

UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE IN I.R. IRAN
LOCAL PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LPAC) MEETING NOTES

8 January 2020



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Project Information:

Award Title and number	Enhancing integrated natural resource management for the restoration of wetland ecosystems and support to alternative livelihoods development of local communities
Source of fund and budget	USD 11,106,000 (Funded by European Union) USD 100,000 (Funded by UNDP)
Implementing Partner	Islamic Republic of Iran (represented by Department of Environment)
Start date	February 2020
Planned duration	60 Months
UNDP Officer	Mohsen Soleymani Rozbahani

Participants:

Row	Name	Signature
1	Mr. Mazen Gharzeddine	UNDP- Deputy Resident Representative
2	Mr. Abbas Golriz	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3	Ms. Khalvandi	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4	Mr. Ali Arvahi	Wetlands Project/DoE
5	Ms. Arezoo Ashrafizadeh	Department of Environment
6	Mr. Ali Nazaridoust	UNDP- Head of Programme and Assistant Resident Representative
7	Mr. Mohammadeza Khosravi	Programme Support Unit Analyst
8	Mr. Mohsen Soleymani	UNDP- Programme Analyst
9	Ms. Nazli Alavi	UNDP - Head of Procurement & Admin Unit
10	Ms. Negar Arefi	UNDP- Assistant Resident Representative
11	Mr. Hessam Mirnezami	UNDP Head of Finance
12	Mr. Alireza Mohammadi	UNDP Programme Analyst
13	Ms. Asieh Rezayi	SGP Programme Assistant
14	Mr. Danial Shakiba	UNDP PSU intern
15	Ms. Parvin Pakzad Manesh	Global Fund HIV Project Analyst
16	Ms. Sara Koochaki	UNDP- Programme Associate
17	Ms. Raha Emami	UNDP- Programme Associate

Background and Purpose of LPAC Meeting:

In Iran, environmental degradation is posing serious problems. Wetlands, among the most productive ecosystems of the country are disappearing due to unsustainable water use, particularly in agriculture. Iran is also vulnerable to climate change, especially concerning its impacts on water availability (surface runoffs and underground water storage expected to decrease), increased temperatures and increased hot-spots of sand and dust storms, all of which exacerbate the impacts brought about by the degradation of wetlands. The situation has already had negative consequences for rural livelihoods and exacerbated sand and dust storms due to the dry former lakes and riverbeds. Biodiversity and rural incomes have been severely affected, and more than 5,000 villages in the east and south of Iran have been abandoned due to these phenomena. This situation causes displacement of women, men, and children, putting them in situations of increased vulnerability, at risk of poverty. The Hamoun wetlands consisting of 3 separate but inter-connected lakes located in an extremely arid region are among those affected wetlands which are entirely dependent on the water sources coming from the Helmand river in Afghanistan. Serious degradation occurs when dry periods extend over unusual durations, threatening not only the ecosystem (flora and fauna) but limiting the possibilities for human livelihoods as well.

“Enhancing integrated natural resource management for the restoration of wetland ecosystems and support to alternative livelihoods development of local communities” in the Sistan and Baluchestan province of Iran, is a new project developed by UNDP and EU to promote integrated natural resource management for the restoration of wetland ecosystems and support alternative livelihoods. The project is expected to result in:

1. Better capacities and coordination
2. Sustainable land and water management
3. Climate-smart agriculture and alternative livelihoods

The project will be implemented for the period of 2020-2025, mainly by EU funds as well as UNDP TRAC funds. The implementation modality will follow National Implementation Modality (NIM), whereby the Department of Environment shall be the Implementing Partner, under the overall management of Deputy Marine and Wetlands of DoE, as National Project Director.

The project document was initially shared with the Department of Environment and Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 25 November 2019, and the received comments were incorporated into the project document.

The Agreement between UNDP and EU was signed on 19 December 2019 with reference number MIDEAST/2019/411-077 including the main project document and its annexes.

The draft of the UNDP Project Document was shared with relevant parties along with invitation to the present Local Project Advisory Committee (LPAC) which was convened on 8 January 2020 to review and finalize the Project Document for approval by authorities.

