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“Addressing Invasive Alien Species Threats at Key Marine Biodiversity Areas”

Mid-Term Review Report

GEF AGENCY: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

EXECUTING AGENCY: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry – General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks (NIM)

GEF Project ID: 9233

UNDP PIMS: 5733

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Prepared by Irina Golomina, International Consultant, June-October 2021

DISCLAIMER

This report is the work of an independent Evaluation Team and does not necessarily represent the views, or policies, or intentions of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and/or of the Government of Turkey.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BD	biodiversity
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
GD	General Directorate
GDFA	General Directorate for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
GDNCNP	General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
IAS	invasive alien species
IP	Implementing Partner
MariAS	“Addressing Invasive Alien Species Threats at Key Marine Biodiversity Areas” Project
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review(er)
MoTI	Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure
N/A	Not Applicable
NIM	National Implementation
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PM	Project Manager
PPG	Project Preparatory Grant
PRF	Project Results Framework
ProDoc	Project Document
Q	Quarter
SC	Steering Committee
SESP	Social and Environmental and Social Screening Protocol
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound
TerIAS Project Turkey Project	Addressing of Invasive Alien Species Threats in Terrestrial Areas and Inland Waters in Turkey Project
ToR	Terms of Reference
U/A	Unable to Assess
UNDP CO	United Nations Development Programme Country Office
Y	Project year

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This report was prepared by Irina Golomina, International Consultant (irina.bredneva@gmail.com), through August 2021. The mid-term reviewer would like to express her gratitude to all project partners and team members who took part in the mid-term review (MTR) process. Their contribution was vital for the success of the MTR exercise, especially taking into account that no field mission was possible due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and the MTR relied solely on document analysis and online stakeholder interviews.

The MTR consultant would like to extend her sincere gratitude to the personnel of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office in Turkey and the project team for organizing a smooth a comprehensive MTR process: Dr. Öykü Uluçay, UNDP CO Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst for her constant feedback and comprehensive guidance on the MTR process and key deliverables; Mr. Nuri Özbağdatlı, UNDP CO Portfolio Manager for his invaluable insight and strategic input; Ms. Hatice Dinç, UNDP CO Projects Coordinator for her continuous contribution and sharing the burden with the Project Team during the most difficult part of the year. Special praise for the dedication, support and understanding to the Project Team: Ms. Iraz Uran Özaltınli, Project Associate who supplied the MTR with all principle data and documents and responded to numerous questions and provided clarifications; Mr. Harun Güçlüsoy, Project Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), for accommodating the numerous MTR questions and providing an absolutely essential country context and linking the project developments to the international trends; and, last but definitely not least, to Mr. Mehmet Gölge, Project Manager, for his professionalism and commitment throughout the entire MTR process and beyond.

I would like to convey my gratitude to Dr. Irfan Uysal, Project Coordinator at the Implementing Partner, the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, for finding the time on a Friday evening before the week of Eid-al-Adha to deliver a fantastic interview session and setting forward a very special mood – based on his institutional memory as one of the project developers, his genuine interest, passion and a feeling of strong ownership, both as a project developer and main management partner. My special appreciation extends further to Mr. Muhammed Çolak, Deputy General Director of Nature Conservation and National Parks, for a comprehensive interview and the high-level assurance of the project relevance, its value, the explanations of the role of the Directorate and its mandate and capacity of an Implementing Partner for the project.

The two other main interview sessions with the principal governmental stakeholders, the General Directorate for Maritime and the General Directorate for Fisheries and Aquaculture, were extremely informative for many aspects of the MTR. The project partners at both directorates, Mr. Turgay Buyuran and Ms. Filiz Eker were more than helpful in providing comprehensive answers to the complex questions raised by MTR. Through meeting them and discussing issues around marine IAS management, the level of national ownership and the outstanding technical capacities and expertise available with the key governmental partners of the project were more than proven.

The full use of partners' contributions was enabled through an excellent interpretation quality provided by Ms. Deniz Eğerci. The MTR consultant would like to express her special thanks to Deniz and her overall appreciation to interview phase organizers, Serenas Group, a leading company in Turkey providing meeting and event organization services. The quality of organizational support was exceptional; a scenario where the organization of professional online consultations is outsourced to a third party is highly recommended as best practice, saving time and providing a stress-free environment both to the participants and the commissioning unit.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Midterm Review (MTR) of the UNDP-GEF full-sized project titled “Addressing Invasive Alien Species Threats at Key Marine Biodiversity Areas” (PIMS 5733).

The MTR was performed by Ms. Irina Golomina, an independent international consultant.

“Addressing Invasive Alien Species Threats at Key Marine Biodiversity Areas Project” (*MarIAS*) is a 5-year project with the GEF budget of \$3,344,654 implemented by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in cooperation with the UNDP. The project started on 19 October 2018 and is in its third year of implementation.

The project strategy follows a three-stage hierarchical approach for addressing IAS outlined by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): prevention, control, and mitigation. The long-term project goal is to minimize the negative impacts of IAS in order to support the conservation of the globally significant native biodiversity of Turkey’s coastal and marine ecosystems. The project objective is “to ensure the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems through strengthened capacities and investment in prevention, detection, control and management of Invasive Alien Species.” The project also seeks to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment, to the extent relevant and feasible within the scope of the project. In order to achieve the project objective, and address the barriers, the project’s intervention has been organized into three components:

- *Component 1.* Effective national policy framework on Invasive Alien Species
- *Component 2.* Capacity building, knowledge and information sharing systems to address the IAS threats
- *Component 3.* Investment in sustainable management, prevention, eradication, and control of IAS and restoration of IAS-degraded habitat at key marine and coastal area.

The project works at both the national level and at the site level, at four pilot sites that cover the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara, the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean: Igneada Longoz Forests National Park, Kırklareli (sea part), Ayvalık Islands Nature Park, Balıkesir, Marmara Islands, Balıkesir, and Samandıra, Hatay (Mediterranean Seal Habitat, Sea Turtle Nesting and Spawning Area).

The main stakeholders of the project are central public institutions and provincial units, local administrations, academia, NGOs, fishermen, and local people. The main sectoral institutions involved are the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Commerce, the Coast Guard Command, and the Gendarmerie General Command.

Table 1: Project Information Table

Project Title: Addressing Invasive Alien Species Threats at Key Marine Biodiversity Areas		
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #): 5733	PIF Approval Date: 2016	
GEF Project ID (PMIS #): 9233	CEO Endorsement Date: October 2017	
ATLAS Business Unit, Award # Proj. ID: TUR10, Award ID 00097993, Project ID00101497	Project Document (ProDoc) Signature Date (date project began): October 18, 2018	
Country(ies): Turkey	Date project manager hired: [clarify with CO]	
Region: Europe and CIS	Inception Workshop date: November 22, 2018	
Focal Area: Biodiversity	Midterm Review completion date: September 2021	
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective: BD-2 Program 4 Outcome 4.1 Improved management frameworks to prevent, control, and manage invasive alien species (IAS)	Planned planed closing date: October 2023	
Trust Fund [indicate GEF TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF]: GEF TF	If revised, proposed op. closing date: n/a	
Executing Agency/ Implementing Partner: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry		
Other execution partners: n/a		
Project Financing	<i>at CEO endorsement (US\$)</i>	<i>at Midterm Review (US\$)</i>
[1] GEF financing:	\$3,344,654	\$638,912
[2] UNDP contribution:	\$200,000	
[3] Government:	\$13,000,000	
[4] Other partners:	n/a	
[5] Total co-financing [2 + 3+ 4]:	\$13,200,000	
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1 + 5]	\$16,544,654	

[Project co-financing at MTR, according to the Guidelines, should be sourced from the last PIR. No verifiable PIR data on co-financing was available thus far]

COVID-19 pandemic and project performance

The project performance has been severely affected by the restrictions associated with COVID-19 pandemic – such as quarantine measures, partial or total lockdowns, travel restrictions, the closure of offices, virtual working, recommendations to stay at home and other social distancing rules. Many plans of the project have been put on hold or been delayed due to the pandemic. Stakeholder consultations and engagement activities were seriously limited by travel restrictions and social distancing rules. The new normality of distance working has negatively impacted the quality of the stakeholder engagement effort. Many meetings and consultations have been postponed and relevant activities virtually put on hold, such as legal and regulatory reform, discussion of financial incentives, and the establishment of monitoring systems. As reported for the 2020 response to Vertical Fund COVID survey, although virtual meetings are held, the desired efficiency is not achieved. The communication limitations have negatively affected the

detailed project planning; several field-level activities on research, stakeholder meetings, awareness-raising had to be re-programmed and postponed. Most importantly, the 2020 response to Vertical Fund COVID survey confirms the rapid switch of governmental priorities to emergency needs.

The COVID-19 crisis is expected to have severely negative consequences for Turkey. The pandemic challenge continues: large numbers of COVID-19 cases are still occurring and there is uncertainty about the future trajectory of the pandemic.

The MTR attempted to assess the impact of the ongoing pandemic crisis on the delivery of project activities and, by extension, on achievements. The government counterparts and specifically the project Implementing Partner have confirmed that the project objective and individual outcomes are still a priority and will be supported through the national level co-financing. They have also confirmed that the COVID-19 restrictions caused several delays and complications to the implementation of project plans. As the restrictions continue, the risk of further delays remain.

MTR ratings and summary assessment

The MTR assigns the overall progress rating as Marginally Satisfactory (MS).

The project has produced a number of tangible results, instruments and mechanisms towards the achievement of its objective and results. The highlights include:

1. The project ensured a comprehensive analysis and update of information on the main pathways and distribution of marine IAS; the identified priority pathways for invasions as well as proposed methods for prevention of entry will create a backbone for the road map towards managing and controlling the IAS pathways in Turkey.
2. The project, supported by the principal stakeholders within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, has established a functional partnership with a parallel EU-funded TerIAS Project targeting terrestrial IAS, and has sound plans of collaborative work on the development of the National IAS Strategy and Action Plan, and support to the National IAS Technical Advisory Group.
3. The project has initiated the work on the marine IAS Protocols and Quarantine Mechanisms. However, the exact roadmap for the preparation, appraisal and enforcement of sector guidelines targeting the marine aquarium trade, recreational yachting and diving sectors is not yet clear (at least to the MTR); the scope and level of sectoral stakeholder engagement remains an issue at the project mid-term.
4. Comprehensive field research and monitoring at the project sites were conducted in 2020 and 2021, despite all complications and issues related to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The project should be highly praised for the effort!
5. The project facilitated the access of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure to the Guidelines of the Ballast Water Management Convention by translating those into Turkish; this was an essential contribution to the preparation of the Action Plans for the implementation of the Convention Directives by the Ministry. Another, more sizeable and significant, and highly innovative increment to MOTI's capacity building is the e-DNA trainings for monitoring of ballast water.
6. The project has commissioned a baseline awareness study that is noteworthy in terms of scope and level.
7. The project's communication and awareness-raising program has been prepared and its implementation is underway since the second quarter of 2020. As is the case with all the project products, the level of planning, detail, coverage and the overall scope of the exercise exceeds one's expectations.

8. The project stakeholders highly praise the relevance and value of the Lionfish Knowledge Exchange Workshop that was held on 04-05 November, 2020 (via Zoom).

9. The project should be praised for the development and implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy and Action Plan and introducing various and very relevant gender-sensitive elements into the project activity planning and implementation.

The project performance has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The negative impact relates mainly to the project work on the ground at the pilot sites (Outcome 3) and the stakeholder engagement activities in general. As the pandemic continues and the restrictions are still in place, it is impossible to predict whether the project adaptive management to be applied after MTR will make it possible to make up for the critical delays during the first half of project implementation. Apart from COVID-19 impacts, the project partners see no major reasons for delays and/or deviations from the originally approved strategy. The Implementing Partner confirms the relevance of the project, its value, and expected benefits for better management of marine IAS in the country. Both the Implementing Partner and the Project Team share the opinion that, apart from the risks and delays associated with the pandemic, the project seems generally on track to reach the expected results by project end.

In view of the MTR, the major shortcomings relate to the following key aspects of project performance:

- Limited stakeholder engagement and outreach, particularly as concerns project site-based stakeholders;
- Delays with the establishment of key institutional sustainability mechanisms and elements;
- Significant delay with the development of the National IAS Strategy and Action Plan and site-specific IAS Management Plans;
- Significant delays with the regulatory developments, so that the remaining project timeframe is insufficient for the draft regulations to be agreed, appraised, enacted, and set for implementation and enforcement;
- The fiscal incentive mechanisms developed by the project have been assessed as ineffective by the project partners;
- Limited progress at the level of project sites (Outcome 3).

Progress towards results (please refer to the ratings below) was assessed based on the analysis presented in Table 2 of the MTR report.

There were no mid-term targets set in the Project Results Framework (Logframe). For several indicators, the progress is impossible to define, while for several others the progress should be expected towards the project completion. The progress on the majority of indicators does not seem sufficient to demonstrate that the project is well on track towards the achievement of the objective-level targets.

Even though the MTR scope and ToR do not require an assessment of project implementation progress at the level of individual outputs and outcomes, the MTR decided to perform such an analysis as a supporting tool for the definition of ratings for Progress Towards Results. Table 4 of the MTR report serves the purpose of assigning the implementation rating to individual project Outputs and Outcomes, where the Outcome-level implementation progress ratings were assigned based on Workplan Output ratings. Outcome 1 is rated MS, Outcome 2 - S (primarily based on the awareness raising activities), while MTR finds it somewhat difficult to define the rating for Outcome 3 because of either lack of progress or lack of information in the project PIRs. Having reviewed all the individual ratings for the Outputs, the MTR

assigned the average ratings for the Outcomes as indicated above which match the Progress Towards Results outcome ratings (MS, S and U/A respectively¹).

There have been no critical risks identified for the remaining implementation period.

During the MTR, the project relevance has been confirmed, the national ownership demonstrated, and the high level of governmental partner's engagement proven.

The overall MS rating also reflects on the high expectations from the project at the level of the Implementing Partner. The project, being the only marine project in the GEF 6 portfolio in the region, brings in several flagman developments not only for Turkey, but also for neighboring Israel and Egypt, and was designed to bring in innovations and best practices for the Mediterranean region and beyond. For this to happen, the project should not be just on track, but go above and beyond in delivering results, and exceed expectations.

The project, at the design stage, was believed to set up strategic frameworks and institutional mechanisms in place to provide for long-term sustainability, replication and scale-up. Judging by the project reporting, there is a long way to go. One big and extremely relevant ambition that was confirmed by the IP but so far was not mainstreamed by the project is the joint regulations on marine IAS for Turkey and a coordination mechanism in place for the implementation of the comprehensive IAS management strategy nation-wide. Overall, the most significant question is if the project will be able to ensure for sustainability and to produce truly catalytic results for marine IAS management, or will it just barely manage to achieve the minimum expected results before completion. In view of the MTR, the project certainly has the potential to achieve truly significant results, particularly with respect to supporting institutional mechanisms and regulations for the nation-wide marine IAS management, and for raising awareness of marine IAS patterns. But much work remains, and in order to achieve outstanding project performance, the second half of project implementation will need to be much more intensive than the first half to achieve the expected results, to ensure efficiency and to make up for the delays and shortcomings of the first 2.5 years of project implementation. A project extension, in line with the GEF rules for the GEF 6 cycle projects, should definitely be considered and timely justified.

MTR ratings:

Progress Towards Results:

U/A for Project Objective (note: no mid-term targets in the Results Framework were established; most of the indicators are formulated in a way that the progress depends on Outcome 3 progress at project sites that was negatively hampered by COVID-19 impacts and restrictions; the progress will be possible to assess at the project FE)

MS for Outcome 1

S for Outcome 2

U/A for Outcome 3

¹ The MTR made a decision not to assign a specific rating to Progress Towards Results for the project Outcome 3 due to the limited scope of interviews and consultations related to the project work at the level of four project sites, which is the core of the Outcome 3 content. Specific indications of the limited progress for Outcome 3 include 7.7% budget delivery rate for Outcome 3 (mostly personnel costs); lack of progress with the Logframe indicators (as illustrated in Table 3); the very nature of the project reporting in the PIRs where most of the site-level outcomes and indicators are reported not in terms of project site impact but with a reference to more or less relevant indicators at the level of Objective or other Outcomes. Yet, it is the MTR opinion that assigning a rating, especially one within the "U" range would not be fair in the case where such rating is not supported with evidence from comprehensive site-level interviews and consultations. Hence, the U/A rating for the Outcome 3 has been chosen.

Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: MSSustainability: ML

Note: The ratings for the main evaluation criteria are narratively highlighted in the report; other ratings are not.

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	<i>Highly Satisfactory (HS)</i>	<i>The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.</i>
5	<i>Satisfactory (S)</i>	<i>The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.</i>
4	<i>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</i>	<i>The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.</i>
3	<i>Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)</i>	<i>The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.</i>
2	<i>Unsatisfactory (U)</i>	<i>The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.</i>
1	<i>Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)</i>	<i>The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.</i>

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	<i>Highly Satisfactory (HS)</i>	<i>Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.</i>
5	<i>Satisfactory (S)</i>	<i>Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.</i>
4	<i>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</i>	<i>Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.</i>
3	<i>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</i>	<i>Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.</i>
2	<i>Unsatisfactory (U)</i>	<i>Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.</i>
1	<i>Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)</i>	<i>Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.</i>

Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)		
4	<i>Likely (L)</i>	<i>Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project’s closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future</i>
3	<i>Moderately Likely (ML)</i>	<i>Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review</i>
2	<i>Moderately Unlikely (MU)</i>	<i>Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on</i>
1	<i>Unlikely (U)</i>	<i>Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained</i>

Additional ratings where appropriate

Not Applicable (N/A)

Unable to Assess (U/A)

Key recommendations

The specific recommendations of the MTR are as follows:

1. The MTR praises the high level of involvement and commitment of the Project Implementing Partner, and appreciates the level of cooperation and trust between the PIU and the IP. However, based on the feedback received by the MTR, all partners, meaning the IP, the PIU, and UNDP could have extended an extra effort to ensure closer, positive, functional and more effective communication with each other. MTR supports one particular IP's request which is to share all draft technical ToRs and specifications with the IP Coordinator before those are posted for procurement. A reasonable timeframe, like 7 working days, should be established to ensure the IP's review and feedback. It is also advised that another timeline, around 10 working days, is established for the review and subsequent appraisal of the technical project products by the IP. A joint decision should be made in case third-party technical expertise is required to review a complex product, collect opinions and comments, and work with the author on a harmonized final product. Such expertise, which is meant to implement a "second opinion" approach as requested by the IP, should be made available and budgeted ad-hoc, as appropriate. For this, a standard suggestion is to have a modest contingency budget available throughout the next two years of project implementation.
2. A need to improve the quality of project technical deliverables and reporting products was communicated to the MTR by the principal project stakeholders. A second opinion approach mentioned above should also be instrumental for harmonizing the product quality expectations with the project timelines, without adding further complexity to the review and appraisal processes that tend to cause project implementation delays. The IP has confirmed the expectation from the project to produce exemplary products and deliver best practices. At the same time, meticulous attention to detail combined with a certain level of micro-management, combined with the ever-changing priorities and pressing external factors contributes to implementation delays, complexities and frustrations. In this regard, a reasonable perfectionist approach is deemed appropriate; the project should be guided by the implementation arrangements described in the Project Document and practical implementation scenarios successfully tested with the same Implementing Partner. As a change from business-as-usual, the Implementing Partner is advised to consider giving more authority to the PIU where it concerns event management, PR and media contacts, external communications, issuance of invitations and other routine/regular interaction with the project partners. The IP should empower the PIU for continuous and meaningful stakeholder engagement and communication. Overall, both the IP and the PIU are advised to work out concrete practical solutions aimed to increase efficiency, accelerate project performance and ensure multi-stakeholder ownership of project endeavors and products.
3. All the stakeholders interviewed by the MTR have confirmed the necessity to improve the coordination and collaboration required for project planning and implementation of project activities. The MTR suggests the following areas for improved coordination:
 - The MTR notes the coordination of the mainstream national-level effort with the partner EU-funded TerIAS project. According to the IP and GDFA, the two projects work collaboratively. However, the roles of the two projects for policy/regulatory reforms, development of the national IAS strategy and its implementation mechanisms should be clearly defined between the two projects; the impact, limitations and assumptions of both partner projects should be considered as part of adaptive management. The MTR would mildly recommend that the project discusses its role and mandate with both GDNCNP and GFDA (the focal point for both

- TerIAS and MarIAS) to make sure that the GEF project increment and added value is adequately captured and pronounced through the project publicity and outreach effort. This is also relevant for the joint work of two projects on the draft by-laws on Control and Management of IAS in line with EU legislation; this work has clearly been prioritized and led by the TerIAS project, which is perfectly fine, as long as the GEF increment and value of the MarIAS contribution is adequately captured and presented, at least for the project reporting and outside assessments.
- GDFA, confirmed by the IP as the project's "main and indispensable partner", should be engaged more meaningfully and effectively. As has been confirmed by GDFA, particular aspects where a more comprehensive approach to cooperation and engagement is required are project planning, decision-making, and fieldwork.
 - The project should become instrumental in implementing the IP's intention and effort to cooperate on inter-sectoral issues within the respective mandates of other DGs. In particular, this refers to the intention of producing national regulations and a joint IAS National Strategy and Action Plan, with the involvement of all relevant DGs and institutes. All three DGs confirmed their perception of the project as a locomotive for innovations and best practices, both those that should be brought from elsewhere to increase the national capacities and those that will hopefully be created within this project to be available for other countries.
 - In view of the MTR, the Project Steering Committee could potentially provide a platform for intersectoral coordination and technical discussion on the issues around the control and management of marine IAS, at least before the National Technical Advisory Board gets functional. This would require a certain change in the scope and technical expertise required to support the SC decision-making which so far has been limited to project-specific issues only, while the meetings have been convened in a formal manner.
4. The MTR recommends that the project accelerates the performance as it concerns the development of the national policy and regulatory framework related to IAS in marine ecosystems, echoing the recommendation of the Project Steering Committee. The MTR emphasizes a need to identify concrete areas for the planned impact as part of the adaptive work planning, based on the ProDoc strategy and the changes in the institutional and regulatory baseline. The MTR recommends that the project team and the IP initiate work with the Ministry of Transport (DG for Maritime), as detailed in the ProDoc, where it concerns ballast water management and control, taking into account changes in the national priorities in response to the IMO directives. The MoTI (GD for Maritime) has confirmed their interest in developing the national ballast water regulations and standards in accordance with best practices, so the project increment can be in finding relevant best practices and working together with the MoTI to apply those to the case of Turkey.
 5. Adaptive Management. The project claims that no adaptive management elements have been applied during the first 2.5 years of project implementation. This arguably originates from definition differences where it concerns adaptive management. The MTR attempts to record the deviations between the original project Workplan, the yearly workplans for 2019-2021, and takes notice of specific cases of adaptive management that have been applied. The project is advised to use the tool developed by the MTR for further justification and recording of significant changes to the original workplans. This will help strategizing the interventions towards higher efficiency and limit the application of an ad-hoc approach when the project plans and acts mostly in response to "this moment" necessities and concerns.

6. One clear example of adaptive management applied so far is the project's work and plans related to fiscal incentives. The project should come up with a clear adaptive management scenario in response to the fact that the incentive programs proposed for Water Hyacinth, Lionfish and North Atlantic Starfish will not be accepted and implemented. Since it was decided to prepare a non-fiscal incentive program for the four targeted species (which was not mentioned among the SC decisions or any adaptive management documentation available), an amendment to the project workplan should be prepared and agreed to with the key partners, including GDFA. Lessons learned from the preparation of a fiscal incentive program should be available for the adaptive management planning to ensure full relevance of the newly proposed strategy and the concrete results on the ground.
7. The MTR notes one specific weakness in the project implementation strategy that is a lack of capacity needs assessments and training needs assessments. It is somewhat unclear as to why specific topics for capacity-building activities and trainings are being selected. The project is strongly advised to work with the MoTI on the ballast water management capacity needs assessment as an essential adaptive management element for Outcome 1.5. Based on the results of such a capacity needs assessment, a concrete workplan should be produced, and the indicators showing the capacity changes as a result of the GEF increment should be developed. In case the capacity building increment will be limited solely to eDNA trainings and equipment, an indicator showing the MoTI's capacity to obtain, analyse, process and use the genetic data for decision-making on the ballast water control where it concerns the IAS contamination vessels' checkup should be offered as an output-level indicator for the Logframe. The MoTI confirmed their readiness to sit down and discuss a more systematic approach to capacity building under Output 1.5 with the project team.
8. The project should accelerate Outcome 3 implementation and develop an implementation scenario that will be reflective of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions related to stakeholder consultations and fieldwork, on the one hand, and will make up for the significant delays in Outcome 3 performance demonstrated so far, on the other. One essential element of the project strategy that raises concerns is the preparation of site-specific IAS management plans, that, according to the ProDoc ToC, were to be developed during the first half of the project. The project team should analyze the reasons behind low delivery and delays, see if a fundamental change of the currently applied top-down approach to intervention planning is required, and come up with an adaptive management strategy for Outcome 3 that will ensure that the project makes up for the delays and complications that have occurred.
9. Stakeholder Engagement. The project is advised to revise the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and implement a sound strategy towards meaningful engagement of the main national-level partners, the two DGs and the Ministry of Environment, and the site-based project stakeholders, along with NGOs, academia and other secondary stakeholders.
10. The following recommendations are offered on project co-financing:
 - The project should develop a process for yearly confirmation and verification of the project co-financing. Every year, as part of the annual reporting (PIR) exercise, the Project Team should be collecting firm evidence to confirm the co-financing. Copies of evidence should be maintained by the CO for any audit purpose, as well as made available for verification by the independent project terminal evaluation. For the parallel co-financing from sectoral ministries, specific guidance with the relevance criteria should be developed by UNDP CO in cooperation with the sectoral stakeholders, to ensure reliability and consistency of reporting and evidence. So far, the MTR can recommend producing a table similar to ProDoc Annex Q

- with details on GDNCNP contribution, and having it detailed, appraised and submitted officially by GDNCNP.
- One way to ensure meaningful engagement of the key stakeholders is through ensuring parallel co-financing of project activities. So far, the only co-financing partner (apart from UNDP) is GDNCNP. It is the opinion of the MTR that if, for example, the MoTI had concrete co-financing obligations towards the project, that could have been more proactive in collaboration with the project, would take a more active role in defining the project increment and ensuring that the project supports their mainstream activity and provides stimulus and resource where the baseline is insufficient and progress is limited.
11. A comprehensive assessment of the relevance, value and effectiveness of the project awareness-raising programme is recommended as an add-on to the end-of-project awareness level survey.
 12. The MTR confirms the necessity for up to 18-months project extension beyond the original timeframe. UNDP is advised to consider cash co-financing of USD 200,000 (versus planned cash USD 30,000 and parallel USD 170,000) to cover the extra management costs (PMC) for the additional six months once and if the no-cost extension is granted.

