of this natural corridor allowing local wildlife to access water (and other resources) during drought periods.
<p>Risk 5: Landscape restoration (soil and conservation) activities in Eritrea are usually implemented using the community mobilization approach, where community members carry out supervised physical work (e.g. building stonewalls, bunds, terraces, planting trees etc.) on communal land. An average government fee for each category of work, referred to as 'Work Norm' (e.g. <i>Hill side terrace construction /width=1m/height &gt; 75cm</i>) is compensated at about US\$4 per day.</p> <p>Principle 3, Standard 3 3.8 - Does the Project involve support for employment or livelihoods that may fail to comply with national and international labor standards (i.e. principles and standards of ILO fundamental conventions)?</p>	I = 3 P =3	<b>Moderate</b>		In light of the recent findings of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea, which raised allegations of forced labour (disputed by the government), the project will ensure that the social and environmental safeguards policy of the UNDP (SES) are fully adhered to implementation stages of the project. The project will put in place a mechanism to ensure that all labour utilized by the project is fully compensated through a cash-for-work mechanism following the guidance put in place by government.
[add additional rows as needed]				
	<b>QUESTION 4: What is the overall Project risk categorization?</b>			
	<b>Select one (see <a href="#">SESP</a> for guidance)</b>		<b>Comments</b>	
	<i>Low Risk</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<i>Moderate Risk</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	<i>High Risk</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<b>QUESTION 5: Based on the identified risks and risk categorization, what requirements of the SES are relevant?</b>			
	Check all that apply		<b>Comments</b>	
	<i>Principle 1: Human Rights</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<i>Principle 2: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<i>1. Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Resource Management</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<i>2. Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<i>3. Community Health, Safety and Working Conditions</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

	<b>4. Cultural Heritage</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>5. Displacement and Resettlement</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>6. Indigenous Peoples</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>7. Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	