Opening of the Meeting

The meeting was opened by UNDP Deputy Resident Representative (DRR), Mr. Mazen Gharzeddine who chaired the session. He welcomed the attendants and thanked them for their participation in the meeting. He explained the nature of LPAC meetings and added that it is an opportunity to collect feedback, from different angles and points of view, on the project document. The project’s technical content has been developed by UNDP in close consultation with national partners and the EU; and

LPAC provides a platform to go through the project components – and ensure there is agreement on the objectives, scope and key interventions being proposed. Fortunately, the donor funds have been agreed and will be soon secured in UNDP accounts, so we must now review the scope of the work and come to agreement on it.

After these remarks, Mr. Golriz as MFA representative asked for some clarification as the documents shared with them at earlier stages were different than the documents they had received before the LPAC meeting and asked for more time to provide their detailed comments, in case they are not addressed during the presentation of the project.

In this regard, Mr. Nazaridoust, UNDP ARR and Head of Programme explained how the process was different than other projects in collaboration with Mr. Safayi's office at MFA. He further clarified that the initial document was the agreement prepared for the EU, then the same contents were incorporated into the UNDP project document template. He also added that the comments received from DoE (including various departments within DoE) were incorporated in the final document signed with EU and also in the UNDP template.

The meeting continued with a comprehensive overview of the project document presented by Mr. Mohsen Soleymani. After going through the meeting Agenda, in his presentation (attached hereto as Annex I), the UNDP Programme Analyst went through the background and challenges faced by Sistan area, the project's link to the existing policy documents, the overall Area-based Approach, the project outputs and their inter-linkages and the new approaches proposed by the project to reach the required results. The meeting continued with elaboration of project annexes including governance and management arrangements.

Then the floor was open for the feedback and comments.

Roundtable Discussions

After hearing the presentation, Mr. Abbas Golriz, from MFA, asked about the necessity of the Social and Environmental Screening annex and the authority who has prepared it. It was explained by UNDP that the UNDP CO has filled the corporate template which is a necessary requirement of all project documents. MFA pointed out that human rights might be perceived as an area of low relevance for such type of projects. He further stated *"The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the above-mentioned project and is of the view that implementation of this project will impact significantly the life and livelihood of the people in Sistan and Baluchestan. Therefore, we need to address the most pressing issues on the ground and avoid losing our focus through being distracted to marginal issues not having immediate relevance on the main subject. In our view implementation of the project is the best manifestation of observing the basic rights of the people living in those harsh conditions and on this basis we do not need to evaluate the steps of the implementation with human rights standards. We believe that human rights principles are best observed through assisting people living in that area to have a sustainable livelihood and decent jobs, while preserving the ecosystem and protecting the environment. The project outcomes when realized and tangible results when enjoyed by the people on the ground are a better assessment tool to evaluate the workability of this project. On this basis we believe that all references to human rights in the annexes and all other project documents are inappropriate and out of context."*

UNDP highlighted that the queries on human rights were part of the corporate template; such template is an integral part of UNDP's standard due diligence process, and is a requirement for any type of projects, globally. The completed format also served the purpose of clarifying that the project

in question is consistent with human rights principles, and that, therefore, it should be supported by UNDP.

Then Mr. Arvahi, NPM of Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project acknowledged this meeting and efforts for the development of the Project Document and explained that the project team has held a meeting with the provincial and national stakeholders, and they will share their comments and feedback on the project document. He further explained that the two main concerns of DoE on chairing the Project Board by Deputy Marine Environment and Wetlands and adding an international project advisor were both already incorporated in this version of the document. He also hoped that given the critical situation of wetlands, the work in these areas could be started as soon as possible, MFA would support negotiations with Afghanistan.

Ms. Ashrafizadeh, DoE representative acknowledged the efforts in preparing this project document. And hoped that the project would lead to good cooperation with Afghanistan as the neighboring country. She also urged for collaboration of other stakeholders for the implementation of the project. She then announced the overall agreement of DoE with the project document but asked for more time to go through the documents with more details given the sensitivities of the area. She also emphasized on the importance of designing all the actions under this project, in close coordination with MFA and existing coordination mechanisms and policies for the Hamouns, such as discouraging water-dependent livelihoods in the area given the downstream position of the Hamouns in Iran.