INTRODUCTION: MTR SCOPE, APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the MTR was to identify project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, assess any cross-cutting issues in contribution to achieving the objectives, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation for the remaining period of the project), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions to be implemented in the second half of project implementation.

According to the MTR ToR (Annex 1), the objective of the MTR was to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR reviewed the project's strategy, its risks to sustainability, the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation. The MTR highlights issues requiring decisions and actions, and initial lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. The MTR also looks at cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, inclusiveness, human rights approach, environmental safeguards, climate change, etc. The findings of the MTR review were incorporated as recommendations for enhanced implementation during the remainder of the project's term.

The MTR process closely followed the [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#). The MTR Ratings were provided for the following Evaluation Categories:

- i. Project strategy
- ii. Progress Towards Results
- iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management
- iv. Sustainability

As pointed out in [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#), MTR is, first of all, a monitoring tool to identify challenges and outline corrective actions to ensure that a project is on track to achieve the declared results by its completion. The MTR is called to open opportunities for discussion and adaptive change in the project. The MTR in its scope and purpose is different from the final evaluation of project results, as the focus of the review and evaluation process is not the same. The MTR will retain its focus on the following key aspects:

- Assessment of progress towards results;
- Monitoring of implementation and adaptive management to improve outcomes;
- Early identification of risks to sustainability;
- Emphasis on supportive recommendations.

The MTR consultant attempted to delivering a product that is clear, succinct, and reflective of the analyses and consultations held during the process; a product that is supported by evidence, reflective of the project team and partners' views and ideas, and, most importantly, a product that will be of use for the project implementing partners and the project team as a key adaptive management tool and reference after the project mid-term.

MTR hopes to have been able to provide a reason and open the floor for discussion, corrective action, and adaptive management following the changing project implementation environment and factors affecting the project performance. It is the MTR's consultant's sincere wish that the project team and management partners benefit from investing their time and effort to support the MTR, and that the recommendations resulting from the MTR process are relevant and useful for the project implementation after the mid-term.

The MTR followed a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts, project consultants, the UNDP Country Office, the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Specialist, and other implementers and key beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The application of the participatory approach and the scope of the stakeholder consultations for this MTR was very much limited due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The MTR included several comprehensive interviews with key government stakeholders but no field mission or visit to project field-based activity sites will be possible. The international MTR consultant was using communication tools such as email, Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp.

The comprehensive discussions with the project team were an essential element of the MTR process and were scheduled to take place before the interviews with the key development and management partners for the project. A dedicated discussion of the Project Results Framework (PRF) and project progress with the key PRF indicators was organised.

At the decision of the Commissioning Unit and the Project Team, the MTR focused the interviews on the principal government stakeholders as outlined above. Each interview was prepared using an individual Interview Protocol to collect evaluative evidence required by the assignment. The principal format for the Interview Protocol in Annex 3 will serve as the basis for the individual interview forms. The Commissioning Unit engaged a top-quality third-party service provider to organize the interview and provide translations services.

The MTR consultant had proposed to combine the principal interviews with an online questionnaire survey to outreach the maximum possible range of project stakeholders. Thus, the project beneficiaries, partners, and those who are affected by the project activities would have had a floor to express their expectations and concerns. With the limited communication means available for the last year of the project implementation, the MTR questionnaires could have served as a mechanism for the stakeholders to get engaged, heard, and get comprehensive feedback as part of the MTR management response activities. The questionnaire in [Annex 4](#) has been prepared based on the MTR Evaluation Matrix, the SESP principles standards and risks, the specific project plans and results as stated in the project workplans and reports, and the scope and the results of the baseline awareness study. The Commissioning Unit took an extra effort to accommodate the MTR requirement for a survey, finalized the proposed questionnaire and communicated it to 22 stakeholder representatives as listed in Annex 4, via e-mail. As a result of a survey, seven (7) responses were received and analysis by the MTR.

Altogether, the evaluation included the following activities:

- ✓ As a data collection and analysis guidance tool, the evaluation matrix included as Annex 2 was used to guide the evaluation. Evidence gathered during the evaluation was cross-checked among as many sources as practicable, to validate the findings;
- ✓ A desk review was made of available reports and other documents as per MTR ToR (Annex 1);
- ✓ Interviews with the key government stakeholders as outlined above;
- ✓ E-mail MTR questionnaire (see [Annex 4](#) for detail);
- ✓ The project results framework and the draft 2021 PIR DO section were used as an evaluation tool, in assessing attainment of the project objective and outcomes against indicators;
- ✓ Co-financing data supported by evidence. The co-financing evidence is still expected from the project Implementing Partner; the MTR recommends that UNDP CO follows-up on this and suggests that the co-financing evidence might be delivered as a table similar to Annex Q of the Project Document with details on GDNCNP contribution.

PROJECT STRATEGY

Project strategy

Invasive alien species (IAS) pose one of the greatest threats to biodiversity and ecosystems globally and have been identified as one of the principal threats to Turkey's marine biodiversity by the Government. There are two major pathways for IAS into Turkey's marine waters: The Suez Canal and "ship-mediated transport" (e.g. ballast water). The functioning of the Suez Canal, the discharge of ballast water by ships into the seas, the effects of climate change and the poor biodiversity of the receiving environment facilitated the settlement of new species. While the number of alien species in the Mediterranean exceeded 1,000, this number in the Turkish seas was 422 in 2011 and reached 539 as of 2021. Of these, 105 are invasive alien species.

"Addressing Invasive Alien Species Threats at Key Marine Biodiversity Areas Project" (MariAS) is a 5-year project with the GEF budget of \$3,344,654 implemented by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in cooperation with the UNDP. The project started on 19 October 2018 and is in its third year of implementation.

The project strategy follows a three-stage hierarchical approach for addressing IAS outlined by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): prevention, control, and mitigation. The long-term project goal is to minimize the negative impacts of IAS in order to support the conservation of the globally significant native biodiversity of Turkey's coastal and marine ecosystems. The project objective is "to ensure the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems through strengthened capacities and investment in prevention, detection, control and management of Invasive Alien Species." The project also seeks to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, to the extent relevant and feasible within the scope of the project. In order to achieve the project objective, and address the barriers, the project's intervention has been organized into three components:

- *Component 1.* Effective national policy framework on Invasive Alien Species
- *Component 2.* Capacity building, knowledge and information sharing systems to address the IAS threats
- *Component 3.* Investment in sustainable management, prevention, eradication, and control of IAS and restoration of IAS-degraded habitat at key marine and coastal area.

The project works at both the national level and at the site level, at four pilot sites that cover the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara, the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean: Igneada Longoz Forests National Park, Kırklareli (sea part), Ayvalık Islands Nature Park, Balıkesir, Marmara Islands, Balıkesir, and Samandağ, Hatay (Mediterranean Seal Habitat, Sea Turtle Nesting and Spawning Area).

The project is fully relevant and is well aligned with the national priorities of the government of Turkey. The Project Document and the overall project design reflect the highest standard and quality that has been applied by Mr. Josh Brann, the international project developer in GEF projects through several decades for a variety of GEF-funded projects. The project strategy is very clear, the justifications for individual project interventions are perfectly sound, and the logic behind the project design is visible even to those who might not have sufficient experience in IAS projects strategizing. The project addresses a very significant development challenge, and the barriers and threats at different levels are relevant and well described. The project document includes a detailed and very well-developed Theory of Change. The PPG consultations seem to have been comprehensive and inclusive and have sufficiently informed the project development, however, as commented by the international project development consultant, the PPG could have benefitted from more comprehensive stakeholder consultations in the pilot regions. Despite that, the level of detail provided for the baseline country developments and expected national ownership for the project is remarkable. The lessons from other relevant projects were properly incorporated into the project design, as illustrated by a

separate ProDoc Annex M “Key Lessons and Good Practices from Previous GEF-funded IAS Projects, and Relevance for Proposed Turkey Marine IAS Project”.

The MTR confirms that the project design fully addresses the country priorities analysed in 2016-2017 during project development phase. The country ownership is re-confirmed. The project concept remains in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country, with an exception of the following design elements:

- Support to the implementation of the National Ballast Water Management Convention;
- Focus on IAS fiscal incentives.

The decision-making mechanisms and management arrangements proposed for the project are sound and reflect the UNDP-GEF rules and expectations from the GEF 6 cycle projects. The management arrangements set forth in the ProDoc are believed to be fully adequate for successfully running the project. The decision-making mechanisms reflect the GEF 6 standards and best practice in terms of transparency and effectiveness.

The project risk assessment at the design stage is adequate. The SESP procedure was somewhat on the formal side, reflective of the requirements and samples available back in 2017. The project is advised to revisit the SESP protocol based on the newly available standards and guidelines.

The gender issues have been raised in the project design in accordance with the requirements for the GEF 6 cycle projects. The gender mainstreaming elements have been significantly developed and expanded during the first years of project implementation, through a number of specific assessments and a gender mainstreaming strategy.

The project Inception Report confirmed the validity of the project strategy as presented in the Project Document. According to the Project Inception Report, since the approval of the project document by GEF Secretariat, no change has occurred within the legal and policy context of environmental legislation and regulations regarding the BD conservation as well as the management of coastal and marine ecosystems. However, Turkey had stepped into a new political transition phase right after the presidential and parliamentary elections held in June 2018. Following the elections, the elected president had identified new ministries, and as a result the executive agency of the Project, the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, has been merged with the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock and renamed as Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Following the restructuring, new ministers were identified and this is followed by major changes in the decision-maker levels of all general directorates.

After 2.5 years of project implementation, the project strategy is still valid in general and is still relevant to the national priorities, with a few exceptions discussed below in “adaptive management” sub-section.

Project Results Framework

The Results Framework is fit for purpose and addresses country priorities as confirmed by the Project Implementing Partner. The Logical Framework is model and shows the author’s recognizable trademarks in terms of the logic, adherence to the global guidance and GEF development practices, “SMART”ness of indicators and the overall high quality and in-depth analysis for the baseline assessments, target settings, risks and assumptions.

The project’s objectives and outcomes or components are clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame. However, as noted more than once through the report, the project implementation and the achievement of declared objective and results is being seriously affected by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The project start has also been affected by the presidential reform in Turkey (associated with a coup d’etat). Both factors together caused a slow start and significant delays throughout the first half of the project implementation. In view of the MTR, even with these delays and additional complication explained below, the project strategy remains feasible and the targets set should be achievable; in view of MTR, no significant

change to the project strategy is required, while several recommendations for adaptive change have been suggested in “Conclusions and Recommendations” section.

Due to the limited progress at the level of project sites and local level stakeholders, the MTR cannot confirm any beneficial development effects demonstrated so far. The current logframe indicators seem sufficient at the moment to capture the development effects and results. Once and if a project-born IAS incentive scheme is being implemented at the site-level generating benefits and opportunities for the local stakeholders, these effects can be captured within the Outcome 3 Logframe indicators and reporting lines. The project has a sound gender strategy and implements it consistently throughout all project components; based on the PIR 2021 exercise, the effort at gender mainstreaming is relevant and significant, however, the reporting on the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy (last Logframe indicator) should be more focused on the effects and impact.

The logframe design did not envisage any mid-term indicator targets, which makes it somewhat difficult to assess the project at the mid-term with much authority and reference. All the logframe indicators are clearly “SMART” (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound). For a number of indicators, based on the consultations during the MTR, the revisions of the indicator values and target settings are proposed below in the “Progress towards results” section. Specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators are suggested for the consideration of the Project Team, UNDP and the Implementing Partner in Table 3 below.

PROGRESS TOWARDS RESULTS

MTR Assessment of progress towards results was based on the most recent reporting available from the PIU. The 2021 draft PIR was the primary source of information, so the MTR progress depended on the timelines for the PIR submission and its review process.

The MTR reviewed the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; colour code progress in a “traffic light system” based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as “Not on target to be achieved” (red).

Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved
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Table 2. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in the 2 nd PIR	End of Project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating	Comments on the Indicator
Objective: <i>To ensure resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems through strengthened capacities and investment in prevention, detection, control and management of Invasive Alien Species</i>						
1. Hectares of seascape with <u>directly</u> improved management of IAS and enhanced ecosystem resilience	0 ha	At baseline level (0 ha) The benchmark for progress with this indicator is mostly associated with the implementation of the IAS management plans at the project pilot sites.	>94,800 ha <u>İğneada:</u> 34,200 ha of marine habitat (including 22 km of coastal habitat) <u>Marmara Islands and Kapıdağ Peninsula:</u> 46,600 ha of marine habitat (including 186.5 km of coastal habitat) <u>Ayvalık Adaları Nature Park:</u> 13,969 ha of marine habitat (including approximately 112 km of coastal habitat) <u>Samandağ Turtle Nesting Beach:</u> 32 ha of marine habitat (including 16 km of coastal habitat)	u/a	The direct impact at project sites is yet to be demonstrated. The project is at the stage of desk review and field surveys for IAS data collection required as the baseline for IAS management plans' development and implementation at pilot sites.	The indicator value depends on the project progress under Outcome 3 (four pilot sites). Baseline set in GEF IAS Tracking Tool, cell C24. Should be reported through Core Indicator Worksheet and supported with evidence (narrative), under Indicator 4.1 "Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity". Progress will be reported in the final PIR, hence the current MTR rating is n/a.
2. Hectares of seascape with <u>indirectly</u> improved management of IAS and enhanced ecosystem resilience	0 ha	At baseline level (0 ha)	~700,000 ha (Total approximate coastline of 8,000 km x 1 ha equals ~800,000 ha, less the area of direct influence of 94,800 ha = ~700,000 ha; there is no official figure for the exact length of Turkey's coastline)	u/a	The indirect impact will be reported at the TE. The principal benchmark is the implementation of the National IAS Strategy. Other elements that can be considered as benchmarks for verification of the indirect project impact beyond the pilot sites are a) implementation and enforcement of the Pufferfish incentive (by GDFA); b) enactment,	The indicator value is reflective of the overall indirect project impact beyond the four pilot sites. Baseline set in GEF IAS Tracking Tool, cell C25. The project is recommended to continue reporting on this indicator through the Tracking Tool (as the Core Indicator Worksheet does not capture this) and support the reporting with evidence (PIR narrative).

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in the 2 nd PIR	End of Project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating	Comments on the Indicator
					implementation and enforcement of the IAS management and control legislation aligned with EU standards; c) implementation of bio-security measures and sectoral guidelines; d) capacity building and awareness-raising activities.	
3. Rate of new IAS introduction events in marine ecosystems along the coasts of Turkey	1 new alien species every 4 weeks along the coasts of Turkey between 1991 and 2010 (as per source methodology: Cinar, et al, 2011).	< baseline According to the 'Update on Key Pathways and Distribution of Marine IAS in Turkey', May 2021, the trend has slowed down in the last 10 years. Most of the incoming species originate from the Red Sea and it seems very difficult or even impossible to control their entry within the scope of the project. "The cumulative number of alien species increases over years in all seas surrounding Turkey. The new alien species are being reported from all coasts, but especially from the east Levantine Sea, because of the impact of the Suez Canal as a primary vector. However, as shown in the last time interval (2010–2020), the trend slows down over time. The number of new alien occurrence (collection date) decreased in the last 10 years (2010–2020) on the coasts of	< baseline	On target MS	The project impact on the rate of new IAS introduction is associated with the monitoring and control of ballast water. The impact and progress is limited as reported under Indicator 10 below.	According to IAS experts, the project timeframe together with the outside factors (most of the new IAS coming through the Suez Canal) limits the project influence. Also, the change in the rate of new introductions is not regularly monitored according to a unified methodology. The project will continue reporting based on the latest statistics available, and support the reporting with a narrative explaining the direct project impact on the rate of new IAS introduction (in terms of prevention of introductions via ship ballast water). It is understood that with respect to prevention, there is little that the Government of Turkey supported by the project can do to stop the invasion of indo-pacific species into Mediterranean waters via the Suez Canal. Thus, the project impact reported for this indicator is associated with the monitoring and controlling of ballast water that significantly reduces the risk of new IAS introductions. The project is expected to develop and follow the adaptive workplan related to the national capacity building for monitoring and control of marine IAS introduction (Outcome 1 and particularly Output 1.5) to make sure that the planned impact is in place and up-scaled.

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in the 2 nd PIR	End of Project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating	Comments on the Indicator
		<p>Turkey, when compared to the previous time intervals since 1980. The sharp decrease was encountered in the Levantine Sea, where 153 new alien occurrences were reported between 2000 and 2010, whereas 63 species (a 59% decrease) were determined between 2010 and 2020. Such decreases were also estimated between the periods in the Aegean (-38%) and the Sea of Marmara (-25%), but on the contrary an increase (25%) was observed in the Black Sea. The increase and decrease in the numbers are partly related to the scientific efforts devoted to assessing of alien species in the areas, but also partly related to the number of new incomers from different pathways and range extensions of the alien species."</p> <p>The awareness-raising activities and the implementation of the Ballast Water Convention have contributed to the decrease in the rate of IAS introduction</p>				
4. National funding toward marine and coastal biosecurity and ecosystem	Currently no designated national funding related to	Allocated national funding is more than 500.000 USD per year. The Project has been in close contact and had regular consultations/meetings on	National funding at \$500,000/year* is allocated specifically for marine IAS management and control.	Achieved S	Technically, the target figure for 2021 has been achieved. The achievement is related to pufferfish incentive programme developed	So far, the reporting has been conservative and includes only the incentive mechanisms run by the Government. The indicator, however, is not only about the incentives. As confirmed with the project developers, the indicator is about co-financing from MoA and

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in the 2 nd PIR	End of Project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating	Comments on the Indicator
resilience support measures in Turkey	marine IAS management and control.	<p>the funding issues & possible incentive mechanisms with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (GDFA), the latter being the key project counterpart in the Ministry responsible from sustainable management and conservation of marine and inland water fisheries and aquaculture in Turkey.</p> <p>The GDFA started to pay 5 TRY for every pufferfish tail in December 2020. GDFA allocated a budget of 5,000,000 TRY (USD 608 K) for the catches in the year 2020 and same for 2021-2023.</p>	<i>*% increase from baseline of \$0 is not possible</i>		<p>and commissioned by the Government (General Directorate for Fisheries and Aquaculture - GDFA).</p> <p>Project reporting is not particularly clear about the impact on GDFA decisions and strategies on financial incentives. As was explained by the PIU, several promotional visits info sharing events have been conducted; the project CTA and key IAS experts were involved in GDFA process at an expert level.</p>	MoTI. The project is advised to collect relevant co-financing from the two respective Directorates but be sensitive to the definition of “marine and coastal biosecurity and ecosystem resilience support measures” when reporting on the indicator.
Outcome 1: Effective national policy framework on Invasive Alien Species						
5. Existence and functioning of national coordination mechanism [links to GEF BD indicator 4.1]	0: National Coordination Mechanism does not exist	<p>1 Scoring criteria in the BD TT Objective 2 Programme 4-IAS): A national coordination mechanism has been established</p> <p>A national coordination mechanism, that is a National IAS Technical Advisory Group composed of representatives of key authorities, NGOs, local reps and academia, has been established by an interministerial order but has not convened yet. The functioning of a National Technical Advisory Board</p>	3: The national coordination mechanism (Technical Advisory Board, interministerial, meeting biannually) oversees development, review and implementation of IAS National Strategy	On target MS	According to the project reporting and the national-level stakeholders, all prerequisites are in place for the National Technical Advisory Board to become operational	<p>The project will continue reporting through GEF IAS Tracking tool, cell C48</p> <p>The Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure seems to be unaware of either the Technical Advisory Board or any Working Groups. MoTI confirms no interest in a specific WG on ballast waters. MTR recommends that no official WG on ballast water is supported while the Ministry is offered to work with their counterparts on ballast waters issues (technical institutes and the Ministry of Environment) within the National Technical Advisory Board. Since the National Technical Advisory Board is not yet functional, the Project Steering Committee could potentially provide a</p>

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in the 2 nd PIR	End of Project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating	Comments on the Indicator
		requires a higher level approval (Decree of the President). The National Technical Advisory Board has not convened yet. The draft Presidential Decree was prepared in cooperation with TerIAS project with due account of the opinions of the relevant institutions. It is expected to be officially established in 4Q 2021.				platform for intersectoral coordination and discussion. This would require a certain change in the scope and technical expertise required to support the SC decision-making which so far has been limited to project-specific issues only, while the meetings have been convened in a formal manner.
6. Existence and level of implementation of national IAS strategy for marine ecosystems [links to GEF BD indicator 4.1]	0: IAS strategy has not been developed	1: (Scoring criteria in the BD TT Objective 2 Programme 4, Section III IAS): National IAS strategy is under preparation The needs and strategy framework were determined in close partnership with the TerIAS project. Both projects agreed on the common strategy outline.	2: IAS strategy exists but is only partially implemented due to lack of funding or other problems	On target MS	The project reports on having commenced the preparatory activities, which results and findings will create the basis for the national IAS strategy.	The project will continue reporting through GEF IAS Tracking tool, cell C50
7. Status of national policy and regulatory framework related to IAS in marine ecosystems [links to Aichi Target 9 indicator on countries adopting relevant national legislation] [links to GEF BD indicator 4.1]	0: IAS policy does not exist	At the baseline level, 0: IAS policy does not exist No direct regulation related with marine invasive alien species yet adopted. In cooperation with TerIAS project, the draft regulation the By-law on Control and Management of IAS in line with EU legislation was prepared in consultation with the relevant stakeholders (G DFA, related DGs of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, Ministry of	4: The regulations are under implementation and enforced for some of the main priority pathways for IAS (shipping sector)	Not on target to be achieved MU	It takes time for the regulations to be a)developed, b)adopted and c)enforced. The remaining project timeframe seems insufficient to achieve the target indicator value. The rating is reflective of these considerations. It is understood that the project increment to the development of national policy and regulatory framework is being defined by the Implementing Partner (GDNCNP). By no means	The project will continue reporting through GEF IAS Tracking tool, cell C52 MTR recommends the project team to accelerate the performance where it concerns regulatory initiatives, development of comprehensive draft packages, full-pledged support and proactive consultations, echoing the recommendation of the project Steering Committee. MTR emphasizes a need to identify concrete areas for the planned impact as part of the adaptive workplanning, based on the ProDoc strategy and the changes in the institutional and regulatory baseline. MTR recommends the project team and the IP to initiate work with the Ministry of

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in the 2 nd PIR	End of Project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating	Comments on the Indicator
		<p>Transport and Infrastructure, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, and also universities and NGOs). The draft regulation has been submitted to the legal department of MOAF; it will be finalized and made ready for submission to GDNCNP in 4Q 2021.</p> <p>GDNCNP will collect opinions of other stakeholders, the project team will be involved in revisions and discussions, then the process is with the Ministry.</p> <p>The project also contributed to preparation of the official communiques on pufferfish incentive (approved by the president and gazetted).</p>			<p>the project is supposed to be proposing regulations that will not be in the priority list for the main national partners – GDNCNP, G DFA and MoTI. It is clear that the project cannot adopt and enforce regulations. These are the obvious limitations that determine the progress, or the lack of it, on this indicator. The target indicator value is, however, that the regulations have been developed, set under implementation and are being enforced. The MTR is not in a position to change the target approved by the GEF.</p>	<p>Transport (DG for Maritime) as detailed in the ProDoc, taking into account changes in the national priorities in response to the IMO directives. The project is advised to partner not only with the GDNCNP, but also with the G DFA and MoTI (GD for Maritime). The latter has confirmed their interest in developing the national ballast water regulations and standards in accordance with the best practice, so the project's increment can be in finding relevant best practices and working together with the MoTI to apply those to the case of Turkey.</p>
<p>8. Existence of financial incentives and non-fiscal mechanisms for control or eradication of IAS in marine ecosystems</p>	<p>No incentive mechanisms exist</p>	<p>The project reports on the Pufferfish fiscal incentive run by G DFA. The PIU has conducted several promotional visits and informative meetings to facilitate allocation of national funding in addition to supporting to process via the active involvement of CTA and key IAS experts into the decision making processes of G DFA. The project claims creating the enabling the environment for G DFA through the expert pool for consultations.</p>	<p>4 fiscal incentive mechanisms are developed (including gender perspectives, as relevant) and tested, with results from piloting documented and disseminated at national level, including at least one mechanism effective for reducing the targeted species</p>	<p>On target MS</p>	<p>The fiscal incentive mechanisms proposed by the project for the four project "target" species were not responsive to the mainstream agenda of the line ministry, or the local conditions and circumstances. The only fiscal incentive reported, the incentive programme for Pufferfish was prepared with some limited involvement of the MariAS project at the expert level. There is another nationally funded</p>	<p>No further support on fiscal incentives has been requested by the GD for Fisheries and Aquaculture. The project will focus on non-fiscal incentives and work in this direction in accordance with the priorities set by the G DFA. G DFA identified Lionfish as a target species for piloting non-fiscal incentives; the species is of commercial value for food industry but still foreign for Turkish cuisine; awareness-raising and regulations are required; the non-fiscal stimulus combined by an awareness effort, the development of fishing methodology, safety standards and relevant regulations seem to be an appropriate path for the project to take away from the initially</p>