Mr. Golriz also asked about how this project is going to be linked to Afghanistan and if any initial assessments has been in place given the difficulty of working with Afghanistan. Mr. Soleymani mentioned that, as described in Output 1, while in general this is an Iranian project, it will be used as a platform to hold joint (Iran-Afghanistan) technical working groups, meetings and workshops, markets and fairs, using a soft approach in technical collaboration with the neighboring country. He also added that local authorities have already some minor initiatives with Afghanistan and need some new approaches which could be provided by the project, such as inviting some Afghan representatives to capacity-building workshops, setting up of transboundary markets etc. He further elaborated that since this is a NIM project, the government has the authority to ensure that sensitivities and policies about the area are considered.

On the same subject, UNDP DRR added that throughout the region, when there is a transboundary issue, a common practice is to involve stakeholders at both sides to analyze the problems and share different perspectives and potential solutions, or derive relevant policy recommendations using the project platform. He added that UNDP can also liaise with UNDP Afghanistan to engage with the relevant Afghan partners, including potentially national or sub-national governments.

Ms. Arefi, as the head of UNDP operations, asked where UNDP operations could assist in the project implementation. In this regard Mr. Arvahi asked for the support of UNDP for better collaboration with the neighboring country and creating a more collaborative platform. UNDP DRR also added that the project could also help identify the challenges in engaging with neighboring countries as we walk through the implementation.

Later, MFA representative asked for some clarification on the HACT and UNDP ARR explained that HACT is a UNDP standard global mechanism for partnership with the national partners, and a requirement for NIM projects and added that the existing Micro-assessment is valid for implementing the project with the Department of Environment.

In the end, Mr. Khosravi as UNDP Programme Support Analyst pointed out two main observations and suggestions on the project document annexes:

1. Re-visiting the theory of change which is the main story of the project and its further elaboration for better picturing of the project.
2. Re-visiting the risks listed under the social and environmental screening, and risk categories which are general and do not relate to the environmental and social risks.

LPAC Recommendations:

In concluding the meeting, UNDP DRR summarized the recommendations of the LPAC as follows:

- The Project Document is approved by the LPAC members, however, the additional comments to be received by 15th January from MFA and DoE will be considered into the final project document.
- UNDP will incorporate the received comments and the project document will be signed between UNDP and DoE in the second half of January
- The initial preparations for project set-up could be done before first of February which is the project start date.

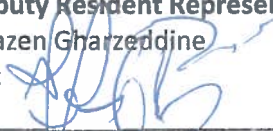
Certification:

The undersigned certify that LPAC recommendations are fully incorporated in the document as appears in the attachment hereto.

<p>The undersigned certify that LPAC recommendations are fully incorporated in the document as appears in the attachment hereto.</p>	
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Endorsement:

I endorse the recommendations made by the LPAC as reflected in these minutes and in the document attached hereto.	UNDP Deputy Resident Representative: Name: Mazen Gharzeddine Signature: 
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Follow-up Action:

1. Incorporate the LPAC comments in the project document as necessary.
2. Upon incorporation of the recommended changes, the project document could be recommended for signature.
3. Once the document is signed, UNDP to carry out the Atlas related tasks required to make funds available for project implementation.

ANNEX 1

LPAC Meeting Presentation

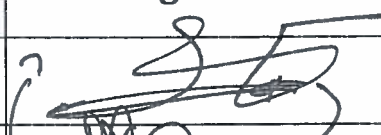

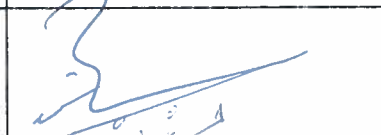

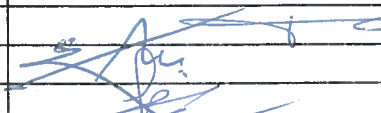

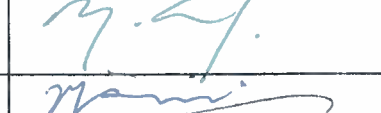
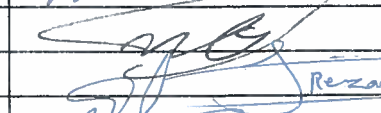