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		<p>A report on “Designing the best incentive mechanism suitable for the country experience and the culture” was commissioned by the project expert in 2021, the target species were validated at a thematic workshop, and the design was validated. The report proposed financial incentive programs for Water hyacinth, Lionfish and North Atlantic starfish; those were evaluated as unsuitable and unsustainable. It was decided to prepare a non-fiscal incentive program. Due to the existing incentive program for Pufferfish and the high commercial value of sea snails, it was decided that a new incentive program is not needed. Since the sea snails are being extensively harvested by commercial fishers therefore a specific incentive program for the harvest was not deemed necessary by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.</p>			project on Pufferfish and Lionfish that was instrumental for the launch of the incentive.	<p>planned support for the fiscal incentive programmes targeting four species. MTR proposes a revised indicator to include non-fiscal instruments.</p> <p>The project should come up with a clear adaptive management scenario in response to the fact that the incentive programs proposed for Water hyacinth, Lionfish and North Atlantic starfish will not be accepted and implemented. As it was decided to prepare a non-fiscal incentive program for the four targeted species (which was not mentioned among the SC decisions or any adaptive management documentation available), an amendment to the project workplan should be prepared and agreed upon with the key partners, including GDFA. Lessons learned from the preparation of a fiscal incentive program should be available for the adaptive management planning to ensure full relevance of the newly proposed strategy and the concrete results on the ground.</p>
<i>Outcome 2: Increased capacity and improved knowledge and information sharing systems to address IAS threats</i>						
9. Existence of detection, delimiting and monitoring surveys	1: Detection surveys (observational) are conducted on a regular basis	2: Detection and delimiting surveys (focusing on key sites: high risk entry points or high biodiversity value sites) are conducted on a regular basis In 2020, IAS field experts performed a desk review of available literature/research on the subject and IAS data at	5. Detection surveys rank IAS in terms of their potential damage and detection systems target the IAS that are potentially the most damaging to globally significant biodiversity	On target MS	The data obtained as a result of the field study will constitute a baseline for the future detection surveys carried out at the project pilot sites. There is no assurance, however, that the detection surveys will be conducted on a regular	GEF IAS Tracking tool, cell C56 MTR recommends introducing a risk related to the ProDoc assumption that the Government and stakeholders might have limited technical capacity to undertake a systematized approach to detection surveys. The project team is recommended to share not only the methodology but also the lessons learned, cost and capacity assessments and other functional elements

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	<p>Note: Surveys are conducted frequently in various areas for various reasons (mainly academic), but not in an organized, consistent and structured manner.</p>	<p>pilot sites have been followed by field studies and an analysis of current marine IAS distribution, key existing and potential pathways and vectors for alien species introductions in Turkey's coastal zones.</p> <p>IAS field experts conducted field researches and diversions at relevant points in Hatay-Samandağ, Ayvalık - Marmara Islands and İğneada between 02-12 September 2020, 29 March 2021-9 April 2021 and 16-26 June 2021.</p> <p>The data obtained as a result of the field study will constitute a baseline for the future detection surveys carried out at the project pilot sites.</p> <p>The fieldwork methods to be carried out regularly were shared with General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks (GDNCNP).</p>			basis without the project support and finance.	<p>of the exercise to the DG to make sure that the knowledge is comprehensively collected and shared for further national ownership and application at the pilot and other sites upon project completion.</p> <p>The sustainability aspects are so far unclear. So far, there is no confirmation as to which authority/research institute will be responsible for conducting the detection surveys on a regular basis without the project support and finance. This institution will have to appraise the fieldwork methodology and guidance developed by the project, allocate the annual budget, and develop internal capacities. Without these elements, the sustainability of the GEF input is questioned.</p>
10. Identification and management of priority pathways (shipping sector)	1: Priority pathways for invasions have been identified using risk assessment procedure as	<p>The priority pathways have been identified and confirmed as a result of a desk study presented as a Scientific Publication on 'Update on Key Pathways and Distribution of Marine IAS in Turkey' released in May 2021.</p> <p>The marine and IAS experts analyzed the current marine</p>	2: Priority pathways for invasions are being actively managed and monitored to prevent invasions (In comment section please specify methods for prevention of entry: quarantine laws and regulation, database establishment, public	On target MS	The priority pathways have been identified and summarized in a report appraised by the key stakeholders. This is indeed a very important first step on the road to manage the priority pathways.	<p>GEF IAS Tracking tool, cell C54</p> <p>The MTR recommends a better structured and logical reporting on this indicator, and possibly a reformulation and utilisation of the indicator with an emphasis on priority pathways management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - methods for prevention; - best practices and innovative methods such as eDNA; - pathways management roadmap

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	appropriate	<p>IAS distribution and pathways in Turkey's coastal zones and contributed with an updated analysis on main and potential pathways and vectors for alien species invasions. The identified priority pathways for invasions as well as proposed methods for prevention of entry will create a backbone for the road map that will be developed in consultations with the project team, project experts/consultants, governmental and non-governmental organizations, experts, and other relevant stakeholders and partners during the project implementation.</p> <p>To manage prevention of entry, the project utilizes law&regulations, database establishment and public education and ballast water treatment technologies.</p> <p>On Laws & Regulations, drafting the regulation on Marine Invasive Alien Species jointly with TerIAS project is ongoing and currently at the stage of collecting opinions of relevant stakeholders. The regulation will be finalized during experts and stakeholder meetings in 3Q 2021</p>	education, inspection, treatment technologies (fumigation, etc.) in the comment box.)		<p>The project is not particularly clear about the impact strategy and the end-of-project product related to this indicator. It is clear that all the elements the project reports on are all parts of some roadmap. When such a roadmap will be prepared? Who will be using it and for which purposes, apart from serving a basis for the National IAS strategy? Also, the proposed methods for prevention of entry were discussed with whom and will be part of the roadmap? National IAS Strategy? Both?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - supporting sectoral regulations and requirements - sector-specific biosecurity and quarantine guidelines <p>Reporting on eDNA should be revised with focus on why this method is suggested (and its application capacitated with a considerable financial increment from the GEF) as an integral element of priority paths management (instrument to check the vessels according to convention obligations).</p>

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		<p>In terms of public education on IAS, the Project's communication and awareness raising program has been prepared and its implementation is underway since the second quarter of 2020.</p> <p>As an effective instrument to check the vessels for Marine IAS contamination according to and in support of Ballast Water Convention obligations, the key stakeholder suggested the adoption of e-DNA methodology in the project. 2 separate meetings were held on September 02-16, 2020 with the participation of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (UAB) and Environmental Sciences Institute. It is planned to re-initiate the e-DNA progress in 4Q 2021. According to the results of postponed workshop, process will be identified more clearly in September 2021.</p> <p>The Evaluation Meeting on the Content of the Protocols and Quarantine Mechanisms regarding marine invasive alien species was held in June 2021.</p> <p>It has been decided to prepare sector specific</p>				

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		<p>guidelines; the marine aquarium trade, recreational yachting and diving for 2021. Attendees agreed on the content of the guidelines that will be finalized and disseminated in 4Q 2021.</p>				
<p>11. Availability of current data on IAS to decision-makers and ecosystem managers in multiple institutions</p>	<p>No national mechanism for aggregating and disseminating the most current information and data on IAS in marine waters</p>	<p>It is planned to set a national IAS knowledge management (KM) system in the second half of 2021 or first half of 2022. This system will include gender perspective, as relevant.</p> <p>Major preparatory works and activities of the Project that will later contribute to the establishment and functioning of the KM system are listed below:</p> <p>Project's communication and awareness raising program has been prepared and its implementation is underway since the second quarter of 2020. The Project's website (istilacilar.org) was developed and become operational in July 2020. The project website is being actively used for the dissemination of current information and data on marine invasive alien species. (Marine ecosystem, Marine IAS, News & Activities, Photo, Video Gallery, Library, Key Literature on Marine IAS).</p>	<p>National IAS knowledge management system in place (including gender perspective as relevant) with multi-stakeholder access, and training on use conducted for all relevant government officials in various institutions</p>	<p>On target S</p>	<p>The project reporting confirms that all principal prerequisites for the national IAS management system are in place. The project reports on the updated IAS list. It is clearly a major deliverable, however, there is no information as to how this is shared with the stakeholders and used for information and decision-making.</p> <p>The project claims that the website is being actively used for the dissemination of current information and data on marine invasive alien species. The project is recommended to process and analyze the raw IT data on website visitation to form evidence. So far, there is only one technical report available on the website.</p>	<p>The project reporting on this indicator should be supported with a strong evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence on the value of awareness raising - Evidence on coordination with the line ministry related to the national KM system, data management protocols etc. is required - Website visitation statistics where it concerns the use of data and information on marine IAS. - Relevant data from end-of-project awareness survey. <p>The project should intensify the consultations with the IP regarding the sustainability elements for the national marine IAS database. The principal decision is that the ownership and maintenance of the database stays with the MOAF. It is expected that the national marine IAS database will be under the National Biodiversity database (www.nuhungemisi.gov.tr). For now, the Biodiversity Department of the IP (GDNCNP) is responsible for the database maintenance. However, there is no official arrangement as to which department/institution subordinate to the Ministry will be responsible for the database maintenance upon the project's completion, who will be implementing data entry and validation protocols; issues related to the open sources data and restricted access data remain open; the protocols for</p>

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		The current IAS list has been updated. The roadmap towards the national marine IAS database scope/content/structure/access and entry evaluation and validation protocols were determined in cooperation with the GDNCNP. In line with the remarks of the GDNCNP, the data entry will be carried out in 3Q 2021.				information access and sharing are yet to be developed in the remaining (somewhat limited) project timeframe.
12. National capacity to implement and enforce Ballast Water Management Convention defined by (as per BWM Convention requirements): a. % of ships docking at Turkish ports have Ballast Water Management Plans and Ballast Water Record Books b. % of ships docking at Turkish ports have approved ballast water management systems (BWC regulation D-3),	Ballast Water Convention signed but not implemented and not in force. No monitoring, management, or control of ship ballast water at Turkish ports, and no facilities for control and safe discharge of ballast water.		Ballast Water Convention under implementation: a. >50% b. >50% c. >50% d. >75% e. 100% f. None g. Feasibility assessment conducted	u/a	The country does not report to the Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention on the parameters suggested for the indicator reporting. These parameters are not particularly reflective on the project [so far limited] impact on the capacities of the DG Maritime. The impact on these parameters is beyond the project scope.	The indicator should be changed to reflect the direct project impact on increased national capacities to implement and enforce Ballast Water Convention. Increased capacities are difficult to measure. More importantly, the project is clearly applying adaptive management regarding the initial plans for capacity building with the MoTI, without enough record and justification for changes. The deviations from the ProDoc scope of capacity building activities and the limitations for the project impact associated with the IOM directives should be explained in the project reporting. National-level actions in support to the implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention are determined by the directives of the Convention, as confirmed by MoTI during the MTR. The MoTI is not particularly willing to go beyond the IMO workplan that's been suspended for 5 years since October 2019. This needs to be reflected in the project workplanning and reporting. The project is strongly advised to work with the MoTI on the ballast water management capacity needs assessment as an essential

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<p>and meet BWC Regulation D-2: Ballast Water Performance Standard</p> <p>c. % of ships carrying foreign ballast water in Turkish waters are surveyed and certified</p> <p>d. Ports receiving XX% of ballast water by volume have reception facilities for the reception of sediments</p> <p>e. % of ballast water entering Turkish waters that is tracked and monitored for management</p> <p>f. Amount of ballast water exchanges occur within 50 nautical miles of Turkish land</p> <p>g. Status of designation of ballast water exchange zones within Turkey's territorial waters</p>						<p>adaptive management element for Outcome 1.5. Based on the results of such capacity needs assessment, a concrete workplan should be produced, and the indicators showing the capacity changes as a result of the GEF increment should be developed. In case the capacity building increment will be limited solely to eDNA trainings and equipment, an indicator showing the MoTI's capacity to obtain, analyze, process and use the genetic data for decision-making on the ballast water control where it concerns the IAS contamination vessels' checkup should be offered as an output-level indicator for the Logframe.</p> <p>The MoTI confirmed their readiness to sit down and discuss a more systemic approach to capacity building under Output 1.5 with the project team.</p>
13. Scientific publications	0	1 out of 4 scientific publication produced: A	4 scientific publications:	On target	The project has produced a report with an update	The project won't produce the fourth scientific paper envisioned in the SRF, as the

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produced based on project work to address key data and knowledge gaps for improved development of policy and implementation of management and control measures		scientific paper on "Update on key pathways and distribution of marine IAS in Turkey" was prepared by IAS experts and published in May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update on key pathways and distribution of marine IAS in Turkey b. Analysis of ecological impacts of marine IAS in Turkey's marine and coastal ecosystems c. Analysis of socio-economic impacts of marine IAS in Turkey's marine and coastal ecosystems d. Results of piloting fiscal incentive programs for marine IAS removal 	S	on key pathways and distribution of marine IAS in Turkey	project strategy for piloting fiscal incentive programs for marine IAS removal has changed. The project workplans should reflect the amended strategy; the scientific paper title should change.
14. Level of knowledge and understanding relating to marine IAS: a. Among local populations (with additional targeted sub-set of tourism operators) in project pilot sites b. Among school-age children in project pilot sites	Fishermen are aware of presence of IAS, but cannot consistently identify IAS species, especially commercial species that have been present for more than 20 years.	To monitor the level of awareness & knowledge as well as the resulting impact of projects activities on the three target groups of stakeholders as per the indicator description, the project will utilize the following two methods: i) Monitoring the level of awareness of target groups at the project pilot sites in particular, through carrying out two surveys. The project team with the CTA's, socio-economic expert's and UNDP's gender advisor's support and academicians	> baseline, with a higher percentage of survey respondents indicating that i.) they know what IAS are generally, ii.) which marine IAS are present in their region, iii.) what the negative impacts that marine IAS can have are, iv.) and what are the key mechanisms by which IAS can be introduced and spread (Monitoring of awareness to be	On target S	Project awareness-raising programme is being implemented. It is highly valued by the principal project stakeholders.	<p>So far, the project education and awareness-raising activities could not reach a sufficient number of people to modify resource-user behavior as appropriate.</p> <p>No annual awareness level tracking survey was available, contrary to the monitoring plan offered in the ProDoc. The project team decides against the annual surveys based on the scope and the cost of the baseline one and also with the right consideration of the real time lapse required to measure the change in awareness and perception which is certainly more than one year.</p> <p>The baseline awareness survey took place in March 2021 – which is the mid-term of the project. The baseline awareness survey did not include the assessment of the value and</p>

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c. Among national and local (in project pilot sites) government officials in relevant institutions	<p>School children in coastal communities have no knowledge of IAS.</p> <p>Local and national government officials are only aware of the 2-3 most significant and damaging IAS (notably balloon fish and lion fish).</p>	<p>developed a ToR for the survey. The first phase was conducted in the 2Q of 2021 to determine the baseline (EV01).</p> <p>The second phase will be conducted in 2023 to assess the resulting impact. Results of the survey will be analyzed by the socio-economic expert and presented to the project team and other relevant stakeholders in 3Q of 2021.</p> <p>ii) The ARCD expert has developed a monitoring system to measure the impact of the awareness raising and the capacity building programs through application of questionnaires and other relevant methods. These methods will be utilized during implementation of every project activity.</p> <p>Within the scope of the awareness-raising program (eg. Brochures, posters, videos, workshops / festivals, cooperation with restaurants, etc.) below activities are realized during the current reporting period;</p> <p>-IAS effect on Public Health short movie was finalized and shared on both MoAF and</p>	disaggregated by gender)			<p>impact of the project awareness program and activities implemented so far.</p> <p>There is no comprehensive plan for assessing and monitoring the impact of the awareness raising and the capacity building activities. According to the Project Team, the Project will measure the impact of the awareness raising and capacity building programs through application of questionnaires and other relevant methods during related project activities</p>

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		<p>UNDP's social media from July 2020.</p> <p>-The construction of the website become available to the public on 02 July 2020. The EN version of the page went live in August 2020.</p> <p>-The content of the training module on Awareness raising has been determined by ARCD expert and a meeting was held on 12 August 2020 to explain and consult how the activities will be carried out in the field with the contribution of IAS experts.</p> <p>-A short film on Lion fish was shot in Kas-Fethiye with Şahika Ercümen in August-September 2020. She introduced the Lionfish as an invasive species with submarine notation. She has also helped to spread the reflection on the best way of tackling the invasion is to consider LionFish as a source of livelihood and a healthy food for human being.</p> <p>(EV02)</p> <p>-The entire September 2020 issue and visual materials of Kafa Çocuk ve Bilim magazine was dedicated to MarIAS project. 10.000 copies were prepared and distributed to the relevant NGOs, governmental institutions and regional directorates of GDNCNP in order to</p>				

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		<p>distribute to primary school kids.</p> <p>-The content of 12 infographics was built by ARCD and IAS experts, 1.000 infographic posters were printed and distributed.</p> <p>-A Lionfish Knowledge Exchange Workshop was held on 04-05 November, 2020 (via Zoom) with the participation of 170 experts from countries such as Malta, Libya, Italy, Lebanon, Spain, USA, Cyprus, Algeria, Israel, Croatia. The main outcome was to identify knowledge gaps beforehand, devise plan to fill in knowledge gaps, get Mediterranean experts up to date with best practices and partners to tackle the invasion.</p> <p>-12 species were defined by the field experts and a technical drawing artist made 12 illustrations of them which are embedded to MarIAS Calendar 2021. More than 3.000 copies was printed and distributed to the relevant NGOs, governmental institutions and regional directorates of GDNCNP. (December 2020 – January 2021)</p> <p>-Animation short video was also produced to raise the knowledge and understanding of marine IAS. (June 2021)</p>				

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		<p>2021 Approved Activities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Designing the content of training materials by ARCD and IAS experts and printing when finalized, designing the content of species cards and printing when finalized (3Q 2021) -Production of IAS Balloon fish video, (3Q 2021) -Concluding the contract with ÖRAV (Turkish Teachers Academy Foundation) through Responsible Party Agreement within the scope of the Teacher and Student Education program which was prepared and submitted to PIU in April 2021 by ARCD expert. (4Q 2021) -Production of a documentary on MarIAS (about 30min) (4Q 2021) -Conducting Awareness meetings (3X) for 3 groups (transport, divers, fishermen) in Antalya (4Q 2021) -Two study visits have been planned to see examples of good practices in combating and managing Marine IAS. (3Q – 4Q 2021) <p>All monitoring data will be disaggregated by gender, as appropriate.</p>				
<i>Outcome 3: Sustainable management, prevention, eradication, and control of IAS and restoration of IAS- degraded habitat at key marine and coastal areas</i>						
15. Trend in status of native	a. Extent of <i>Mytilus</i>	As of the end of 2019, the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)	> baseline a. hectares	u/a	u/a	The project is at the stage of the first year field data assessment. No data on the status

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biodiversity indicator species in targeted marine environments	<i>galloprovincialis</i> presence significantly below historical standard (Igneada and Marmara Islands) b. Extent of seagrass beds (Ayvalik Islands) c. Trend in small fish stocks (lion fish prey species) (Hatay-Samandag) Exact Figures will be clarified by end of Year 1	has commissioned the technical reports as the basis for monitoring the status of native indicator species at pilot sites. Preliminary field studies were carried out in the second half of 2020. The project workplan was amended to have seasonal field studies. The reports from spring studies held in April 2021 and summer in June/July 2021 are currently being assessed. The results of these surveys will also be taken into account during the management planning process to determine the site level actions. It is expected to revise and update the data on the current extent of the three categories of native indicator species in 2021. This type of data (distribution area, number of individuals in survey, and/or biomass measurements in survey area) will be updated regularly during project implementation.	b. hectares c. number of individuals in survey, and/or biomass measurements in survey area			of native biodiversity indicator species is currently available. As per SRF, the figures should have been obtained by end of Year 1. In follow-up to the MTR, the project team made the following suggestion: In order to have more attainable, practical and less costly indicator, it would be change: a) "hectares" to "percentile coverage" b) "hectares" to "shoot density/m2 and percentile coverage" c) "number of individuals in survey, and/or biomass measurements in survey area" to "stomach content of lion-fish Index of relative Importance". The MTR cannot form an opinion on the suggested changes before the actual data on the status of native biodiversity indicator species is presented and analysed by specialists. The MTR recommends doing so in the next year PIR with an indication why %data is available instead of ha coverage, and why the lionfish stomach content is chosen as an indicator of lionfish prey species population trends and what are the limitations and assumption of this approach.
16. Application of best management practices in project target areas	1: Management goal and target area has been defined and acceptable	1: Management goal and target area has been defined and acceptable threshold of population level of the species established (baseline level). During the reporting period, the activities below were conducted to ensure the best	5: Funding for sustained and ongoing management and monitoring of the target area is secured.	Not on target to be achieved MU	No best IAS management practices/standards/mechanism have been applied in the project target areas as of yet. The only impact on the ground relates to the implementation of the Pufferfish Incentive	The indicator has been set in accordance with the GEF IAS Tracking tool, cell C58 For this indicator, the project keeps reporting on the national-level actions and interventions even though the project workplan clearly indicates the site-level activities and impact. The national-level actions have been reported above; no site-

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	<p>the threshold of population level of the species established</p>	<p>management practices in target pilot sites.</p> <p>A. On securing funding for sustaining the management and monitoring of the target area:</p> <p>-The Evaluation Meeting on Incentive Mechanisms for Combating Marine Invasive Alien Species (IAS) was held in June 2021. The incentive mechanisms for the five IASs targeted by the MarIAS Project were discussed and the expert emphasized the problems encountered in the developed mechanisms. Financial incentive programs for Water hyacinth, Lionfish and North Atlantic starfish, which are among the target species within the scope of the project, were assessed as unsuitable and unsustainable. It was decided to prepare a non-fiscal incentive program instead.</p> <p>Due to the existing incentive program for Pufferfish and a high commercial value of sea snails, it was decided that a specific new incentive program is not needed. The points to be considered in program design through case studies were reviewed.</p> <p>-The expert report containing current status and recommendations for incentive mechanism design was submitted to UNDP in</p>			<p>Program run by GDFA nation-wide.</p> <p>The target indicator score of 5 means that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The IAS management plans for the pilot sites have been developed, adopted and set under implementation; - Monitoring system has been established; - Funding for sustained and ongoing management and monitoring of the target area is secured. <p>The project is at the stage of field data management to define the baseline for the IAS management plans. Most importantly, the stakeholder engagement at the level of the project sites has been very limited due to both the outside factors (COVID-19 limitations) and the top-down strategy of project interventions. The likelihood that the project is able to demonstrate the actual application of best IAS management practices and have those supported with</p>	<p>level project-born impact can be demonstrated and reported yet.</p>

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		<p>June 2020, a technical evaluation meeting held in July 2020. Revisions were requested from GDNCNP, the FINAL version of the report was finally approved in May 2021.</p> <p>B. On establishing the regulatory and legislative framework to sustain management plans, the following were carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Evaluation Meeting on the Content of the Protocols and Quarantine Mechanisms Guidelines was held in June 2021. Prioritized sectors were determined for the guidelines to be prepared and a general framework was discussed. -Report on protocols and quarantine mechanisms consistent with bio-security requirements and international standards for IAS in marine and coastal wetland ecosystems submitted in June 2020, a technical evaluation meeting held in July 2020. Revisions were requested from GDNCNP, the FINAL version of the report was finally approved in May 2021. -Presidential decree on national and local committees for invasive species prepared and submitted to the implementing partner and approved in March 2021. 			sustainable finance is low, considering the remaining timeframe for the project implementation, the continuous effect of COVID-19 restrictions on the stakeholder engagement, and the project planning approach that does not anticipate	

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in the 2 nd PIR	End of Project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating	Comments on the Indicator
17. Level of resource management planning related to IAS in pilot sites	No IAS-specific management plans in project pilot sites	<p>No change from the baseline, i.e. no IAS-specific management plans in project pilot sites.</p> <p>It was decided to engage a Responsible Party specialized in design and implementation of site-specific management plans (2022-2023); the contracting is scheduled for 4Q 2021.</p> <p>In the reporting period, the below activities were realized to develop the ground work for the management plans' preparation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -IAS field experts conducted field researches and dives at relevant points in Hatay-Samandağ, Ayvalık - Marmara Islands and İğneada between 02-12 September 2020 , 29 March 2021-9 April 2021 and 16-26 June 2021. -The Evaluation Meeting of Field Studies Results realized in Project Pilot Sites was held on 16,17 February 2021 in Ankara. The current marine Invasive Alien Species (IAS) distribution and pathways in Turkey's coastal zones was discussed. - The format of the Management Plan and the overall management planning process diagram for the İğneada, Marmara Islands, Ayvalık Islands and Samandağ Coast and the perspective management planning 	IAS-specific management plans developed, adopted, and under implementation by relevant local authority in each project pilot site (including gender perspectives as relevant)	u/a	u/a	The project is at the stage of planning and setting grounds for the preparation of IAS-specific management plans in project pilot sites

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in the 2 nd PIR	End of Project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating	Comments on the Indicator
		experts to be recruited for the management plans are discussed and have been agreed with the beneficiary.				
18. Consistency of project gender mainstreaming approach with project plans	N/A – Project not under implementation; project design includes multiple elements designed to mainstream gender	<p>Project implementation is guided by the Gender mainstreaming document and Action Plan prepared for the project. The project closely follows the gender marker system of UNDP. The project addresses the gender inequality and empowerment of women through the below approach and related activities.</p> <p>The project has developed a communication & awareness raising program incorporating gender perspective elements. A gender-sensitive approach application will start with the identification of specific needs of women (fisher women, women working with husbands in the fishery and other relevant sectors and living in 4 pilot areas for the project) to benefit equally from education and learning opportunities. Most of the communication videos and materials center around the use of gender role models such as fisher women who are usually absent in the usual narratives about fishing sector. The project has established a working partnership with the high profile female public figures</p>	<p>Gender mainstreaming carried out during project implementation, as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Technical Working Group and local stakeholder working groups have gender balance or include a gender mainstreaming representative; - Policies, laws, and regulations developed with project support include gender perspectives, as relevant - Fiscal incentive programs, and other management and control measures implemented at the site level are designed incorporating gender perspectives as relevant - Project events and activities (e.g. trainings) ensure 	On target S	The project's communication & awareness-raising program incorporates gender perspective elements. Several awareness products feature female fisher women, who are generally absent from showcasing in the fishery sector. The project has established a partnership with the high profile female public figures, Şahika Ercümen who is a world record holder in diving and "Life Below Water" Advocate of UNDP.	The baseline awareness survey reveals that women have lower levels of knowledge on IAS compared to men. Only 10 % of participants to the baseline survey are women and women represent consistently lower awareness on IAS threat. 68 % of women are aware of the term IAS as opposed to 80.9 % of men. Only 36 % of women know which institution is in charge of handling IAS threats in their locality as opposed to 45.4 % of men. If the project wants to galvanize the community leadership potential of women to raise awareness, more targeted efforts are needed and this is the reason why the project is promoting female role-models. Ignorance among women on IAS would translate into ignorance on the threat of IAS among society at large. In order to sustain project's environmental outcomes in the long run, the project needs and relies on women. The MTR joins this conclusion coming from UNDP CO in the 2 nd project PIR.