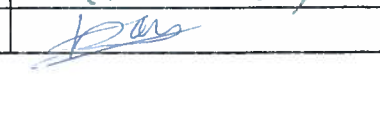






EU project
Presentation Iran - V

List of Participants

LPAC meeting of “Enhancing integrated natural resource management for the restoration of wetland ecosystems and support to alternative livelihoods development of local communities”

8 January 2020

Row	Name	Title	Signature
1	Mr. Mazen Gharzeddine	UNDP- Deputy Resident Representative	
2	Mr. Ali Nazaridoust	UNDP- Head of Programme and Assistant Resident Representative	
3	Mr. Mohammadeza Khosravi	Programme Support Unit Analyst	
4	Mr. Mohsen Soleymani	UNDP- Programme Analyst	
5	Mr. Abbas Golriz	MFA	
6	Ms. Khanvandi	MFA	
7	Mr. Ali Arvahi	Wetlands Project/DoE	
8	Ms. Arezoo Ashrafizadeh	DoE	
9	Ms. Nazli Alavi	UNDP - Head of Procurement & Admin Unit	(item 14)
10	Ms. Negar Arefi	UNDP- Assistant Resident Representative	
11	Mr. Hessam Mirnezami	UNDP Head of Finance	
12	Mr. Alireza Mohammadi	UNDP Programme Analyst	
13	Ms. Asieh Rezayi	SGP Programme Assistant	
14	Mr. Danial Shakiba	UNDP PSU intern	
15	Ms. Parvin Pakzad Manesh	Global Fund HIV Project Analyst	
16	Ms. Nazli Alavi	UNDP Head of Procurement	
17	Ms. Negar Arefi	UNDP ARR and Head of Operations	(item 8)
18	Ms. Sara Koochaki	UNDP- Programme Associate	

Tehran, Iran
12th September 2019

“Enhancing integrated natural resource management for the restoration of wetland ecosystems and support to alternative livelihoods development of local communities”

UNDP Iran
January 2020

Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC)

1


Agenda of Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) Meeting on 08 January 2020

Row	Sessions	Time	Facilitator
1	Presentation on LPAC Procedure	15:00 – 15:15	Mr. Muzan Gharasodin
2	Presentation on “Enhancing integrated natural resource management for the restoration of wetland ecosystems and support to alternative livelihoods development of local communities” Project Document	15:15 – 15:45	Mohsen Sahyanti Pasobahani
3	Question and Answer, provide reviewing	15:45 – 16:15	Meeting attendees
4	Decision making and conclusion	16:15-16:30	Acting manager

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Background Information

- The Sistan and Baluchestan province is the second largest province in Iran with an area of 180,726 km², a population of 2.5 million.
- The Hamoun wetlands have a population of more than 66,000 inhabitants, and more than 400,000 people inhabit Sistan district.
- The province borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan in the east, sharing water resources with them.




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Background Information

The Hamoun system - Natural conditions

- The Sistan area is located in the north of the Sistan and Baluchestan province and one of the driest regions of Iran at the tail end of a river basin shared with Afghanistan.
- It comprises three geographical sub-units: (i) the upper plain of the inland delta of the Helmand (Hirmand) river, which is mostly drained and used for agriculture; (ii) the wetlands (Hamoun) covering the lower delta plain and (iii) a hypersaline lake (Gowd-e-Zareh) in the lowest part of the basin.



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Background Information

Livelihoods in the Hamoun wetlands

- Only 8 out of the 200 villages that constitute the region have more than 1,000 residents.
- Sistan and Baluchestan province is the poorest province of Iran, with 53 percent of people living with less than \$5.5 per day PPP in 2016. Provincial poverty rates seem to be correlated with the low level of urbanization, employment, inequality and access to infrastructure observed in province World Bank, Iran Economic Monitor.
- In 2018 the population growth rate was 3%, and the unemployment percentage in the same year was 18.6%. The young population represents 67% of the total population and is the segment that is most affected by the unemployment

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Development Challenges

- Inefficient Land and water management
- Lack of adaptive approaches for livelihood opportunities
- Lack of multi-stakeholder coordination/ management

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Project Information

Project Title: "Enhancing integrated natural resource management for the restoration of wetland ecosystems and support to alternative livelihoods development of local communities"