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in the 2 nd PIR	End of Project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating	Comments on the Indicator
		<p>such as Şahika Ercüment who is a world record holder in diving and “Life Below Water” Advocate of UNDP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific communication activities targeting women consumers. Following results of the perception study, it is planned to carry out thematic basic trainings that will both support the sustainable use of marine resources and impact the livelihoods various groups positively related to the needs that stand out in each project area - 4Q 2021 - Public awareness activities targeting fisher women (Lionfish short movie tells a short story of a fisher woman in Fethiye) (EV02) <p>The project activities related to fiscal incentives for management and control of marine IAS (Output 1.4) will be designed to ensure gender mainstreaming aspects, as appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial incentive mechanisms were designed to particularly consider the role of women in the artisanal fishing sector. - A workshop will be delivered, as a contribution to local livelihoods sustainability, on the use of Water hyacinths (collected from Asi River (Hatay-Samandağ/pilot site) as animal feed in 1Q 2022. The 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gender balance among invited participants, as feasible - Project education and awareness activities are developed and carried out incorporating gender perspectives, as relevant 			

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in the 2 nd PIR	End of Project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating	Comments on the Indicator
		<p>workshop will be specifically targeting the locally resident women.</p> <p>Project events & activities:</p> <p>.</p> <p>The Lionfish Virtual Workshop was held on 04-05 November 2020 with the participation of many experts from countries such as Malta, Libya, Italy, Lebanon, Spain, USA, Cyprus, Algeria, Israel, Croatia. The main outcome was to identify knowledge gaps beforehand, devise plan to fill in knowledge gaps, get Mediterranean experts up to date with best practices and partners to tackle the invasion. Of 175 workshop participants 77 were women.</p>				

Table 3. Proposed Logframe Indicator Changes

Indicator	Baseline Level	End of Project Target	Suggested changes
4. National funding toward marine and coastal biosecurity and ecosystem resilience support measures in Turkey	Currently no designated national funding related to marine IAS management and control.	National funding at \$500,000/year* is allocated specifically for marine IAS management and control. <i>*% increase from baseline of \$0 is not possible</i>	So far, the reporting has been conservative and includes only the incentive mechanisms run by the Government. The indicator, however, is not only about the incentives. It is about co-financing from MoA and MoTI. The project is advised to collect relevant co-financing from the two respective Directorates, but be sensitive to the definition of “marine and coastal biosecurity and ecosystem resilience support measures” when reporting on the indicator.
8. Existence of financial incentives and non-fiscal mechanisms for control or eradication of IAS in marine ecosystems	No incentive mechanisms exist	4 financial and non-fiscal incentive mechanisms are developed (including gender perspectives, as relevant) and tested, with results from piloting documented and disseminated at national level, including at least one mechanism effective for reducing the targeted species	No further support on fiscal incentives has been requested by the GD for Fisheries and Aquaculture. The project will focus on non-fiscal incentives and work in this direction in accordance with the priorities set by the GDFA as the department responsible for financial and non-fiscal mechanisms, and the GDNCNP as the project Implementing Partner. GDFA identified Lionfish as a target species for piloting non-fiscal incentives; the species is of commercial value for food industry but still foreign for Turkish cuisine; awareness-raising and regulations are required; the non-fiscal stimulus combined by an awareness effort, the development of fishing methodology, safety standards and relevant regulations seem to be an appropriate path for the project to take away from the initially planned support for fiscal incentive programmes targeting four species. MTR proposes a revised indicator to include non-fiscal instruments. The revised indicator reads as “Existence of financial incentives and non-fiscal mechanisms for control or eradication of IAS in marine ecosystems”.
11. Availability of current data on IAS to decision-makers and ecosystem managers in multiple institutions	No national mechanism for aggregating and disseminating the most current information and data	National IAS knowledge management system in place (including gender perspective as relevant) with multi-stakeholder access, and training on use conducted for all relevant	The indicator reporting should include the following key elements: Evidence on the value of awareness-raising Evidence on coordination with the line ministry related to national KM system, data management protocols etc. is required

Indicator	Baseline Level	End of Project Target	Suggested changes
	on IAS in marine waters	government officials in various institutions	Website visitation statistics, as evidence that the project website is being actively used for dissemination of current information and data on marine invasive alien species Relevant data from awareness survey
<p>12. National capacity to implement and enforce Ballast Water Management Convention defined by (as per BWM Convention requirements):</p> <p>h. % of ships docking at Turkish ports have Ballast Water Management Plans and Ballast Water Record Books</p> <p>i. % of ships docking at Turkish ports have approved ballast water management systems (BWC regulation D-3), and meet BWC Regulation D-2: Ballast Water Performance Standard</p> <p>j. % of ships carrying foreign ballast water in Turkish waters are surveyed and certified</p> <p>k. Ports receiving XX% of ballast water by volume have reception facilities for the reception of sediments</p> <p>l. % of ballast water entering Turkish waters that is tracked and monitored for management</p> <p>m. Amount of ballast water exchanges occur within 50 nautical miles of Turkish land</p> <p>n. Status of designation of ballast water exchange zones within Turkey's territorial waters</p>	<p>Ballast Water Convention signed but not implemented and not in force. No monitoring, management, or control of ship ballast water at Turkish ports, and no facilities for control and safe discharge of ballast water.</p>	<p>Ballast Water Convention under implementation:</p> <p>h. >50%</p> <p>i. >50%</p> <p>j. >50%</p> <p>k. >75%</p> <p>l. 100%</p> <p>m. None</p> <p>n. Feasibility assessment conducted</p>	<p>The indicator should be changed to reflect the direct project impact on increased national capacities to implement and enforce Ballast Water Convention.</p> <p>The project is strongly advised to work with the MoTI on the ballast water management capacity needs assessment as an essential adaptive management element for Outcome 1.5. Based on the results of such capacity needs assessment, a concrete workplan should be produced, and the indicator(s) showing the capacity changes as a result of the GEF increment should be developed. In case the capacity building increment will be limited solely to eDNA trainings and equipment, an indicator showing the MoTI's capacity to obtain, analyse, process and use the genetic data for decision-making on the ballast water control where it concerns the IAS contamination vessels' checkup should be offered as an output-level indicator for the Logframe.</p>

Indicator	Baseline Level	End of Project Target	Suggested changes
<p>14. Level of knowledge and understanding relating to marine IAS:</p> <p>a. Among local populations (with additional targeted sub-set of tourism operators) in project pilot sites</p> <p>b. Among school-age children in project pilot sites</p> <p>c. Among national and local (in project pilot sites) government officials in relevant institutions</p>	<p>Fishermen are aware of presence of IAS, but cannot consistently identify IAS species, especially commercial species that have been present for more than 20 years.</p> <p>School children in coastal communities have no knowledge of IAS.</p> <p>Local and national government officials are only aware of the 2-3 most significant and damaging IAS (notably balloon fish and lion fish).</p>	<p>> baseline, with a higher percentage of survey respondents indicating that i.) they know what IAS are generally, ii.) which marine IAS are present in their region, iii.) what the negative impacts that marine IAS can have are, iv.) and what are the key mechanisms by which IAS can be introduced and spread</p> <p>(Monitoring of awareness to be disaggregated by gender)</p>	<p>The monitoring plan that mentioned annual tracking survey should be updated. The baseline survey took place in March 2021. There will be no annual surveys; the end-of-project survey should take place before the FE.</p> <p>The project is advised to develop a specific set of questions to determine the value of awareness-raising activities and products developed by the project, and include these questions into the end-of-project awareness level survey and analysis.</p>

The project has produced a number of tangible results, instruments and mechanisms towards the achievement of its objective and results. The highlights include:

1. The 'Update on Key Pathways and Distribution of Marine IAS in Turkey', May 2021, is a major deliverable and an essential step towards managing and controlling the IAS pathways. As confirmed in the 2021 PIR, the identified priority pathways for invasions as well as proposed methods for prevention of entry will create a backbone for the road map that will be developed in consultations with the project team, project experts/consultants, governmental and non-governmental organizations, experts, and other relevant stakeholders and partners during the project implementation.
2. The project, supported by the principal stakeholders within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, has established a functional partnership with a parallel EU-funded TerIAS Project targeting terrestrial IAS, and has sound plans of collaborative work on the development of the National IAS Strategy and Action Plan, and support to the National IAS Technical Advisory Group. MTR would mildly recommend that the project discusses its role and mandate with both GDNCNP and GFDA (the focal point for both TerIAS and MarIAS) to make sure that the GEF project increment and added value is adequately captured and pronounced through the project publicity and outreach effort. This is also relevant for the joint work of two projects on the draft by-laws on Control and Management of IAS in line with EU legislation; this work has clearly been prioritized and led by the TerIAS project, which is perfectly fine, as long as the GEF increment and value of the MarIAS contribution is adequately captured and presented, at least for the project reporting and outside assessments.
3. The project has initiated the work on the marine IAS Protocols and Quarantine Mechanisms. The project workplans are not particularly clear about the intervention strategy and the planned impact. The exact roadmap for the preparation, appraisal and enforcement of sector guidelines targeting the marine aquarium trade, recreational yachting and diving sectors is not yet clear (at least to the MTR); the scope and level of sectoral stakeholder engagement remains an issue at the project mid-term.
4. Comprehensive field research and monitoring at the project sites were conducted in 2020 and 2021, despite all complications and issues related to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The project should be highly praised for the effort! The PMU is kindly advised to make the field results available to the project partners and site-based stakeholders and the general public, through the website and online publications. There is little value in collecting high-quality data if that does not serve to raise awareness and support decision-making!
5. The project facilitated the access of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure to the Guidelines of the Ballast Water Management Convention by translating those into Turkish; this was an essential contribution to the preparation of the Action Plans for the implementation of the Convention Directives by the Ministry. Another, more sizeable and significant, and highly innovative increment to MOTI's capacity building is the e-DNA trainings for monitoring of ballast water.
6. The project has commissioned a baseline awareness study that is amazing in terms of scope and level. Considering the amount of resources and time spent on the exercise (USD 39,000), the project is strongly recommended to prepare a targeted analysis of its outcomes and make it available to the project stakeholders and general public. The end-of-project survey will be conducted in 2023 according to the same methodology and scope, so one needs to make sure that the endeavor is relevant, justified in terms of time and resource efficiency, and, most importantly, is of benefit to the project partners and stakeholders.
7. The project's communication and awareness-raising program has been prepared and its implementation is underway since the second quarter of 2020. As is the case with all the project products, the level of planning, detail, coverage and the overall scope of the exercise exceeds one's expectations. Again, based on the level of resource to be spent on the implementation of the program, the project is advised to make

sure that its results are assessed towards the project completion. The project might consider using the end-or-project awareness level study for such an assessment; then, the original methodology should be expanded with an evaluation of the project awareness, KM and communication products and activities.

8. The project stakeholders highly praise the relevance and value of the Lionfish Knowledge Exchange Workshop that was held on 04-05 November, 2020 (via Zoom).
9. The project should be praised for the development and implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy and Action Plan and introducing various and very relevant gender-sensitive elements into the project activity planning and implementation.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Management Arrangements

The management arrangements are standard for the UNDP-GEF projects in Turkey and adhere to the principles and requirements set forth in the Project Document. Based on the previous experience, the management arrangements for the project were planned at the outset of the project and reflect the country-specific best practice for the decision-making and the day-to-day implementation of project activities. No changes to the project management arrangements have been made since the ProDoc signature.

The project is being implemented in an efficient and results-focused manner, with highly capable and professional staff. The project management arrangements are well-suited to the project design, and project daily operations, reporting, and financial management are conducted in an appropriate manner.

Since the beginning of project implementation, the same capable individuals have held the positions of Project Manager, Chief Technical Advisor, Project Associate and site-based IAS field experts. The project implementation benefits from no personnel turnover. At the same time, there have been significant delays in the recruitment of the Project Manager (at least six months) and the site experts (12 months).

One particular element that may be considered non-conventional in the PIU formation is that the Project Manager's position, advertised and filled based on an open competition in accordance with UNDP rules and requirements, was filled by a highly qualified individual who, at that time, held a mid-senior management position as a civil servant and a staff member of the project Implementing Partner. Resigning from governmental service in order to assume the PM responsibilities under the UNDP service contract does not seem an easy decision to make; most importantly, such a transfer requires a certain change in management style, reporting, communication... all of these aspects may be associated with stress and risks of internal professional conflicts. The Project Manager seems to be coping just fine; he is highly respected both by the project team members and project partners, the IP included. Yet, based on the previous UNDP-GEF implementation record in the region, a 100% "independent" PM position seems a more "assured" and "regular" solution. Then again, the current arrangement is responsive to the GEF7 trend of having the PM position fully based in the IP, so, a "hybrid" arrangement in the MarIAS project provides an excellent opportunity for both UNDP and the Implementing Partner to test how the new trends and requirements can be accommodated in the national institutional reality.

Overall, the project is implemented by an excellent technical team of professionals supported by national consultants/experts bringing together a broad range of skills and knowledge in the project subject area. The responsibilities and reporting lines are clear, and the overall PIU arrangements seem effective and efficient. Technically, the project enjoys high-quality part-time support from a national Chief Technical Adviser, with extensive experience and work record specifically related to marine IAS management and sectoral developments around the IAS topic. The IAS experts at the project sites are the project institutional memory, the best available expertise in the country and, as confirmed by more than one source, are the strongest

technical element of the project management structure. The project management arrangements seem to have effectively utilized the two key lessons learned in many previous GEF projects, first in having a highly qualified internationally recognized and respected expert figure as a project CTA, and another in having qualified and knowledgeable locally-based project staff to ensure continued progress with project activities, liaise with local stakeholders, and act as the primary communication channel from the local to the central level.

The project is overseen by the Steering Committee that functions in accordance with the ToR and the mandate foreseen at the project start. Based on the SC minutes, the only function of the Project SC is the consideration and approval of the yearly workplan. There is no record of a discussion nor a decision that goes beyond this limited agenda. MTR has offered a recommendation in this regard, presented below in “Conclusions and Recommendations” section.

The project is implemented as “supported NIM” by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Directorate for GDNCNP. The IP Project Coordinator has confirmed the IP’s full understanding of the IP’s role and mandate for the project, especially where it concerns the delivery of global environmental benefits by the GEF increment. The IP confirms being fully aware of the responsibilities that such a commitment brings.

The IP raised no issues regarding the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP), apart from singular cases of delayed recruitment and procurement.

Work Planning and Adaptive Management

The delay between the GEF approval (October 2017) and the project inception (October 2018) is explained by the governmental reform in the country and the procedural complexities with the ProDoc signing. There were more delays associated with the recruitment of key project personnel and the procurement of certain complex activities. One other example that has an impact on several project performance aspects is the delivery of the **baseline** awareness level assessment 2.5 years after the project start.

The project work planning is result-based and generally follows the UNDP-GEF rules and requirements.

What the project is lacking is a record of changes made to the original ProDoc workplan and the adaptive management scenarios applied since the project start. The MTR attempts to provide such a record in Table 4, below, based on what was once considered best practice in the region, and recommends that the project uses/modifies the suggested approach for documentation of the adaptive management scenarios which are applied.

Table 4 also serves the purpose of assigning the implementation rating to individual project Outputs and Outcomes, in lieu of the detailed assessment of the implementation progress (IP rating) that used to be available as part of the annual PIR exercise.

Table 4. Project Workplanning and Adaptive Management Analysis

Project Output/Activity	Original Timeframe (ProDoc)	Project Yearly Workplans	Adaptive management scenario applied	Implementation rating	Comments
Output 1.1: Regulations on introduction, early detection, prevention and management of IAS in marine and coastal wetland ecosystems developed and submitted for adoption.					
1. By-laws and other regulatory mechanisms/tools on marine IAS developed and adopted in relation to the implementation of Decree Law on Organization and Duties of Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs Law and other related regulations of other Ministries	Y1Q3-4 Y2 Y3	<p>2019: Initial analyses will be outlined based on the developments of the Turkish legislative context.</p> <p>2020: Preparation of the draft legislation by the project legal expert</p> <p>Consultations with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, General Directorate of Law</p> <p>Presentation and discussion of the draft in a 2-3 day workshop</p> <p>Submission of the draft legislation package to the Ministry.</p> <p>2021: Submission of the draft legislation by the project legal expert to GDNCNP and UNDP</p> <p>Appraisal of the draft by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry General Directorate of Law and UNDP MarIAS experts</p> <p>Re-visiting the draft by the legal expert following the presentation workshop</p> <p>Gathering the institutional opinions by GDNCNP on MarIAS draft legislation and making the legislation FINAL</p> <p>It is foreseen that the legislation will be sent to the Presidency by GDNCNP and the approval process will be initiated.</p>	<p>The project is not explicit as to which regulation exactly is being developed. The legislation is no longer related to the implementation of the Decree Law on Organization and Duties of Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs Law. The project works exclusively with the GDNCNP and supports the baseline developments of GDNCNP. The regulations package developed by the project has nothing to do with the regulations of other Ministries and General Directorates. These revisions to the initial plans have not been recorded.</p>	MS	<p>According to project PIR 2021, in cooperation with TerIAS project, a draft regulation on control and management of IAS in line with EU legislation has been prepared.</p> <p>While the work is supported by two projects and the TerIAS project works with the GDFA, the MarIAS project seems to be working almost exclusively with the GDNCNP as the national BD focal point. However, as was confirmed by the GDNCNP Focal Point, the legislation is not a single Directorate outcome but a joint work of all relevant directorates and authorities. GFDA was not substantively involved in the development of the draft legislation package, as confirmed to the MTR by the GDFA focal point, who is also TerIAS project focal point in MoAF. At the same time, GDFA is developing a national Law on Aquaculture that will be supported by bylaws and regulations. Through the legislative reform and developments, GDFA attempts to cover the shortcomings of the regulations related to transportation of Ilifefish, aquarium species trade, customs management. GDFA has developed and is implementing</p>

					<p>and enforcing regulations related to pufferfish hunting and use. The project, together with the Implementing Partner (GDNCNP), should assess the benefits and opportunities related to cooperation with GDFA on the regulatory reforms and innovations, both under Output 1.1. and Output 1.3.</p> <p>In terms of implementation progress, the remaining project timeframe is insufficient to ensure the appraisal, adoption, enactment, implementation and enforcement of the legislation package. The MTR implementation rating reflects this risk.</p>
2. Implementation of IAS by-laws and other regulatory tools/mechanisms through training and awareness raising of regulators and resource-users	Y4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Output 1.2: Main pathway and vectors for IAS identified.					
1. Research and analysis on current marine IAS distribution and pathways in Turkey's coastal zones (including Mediterranean and Black Sea coasts)	Y1 Q 2-3-4 Y2 Y3	<p>2019: Methodology will be identified.</p> <p>2020: Regional collection of data on existing IAS distribution path in Turkey; A technical meeting in pilot areas as a result of the updated analysis.</p>		S	<p>A report of data collection on existing regional marine IAS distribution and pathways in Turkey was completed in February 2020 by Project Chief Technical Advisor and submitted to UNDP and the Project Implementing Partner (GDNCNP).</p> <p>The marine and IAS experts analyzed the current marine IAS distribution and pathways in Turkey's coastal zones and contributed with updated analysis on main and potential pathways</p>

					and vectors for alien species invasions.
2. Updated analysis on main and potential pathways and vectors for alien species introductions	Y2 Y3 Q 1-2			S	<p>The priority pathways have been identified and confirmed as a result of a desk study presented as a Scientific Publication on 'Update on Key Pathways and Distribution of Marine IAS in Turkey' released in May 2021.</p> <p>The identified priority pathways for invasions as well as proposed methods for prevention of entry will create a backbone for the road map that will be developed in consultations with the project team, project experts/consultants, governmental and non-governmental organizations, experts, and other relevant stakeholders and partners during the project implementation.</p>
Output 1.3: Protocols and quarantine mechanisms consistent with bio-security requirements and international standards for IAS in marine and coastal wetland ecosystems in place					
1. Assess, customize and integrate protocols and quarantine mechanism consistent with bio-security requirements and international standards into the marine IAS by-law of MoFWA (see 1.1.1) and other related by-laws/regulatory tools and mechanisms	Y2 Y3	<p>2019: Consultancy ToRs will be prepared</p> <p>2020: Recruitment a quarantine / biosafety expert.</p> <p>Identification of sectors by the Communication and quarantine specialist (together with the Ministry)</p> <p>A preliminary study (desk) for sector needs, Preparation of an expert report including current situation and suggestions and sector needs, joint appraisal of the report by General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks (GDNCNP) and General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (GDFA),</p>	<p>The project workplans are not specific about how exactly the protocols and quarantine mechanisms consistent with bio-security requirements will be integrated into the marine IAS bylaws of MoFWA. 2019-2020 the project did preparatory work to determine the sector needs and define the roadmap for the implementation of the ProDoc activity. In 2021, the project plans to commission sector-specific guidelines for</p>	MU	Depends on the clarifications regarding the adaptive management scenario applied

		It is planned to organize a 2-day meeting to determine the method and the roadmap. 2021: Submission of the FINAL report containing the current situation, sector needs and the recommendations to GDNCNP	the three priority sectors (marine aquarium trade, recreational yachting and diving), while no work is planned on the protocols and quarantine mechanisms <i>per se</i> . If the project works on other related		
2. Development of sector-specific guidelines on protocols and quarantine mechanisms for marine IAS in all sectors that impact/being impacted by IAS other than shipping	Y2 Y3 Y4	2021: Determination of prioritized sectors and the outline of the guidelines by MoAF and biosecurity expert Preparation of draft guidelines for 3 prioritized sectors, Organizing meetings with 3 sector groups FINAL version of guidelines to be shared with the relevant sectors and institutions.	bylaws/regulatory mechanisms, which are those? Some adaptive management strategy is clearly in place but is difficult to understand and assess.	MS	The Evaluation Meeting on the Content of the Protocols and Quarantine Mechanisms regarding marine invasive alien species was held in June 2021. It has been decided to prepare sector-specific guidelines. Attendees agreed on the content of the guidelines that will be finalized and disseminated in 4Q 2021
3. Support for implementation of laws and regulations that have been developed and adopted via dissemination of guidelines to targeted sectors	Y4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Output 1.4: Fiscal incentives introduced for effective removal of IAS (e.g. Lion fish, Balloon fish) in marine and coastal wetland ecosystems (to encourage selective fishing and removal of IAS by fishers) jointly with MFAL.					
1. Confirmation of design of incentive mechanism with specific implementation instructions confirmed with all partners	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2 Q 1-2	2019: Meetings will be held with the GD of Fisheries and Aquaculture and other key local stakeholders to design the incentive mechanism, identify the target species. Detailed activity plan on incentive program and Detailed terms of reference for the incentive consultant will be prepared & advertised. 2020: Recruitment of the incentive consultant. Preparation of the desk study and suggestions for the incentive mechanism design, joint appraisal of the report by GDNCNP and GDFA A 2-day meeting to determine the method and roadmap Preparation of the legal regulation within the framework of the road map	The project reporting provides no explanation why the incentive programme for the four target species developed in 2020 was deemed irrelevant and ineffective. The PIR 2021 states that It was decided to prepare a non-fiscal incentive program instead, however, there is no record of the adaptive management related to the shift from fiscal incentives to non-financial mechanisms.	MU	According to the project reporting, the financial incentive programs develop by project experts for Water hyacinth, Lionfish and North Atlantic starfish were assessed as unsuitable and unsustainable. The project workplanning/reporting documents do not shed a light on either the exact roadmap developed for the implementation of the "incentive" component or the coordination efforts that were extended to ensure that the chosen intervention strategy (fiscal incentive programs for four

		<p>Development of a draft program for access to financial incentive measures by the Awareness Raising and the Incentive experts,</p> <p>Appraisal of the draft incentive program together with the GDNCNP and GDFA and organize a 2-day meeting.</p> <p>2021: Submission the FINAL version of the Incentive Mechanism report containing the current situation and recommendations for incentive mechanism design to GDNCNP.</p> <p>Designing an access program by incentive and communications specialists within the scope of financial incentive measures,</p> <p>Organizing a one-day meeting with related parties (BSGM) in Ankara,</p>	<p>Due to the existing incentive program for Pufferfish and a high commercial value of sea snails, it was decided that a new incentive program is not needed. It was confirmed by GDFA that the project support would not be required for any fiscal incentive program. The project plans are not reflective of this.</p> <p>According to the Project Document, the project is supposed to analyse and document the positive or negative experience with incentive programs. This hasn't taken place.</p>		<p>species) is confirmed with all partners. It is impossible to judge whether the coordination with the partners was not sufficient/successful, or the project implementation environment has changed, or the conflicting stakeholder interests were the main factor that led to no success/relevance of the fiscal incentive program developed by the project.</p> <p>The project is advised to record the lessons learned and develop the adaptive management strategy for 2021 onward.</p> <p>The project is strongly advised to approach the IP with an urging necessity of an extended harmonization and coordination effort where it concerns the parallel mainstream activities of GDFA.</p>
2. Outreach program on fiscal incentives for the local communities (and nature/conservation related NGOs) for each study site	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2 Y3	No outreach program on fiscal incentives planned	n/a	n/a	n/a
3. Outreach program on fiscal incentives for the staff of the province directorates of MoFAL and MoFWA	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2 Y3	No outreach program on fiscal incentives planned	n/a	n/a	n/a
4. Harvest incentive program in partnership with local communities for <i>Pterois spp.</i> in Hatay-Samandag	Y2 Y3 Y4 Y5	<p>2021: Preparation of Lionfish Harvest Incentive Program by the project incentive specialist with the support of Samandağ field expert</p> <p>Procurement of the specific hunting equipment (polespear) for Lionfish</p>		n/a	<p>Project PIR 2021 (2.5 years into project implementation) mentions no activities related to Harvest Incentive Programs at pilot sites. The project reporting focuses on the national-level actions that so far do not show any project</p>

					increment for the incentive programs
5. Harvest incentive program in partnership with local communities for <i>Eichhornia crassipes</i> in Hatay-Samandag	Y2 Y3 Y4 Y5	2021: Preparation of Water hyacinth Harvest Incentive Program by the project incentive specialist with the support of Samandağ field expert Procurement of the Water hyacinth collecting equipment through GDNCNP		n/a	Project PIR 2021 (2.5 years into project implementation) mentions no activities related to Harvest Incentive Programs at pilot sites. The project reporting focuses on the national-level actions that so far do not show any project increment for the incentive programs
6. Harvest incentive program in partnership with local communities for <i>Tetraodontidae (spp.)</i> in Hatay-Samandag	Y2 Y3 Y4 Y5	2021: Preparation of Puffer fish Harvest Incentive Program by the project incentive specialist with the support of Samandağ field expert	No adaptive management was applied in response to the mainstream developments by GFDA. The project seems to have no role/increment for the national Pufferfish Incentive Program, neither for its development or implementation till 2023.	n/a	The GFDA has launched and is successfully implementing a nation-wide pufferfish incentive program, a “bounty program” in which a predetermined amount of money (5 TRY) is paid to an individual upon satisfactory evidence of collection of a specified organism (a pufferfish tail). Yet, the project plans mention the preparation of a Pufferfish Harvest Incentive Program with seemingly no adaptive management to apply in response to the mainstream development of GFDA. The project plans should be amended and clarified accordingly. If indeed the project will somehow cooperate with GFDA within the Pufferfish Incentive Program, the project SESP should be amended with a special emphasis on the legal and safety aspects.
7. Harvest incentive program in partnership with local communities for <i>Asterias rubens</i> in Marmara Islands	Y2 Y3 Y4	2021: <i>Asteria rubens</i> Harvest Incentive Program will be prepared by the project incentive specialist with the support of Marmara field expert.		n/a	Project PIR 2021 (2.5 years into project implementation) mentions no activities related to Harvest Incentive Programs at pilot sites.

	Y5				
8. Documentation and publications on positive or negative experience with harvest programs	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Output 1.5: Regulations and standards on control, minimization and removal of IAS from ballast water developed jointly with MTMAC and put for enforcement					
1. Establish National Technical Working Group on implementation of the Ballast Water Convention	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2 Y3 Y4 Y5	2019: Members of the Working Group will be selected and invited by official letters. The first meeting of the Working Group will be held. Meetings with MoTI will be undertaken to define a strategy and detailed activity plan in regard the ballast water subject.	There is no record in the project reporting related to the WG. There is no record of adaptive management related to the fact that the WG on the ballast waters is not considered to be a relevant and necessary coordination mechanism by the MoTI.	n/a	According to the Directorate for Maritime, the National Technical Working Group on the implementation of the Ballast Water Convention is not required. The project planning and reporting should be reflective of the adaptive management strategy in this regard.
2. Revision and updating of the National Ballast Water Strategy, in line with international best practices and Turkey's obligations and commitments under the Ballast Water Convention	Y2 Q 4 Y3	2021: Updating the National Ballast Water Strategy as a result of the decision of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (MoTI), Organizing a 2-day workshop in Istanbul within the scope of updating the National Ballast Water Strategy	According to the Directorate for Maritime, the National Ballast Water Management Strategy is no longer a governmental priority and it is not being implemented. There is no record of the fact in the project reporting. The project plans should be reflective of the needs and communications with the MoTI. The project plans should clearly indicate that the project will not be supporting the implementation of the National Ballast Water Strategy and should apply an alternative scenario, either limiting its scope and impact related to the Ballast Water Management Convention implementation or discussing	n/a	The project translated 12 Ballast Water Convention Guidelines from Eng to Tur. The project reporting does not mention the purpose and the application of this input. The Directorate for Maritime confirms that the guidelines were instrumental for the development of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention. The future role of the project in the implementation of the Action Plans (in lieu of the National Ballast Water Strategy) should be discussed with the Directorate for Maritime.

			with the MoTI a possible project increment for the implementation of the ministerial Action Plans developed for the implementation of the Convention.		
3. National legislation for compliance and implementation of Ballast Water Convention prepared and adopted	Y2 Q 4 Y3 Y4	---	No work undertaken, no record of adaptive management. See above	n/a	See above
4. National regulations and by-laws on implementation of National Ballast Water Strategy and Ballast Water Convention developed and adopted	Y2 Q 4 Y3 Y4	---	No work undertaken, no record of adaptive management. See above	n/a	See above
5. Establishment of compliance and enforcement mechanism for implementation of Ballast Water Convention	Y2 Q 4 Y3 Y4 Q 1-2	---	No work and no plans ahead. See above	n/a	See above
6. System for monitoring compliance and implementation of the Ballast Water Convention	Y2 Q 4 Y3 Y4 Y5	---	No work and no plans ahead. See above	n/a	See above
7. Practical workshops on capacity building of MoTI personnel working in sampling and analysis of ballast water and sediment, to support implementation of National Ballast Water Strategy and Ballast Water Convention, including demonstration of eDNA sampling and analysis	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4 Y4 Q 1-2	2020: Meeting with Boğaziçi University to support the implementation of eDNA sampling and analysis, Based on the discussion, procurement of eDNA equipment is foreseen. Workshops on eDNA training at the ports to be determined as a result of the decision of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (MoTI). 2021: Preparation of the technical specifications for the eDNA expert	The capacity building of MoTI related to sampling and analysis of ballast water has been and will be limited to e-DNA sampling. The project reporting should clearly reflect this narrowing-down of the initial focus and explain the reasons (which are perfectly sound!) behind this adaptive planning.	S	According to project PIR 2021, a practical workshop on capacity building of MoTI personnel working in sampling and analysis of ballast water and sediment, to support the implementation of the National Ballast Water Strategy and Ballast Water Convention, including demonstration of eDNA sampling and analysis took place in the 3Q 2021 with the close collaboration of IMO. The project is strongly advised to establish a partnership with the Ministry of

		<p>Organizing a 2-day workshop on eDNA planned in 2020 and postponed due to Covid-19, determining pilot ports for eDNA application during the workshop</p> <p>Procurement of the eDNA equipment</p> <p>Design of trainings on the use of eDNA-related devices to the ports to be determined as a result of the decision of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (MoTI)</p> <p>1-day training in the selected pilot port / province</p>			<p>Environment where it concerns sediment treatment aspects.</p> <p>The project is further advised to assess the results and value of the eDNA training and discuss the MOTI's requirement for training and actual testing at other sites and their request for more than one set of eDNA equipment, based on the justification available from the Ministry.</p>
<p>Output 1.6: Sustainability and Replication mechanism: National Strategy and Action Plan on IAS in marine and coastal wetland ecosystems developed and approved to inform future actions on identifying priority habitats and species to be protected, evaluating financial and socio-economic effects of action/inaction for marine and freshwater IAS based on a thorough cost/benefit analysis.</p>					
1. Identification of methods to measure and analyze the impact of marine IAS	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2 Q 1-2	<p>2020: Recruitment of a socio-economic expert</p> <p>A 2-day technical meeting with the participation of relevant experts / academicians in determining methods for measuring and analyzing the impact of marine IAS, determining habitats unprotected against IAS invasion.</p> <p>Data collection for the completion of the project site IAS management plans activities (Output 3.1)</p> <p>Preparation of the methodology report.</p>		S	The project reporting could be improved with an indication of how the methodology will be further used and replicated
2. Investigation of ecological and socio-economic impact of selected marine IAS	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4	<p>2021: Evaluation of the results of the perception survey conducted to measure and analyze the impact of Marine IAS by the socio-economic and ecological effects by field experts</p>	n/a	n/a	Was planned to start in Y2, at least 6-months delayed
3. Identification of habitats vulnerable to marine IAS invasion	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4	<p>2021: Identification of the prioritized habitats to be protected by IAS field experts</p>	n/a	n/a	Was planned to start in Y2, at least 6-months delayed

4. Scientific conference on ecological and socio-economic impacts of marine IAS.	Y1 Q 3-4	2019: Preparation of the conference will be initiated, the date, content and share of responsibilities will be outlined. 2020: no record of plans 2021: The date and content of the scientific conference to be held on the ecological and socio-economic impacts of IAS to be confirmed	n/a	n/a	At least 24-months delayed
5. National Strategy and Action Plan on marine IAS	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4 Q 1-2	2021: Designing the national strategy and action plan marine component in parallel with the TerIAS project. TerIAS will lead the process	No record of adaptive strategizing of this key output resulting from the partnership with TerIAS project	n/a	According to the project PIR 2021, The national IAS strategy has not been drafted and approved yet but the project has commenced the preparatory activities, which results and findings will provide the basis for the national IAS strategy. The needs and strategy framework were determined in close partnership with the TerIAS project. The project plans and reports should be clear about the roles, respective inputs and coordination mechanisms between the MarIAS and TerIAS projects in the preparation of the National IAS Strategy and Action Plan
6. Support to local authorities of MoFWA, MoFAL, Coast Guard, MoEU, MoH, MoCT etc. for implementation of National Strategy and Action Plan on Marine IAS	Y4 Q 2-3-4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Output 2.1: Inter-sectoral multi-stakeholder Advisory Technical Board under Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs capacitated to deal with IAS prevention, early detection, rapid response, management and eradication					
1. Ministerial Decree on national coordination mechanism (Advisory Technical Board) drafted and submitted for adoption	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2	2019: Details of the participants list, terms of reference of the Board and methods of working will be identified. The draft decree will be outlined. 2020: The draft Decree is expected to receive the Consent of the Minister.	According to project reporting, a national coordination mechanism-- National IAS Technical Advisory Group composed of	MS	. The project increment to ensure that the enabling environment and prerequisites for the establishment of the National

		2021: It is planned to update the draft decree for the boards and working groups and submit it to the Presidency by the GDNCNP.	<p>representatives of key authorities, NGOs, local and academic--has been established by an interministerial order but has not convened yet.</p> <p>The draft Presidential Decree, detailing the structure, responsibilities and members of the IAS national coordination mechanism was prepared. The project reporting is not clear as to why an update to the draft Presidential Decree is required.</p> <p>The project reporting is unclear about the number and composition of the Working Groups either.</p>		marine IAS inter-sectoral multi-stakeholder coordination body should be clearly stated in the project reporting. The project should be specific, both in the reporting and the planning, regarding its input related to the operationalization of the Advisory Technical Board
2. National marine IAS inter-sectoral multi-stakeholder coordination body: Advisory Technical Board established	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4 Y5	2020: The Technical Advisory Board is expected to hold its first meeting	The project reporting is not explicit about the unforeseen changes in the institutional requirements related to the Advisory Technical Board establishment: apart from an interministerial decision, a Presidential Decree became a requirement. As a result of this procedural complication combined with the pandemic crisis, a significant delay is observed.	n/a	The project is advised to investigate if the project Steering Committee can play a more technical and extended coordination role before the Advisory Technical Board is established, providing an interim intersectoral coordination platform that is currently lacking.
3. Advisory Technical Board to provide guidance for IAS Strategy and Action Plan process and ensure implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	At least 6 months delayed

Output 2.2: Information system with official list of prohibited IAS, modules on risk analysis, early warning response and monitoring for IAS in marine and coastal ecosystems is in use by government regulators. The system enables a comprehensive inventory and monitoring of IAS threats at the most sensitive marine and coastal habitats and species (posidonia meadows, coralligenous, sea turtles, anchovy, mussel, oyster), as well as measures to detect and prevent entry of risky IAS at key points of entry.					
1. Data collection for open access marine IAS database	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2 Q 1-2	2019: ToRs for database consultants will be prepared and advertised. Stakeholder consultation meetings will be held to identify the preliminary needs and existing tools regarding the database. The consultation meetings will also be made with key organizations in relation to Ballast Water Convention to analyze how two databases can work together.	The data collection has been delayed, pending the agreement on the database technical specifications. The project reporting is not particularly clear about the fact. Is there any adaptive strategy applied to ensure data collection before the database specifications are agreed upon?	MS	
2. Construction of the database and the web interface for open access marine IAS database	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2 Y3 Q 1-2	2020: A needs assessment meeting with MoTI, GDFA and GDNCNP. Preparation of database technical specifications in line with MoTI, GDFA and GDNCNP expectations. Procurement of database software Agreement on the website name, content and a technical specification including the "Citizen Science" Website tender, development and promotion 2021: Recruitment of the database expert Creation of database content by CTA and IAS field experts Designing the first prototype by the database expert and presenting the first study to PIU with a meeting over Zoom,	Starting from the AWP 2020, it was decided to split the activity into two: i) database and ii) web page (interface)	S	The existing national IAS list has been updated. The roadmap towards the national marine IAS database scope/content/structure/access and entry evaluation and validation protocols were determined in cooperation with the GDNCNP. The database will be constructed and pilot data entry will be carried out in 3Q-4Q 2021. The MTR questions to 2021 draft PIR are as follows: who'll be responsible for maintenance, both during the project implementation and upon its completion, who will be implementing data entry and validation protocols, what about open sources data and restricted-access data, how the information about the data based will be distributed among the stakeholders, and, most importantly, touch upon the sustainability elements upon project completion. The project

					team's response is that the Biodiversity Department of the IP will be the main responsible institution. The project team is then strongly advised to discuss and agree on the details as per the MTR questions and specific issues and aspects raised above.
3. Development of database module, or separate database, to support implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of Ballast Water Convention	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2 Y3 Q 1-2	Contracting a database expert or a company according to the needs of MoTI, Training of databases built for MoTI and for MariAS project (1 day MoTI - 1 day - MoAF),	The project plans are unclear why two separate databases, one for MoTI and one for MariAS project will be developed. The plans are not particularly specific as to how the "MariAS project" database will be appraised with the MoAF, which are the maintenance arrangements and the sustainability elements.	n/a	At least 24-months delayed
4. Designation and training of experts to operate open access marine IAS database	Y1 Q 4 Y2 Y3 Y4 Y5 Q1		n/a	n/a	Not started, at least 24 months delayed
5. Presentation of the open access marine IAS database to the public and training of the target user groups	Y2 Q4 Y3 Y4 Y5 Q 1-2	It is planned to introduce the accessible MariAS database to the relevant institutions / public with the 1-day meeting.	n/a	n/a	Not started
6. System for sustainable operation, update and maintenance of the open access marine IAS database	Y3 Y4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Output 2.3: Engagement with shipping industry, and transport and customs sectors, on implementation of regulations and standards on control, minimization and removal of IAS from ballast water; and on procedures for regulating the entry of species for ornamental and aquaculture purposes to mitigate the introduction of marine and freshwater IAS.					

1. International symposium on ballast water management	Y1 Q 4 Y2	2019: Consultations with relevant stakeholders to identify the content, date and activity plan for the symposium. 2020, same for 2021: It is planned to organize a joint meeting with MoTI, GDNCNP, IMO and determine the scope, time and place of the symposium and then make the announcement.		n/a	
2. Sectoral capacity building for implementation of regulations and standards on the control, minimization and removal of IAS	Y1 Q 4 Y2 Y3	2019: Meetings with the key institutions of the shipping sector to introduce the project and map the stakeholders, expectations, and capacity building needs 2021: Translation of the Ballast Water Management Convention guidelines into English No further plans?	n/a	n/a	The project is recommended to approach MoTI on the capacity building needs and possible GEF increment, to expand the project impact beyond the translation of the Convention guidelines
3. Capacity building for customs and transport authorities on control of marine IAS in non-shipping sector	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4	No further plans?	n/a	n/a	The project is recommended to outreach the non-shipping sector stakeholders
Output 2.4: Increased knowledge and awareness on IAS threats, impacts, management options and best practices for relevant industries, enterprises (aquaculture, transport, custom, tourism, etc.) media, security forces (gendarme), schools etc. through a comprehensive national communication, outreach program and delivery of community training					
1. Identification of key target groups related to the introduction and control of marine IAS	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2 Q 1-2	2019: A communication and awareness raising program will be prepared for the project. Also, a monitoring system to measure the impact of the program will be designed and initiated. 2020: Identification of key target groups Development of the draft project communication strategy A current situation report on monitoring awareness in target groups	---	S	
2. Development of training modules and programs on control of marine IAS	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2 Q 1-2	2020: Preparation of technical specifications for IAS documentary and IAS book Development of a training module program		S	

		2021: Development of a training module and program by ARCD, CTA and IAS expert (s), Designing the content of training materials by ARCD and IAS experts and printing when finalized, designing the content of species cards and printing when finalized.			
3. Design and printing of training and awareness raising materials	Y1 Q 4 Y2 Y3 Y4 Y5	2020: Design of training material content and printing of training materials		S	
4. Raising awareness on marine IAS in schools - development of high school-level teacher activity packets (lesson plans) related to marine IAS	Y2 Y3 Y4	2021: Establishing cooperation models / meeting with relevant institutions within the scope of the Teacher and Student Education program, Concluding the contract with the relevant institution through Responsible Party Agreement or any other method, Conducting meetings with the Ministry of National Education within the scope of the Responsible Party Agreement, determining teachers-schools, designing teacher training and subsequently training materials for teachers and students	n/a	n/a	n/a
5. Raising awareness on marine IAS in marine transport sector	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4 Y5	2021: Conducting meetings (3X) for 3 groups (transport, divers, fishermen) in Antalya, Reporting the outputs as a result of the meetings/trainings by ARCD expert	n/a	n/a	n/a
6. Raising awareness on marine IAS in hobby aquarium sector and aquarists	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4 Y5	No plans?	n/a	n/a	n/a

7. Raising awareness on marine IAS in aquaculture sector	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4 Y5	No plans?	n/a	n/a	n/a
8. Raising awareness on IAS in media	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4 Y5	2021: Production of IAS Animation short film Production of IAS Jellyfish video, Production of IAS Balloon fish video,	n/a	n/a	IAS awareness films are targeting broader audiences but are presented here as there was no “general public awareness” activity in the original workplan
9. Raising awareness on marine IAS among fishers	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4 Y5	2021: Conducting meetings (3X) for 3 groups (transport, divers, fishermen) in Antalya, Reporting the outputs as a result of the meetings/trainings by ARCD expert	n/a	n/a	n/a
10. Raising awareness on marine IAS among divers	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4 Y5	2021: Conducting meetings (3X) for 3 groups (transport, divers, fishermen) in Antalya, Reporting the outputs as a result of the meetings/trainings by ARCD expert	n/a	n/a	n/a
11. Raising awareness on marine IAS in governmental institutions (customs, coast guard, MoFAL, MoEU, MoFWA, MoTMAC etc.)	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Y4 Y5	No plans?	n/a	n/a	n/a
12. Monitoring the awareness in target groups	Y1 Q 4 Y2 Y3 Y4 Y5	2021: Evaluating the outputs obtained regarding the monitoring of awareness in target groups and preparing a current situation report by a socio-economics and ARCD expert	n/a	S	n/a
13. Study visits for capacity building of staff of related Institutions	Y2 Y3 Y4 Y5	2020: An overseas study visit to see examples of good practices regarding the fight and management of Marine IAS. 2021: Two study visits have been planned to see examples of good practices in combating and managing Marine IAS.	No study visits were possible in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions	n/a	n/a

Output 3.1: Management plans designed and launched for 4 areas, with identification of site-specific measures for prevention, ensure eradication, control and management of IAS					
1. Data collection for completion of project site marine IAS management plans	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2 Q 1-2	<p>2019: The content of data collection program will be identified.</p> <p>Terms of references for related consultants will be drafted and advertised, methodology for establishing the local committees and their terms of references will be finalized.</p> <p>2020: Literature / field studies</p> <p>A 2-day technical meeting with the participation of relevant experts / academicians in determining methods for measuring and analyzing the impact of marine IAS, determining habitats unprotected against IAS invasion.</p> <p>Data collection for the completion of the project site IAS management plans activities (with activity 1.6.1 - 1.6.3 - 3.1.1)</p> <p>2021:</p> <p>Organizing a 2-day technical meeting on data collection and distribution of IAS, arrival routes and measurement of impacts to complete the project site IAS management plans activities,</p> <p>Organizing field studies (4x) within the framework of the working plan, holding a 2-day evaluation meeting at the end of 2021</p>	As part of adaptive management, the ProDoc workplan was amended to have seasonal field studies. The project reporting/planning is not explicit whether any adaptive management scenarios and methods were applied in response to the data collection limitations related to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.	MS	IAS field experts conducted field researches and dives at relevant points in Hatay-Samandağ, Ayvalık - Marmara Islands and İğneada between 02-12 September 2020 , 29 March 2021-9 April 2021 and 16-26 June 2021. At the time of MTR, the project is still at the stage of desk review and field surveys for IAS data collection required as the baseline for IAS management plans' development and implementation at pilot sites. It is unclear, however, whether the baseline data collected since the project start is sufficient. Seems like the data collection is at least 18 months delayed. The reasons behind the delay and the exact implications of COVID-19 restrictions are somewhat unclear.
2. Formation of national Technical Working Group for development of project site marine IAS management plans	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Q 1-2	2021: Updating the draft decree for the boards and working groups and submitting it to the Presidency, (in coordination with 2.1.1-2.1.1 activity)	n/a	n/a	The project reporting is unclear about the Technical Working Groups at the pilot sites
3. Formation of the Local Committee for development of project site marine IAS management plans	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Q 1-2	Establishment of local committees with the Presidency decree or the approval of the GDNCNP regional directorate, (will be in coordination with 2.1.1-2.1.2 activities),	n/a	n/a	The project reporting is unclear about stakeholder engagement activities that should have preceded the establishment of the local committees