Implementing Partner: Department of Environment of Iran

Total resources required:	USD 11,206,000	
Total resources allocated:	UNDP TRAC:	100,000
	Donor (EU):	11,106,000

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Policy Framework

- Contribution towards the implementation of the 8th Five-Year Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran
 - Article 22
 - Article 27
- Contributing to the implementation of the *Hamoun Wetlands Integrated Management Plan*

Objective 1

Restoration Improvement and Protection of Biodiversity in the Wetlands

Objective 2

Addressing Degrading Soil and Water Conditions and Control of Dust Storms

Objective 3

Increased Awareness and Participation, Improved Livelihood, and Sustainable Utilization of the Wetlands

Objective 4

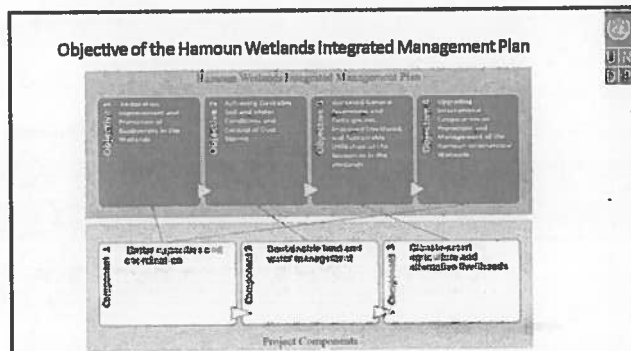
Upgrading International Cooperation on Protection and Management of the Hamoun Wetlands

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Contribution and links to UNDP documents

- CPD OUTCOME 1: Responsible government agencies formulate, implement and monitor integrated natural resource management, low carbon economy, and climate change policies and programmes more effectively (UNDAF outcomes 1.1 and 1.2).
- CPD OUTCOME 3: Relevant government agencies formulate, implement and monitor their social welfare, poverty eradication and sustainable employment policies and programmes more effectively (UNDAF Outcomes 3.1 and 3.5)
- Indicative Output(s) with gender marker: GEN 2

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Project Methodology

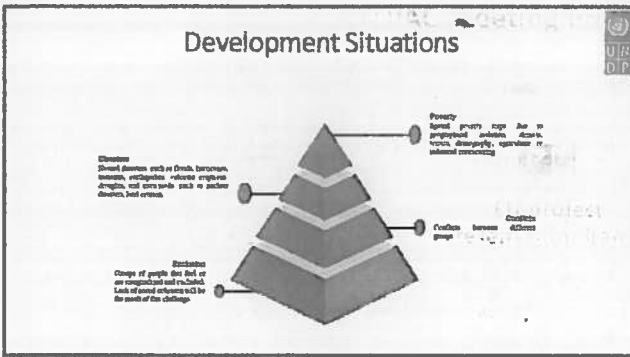
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Area-Based Development (ABD)

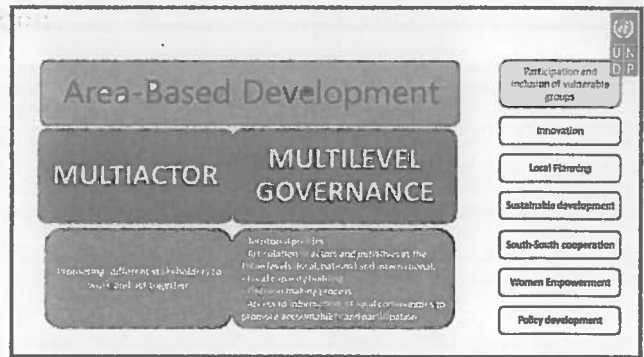
The focus is on institutional linkages and integration across sectors for a given territory. It emphasizes the need to understand the interdependencies among sectors and institutions in a given area across areas to promote cohesive development processes.