4. Preparation of project site marine IAS draft management plans with support/involvement by the Local Committee	Y2 Q 3-4 Y3 Q 1-2	2021: Making a contract with an institution specialized in the management plan and starting the preparation of IAS management plans, Holding 2-day meetings by the chosen relevant institution with the participation of stakeholders and experts, (4 pilot sites)	The preparation of the site-specific management plans is undoubtedly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the exact impact is somewhat debatable. Since the baseline data were collected during the 2020 field season, it is only the stakeholder engagement and the coordination aspects that should have been severely affected by the pandemic crisis. The project reporting is unclear whether, apart from the stakeholder agreements and formation of the institutional mechanisms, all preparatory analytical work was accomplished in preparation for the site-specific IAS management plans. Why the decision to engage a responsible party for the IAS MP preparation has taken 2.5 years? Which were the operational difficulties and what the project did to try and timely resolve those?	MU	As per PIR 2021, the format of the Management Plan and the overall management planning process diagram towards the İğneada, Marmara Islands, Ayvalık Islands and Samandağ Coast and the potential management planning experts to be recruited for the management plans have been discussed and agreed with the Implementing Partner. There are no further details about the preparatory activities for the IAS management planning. The institutional mechanisms (activities above) have not been set up to support the development of the management plans. The MTR cannot form a justified opinion whether the preparatory activities for site-specific marine IAS management plans have been sufficient and satisfactory.
5. Revision of the draft plan by the national Technical Working Group, and adoption by national Technical Working Group and Local Committee	Y3 Q 3-4	2021: Following the finalization and approval of the IAS management plans, it is envisaged to be introduced with a 1-day meeting for 4 pilot sites.	n/a	n/a	It is quite clear that the IAS MPs will not be finalized to be presented in 2021, since as of July no organization for the work was contracted.
6. Government adoption and implementation of the local management plans for İğneada, Marmara Islands - Kapıdağ, Ayvalık Islands Nature Park, and Gulf of Iskenderun including	Y3 Q 4 Y4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

formation of Local Marine IAS Taskforces					
7. Monitoring implementation of management plans	Y4 Q 3-4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Output 3.2: Measures to detect, control spread of IAS at the target sites in collaboration with local communities, and targeted restoration of ecosystems degraded as a result of IAS.					
1. İgneada: Implementation of marine IAS management and control measures defined in site management plan (3.1.7), in cooperation with local communities	Y3 Q3-4 Y4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	At least 12-months delayed
2. Marmara Islands: Implementation of marine IAS management and control measures defined in site management plan (3.1.8), in cooperation with local communities	Y3 Q3-4 Y4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	At least 12-months delayed
3. Ayvalik Islands: Implementation of marine IAS management and control measures defined in site management plan (3.1.9), in cooperation with local communities	Y3 Q3-4 Y4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	At least 12-months delayed
4. Hatay-Samandag / Gulf of Iskenderun: Implementation of marine IAS management and control measures defined in site management plan (3.1.10), in cooperation with local communities	Y3 Q3-4 Y4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	At least 12-months delayed
Output 3.3: Support for the recovery of native species disturbed by IAS at selected sites					
1. Detailed specification of damaged <i>Mytilus galloprovincialis</i> and <i>Mytilaster lineatus</i> beds in İgneada and Marmara Islands; data	Y1 Q 3-4 Y2	2019: The content of data collection for selected species will be identified .	Neither project planning nor reporting is informative of the progress under Output 3.3.	u/a	

collection and feasibility assessment of re-population		Terms of references for related consultants/ consultant rosters will be drafted and advertised.			
2. Eradication of <i>Rapana venosa</i> and <i>Asterias rubens</i> in the selected sites	Y1 Q4 Y2 Y3		Neither project planning nor reporting is informative of the progress under Output 3.3.	u/a	
3. Long-term control of <i>Rapana venosa</i> and <i>Asterias rubens</i>	Y3 Y4 Y5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
4. Feasibility assessment of other sites in Turkey	Y2 Y3 Y4 Q 1-2		Neither project planning nor reporting is informative of the progress under Output 3.3.	u/a	

Finance and co-finance

The budget delivery as of June 30, 2021, makes 19% of the approved project budget. The co-financing reported by UNDP CO in the online PIR 2021 is at 20% delivery rate. The reason for slow delivery stems from the extended inception period resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019-2020, but generally follows the previous experience of UNDP-GEF projects in the country starting slowly. None of the stakeholders mention any specific reasons for slow delivery and underperformance as compared to the original workplans and budget. The project reporting confirms that the COVID pandemic had caused delays in field researches and trainings with a negative impact on the budget delivery. The workplans and budgets were adjusted and subsequently approved by the project Steering Committee.

The total delivery of the GEF budget as of June 30, 2021 is USD 638,912. The delivery structure is presented below:

GEF resource delivery as of June 30, 2021

	2018	2019	2020	2021	%
Outcome 1	25,468.05	51,300.39	119,775.28	36,594.80	36
Outcome 2	8,836.59	38,704.15	110,529.05	58,844.76	34
Outcome 3	697.25	21,450.30	49,416.39	58,099.93	20
PMC	5,598.52	32,485.24	16,248.59	4,862.41	9
Total	40,600.41	143,940.08	295,969.31	158,401.90	100

The MTR takes a due note of UNDP TRAC allocation of USD 11,000 for the project communication expenses, in addition to the figures displayed above.

The MTR's analysis of the project expenditures, although limited to the project CDRs data, reveals the following elements that the MTR would like to notice for possible future management action of the project team/UNDP. Firstly, the PMC costs are above the current threshold established by the GEF (5%) and make 9% of the total budget delivery. UNDP and PMU are advised to keep the PMC costs within the established limit (5% of the GEF budget and 5.65% of the total budget with the UNDP TRAC allocation). Secondly, the MTR comments on the very low delivery rate (7.7%) for project Outcome 3, where most of the expenses are 71400 project personnel costs. Thirdly, the MTR notes considerable expenditures on 75700 Learning Costs (project events), accounting for USD 122,000, or 19% of the total budget delivery. With the COVID-19 restrictions imposed on project events and offline communications and gatherings for 2020 and 2021, the MTR finds it difficult to explain the relatively high percentage (one fifth of the funds delivered). Another budget line with a substantial expenditure is 71400 Service Contract (Project Personnel), a bit below USD 200,000 or one-third of the project expenditures so far, which is a bit higher than the general trend for the first half of project implementation; the high ratio of the personnel cost indicates the lack of substantive activities and complex procurement during the first half of project implementation.

The budget revisions generally follow the approval of project workplans; the project team generally adjusts the budget according to the approved workplan in the first quarter of the year and prepares another budget revision to reflect the delivery expectations, towards the year-end. The PMU is late with the budget revision for the year 2021; by the time of MTR, the budget revision was not ready for the external review, so the MTR is unable to use that for the analysis. The unspent budget is generally rephased proportionally to future years. In view of the MTRs, the future year budgets seem impossible to deliver without any specific measures (such as selection of Responsible Parties for particular outputs/activities); the project no-cost extension will be required, and there is also a risk of under-delivery of the GEF funds even within the maximum available timeframe. The project will have to deliver about US\$1.3 million a year for the next two years, which, with

the continuous limitations caused by the pandemic, as well as some other project implementation issues discussed below in Conclusions and Recommendations, does not seem manageable without risks and the need for improved management effort. This is of particular relevance to the project performance under Outcome 3 where it concerns concrete input and long-term sustainability at the pilot sites' level.

The project financial management is considered to be adequate, responsive to the high standards of UNDP with a decades' record of quality support to NIM in the country. The financial controls, including reporting and planning, follow UNDP standards and requirements. There was no NIM audit yet conducted for the project, as the yearly budget delivery for 2018-2020 was below the audit threshold. The observations above regarding the nature of project expenditures concern the programmatic aspects of project delivery and do not relate to financial management and controls.

The project does not seem to have a practice of collecting co-financing evidence from its only co-financing partner, GDNCNP. The MTR recommends changing this and also considering the engagement of more than one co-financing partner for the remaining project lifetime. The common practice for the Europe and CIS region is to collect evidence of parallel co-financing from the principal partners, as is also advised for the reporting under Logframe Indicator 4.

Project-level reporting, monitoring and evaluation systems

So far, no adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Steering Committee. Please see specific MTR recommendations below.

Consequently, no lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

The project sticks to the approved M&E budget and generally follows the monitoring plan outlined in the project document, and adheres to UNDP-GEF M&E requirements. The MTR would like to note that in view of the savings of the M&E budget related to MTR (originally USD 25,000 plus report translation costs), the commissioning unit considers engaging a team of two experts, international and national, for the Final Evaluation, to enhance the coverage and effectiveness of the exercise.

One significant deviation from the original monitoring plan is the awareness level assessment that was organised two years into the project implementation and is still considered to be capturing the baseline awareness level. The GEF reporting requirements are being implemented as required; however, there was no 2020 PIR quality assessment available to support the MTR's judgment of the overall adequate quality of the project reporting.

Stakeholder Engagement

The MTR assessment of the stakeholder engagement aspects is severely limited by the fact that the MTR assignment was performed remotely; there was no MTR field mission and no face-to-face interviews.

Interviews with key stakeholders were conducted to provide an opportunity for the project management team and the principal stakeholders to present their views directly to the MTR consultant. The following principal government stakeholders were included in the list for the comprehensive MTR online interviews:

- General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Project Implementing Partner);
- General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (fisheries and aquaculture issues);
- General Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (ballast water issues).

The interviews confirmed the project relevance and value for the principal stakeholders listed above. The project should be praised for establishing a continuous functional partnership with the Implementing Partner, GDNCNP. The MTR notes the exemplary level of involvement and commitment of the project Implementing Partner. The specific concerns of the MTR regarding the interaction with, and engagement of, the principal governmental stakeholders are mentioned below in the [Conclusions and Recommendations](#) Section. The recommendations also touch upon the Steering Committee as a key decision-making mechanism to support efficient and effective project implementation.

There are multiple stakeholder types at the local level in the project field sites. These include representatives of the artisanal fishing industry, the tourism sector, port authorities, local government representatives, fishers' groups, and local coastal communities. The project design envisages the establishment of marine IAS working groups in each of the demonstration sites, which will include local government representatives, fishers' groups, the tourism sector, and other site-specific key stakeholders (e.g. representatives of the protected area in Ayvalik Islands). In addition, the project has multiple education and awareness activities planned that will engage local communities and stakeholders in addressing the management and control of marine IAS.

Based on the limited evidence available and with a due note regarding the limitations for the MTR's coverage of the site-based project stakeholders, the MTR is not able to conclude, with all authority, regarding the level of stakeholder engagement at the project sites. The MTR's personal opinion is that the site-level stakeholder engagement effort, significant or not, did not achieve a result that would have been expected at the project mid-term. The project progress on Outcome 3, where it concerns pilot site activities, remains very limited. One positive factor that should be mentioned is that the project managed to engage the best available expertise for the project work at the pilot site level; whether the project has engaged all possible resources to engage local stakeholders is less certain. The 2021 PIR confirms that there was limited interaction with local stakeholders due to the Covid pandemic and associated restrictions.

The MTR Online Questionnaire ([Annex 4](#)) was sent to 22 stakeholders at 13 groups or organizations. Seven were completed and returned. Given the small number of respondents (7) one realizes that these responses are statistically irrelevant. Most of the comments are generic and bland and provide little insight into the effectiveness of information dissemination by the Project. However, there are some telling comments as they relate to the communications that were (or were not) in place during the Project. Two of the NGOs provided the following comment: "WE CANNOT PROVIDE REGULAR PARTICIPATION, BECAUSE THERE WAS NO REGULAR INFORMATION TO ENABLE OUR TIMELY PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT EXCEPT FOR THE INCEPTION WORKSHOP". Although they inexplicably had separately sent in identical questionnaires, they must have both experienced this shortcoming of Project communication and stakeholder outreach and engagement effort. Since the State/Public respondents did not make similar comments it is possible that the Project stumbled in keeping non-governmental groups well informed about Project activities.

Communications

According to the 2021 PIR, the project's communication and awareness-raising program has been prepared and its implementation has been underway since the second quarter of 2020. The program and its implementation will serve to determine knowledge, interest and attitude of target groups regarding invasive alien species and for identifying informative, education and communication needs and tools as well as developing and implementing awareness-raising, education and communication activities for different target groups and preparing printed and visual materials (posters, infographics) and digital platforms and tools for dissemination.

The MTR's opinion from the interviews with the principal governmental stakeholders is that the project communication is regular, straightforward, and timely, although there were comments on the rather formal nature of the communication as a primary tool for the stakeholder outreach and engagement.

The project website (<https://www.istilacilar.org/>) was developed as a primary tool for project communication and information sharing. The website is professionally designed, is very attractive and easily gets one's attention. It however seems very generic, lacking specific marine IAS information, facts, and data. It also seems that very little of the website content (less than 10%?) is specific to Turkey. The country-specific information is so buried that it takes considerable searching to find it. Some information raises questions. As an example, the following is an excerpt from the *"/marine-invasive-alien-species/"* page:

"Marine alien species are introduced by human activities accidentally or deliberately into a natural environment where they are not normally found. There are 500 marine alien species identified to date in Turkish seas. Further, 1 new marine alien species is introduced every 4 weeks into Turkish seas. It is reported that 2/3 of species introduced to Turkish seas arrived from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean via Suez Canal, and 1/3 on hulls and in ballast waters.

Turkish waters have 3 invasive alien species (comb jelly, veined whelk, and water hyacinth) listed in "100 of the World's Worst Invasive Alien Species List" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)."

This information is somewhat confusing, as it does not give a straight answer to the question of which marine IAS are registered for Turkey. The project reports of the completed IAS list as a major deliverable; alas, this has not been uploaded to the website, nor any visualization to this key data source has been ensured. There are photos and videos of the four (4) project target marine IAS posted on the Gallery web page of the MarIAS website, but without a proper reference and description, such presentation and coverage might actually lead to the obfuscation of the real problems with MarIAS in Turkey.

The project claims (2021 PIR) that the project website is being actively used for the dissemination of current information and data on marine invasive alien species (Marine ecosystem, Marine IAS, News & Activities, Photo, Video Gallery, Library, Key Literature on Marine IAS). The MTR finds it impossible to support this statement with evidence. The only technical report available at the website is "Legal Analysis on IAS", 2019. The only resources available in English are related to Lionfish Knowledge Exchange Workshop. As mentioned above, the Marine Invasive Alien Species catalog lists only four project "target" species. The project is strongly advised to update the website with the key publications produced so far, first of all, the "Update on Key Pathways and Distribution of Marine IAS in Turkey", May 2021.

The "title" website (and project) video is published without English subtitles. One can set an automated translation of the original subtitles from Turkish to English, however, the translation quality, especially when it comes to species names and the project structure, is confusing.

Some specific suggestions received from the stakeholders in response to the MTR Online Questionnaire ([Annex 4](#)) for improving the website are as follows:

- A) Maybe a short training module can be added, a mini online certificate can be given to those who pass the online assessment exam after certain training. This can be beneficial in terms of disseminating education.
- B) The titles and contents that would be beneficial [and should be] included in the project site:
 - Activities to be carried out in the upcoming period (upcoming events),
 - Preparing the project videos in English and placing them on the website
 - Enrichment of the visuals section
 - Project progress to date (what we achieved)

C) Expandable with more information. Transitions can be accelerated in the promotion of stakeholder institutions

These are seemingly good and direct suggestions and should be pursued even after the end of the Project.

The MTR has requested the website visitation statistics and data as evidence of the value and quality of this instrument for knowledge sharing and awareness-raising. The MTR was provided with raw IT data (MSExcel spreadsheets) with no frame of reference as to the breadth of the web page information dissemination. The project team is kindly advised to reconsider the approach for collecting the website visitation statistics as evidence in the future and get ready for the FE request to provide quality data for the analysis.

Based on the analysis of the raw data received, the MTR was able to summarize the following key observations regarding the website visitation. All of the web pages at the MariAS website had a total of nearly 11,000 hits between Jul 1, 2020 and Jun 30, 2021. About 50% of the users only looked at the main web page before leaving the site (Bounce Rate). There were 4,000 visitors in that time period. That is an average of slightly above 10 users per day. The average time spent by all users at the site was about 1 minute 30 seconds. Each of the main pages (/marine-ecosystems/, /marine-invasive-foreign-tours/, and /marias/) had the users stay about 2 minutes at each page.

It would have been very beneficial for the reviewer to have been provided with such a summary along with some perspective regarding these data. Are 10 users per day a success? Is 1½ minutes a good time for people to spend on some pages? The project Communication Specialist is advised to perform regular analysis of whether this level of use is meaningful and substantive, and form a justified opinion of the value and efficiency of the project spending on the website creation and maintenance. The same analysis will be helpful to determine if any promotion tools should be put in place to improve the meaningful website visitation. It was also very evident from the provided files that web page viewing dropped significantly after the first two months (July and August, 2020). The number of users dropped by ½ after the first two months. After nearly 60 pages viewed per day in the first two months, the rate dropped to 50% of that level, and below, in subsequent months. Again, this is the only information that could have been obtained from the raw data available to the MTR, so the analysis is somewhat limited. Perhaps, the next time the website statistics are reviewed, a more coherent and user-friendly approach will apply. This would include a summary and overview of what the raw data represent along with perspectives of how effective this form of information dissemination has been. What is of special importance, based on the Logframe Indicators, are the downloads of the project technical reports. So far, this information has not been available. Also, for some unexplained reason, some of the web pages that are cited in the web viewing data can no longer be accessed. A visitor is told that “404 The requested page cannot be found.”

Overall, the technical issues with the website visitation data available to the MTR somewhat support the overall reflection on the project information dissemination effort. Although the Project Team has compiled considerable information, and they are to be congratulated for that effort, there is a lack of appreciation of what it takes to convey information to others. There is little value in collecting and producing unique data and analyses if the information that is compiled is not effectively explained and broadly disseminated.

Another evidence requested by the MTR is associated with the distribution of project reports, publications and awareness materials. One fundamental issue the MTR found with the distribution lists is that none of the “non-principal” stakeholders (those that were supposed to be covered by the on-line MTR questionnaire and responded to it) were the final recipients of any of the printed material that was distributed. Given the thousands of copies of various reports and documents that were distributed to the Directors of the Nature Conservation and Wetlands Agency one would imagine that some of those reports and documents might have been sent to other stakeholders, but there is no evidence of that having been done. It also seems that the Coast Guard and other stakeholders particularly tied to fisheries would have been primary targets for all report distributions. Yet, there is no evidence that such distribution occurred.

The evidence provided to the MTR does not prove that the end distribution lists are inclusive. As an example, 10,000 copies of the “Kafa Science and Children's Journal” (“Kafa Bilim ve Çocuk Dergisi”) were sent out. All but 350 copies were sent to the Regional Nature Conservation Directorates. The 350 copies were sent to GDNCNP and to the UNDP. There was little or no distribution to other agencies nor NGOs. As further explained by the project team, the Regional Nature Conservation Directorates are responsible for distributing the copies to the primary schools; in this case, the distribution lists should be indicative of this arrangement. In the case of the Delphi & Mermaid Book (Delfi&Deniz Kızı Kitap), 50 copies of the Book were sent to four other organizations. Those recipients were the Director of the Mediterranean Fisheries Research, Production and Training Institute (Akdeniz Su ürünleri araştırma üretme ve eğitim enstitüsü müdürlüğü), the Fisheries Central Research Institute (Su Ürünleri Merkez Araştırma Enstitüsü), the President of the European Union (Avrupa Birliği Başkanlığı), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (T.C. Tarım ve Orman Bakanlığı). Given that a total of 3,000 of these books were sent out, it is hardly broad dissemination with 50 copies going to these four agencies, and the only explanation is the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has ensured further dissemination – alas, no evidence of that. Overall, based on the exercise performed by the MTR, the project team is strongly advised to reconsider the BAU approach to the collection of evidence of project information dissemination and get well prepared for the FE in this aspect.

Sustainability

Based on the existing progress with the key project outputs “in charge of” the mechanisms and tools to ensure the sustainability of project results beyond the project timeframe, such as the National IAS Strategy and Action Plan, the site-specific IAS management plans, IAS fiscal incentives, the data and knowledge management platform etc., this MTR is not yet at a point to make a justified opinion that the project is likely to provide for long-term sustainability, replication and upscaling of its main results and achievements.

As mentioned in the Project Document, experience has shown in UNDP-GEF projects that sustainability is critically dependent on stakeholder ownership of the process and project results. The project is advised to double its stakeholder engagement effort and work closely with all stakeholders to ensure that the strong engagement and ownership by stakeholders is carried on past the life of the project.

The project is further advised to revisit the risk log based on the observations and recommendations of the MTR.

Another recommendation is to make sure that the project SESP is reflective of the project adaptive management strategy. For example, the project’s decision to focus on a non-fiscal incentive instrument for Lionfish carries with it a reassessment of health and safety risks. The project strategy and the SESP risk management strategy should include guidance on proper techniques for capturing and handling of Lionfish, as improper handling of the species’ venomous spines can cause significant human harm ranging from pain and swelling to tachycardia, seizures, and temporary paralysis (Morris and Whitfield 2009). Additional risks may be associated with promoting invasive species as a viable food source, as Lionfish may harbour foodborne toxin and represent a possible health hazard when ingested (Cearnal 2012; FDA 2013).

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

UNDP Social and Environmental Safeguards and related cross-cutting aspects

According to the UNDP Social and Environmental and Social Screening Protocol (SESP) developed at the project design phase, the project was designed to contribute to the sustainable development of communities neighboring marine ecosystems and strengthen human rights related to access and use of marine ecosystems and species. In particular, the project was planned to will work closely with fishing communities that have a vested interest in the sustainability and ecological condition of marine resources. The project design is sensitive to the overarching social and environmental principals and standards, including those related to environmental sustainability and human rights. According to the SESP, all government partners at the national

and local level should be included in capacity development activities related to the management and control of marine IAS. All capacity development activities should be designed to ensure attention to any potential link between the control and management of marine IAS and human rights related issues. Any regulations, policies, management plans, or other such documents produced by the project at the national or local level should retain awareness of any possible effect (none anticipated) on the ability of human rights duty bearers to fulfill their duties or on human rights holders to claim their rights.

With the limited impact on the ground and low level of local-level stakeholder engagement, the MTR cannot confirm or question the validity of SESP commitments, assumptions and risks where it concerns enjoyment of human rights of the affected stakeholders, communities and marginalized groups. The limited impact on the ground at the pilot sites and the lack of response of pilot-site specific stakeholders to the online MTR questionnaire makes it impossible to assess to what extent has the project contributed to poverty/environment nexus or sustainable livelihoods. It is clear that the project effort at community engagement has been so far very limited. The project is advised to report, in the next PIR, on these issues and also ensure that the activities planned/implemented within the national and local level advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns on the management and control of marine IAS were designed and implemented with due integration of SESP principles and concerns.

As pledged in the Project Document, the project should develop clear mechanisms and channels of communication that stakeholders may employ if they have any grievances related to the social and environmental impacts of the project. The identification of such mechanisms was planned for the project inception stage, while the project education and awareness activities were suggested as principle implementation mechanisms. The MTR saw no evidence of the grievance redress mechanisms being available for the project stakeholders. This is of special concern as the social baseline for the project implementation has drastically changed since the 2020 COVID crisis start. According to the World Bank, the COVID has deepened gender gaps and increased youth unemployment and the poverty rate. The risk of inequalities has also been increasing. The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has had particularly noticeable repercussions for vulnerable groups. The project supported by UNDP CO is strongly advised to formalize a grievance redress mechanism, possibly considering the Steering Committee for the function before the IAS Advisory Board in place, and re-assess the social and environmental risks and safeguards for the project, based on the revised SESP template and guidance available corporately.

Gender mainstreaming

The MTR confirms that the project design and implementation strategy are sensitive to the relevant gender issues and needs to ensure and mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment. The MTR was guided by the Checklist for Gender Sensitive Midterm Review Analysis available as Annex 9 to the [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#).

Gender-sensitive MTR process will be organized to ensure that

- human rights and gender equality is prioritized as an ethical principle within all actions;
- activities are designed and implemented in accordance with Social and Environmental Standards of UNDP;
- any kind of diversities based on ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, class, gender are respected within all implementations including data production;
- differentiated needs of women and men are considered;
- inclusive approach is reflected within all actions and implementations, in that sense an enabling and accessible setup in various senses such as disability gender language barrier is created;

- necessary arrangements to provide gender parity within all committees, meetings, trainings etc. introduced.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The MTR conclusions have been integrated into the body of the report, with a summary presented in the Executive Summary section.

The specific recommendations of the MTR are as follows:

1. The MTR praises the high level of involvement and commitment of the Project Implementing Partner, and appreciates the level of cooperation and trust between the PIU and the IP. However, based on the feedback received by the MTR, all partners, meaning the IP, the PIU, and UNDP could have extended an extra effort to ensure closer, positive, functional and more effective communication with each other. MTR supports one particular IP's request which is to share all draft technical ToRs and specifications with the IP Coordinator before those are posted for procurement. A reasonable timeframe, like 7 working days, should be established to ensure the IP's review and feedback. It is also advised that another timeline, around 10 working days, is established for the review and subsequent appraisal of the technical project products by the IP. A joint decision should be made in case third-party technical expertise is required to review a complex product, collect opinions and comments, and work with the author on a harmonized final product. Such expertise, which is meant to implement a "second opinion" approach as requested by the IP, should be made available and budgeted ad-hoc, as appropriate. For this, a standard suggestion is to have a modest contingency budget available throughout the next two years of project implementation.
2. A need to improve the quality of project technical deliverables and reporting products was communicated to the MTR by the principal project stakeholders. A second opinion approach mentioned above should also be instrumental for harmonizing the product quality expectations with the project timelines, without adding further complexity to the review and appraisal processes that tend to cause project implementation delays. The IP has confirmed the expectation from the project to produce exemplary products and deliver best practices. At the same time, meticulous attention to detail combined with a certain level of micro-management, combined with the ever-changing priorities and pressing external factors contributes to implementation delays, complexities and frustrations. In this regard, a reasonable perfectionist approach is deemed appropriate; the project should be guided by the implementation arrangements described in the Project Document and practical implementation scenarios successfully tested with the same Implementing Partner. As a change from business-as-usual, the Implementing Partner is advised to consider giving more authority to the PIU where it concerns event management, PR and media contacts, external communications, issuance of invitations and other routine/regular interaction with the project partners. The IP should empower the PIU for continuous and meaningful stakeholder engagement and communication. Overall, both the IP and the PIU are advised to work out concrete practical solutions aimed to increase efficiency, accelerate project performance and ensure multi-stakeholder ownership of project endeavors and products.
3. All the stakeholders interviewed by the MTR have confirmed the necessity to improve the coordination and collaboration required for project planning and implementation of project activities. The MTR suggests the following areas for improved coordination:
 - The MTR notes the coordination of the mainstream national-level effort with the partner EU-funded TerIAS project. According to the IP and GDFA, the two projects work collaboratively. However, the roles of the two projects for policy/regulatory reforms, development of the national IAS strategy and its implementation mechanisms should be clearly defined between the two

projects; the impact, limitations and assumptions of both partner projects should be considered as part of adaptive management. The MTR would mildly recommend that the project discusses its role and mandate with both GDNCNP and GFDA (the focal point for both TerIAS and MarIAS) to make sure that the GEF project increment and added value is adequately captured and pronounced through the project publicity and outreach effort. This is also relevant for the joint work of two projects on the draft by-laws on Control and Management of IAS in line with EU legislation; this work has clearly been prioritized and led by the TerIAS project, which is perfectly fine, as long as the GEF increment and value of the MarIAS contribution is adequately captured and presented, at least for the project reporting and outside assessments.

- GDFA, confirmed by the IP as the project's "main and indispensable partner", should be engaged more meaningfully and effectively. As has been confirmed by GDFA, particular aspects where a more comprehensive approach to cooperation and engagement is required are project planning, decision-making, and fieldwork.
 - The project should become instrumental in implementing the IP's intention and effort to cooperate on inter-sectoral issues within the respective mandates of other DGs. In particular, this refers to the intention of producing national regulations and a joint IAS National Strategy and Action Plan, with the involvement of all relevant DGs and institutes. All three DGs confirmed their perception of the project as a locomotive for innovations and best practices, both those that should be brought from elsewhere to increase the national capacities and those that will hopefully be created within this project to be available for other countries.
 - In view of the MTR, the Project Steering Committee could potentially provide a platform for intersectoral coordination and technical discussion on the issues around the control and management of marine IAS, at least before the National Technical Advisory Board gets functional. This would require a certain change in the scope and technical expertise required to support the SC decision-making which so far has been limited to project-specific issues only, while the meetings have been convened in a formal manner.
4. The MTR recommends that the project accelerates the performance as it concerns the development of the national policy and regulatory framework related to IAS in marine ecosystems, echoing the recommendation of the Project Steering Committee. The MTR emphasizes a need to identify concrete areas for the planned impact as part of the adaptive work planning, based on the ProDoc strategy and the changes in the institutional and regulatory baseline. The MTR recommends that the project team and the IP initiate work with the Ministry of Transport (DG for Maritime), as detailed in the ProDoc, where it concerns ballast water management and control, taking into account changes in the national priorities in response to the IMO directives. The MoTI (GD for Maritime) has confirmed their interest in developing the national ballast water regulations and standards in accordance with best practices, so the project increment can be in finding relevant best practices and working together with the MoTI to apply those to the case of Turkey.
 5. Adaptive Management. The project claims that no adaptive management elements have been applied during the first 2.5 years of project implementation. This arguably originates from definition differences where it concerns adaptive management. The MTR attempts to record the deviations between the original project Workplan, the yearly workplans for 2019-2021, and takes notice of specific cases of adaptive management that have been applied. The project is advised to use the tool developed by the MTR for further justification and recording of significant changes to the original workplans. This will help strategizing the interventions towards higher efficiency and limit the application of an ad-hoc approach when the project plans and acts mostly in response to "this moment" necessities and concerns.

6. One clear example of adaptive management applied so far is the project's work and plans related to fiscal incentives. The project should come up with a clear adaptive management scenario in response to the fact that the incentive programs proposed for Water Hyacinth, Lionfish and North Atlantic Starfish will not be accepted and implemented. Since it was decided to prepare a non-fiscal incentive program for the four targeted species (which was not mentioned among the SC decisions or any adaptive management documentation available), an amendment to the project workplan should be prepared and agreed to with the key partners, including GDFA. Lessons learned from the preparation of a fiscal incentive program should be available for the adaptive management planning to ensure full relevance of the newly proposed strategy and the concrete results on the ground.
7. The MTR notes one specific weakness in the project implementation strategy that is a lack of capacity needs assessments and training needs assessments. It is somewhat unclear as to why specific topics for capacity-building activities and trainings are being selected. The project is strongly advised to work with the MoTI on the ballast water management capacity needs assessment as an essential adaptive management element for Outcome 1.5. Based on the results of such a capacity needs assessment, a concrete workplan should be produced, and the indicators showing the capacity changes as a result of the GEF increment should be developed. In case the capacity building increment will be limited solely to eDNA trainings and equipment, an indicator showing the MoTI's capacity to obtain, analyse, process and use the genetic data for decision-making on the ballast water control where it concerns the IAS contamination vessels' checkup should be offered as an output-level indicator for the Logframe. The MoTI confirmed their readiness to sit down and discuss a more systematic approach to capacity building under Output 1.5 with the project team.
8. The project should accelerate Outcome 3 implementation and develop an implementation scenario that will be reflective of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions related to stakeholder consultations and fieldwork, on the one hand, and will make up for the significant delays in Outcome 3 performance demonstrated so far, on the other. One essential element of the project strategy that raises concerns is the preparation of site-specific IAS management plans, that, according to the ProDoc ToC, were to be developed during the first half of the project. The project team should analyze the reasons behind low delivery and delays, see if a fundamental change of the currently applied top-down approach to intervention planning is required, and come up with an adaptive management strategy for Outcome 3 that will ensure that the project makes up for the delays and complications that have occurred.
9. Stakeholder Engagement. The project is advised to revise the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and implement a sound strategy towards meaningful engagement of the main national-level partners, the two DGs and the Ministry of Environment, and the site-based project stakeholders, along with NGOs, academia and other secondary stakeholders.
10. The following recommendations are offered on project co-financing:
 - The project should develop a process for yearly confirmation and verification of the project co-financing. Every year, as part of the annual reporting (PIR) exercise, the Project Team should be collecting firm evidence to confirm the co-financing. Copies of evidence should be maintained by the CO for any audit purpose, as well as made available for verification by the independent project terminal evaluation. For the parallel co-financing from sectoral ministries, specific guidance with the relevance criteria should be developed by UNDP CO in cooperation with the sectoral stakeholders, to ensure reliability and consistency of reporting and evidence. So far, the MTR can recommend producing a table similar to ProDoc Annex Q with details on GDNCNP contribution, and having it detailed, appraised and submitted officially by GDNCNP.

- One way to ensure meaningful engagement of the key stakeholders is through ensuring parallel co-financing of project activities. So far, the only co-financing partner (apart from UNDP) is GDNCNP. It is the opinion of the MTR that if, for example, the MoTI had concrete co-financing obligations towards the project, that could have been more proactive in collaboration with the project, would take a more active role in defining the project increment and ensuring that the project supports their mainstream activity and provides stimulus and resource where the baseline is insufficient and progress is limited.

11. A comprehensive assessment of the relevance, value and effectiveness of the project awareness-raising programme is recommended as an add-on to the end-of-project awareness level survey.

12. The MTR confirms the necessity for up to 18-months project extension beyond the original timeframe. UNDP is advised to consider cash co-financing of USD 200,000 (versus planned cash USD 30,000 and parallel USD 170,000) to cover the extra management costs (PMC) for the additional six months once and if the no-cost extension is granted.

Ratings

Please refer to the Executive Summary section

Annex 1: Terms of Reference (ToR)

Terms of Reference

Mid Term Review (MTR) - UNDP GEF Addressing Invasive Alien Species Threats at Key Marine Biodiversity Areas Project in Turkey

INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the full-sized project titled Addressing Invasive Alien Species Threats at Key Marine Biodiversity Areas (PIMS 5733) implemented through the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry – General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks. The project started on 19 October 2018 and is in its third year of implementation. In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance on MTRs, this MTR process was initiated before the submission of the second Project Implementation Report (PIR). This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#).

PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Turkey's coastline stretches 8,592 km (excluding islands), bordering four different major seas: the Mediterranean, Aegean, Marmara and Black Seas. These extensive marine ecosystems support Turkey's overall high level of marine biodiversity. In total, nearly 5,000 plant and animal species have been identified in Turkey's marine waters. Invasive Alien Species (IAS) have been identified by the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs (MFWA) as one of the principal threats to Turkey's marine biodiversity. Approximately 450 IAS have been reported on the coasts of Turkey. There are two major pathways for IAS into Turkey's marine waters: The Suez Canal, and "ship-mediated transport" (e.g. ballast water). In the 2011 national review of IAS in marine waters it was found that 66% of the total IAS in Turkey's coastal waters arrived via the Suez Canal, while 30% arrived via ship transport.

The project strategy follows three-stage hierarchical approach for addressing IAS outlined by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): prevention, control, and mitigation. The long-term project goal is to minimize negative impacts of IAS in support of conservation Turkey's globally significant native marine biodiversity. The project objective is "To ensure resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems through strengthened capacities and investment in prevention, detection, control and management of Invasive Alien Species." The project is organized into three components:

- Component 1. Effective national policy framework on IAS
- Component 2. Capacity building, knowledge and information sharing systems to address the IAS threats
- Component 3. Investment in sustainable management, prevention, eradication, and control of IAS and restoration of IAS-degraded habitat at key marine and coastal areas

The project works at both the national level and at the site level at four proposed pilot sites. In the view of the above, the Consultant will serve for overall Mid-Term Evaluation of all components, outputs and activities of Addressing Invasive Alien Species Threats at Key Marine Biodiversity Areas Project in Turkey .

OBJECTIVES OF THE MIDTERM REVIEW (MTR)

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy, its risks to sustainability.

MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR must provide evidence based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The Individual Consultant (IC) as MTR expert will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Environmental & Social Safeguard Policy, the Project Document, project reports including Annual Project Review/PIRs, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review). The IC will review the baseline GEF focal area Tracking Tool submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Tracking Tool that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins.

The IC is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisers, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to (list); executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, the IC is expected to conduct field missions to (location), including the following project sites (list).

The final MTR report should describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

The mid-term review will be carried out by IC as MTR Expert. The IC will receive the support of UNDP Country Office and Project Management Unit and will be assisted by a facilitator assigned by UNDP (when needed).

DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR AND DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE IC

The IC will assess the following four categories of project progress. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for extended descriptions.

i. Project Strategy

Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?

- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

Results Framework/Logframe:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project’s logframe indicators and targets, assess how “SMART” the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project’s objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women’s empowerment, improved governance etc…) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART ‘development’ indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

ii. Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

- Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; colour code progress in a “traffic light system” based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as “Not on target to be achieved” (red).

Table. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

Project Strategy	Indicator ²	Baseline Level ³	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target ⁴	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment ⁵	Achievement Rating ⁶	Justification for Rating
Objective:	Indicator (if applicable):							
Outcome 1:	Indicator 1:							
	Indicator 2:							
Outcome 2:	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
Etc.								

Indicator Assessment Key

² Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

³ Populate with data from the Project Document

⁴ If available

⁵ Colour code this column only

⁶ Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved
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In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements:

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.

Work Planning:

- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
- Examine the use of the project's results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance:

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?

- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?

Reporting:

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.
- Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?)
- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Communications:

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.

iv. Sustainability

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.
- In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key

stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

- Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

- Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

Conclusions & Recommendations

The IC shall include a section of the report setting out the MTR's evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.⁷

Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table.

The IC should make no more than 15 recommendations total.

Ratings

The IC shall include its ratings of the project's results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See Annex E for ratings scales. No rating on Project Strategy and no overall project rating is required.

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for (Project Title)

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Etc.	
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Sustainability	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES

⁷ Alternatively, MTR conclusions may be integrated into the body of the report.

The deliverables expected from the IC as MTR Expert are as follows:

#	Deliverable	Description	Estimated Number of Days (Indicative)*	Expected Delivery Date	Responsibilities
1	MTR Inception Report: Desk review, development of methodology, updating timetable, drafting mission programme. Incorporating comments received from UNDP Country Office (if necessary).	IC clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	4 days	15 June 2021	IC submits to the UNDP
2	Presentation (After conducting in-country field visits, interviews, preliminary mission findings briefing(s), debriefings with project partners and providing aide memoire. Delivering a presentation on aide memoire (finding(s) and recommendation(s)) to Project Partners.)	Initial Findings	12 days	5 July 2021	IC submits to the UNDP
3	Draft Final Report	Full report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes	7 days	16 July 2021	Submit to UNDP and reviewed by RTA
4	Final Report	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report	2 days	30 July 2021	Submit to UNDP

Each and every activity to be conducted by the IC is subject to UNDP approval. Each step shall be conducted upon approval of the previous step by UNDP.

* These estimated number of days for each deliverable are solely just provided to give the IC an idea on the assignment and deliverables to be undertaken. The payments will be made in line with the table given under section 11. PAYMENTS, irrespective of the number of days to be actually invested by the IC for the completion of each respective deliverable.

MTR ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with UNDP. UNDP will contract the IC and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within Turkey for the IC. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the IC to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

UNDP will provide the IC all relevant background documents. UNDP is not required to provide any physical facility for the work of the IC. However, depending to the availability of physical facilities (e.g. working space, computer, printer, telephone lines, internet connection etc.) and at the discretion of the UNDP and relevant stakeholders such facilities may be provided at the disposal of the IC.

The IC shall report to Climate Change and Environment Portfolio Manager. The IC shall conduct the MTR in collaboration with Monitoring & Evaluation Advisor of CCE Portfolio at UNDP.

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation lies with UNDP. UNDP will assign a facilitator to set up the stakeholder interviews, arrange the field visits, coordinate with the GDF and provide translation (when necessary).

In preparation for the evaluation mission, which would last for 12 days (including travel days) travel mission, Project Manager, with assistance of UNDP, will arrange completion of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT). Results of METT should be used by an international project evaluation consultant, who will provide his/her comments and track the progress in management effectiveness of project sites. Upon incorporation of the evaluator's comments the METT will be finalized and the results should be attached as a mandatory Annex to the MTR report.

These Terms of Reference follow the UNDP-GEF policies and procedures.

Duties and Responsibilities of the IC:

There will be only one IC conducting the Mid-term evaluation for this project. The IC shall not have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project's related activities. The generic duties and responsibilities of the IC is as follows:

- Desk review of documents, development of draft methodology, detailed work plan and MTR outline;
- Debriefing with UNDP and GDIP, agreement on the methodology, scope and outline of the MTR report;
- Interviews with PMU, UNDP Turkey, GDIP and project partners;
- Debriefing UNDP and project partners and will provide an *aide memoire*;
- Coordination with "strategy revision report" which shall be prepared by another expert in parallel with MTR report and to be annexed with.
- Development and submission of the first MTR report draft. The draft will be shared with the key project stakeholders for review and comment;
- Finalization and submission of the final MTR report through incorporating suggestions received on the draft report;

The IC shall avoid any kind of discriminatory behavior including gender discrimination and ensure that

- human rights and gender equality is prioritized as an ethical principle within all actions;
- activities are designed and implemented in accordance with "Social and Environmental Standards of UNDP";
- any kind of diversities based on ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, class, gender are respected within all implementations including data production;
- differentiated needs of women and men are considered;
- inclusive approach is reflected within all actions and implementations, in that sense an enabling and accessible setup in various senses such as disability gender language barrier is created;
- necessary arrangements to provide gender parity within all committees, meetings, trainings etc. introduced.

UNDP will assist the IC with below services:

- Provide support in collection of background materials;
- Participation in debriefings with UNDP CO and GDIP representatives;
- Organize the mission program together with the Project Management Unit, arrange and facilitate meetings with key stakeholders;
- Assistance to the IC in conducting interviews with relevant stakeholders and provide translation during the interviews when necessary;
- Participation in debriefing with UNDP and project partners;
- Necessary support will be provided to IC in circulation of the draft MTR report among the key project stakeholders for review and commenting.

Reporting Line

The IC will be responsible to CCE Portfolio Manager for the completion of the tasks and duties assigned in Section 6 of this ToR. All of the reports are subject to approval from CCE Portfolio Manager in order to realize the payments to the IC.

Reporting Language

The reporting language shall be in English.

ToR ANNEX A: List of Documents to be reviewed by the IC

1. PIF
2. UNDP Initiation Plan
3. UNDP Project Document
4. UNDP Environmental and Social Screening results
5. Project Inception Report
6. All Project Implementation Reports (PIR's)
7. Quarterly progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
8. Audit reports
9. Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools at CEO endorsement and midterm
10. Oversight mission reports
11. All monitoring reports prepared by the project
12. Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team

The following documents will also be available:

13. Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
14. UNDP country/countries programme document(s)
15. Minutes of the Project Board Meetings and other meetings (i.e. Project Appraisal Committee meetings)
16. Project site location maps

ToR ANNEX B: Guidelines on Contents for the Midterm Review Report⁸

- i.** Basic Report Information (*for opening page or title page*)
 - Title of UNDP supported GEF financed project
 - UNDP PIMS# and GEF project ID#
 - MTR time frame and date of MTR report
 - Region and countries included in the project
 - GEF Operational Focal Area/Strategic Program
 - Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and other project partners
 - MTR team members
 - Acknowledgements
- ii.** Table of Contents
- iii.** Acronyms and Abbreviations
- 1.** Executive Summary (*3-5 pages*)
 - Project Information Table
 - Project Description (brief)
 - Project Progress Summary (between 200-500 words)
 - MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table
 - Concise summary of conclusions
 - Recommendation Summary Table
- 2.** Introduction (*2-3 pages*)
 - Purpose of the MTR and objectives
 - Scope & Methodology: principles of design and execution of the MTR, MTR approach and data collection methods, limitations to the MTR
 - Structure of the MTR report
- 3.** Project Description and Background Context (*3-5 pages*)
 - Development context: environmental, socio-economic, institutional, and policy factors relevant to the project objective and scope
 - Problems that the project sought to address threats and barriers targeted
 - Project Description and Strategy: objective, outcomes and expected results, description of field sites (if any)
 - Project Implementation Arrangements: short description of the Project Board, key implementing partner arrangements, etc.
 - Project timing and milestones
 - Main stakeholders: summary list
- 4.** Findings (*12-14 pages*)
 - 4.1** Project Strategy
 - Project Design
 - Results Framework/Logframe
 - 4.2** Progress Towards Results
 - Progress towards outcomes analysis
 - Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective
 - 4.3** Project Implementation and Adaptive Management
 - Management Arrangements
 - Work planning
 - Finance and co-finance
 - Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

⁸ The Report length should not exceed 40 pages in total (not including annexes).

- Stakeholder engagement
 - Reporting
 - Communications
- 4.4 Sustainability**
- Financial risks to sustainability
 - Socio-economic to sustainability
 - Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability
 - Environmental risks to sustainability
- 5. Conclusions and Recommendations (4-6 pages)**
- 5.1 Conclusions**
- Comprehensive and balanced statements (that are evidence-based and connected to the MTR's findings) which highlight the strengths, weaknesses and results of the project
- 5.2 Recommendations**
- Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
 - Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
 - Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives
- 6. Annexes**
- MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)
 - MTR evaluative matrix (evaluation criteria with key questions, indicators, sources of data, and methodology)
 - Example Questionnaire or Interview Guide used for data collection
 - Ratings Scales
 - MTR mission itinerary
 - List of persons interviewed
 - List of documents reviewed
 - Co-financing table (if not previously included in the body of the report)
 - Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form
 - Signed MTR final report clearance form
 - *Annexed in a separate file:* Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report
 - *Annexed in a separate file:* Relevant midterm tracking tools (*METT, FSC, Capacity scorecard, etc.*)

ToR ANNEX E: MTR Ratings

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)		
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project’s closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review
2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

ToR ANNEX G: Audit Trail Template

Note: The following is a template for the MTR Expert to show how the received comments on the draft MTR report have (or have not) been incorporated into the final MTR report. This audit trail should be included as an annex in the final MTR report.

To the comments received on (date) from the Midterm Review of (project name) (UNDP Project ID-PIMS #)

The following comments were provided in track changes to the draft Midterm Review report; they are referenced by institution (“Author” column) and track change comment number (“#” column):

Author	#	Para No./ comment location	Comment/Feedback on the draft MTR report	MTR Expert response and actions taken

Annex 2 Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project's objective fit within the priorities of the national stakeholders, project site-based stakeholders and local communities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project objective and national policy priorities and strategies, as stated in official documents and confirmed by national stakeholders during interviews Level of coherence between project objective and stated priorities of site-based stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National policy documents and national legislation in the field of relevance Government stakeholders Project reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with government stakeholders Project team interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the project concept originate from national stakeholders, and/or were relevant stakeholders sufficiently involved in project development? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of involvement of national stakeholders in project origination and development as indicated by number of planning meetings held, representation of stakeholders in planning meetings, and level of incorporation of stakeholder feedback in project planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project staff Local and national stakeholders Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project's objective fit GEF strategic priorities and operational principles, Aichi Targets, SDGs, and the priorities set in UNDP CPD and UNDCS? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project objective and GEF strategic priorities Level of conformity with GEF operational principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GEF strategic priority documents for period when project was approved Current GEF strategic priority documents GEF operational principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project's objective support implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity? Other MEAs, including Ballast Water Management Convention? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linkages between project objective and elements of the CBD, such as key articles and programs of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CBD website National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Project Strategy: Results Framework/Logframe			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project objective likely to be met? To what extent and in what timeframe? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of progress toward project indicator targets relative to expected level at current point of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the project's outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of progress toward project indicator targets relative to expected level at current point of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Online interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How SMART the project indicators, midterm and end-of-project targets are? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conformity of Logframe indicators with the SMART criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project developers/development partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Online interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are broader development and gender aspects of the project being monitored effectively? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SESP assessments Gender mainstreaming indicators, implementation of the Gender Action Plan and other specific instruments introduced after project start Project surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Online interviews
Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key factors contributing to project success or underachievement? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of documentation of and preparation for project risks, assumptions and impact drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the planned outputs being produced? Are they likely to contribute to the expected project outcomes and objective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of project implementation progress relative to expected level at current stage of implementation Existence of logical linkages between project outputs and outcomes/impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the planned indicator targets being achieved?? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of project implementation progress relative to expected level at current stage of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project reporting (PIRs) IAS Tracking Tool Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Online interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the anticipated outcomes likely to be achieved? Are the outcomes likely to contribute to the achievement of the project objective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Output-based project progress and delivery rate Existence of logical linkages between project outcomes and impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project reporting (PIRs) Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the key assumptions and impact drivers relevant to the achievement of Global Environmental Benefits likely to be met? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions undertaken to address key assumptions and target impact drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are impact level results likely to be achieved? Are the likely to be at the scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<p>Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation?</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the project management arrangements reflective of the best country-specific practice, national capacities and donor requirements? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Is the governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriateness of structure of management arrangements Relevance and transparency of decision-making arrangements Extent of necessary partnership arrangements Level of participation of relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
mechanism effective for the meaningful engagement of project stakeholders?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are management and implementation arrangements efficient in delivering the outputs necessary to achieve outcomes? Is the quality of national execution sufficient for the smooth and transparent project implementation? Does UNDP provide quality support services to the Implementing Partner? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriateness of structure of management arrangements Extent of necessary partnership and management arrangements Level of management ownership and participation of relevant stakeholders Output-based project progress and delivery rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project national-level stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff Online interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project cost-effective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and comprehensiveness of financial management procedures Project management costs share of total budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Finance data analyses Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the project implementation delayed? If so, did that affect cost-effectiveness? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project milestones in time Required project adaptive management measures related to delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is project workplanning timely, regular, effective, and results-based? Are the workplanning processes transparent and inclusive? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project milestones in time Timely and comprehensive workplans Stakeholder engagement for workplanning purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Key development stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Online interviews with key development stakeholders Interviews with project staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are expenditures in line with international standards and norms for development projects? Are appropriate financial controls in place? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of project inputs and outputs relative to norms and standards for donor projects in the country or region Annual audit observations and concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents (budget files, audit, etc.) Finance data analyses Project staff National stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation? Is project co-financing information verifiable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of cash and in-kind co-financing relative to expected level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff and co-financing partners Project co-financing reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the project leveraging additional resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of resources leveraged relative to project budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key risks and priorities for the remainder of the implementation period? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence, assessment of, and preparation for expected risks, assumptions and impact drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is adaptive management being applied to ensure effectiveness? Are the adaptive management changes being reported and shared with the Project Steering Committee? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified modifications to project plans, as necessary in response to changing assumptions or conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are project reporting requirements being met? Is monitoring and evaluation used to ensure effective decision-making? Are lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of project reporting (PIR ratings) Quality of M&E plan in terms of meeting minimum standards, conforming to best practices, and adequate budgeting Consistency of implementation of M&E compared to plan, quality of M&E products Use of M&E products in project management and implementation decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are project stakeholder engagement effort sufficient to ensure national ownership of the project results? Has public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of stakeholder engagement Impact of awareness-raising and capacity building activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Online questionnaire Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do government stakeholders support the project plans? Do they have an active role in project decision-making? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of initiative and engagement of relevant stakeholders in project activities and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is project communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results? Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of awareness and engagement of relevant stakeholders in project activities and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Online questionnaire Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
public awareness campaigns?)			
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are project results likely to be dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial requirements for maintenance of project benefits Level of expected financial resources available to support maintenance of project benefits Potential for additional financial resources to support maintenance of project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do relevant stakeholders have or are likely to achieve an adequate level of “ownership” of results, to have the interest in ensuring that project benefits are maintained? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of initiative and engagement of relevant stakeholders in project activities and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do relevant stakeholders have the necessary technical capacity to ensure that project benefits are maintained? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of technical capacity of relevant stakeholders relative to level required to sustain project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of socio-political risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the project results dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of institutional and governance risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of environmental risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?			