- ABD approaches use the geographic 'area' as the main entry point for intervention, rather than a sector or target group.
- Area-based programming is widely used in conflict-affected parts of Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, South and Central Asia.
- Key principles are:
 - Endogenous development
 - Common vision
 - Articulation and coordination
 - Strategic planning and participation

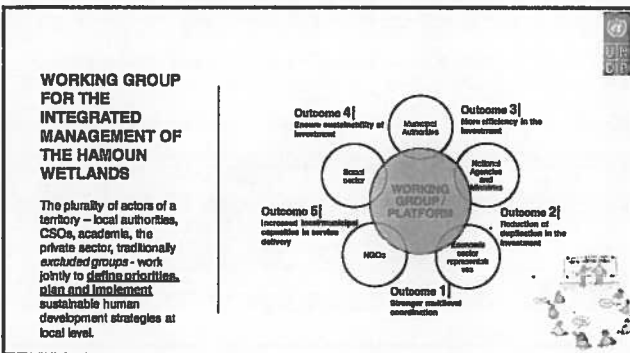
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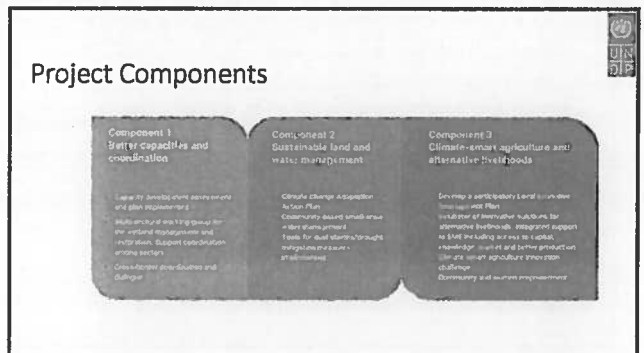
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Results Framework - Outputs

Activities	Key Activities	Amount (\$)
1.1	Carry out a comprehensive capacity and needs analysis within existing institutional frameworks in order to understand gaps and propose solutions for intervention	88,056
1.2	Develop and implement capacity building plans based on the finding from activity 1.1 to ensure climate resilience interventions	514,000
1.3	Organize local and transboundary events and initiatives such as joint technical working groups, cross-border markets and fairs, training and consultation workshop	228,000
Output I		830,056

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Results Framework - Outputs

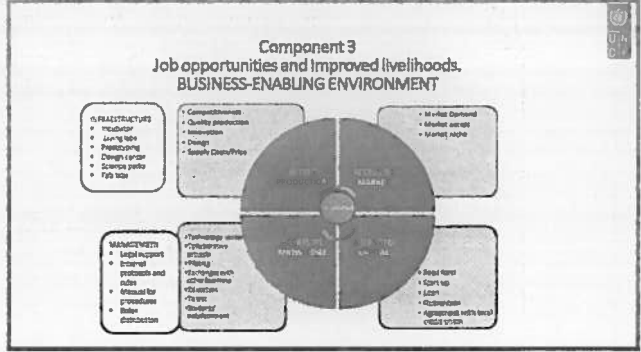
Activity	Key Activities	Amount (\$)
2.1	Develop a Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan for the implementation of the Integrated Hamoun Wetlands Management Plan	162,500
2.2	Support the implementation of the Action Plan on watershed management, water efficiency, wetland restoration, biodiversity conservation with special focus on climate change adaptation	1,797,000
2.3	Identify and implement mitigation measures to address the negative impact of dust storms/drought in the local community	980,000
Output II		2,907,300

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Results Framework - Outputs

Activities	Key Activities	Amount (\$)
3.1	Assess the biological carrying capacity of the Hamoun Landscape and identify local level opportunities for sustainable alternative livelihoods in a participatory manner	60,000
3.2	Develop a participatory Local Economic Development Plan	110,500
3.3	Support the implementation of the thematic Action Plan including a call for proposal for the local organizations and SMEs to propose business plans and projects on job generation in the region.	7,794,223
3.4	Joint action with UN agencies to ensure integral development of skills and entrepreneurship in the Hamoun-wetland	67,000
3.5	Support climate-smart agriculture intervention with special focus on efficient water management	1,995,000
Output III		4,908,318

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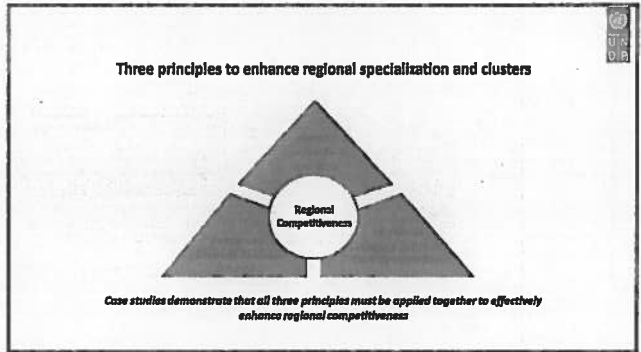


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Results Framework - Outputs

Outputs	EXPECTED OUTPUTS	Amount (\$)
Output 4.1	Project effectively managed	1 832 054

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Monitoring Plan

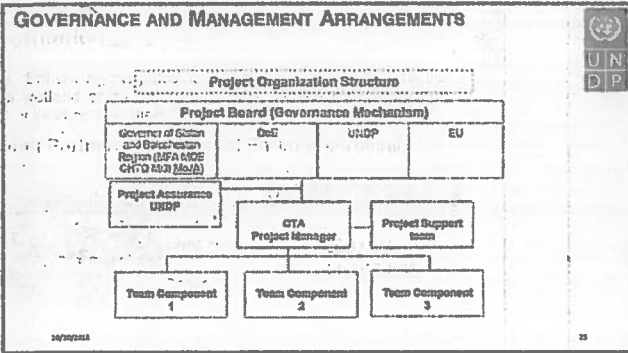
Monitoring Activity	For what	Frequency	Expected Action	Responsible Party
Quarterly Review	Progress and budget for the next quarter	Quarterly	Review the progress of activities and the budget	UNEP
Annual Review	Overall progress and budget for the year	Annually	Review the progress of activities and the budget	UNEP
Mid-term Review	Progress and budget for the first half of the year	Mid-term	Review the progress of activities and the budget	UNEP
Final Review	Overall progress and budget for the project	Final	Review the progress of activities and the budget	UNEP

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Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Title	Partners (if joint)	UNEP/UNEP Outcome	Relevant Development Goals	Key Evaluation Stakeholders	Cost and Source of Funding
Mid-term Evaluation		CPD OUTCOME 1 (UNEP Outcomes 1.1 and 1.2)	SDG 8	Local community representatives, local/provincial Gov./national Gov./ other government entities at various levels, UNEP	Source of Funding: UNEP
Final Evaluation		CPD OUTCOME 3 (UNEP Outcomes 3.1 and 3.2)	SDG 8	Local community representatives, local/provincial Gov./national Gov./ other government entities at various levels, UNEP	Source of Funding: UNEP

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ANNEX 1. Project Quality Assurance Report

PROJECT QA ASSESSMENT: DESIGN AND APPRAISAL

OVERALL PROJECT

Overall Project	Design	Appraisal	Implementation	Monitoring & Evaluation
...

DECISION

4. APPROVAL - The project is approved for implementation...

5. APPROVAL WITH QUALIFICATIONS - The project is approved with certain conditions...

6. REJECTION - The project is not approved for implementation...

RATING CRITERIA

For all questions, select the option that best reflects the project

STRATEGIC

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ANNEX 2. Social and Environmental Screening

ANNEX (II). Social and Environmental Screening

1. **Screening Questions**

- Does the project involve any of the following activities?
 - Construction of roads, bridges, or other infrastructure
 - Construction of dams, reservoirs, or other water control structures
 - Construction of large-scale housing or other residential developments
 - Construction of large-scale commercial or industrial developments
 - Construction of large-scale public works or other infrastructure

2. **Screening Results**

3. **Screening Summary**

4. **Screening Recommendations**

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ANNEX 3. Risk Analysis

ID	Description	Date Identified	Type
1	The project deals with a need for inter-sectoral and cross-border collaboration in the management of water resources and dynamic development	Dec 2018	Operational
2	Lack of skilled human resources, especially in the area of water control, hydrology and targeted community mobilization and conflict resolution, both in rural and urban municipalities	Dec 2018	Operational
3	Better top approaches and inter-sectoral cooperation still needs a practical platform to happen and lack of such platform may put project activities and progress at risk	Dec 2018	Operational

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Water Resource Development (WRD)

Water Resource Development (WRD) is a multi-sectoral approach to water management that focuses on the sustainable use of water resources for the benefit of all. It involves the development of water infrastructure, the improvement of water services, and the promotion of water conservation and efficiency. WRD is a key component of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