Annex 3. Unified Interview Protocol

Overview: The questions under each topic area are intended to assist in focusing discussion to ensure consistent topic coverage and to structure data collection, and are not intended as verbatim questions to be posed to interviewees. When using the interview guide, the interviewer should be sure to target questions at a level appropriate to the interviewee. The interview guide is one of multiple tools for gathering evaluative evidence, to complement evidence collected through document reviews and other data collection methods; in other words, the interview guide does not cover all evaluative questions relevant to the evaluation.

Key

Bold = GEF Evaluation Criteria

Italic = GEF Operational Principles

I. PLANNING / PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

A. **Relevance**

- i. Did the project's objectives fit within the priorities of the local government and local communities?
- ii. Did the project's objectives fit within national priorities?
- iii. Did the project's objectives fit GEF strategic priorities?
- iv. Did the project's objectives support implementation of the relevant multi-lateral environmental agreement?

B. *Incremental cost*

- i. Did the project create environmental benefits that would not have otherwise taken place?
- ii. Does the project area represent an example of a globally significant environmental resource?

C. *Country-drivenness / Participation*

- i. How did the project concept originate?
- ii. How did the project stakeholders contribute to the project development?
- iii. Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project?
- iv. Do the local communities support the objectives of the project?
- v. Are the project objectives in conflict with any national level policies?

D. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan / Design (*M&E*)

- i. Were monitoring and reporting roles clearly defined?
- ii. Was there either an environmental or socio-economic baseline of data collected before the project began?

II. MANAGEMENT / OVERSIGHT

A. Project management

- i. What were the implementation arrangements?
- ii. Was the management effective?
- iii. Were workplans prepared as required to achieve the anticipated outputs on the required timeframes?
- iv. Did the project develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?

- v. Were there any particular challenges with the management process?
 - vi. If there was a steering or oversight body, did it meet as planned and provide the anticipated input and support to project management?
 - vii. Were risks adequately assessed during implementation?
 - viii. Did assumptions made during project design hold true?
 - ix. Were assessed risks adequately dealt with?
 - x. Was the level of communication and support from the implementing agency adequate and appropriate?
- B. Flexibility**
- i. Did the project have to undertake any adaptive management measures based on feedback received from the M&E process?
 - ii. Were there other ways in which the project demonstrated flexibility?
 - iii. Were there any challenges faced in this area?
- C. Efficiency (*cost-effectiveness*)**
- i. Was the project cost-effective?
 - ii. Were expenditures in line with international standards and norms?
 - iii. Was the project implementation delayed?
 - iv. If so, did that affect cost-effectiveness?
 - v. What was the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation?
 - vi. To what extent did the project leverage additional resources?
- D. Financial Management**
- i. Was the project financing (from the GEF and other partners) at the level foreseen in the project document?
 - ii. Were there any problems with disbursements between implementing and executing agencies?
 - iii. Were financial audits conducted with the regularity and rigor required by the implementing agency?
 - iv. Was financial reporting regularly completed at the required standards and level of detail?
 - v. Did the project face any particular financial challenges such as unforeseen tax liabilities, management costs, or currency devaluation?
- E. Co-financing (*catalytic role*)**
- i. Was the in-kind co-financing received at the level anticipated in the project document?
 - ii. Was the cash co-financing received at the level anticipated in the project document?
 - iii. Did the project receive any additional unanticipated cash support after approval?
 - iv. Did the project receive any additional unanticipated in-kind support after approval?
- F. Monitoring and Evaluation (*M&E*)**
- i. Project implementation M&E
 - a. Was the M&E plan adequate and implemented sufficiently to allow the project to recognize and address challenges?
 - b. Were any unplanned M&E measures undertaken to meet unforeseen shortcomings?
 - c. Was there a mid-term evaluation?
 - d. How were project reporting and monitoring tools used to support adaptive management?
 - ii. Environmental and socio-economic monitoring
 - a. Did the project implement a monitoring system, or leverage a system already in place, for environmental monitoring?
 - b. What are the environmental or socio-economic monitoring mechanisms?

- c. Have any community-based monitoring mechanisms been used?
- d. Is there a long-term M&E component to track environmental changes?
- e. If so, what provisions have been made to ensure this is carried out?

E. *Full disclosure*

- i. Did the project meet this requirement?
- ii. Did the project face any challenges in this area?

III. ACTIVITIES / IMPLEMENTATION

A. **Effectiveness**

- i. How have the stated project objectives been met?
- ii. To what extent have the project objectives been met?
- iii. What were the key factors that contributed to project success or underachievement?
- iv. Can positive key factors be replicated in other situations, and could negative key factors have been anticipated?

B. Stakeholder involvement and public awareness (*participation*)

- i. What were the achievements in this area?
- ii. What were the challenges in this area?
- iii. How did stakeholder involvement and public awareness contribute to the achievement of project objectives?

IV. **RESULTS**

A. Outputs

- i. Did the project achieve the planned outputs?
- ii. Did the outputs contribute to the project outcomes and objectives?

B. Outcomes

- i. Were the anticipated outcomes achieved?
- ii. Were the outcomes relevant to the planned project impacts?

C. Impacts

- i. Was there a logical flow of inputs and activities to outputs, from outputs to outcomes, and then to impacts?
- ii. Did the project achieve its anticipated/planned impacts?
- iii. Why or why not?
- iv. If impacts were achieved, were they at a scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?
- v. If impacts or Global Environmental Benefits have not yet been achieved, are the conditions (enabling environment) in place so that they are likely to eventually be achieved?

D. Replication strategy, and documented replication or scaling-up (*catalytic role*)

- i. Did the project have a replication plan?
- ii. Was the replication plan “passive” or “active”?
- iii. Is there evidence that replication or scaling-up occurred within the country?
- iv. Did replication or scaling-up occur in other countries?

V. **LESSONS LEARNED**

A. What were the key lessons learned in each project stage?

B. In retrospect, would the project participants have done anything differently?

VI. SUSTAINABILITY

A. Financial

- i. To what extent are the project results dependent on continued financial support?
- ii. What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends?
- iii. Was the project successful in identifying and leveraging co-financing?
- iv. What are the key financial risks to sustainability?

B. Socio-Political

- i. To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors?
- ii. What is the likelihood that the level of stakeholder ownership will allow for the project results to be sustained?
- iii. Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?
- iv. What are the key socio-political risks to sustainability?

C. Institutions and Governance

- i. To what extent are the project results dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance?
- ii. What is the likelihood that institutional and technical achievements, legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes will allow for the project results to be sustained?
- iii. Are the required systems for accountability and transparency and the required technical know-how in place?
- iv. What are the key institutional and governance risks to sustainability?

D. Ecological

- i. Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?

Annex 4. Online Survey Questionnaire

The MTR should follow a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with key stakeholders. According to the [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#), the MTR interviews should target a diverse array of stakeholders, including project beneficiaries, government representatives, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, local government officials, and national agency officials including the GEF OFP.

It is understood that the project impact so far has been limited almost solely to the governmental stakeholders (General Directorates). These principle stakeholders will be targeted by the MTR via one-to-one comprehensive interviews. This, however, leaves an array of other stakeholders outside the MTR process. In order to provide an opportunity for those stakeholders to share their views and opinions on the project results and plans, e-mail/online survey is offered in lieu of interviews.

The MTR survey seeks to determine the project impact on the ground through getting an opinion from those stakeholders who were not interviewed by the MTR but still might have something an opinion to share and thus impact the project assessment, planning, and decision-making after the MTR. Combining the face-to-face interview with an online opinion poll will make it possible to outreach the required range of the project stakeholders. Thus, the project beneficiaries, partners, and those who are affected by the project activities will have a floor to express their expectations and concerns.

An additional reason for the proposed survey is that there is no project-level grievance redress/accountability mechanism offered for the stakeholders because the project was assessed as low-risk during SESP assessment at the project design phase. The MTR will recommend the re-assessment of the SESP risks according to the updated SESP guidelines. The proposed MTR survey includes specific questions required for a justified opinion on a number of SESP risks.

With the limited communication means available for the last year of the project implementation, the MTR questionnaire might serve as a mechanism for the stakeholders to get engaged, heard, and get comprehensive feedback as part of the MTR management response activities. In response to the MTR, the project team agreed to allocate additional time and internal resource to organize a direct e-mailing of the questionnaire to the individual representatives the stakeholder groups identified below by the MTR.

The list of individual stakeholders completed by the Project Team is presented below as Table 1.

The stakeholders have been specifically informed that their inputs would be accepted with gratitude and processed by the MTR and reflected in the recommendations for further project planning, as appropriate.

The questionnaire below has been prepared based on the MTR Evaluation Matrix, the SESP principles standards and risks, the specific project plans and results as stated in the project workplans and reports, and the scope and the results of the baseline awareness study.

The following tentative set of questions is proposed for the MTR questionnaire survey:

1. Please indicate the MariAS Project stakeholder group you might associate yourself with:
 - Government authority (Ministries, Regional Directorates, Coast Guard Command, Customs Authorities)
 - Civil Society Organisaion/Non-Governmental Entity
 - Marine transportation business

- Management of ports and marinas
 - Local business sector representative at the project pilot sites (fishery, boating, sailing, aquarium trade, diving, sea-based tourism)
 - University
 - Local community representative
2. Are you aware of the MariAS Project plans related to your region (for the local communities, licensed amateur fishers and divers) / sector (for local businesses) / organization (ministries, local subunits of governmental authorities, universities, schools, NGOs)?
 3. Have you been affected by the awareness-raising and educational activities carried out by the Project?

If yes:

- Please specify the activities;
 - Describe your role (beneficiary, contractor, meeting participant, trainer/trainee, service provider, expert, reviewer, Working Group member, Member of the Project Board; project developer, co-financier, project partner engaged in management and oversight, etc);
 - Assess your/organizational benefits from the engagement in project activities;
 - State any drawbacks / ways for improvement;
 - Please share your needs and expectations for possible future engagement.
4. Have you experienced any barriers or challenges to participating effectively in the project so far? If yes – please specify and provide suggestions as to how these might be overcome in the future.
 5. Through participation in the project activities, my:
 - awareness of the marine IAS and associated issues has increased;
 - Capacity in IAS detection/management/control/inspection/training/advocacy/expertise has improved;
 - Access to best practice and innovations was ensured

Please provide details as relevant.

6. Do you think the project addresses the problems and capacity constraints that you/your organization/community faces in relation to marine IAS?
7. How did you learn about the project?
8. Have you visited the project website? If yes – was it of benefit for you/your organization/community? Please specify. Please suggest recommendations for the enhanced website coverage/content
9. Have you got access to the awareness materials produced by the Project? Please specify and rate the usefulness of the materials that were available for you/your organization/community

10. Have you participated in any trainings or other events organized/supported by the Project? Please specify and rate the usefulness of the event for you/your organization/community
11. In your opinion, does the project is able to support your meaningful participation in relevant activities? Please indicate if any improvements should be made regarding the access to:
- relevant information about the project,
 - trainings and capacity building activities,
 - results of IAS assessments, feasibility analyses and other studies commissioned by the project,
 - draft regulatory framework developed with the project support,
 - other products and activities (please specify)
12. You are welcome to use this confidential survey to record any negatives effects on you as a project stakeholder, for example:
- Grievances related to your exclusion from fully participating in project-level decisions that may affect you (individually or corporately),
 - Concerns connected with the loss of access to vital resources or services,
 - Verifiable facts related to discriminatory working conditions, or health and safety risks associated with marine IAS in connection with the project activities.

Table 1: List of Project Stakeholders to be outreached by the MTR Questionnaire

Stakeholder name	#o reps to outreach	Individual stakeholder details
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1	Tijen İğci/Emre Öziğci
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry GD EU&Foreign Relations	1	Volkan Güngören/İffet Deniz Cengiz
Ministry of Environment: implementation of the quarantine measures and IAS protocols; ballast water management where it concerns sediments;	1	Huri Eyüpoğlu/Çiğdem Ağar
Ministry of Health: education and awareness raising activities, Component 3 activities where it concerns human safety and security; safety aspects of IAS inception programmes	1	Selim Atak
Ministry of Culture and Tourism: technical inputs and	1	Müge Şanal

implementation support for the knowledge building and advocacy campaign		
Ministry of Development: member of Project SC, integration of project-born regulatory amendments and incentives into the country development programs and action plans	1	Rıza Fikret Yılmaz
Regional Directorates for the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry: Component 3. Also an administrative liaison to ensure effective participation of local communities and NGOs as well as private sector to the local activities of the project	3	Cüneyt Çağlar-Hatay İlker Baldan- Balıkesir ve Marmara Merih Uslu/(Kırklareli müdür?)- İğneada
Coast Guard Command: trainings and capacity building activities	1	Şule Şunlu/Fatik Ünsal
Customs, gendarmes: capacity building	1	Fethi Sezgin
CSOs active in the project pilot areas (at least 4): Component 3	5	Ayşe Oruç -WWF (Ayvalık) Zafer Kızılkaya -Akdeniz Koruma Derneği (Marmara) Mesut Gürlek- Hatay Doğa ve Bilim Derneği Bayram Öztürk- TUDAV (İğneada-Marmara) Almıla Kından Cebbari-TÜRÇEV
Local communities and fish resource users, including women fishermen and divers: Component 3	3	Kübra Ceviz Sanalan-Kadın Balıkçılar Derneği Tahsin Ceylan-Su altı Federasyon Ramazan Özkaya/Mine Canikli- SÜR-KOOP
Private sector: Fisheries, aquaculture companies and hobby aquarium sector, tourism agencies, shipping sector: Component 3, capacity building for management, monitoring and control of IAS	2	Hüseyin Armutçu Hatay Akvaryum-tel var Yakup Reis (tel)- Paşam 2 Tekne sahibi-İğneada

Shipping sector: equipment of the existing ships in accordance with the ballast water control standards; in general, activities aimed at awareness and understanding of management and control of marine IAS, in support of the implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention.	1	Hayriye Demirođlu- Deniz Ticaret Odası İMEAK
TOTAL	22	

List of project stakeholder representatives responded to the questionnaire:

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry GD EU&Foreign Relations Volkan Güngören

Regional Directorates for the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry: Merih Uslu

Coast Guard Command: Şule Şumlu, Fatik Ünsal

CSOs active in the project pilot areas Ayşe Oruç -WWF (Ayvalık) and Almıla Kından Cebbari-TÜRÇEV

Shipping sector Mine Canikli SÜR-KOOP

Annex 5. List of persons interviewed

Mehmet Gölge	Project Manager	UNDP Turkey CO
Iraz Uran Özaltınlı	Project Associate	UNDP Turkey CO
Hatice Dinç	Projects Coordinator	UNDP Turkey CO
Nuri Özbağdatlı	Portfolio Manager	UNDP Turkey CO
Harun Güçlüsoy	Project CTA	UNDP Turkey CO
Muhammed Çolak	Deputy General Director	General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
İrfan Uysal	Division Director	General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Turgay Buyuran	Head of Department	General Directorate of Maritime, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Filiz Eker	TerIAS - MariAS Focal Point	General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Maxim Vergeichik	Project RTA	Technical Specialist UNDP NCE BPPS
Josh Brann	International Expert for Project Development	n/a

Annex 6. Specific questions and issues raised during interviews

Meeting with the **Project Implementing Partner**, General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, July 16, 11:00

1. Were perspectives and expectations of the Directorate taken into account during project design and reflected in the project strategy?
2. The project was approved by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in October 2017. The project implementation commenced in October 2018 when the Project Document was signed. Is this 1-year delay with the project launch associated with the complexities in the national procedures and the fact that the Project Document should have been signed also by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?
3. According to the Project Document, the project was expected to assist the Government in developing by-laws and other regulatory mechanisms/tools on marine IAS developed and adopted in relation to the implementation of Decree Law on Organization and Duties of the former Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs. Another key expected development was the draft law on the conservation of nature and biodiversity. After the governmental reform and re-structuring of the key line ministries in 2018, have these plans been amended? Which are the expectations of the Directorate in relation to the project support to the regulatory framework development?
4. Will the project support be required for implementation and enforcement of the new legislation adopted, through capacity building and awareness-raising?
5. The project was expected to assess, customize and integrate protocols and quarantine mechanisms consistent with bio-security requirements and international standards into the by-laws and regulations of the Ministry. Does the Department oversee this work? The project plans include the development of sector-specific guidelines on protocols and quarantine mechanisms for marine IAS in all sectors that impact/being impacted by IAS other than shipping. Will the Department be willing to provide quality control for the content of the guidelines and support the dissemination of those guidelines widely among the sector players?
6. One of the key outputs for the project is the development of the National Strategy and Action Plan for IAS; the main activities are planned for 2022. In your opinion, what is the main role and the incremental value that the project will bring into this nationally-owned strategy development process: engaging the best available in-country expertise? Analysis of best practices and examples from abroad? Providing space for multi-sectoral expert discussions? Anything else?
7. The project works to establish and operationalize the national Advisory Technical Board as a coordination body for IAS in Turkey. The main pillars of the output will be (a) publishing the ministerial decree for the establishment of the Board; (b) establishment of the board; and (c) ensuring the successful implementation of national strategy and action plan for IAS by the Board. What is the role of the Directorate in these processes?
8. The site-based IAS management plans will be commissioned by the project for four pilot sites selected for on-the-ground demonstration of IAS management practices. Once launched and if successful, can those be replicated to other similar sites in Turkey, and will it be in the mandate of the Directorate to recommend preparation and implementation of similar plans at other sites without the GEF support?
9. National level co-financing: Will the Ministry be able to confirm the project parallel co-financing as planned in the Project Document? Will it be possible to document, with the help of the project team, lessons learned, sustainability elements, synergetic effects, catalytic mechanisms, and up-scale plans for the Ministry as relevant to this project?

10. Risks to project success: For many of the projects implemented in the “new COVID normalty” an effect of a rapid switch of governmental priorities to emergency needs has been recorded. Is this the case with the Ministry where it concerns IAS management? In your opinion, are the project plans still relevant? Would they be supported by the Ministry even during the crisis? Which would be the obvious limitations? In general, are the project objectives and outcomes still achievable, or any changes in the design should be suggested in response to the change in governmental priorities?

Specific issues discussed with the Implementing Partner Coordinator for the Project, Division Director Mr. İrfan Uysal:

11. One of the key roles of the Project Implementing Partner is coordination and collaboration with other project stakeholders, first of all, different Directorates of the Government – the General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture and the General Directorate of Maritime. How would you assess the level of cooperation between various agencies involved in project implementation?
12. The Ministry chairs the Project Steering Committee. Would there be any particular comments or recommendations for improvement where it concerns the organization of the work of the Steering Committee? As a Steering Committee member, are you being sufficiently informed before the meetings? Is decision-making supported by background documents and prior discussions by the Project Team?
13. Please comment on the value of the awareness-raising activities performed by the project since its start.
14. Is the reporting required from the project team by the Ministry of sufficient quality and provided in a timely and comprehensive manner?
15. How would you assess the quality of execution support provided by UNDP in accordance with the Letter of Agreement between UNDP and the Ministry?
16. What is the level of your involvement in project workplanning?
17. Would you like to point out any shortcomings (delays etc) in the project implementation, so that the mid-term review suggests the mechanisms for improvement reflecting on your concerns?

Meeting with **General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture**, July 16, 09:00

Note: Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, has been merged with Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock and renamed as Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in 2018 during the project inception. As of July 18, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock was reorganized so that the current Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry now has both Directorate for Nature Conservation and National Parks and Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (GDFA) is the key project counterpart in the Ministry responsible for sustainable management and conservation of marine and inland water fisheries and aquaculture in Turkey.

1. The Project reports on the exemplary level of involvement and ownership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (GDFA) where it concerns consultations and meetings regarding the IAS incentive mechanisms. What is the policy context and the mandate of the Directorate in relation to the financial incentives? Which are the prerequisites for the launch of financial incentives related to IAS management? Is the Directorate driven by any international obligations that stimulate the application of the incentive mechanisms? In short, what is the driving force behind the application of the IAS financial incentives?

2. The GDFA started to pay 5 TRY for every pufferfish tail in December 2020 and committed funding for the incentive program for 2021-2023. How do you access the first results of the program? How would you qualify the role of the GEF project and “its” experts at the stage where this incentive was at the discussion phase?
3. In 2020, the project contracted a consultant on fiscal incentive mechanisms who produced a report on “Designing the best incentive mechanism suitable for the country experience and the culture”. The report has been reviewed, finalized, and eventually approved by the GDNCNP. How was the Directorate involved in the review and quality assurance for the report? Can you share your opinion about the quality and the content of the report?
4. The design of the incentive program was validated at the Evaluation Meeting on Incentive Mechanisms for Combating Marine Invasive Alien Species in June 2021. Financial incentive programs for Water hyacinth, Lionfish and North Atlantic starfish, which are among the target species for the GEF project, were evaluated as unsuitable and unsustainable. Will it be possible for the Directorate to share any details of the review and discussion process?
5. According to the Project reporting, due to the existing incentive program for Pufferfish and the high commercial value of sea snails, it was decided that a new incentive program is not needed. Was this a decision of the Directorate? Will the Directorate limit its work on IAS financial incentives with the Pufferfish incentive program?
6. The GEF Project is now planning towards developing a non-fiscal incentive program for lionfish, based on the commercial value of the species for food industry. Will the Department partner with the Project on that?
7. The next two questions derive from Ms. Filiz Eker being the Focal Point for both the MarIAS and TerIAS projects. The GEF MarIAS project cooperates with the EU-funded IPA-II TerIAS (Addressing of Invasive Alien Species Threats in Terrestrial Areas and Inland Waters in Turkey) project on the development of draft regulations. Can you share your opinion regarding the efficiency of cooperation and the relevance of results?
8. The IAS national strategy will also be developed in cooperation with TerIAS project. The needs and IAS national strategy framework were determined in close partnership with the TerIAS project. Is the Directorate being involved? What would be the role of the Directorate and Ms.Eker for the development of the IAS national strategy?

Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure - General Directorate of Maritime (GDM) , July 13, 14:00

Note: The Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure - General Directorate of Maritime (GDM) is the key project partner where it concerns maritime regulations and management and control of ballast water in the shipping sector. The Ministry is the focal point for the Ballast Water Convention in Turkey. As per the Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the Project, the project team should coordinate project activities regarding ballast water regulations as well as capacity building in customs and shipping sectors. GDM is a member of the Project Steering Committee and should also be represented on the Project Technical Advisory Group.

18. GEF increment to the work of the Ministry related to the international obligations under the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (Ballast Water Convention, or **BWC**). BWC entered into force globally on 8 September 2017. Turkey is a party to the Convention. GDM as the Convention’s focal point in Turkey has started the preparation of key guidelines for the implementation of BWC. The Project Document states that Turkey will

require further support to implement the guidelines of the convention. According to the project reporting, the schedule of implementation of the BWC is directly related with Convection's calendar and member states follow the International Maritime Organization (IMO) rules. The impact of the project on these issues is limited. Is there any space for the project to provide an increment, supporting the Ministry with the capacity building for the implementation of the BWC?

19. Implementation status of the **National Ballast Water Management Strategy** and capacity constraints of the Ministry that the Project might seek to address. Turkey produced a National Ballast Water Management Strategy in 2008. According to the Project Document, the strategy is not being implemented. What is the current status? The Project Document strategy mentioned a “revision and updating of the National Ballast Water Strategy, in line with international best practices and Turkey's obligations and commitments under the Ballast Water Convention”. Is this task still relevant?
20. There are multiple steps envisioned for the implementation of the Ballast Water Convention and the National Ballast Water Management Strategy. As stated in the Project Document, these include the development and introduction of regulations to establish port state controls, certification, type approvals, baseline biological surveys in ports, coordination with universities and research centers, support for scientific studies, and updating of data on ballast water management. The Project Document strategy included the following particular outputs:
 - National legislation for compliance and implementation of Ballast Water Convention prepared and adopted
 - National regulations and by-laws on implementation of National Ballast Water Strategy and Ballast Water Convention developed and adopted
 - Establishment of compliance and enforcement mechanism for implementation of Ballast Water Convention
 - System for monitoring compliance and implementation of the Ballast Water Convention.

It is understood that in general, the Project's work to support **legal and regulatory developments** was hampered by the implications of the COVID-19 crisis. Apart from this factor, is there any other obstacle that might have changed the initial focus of the project as stated in the Prodoc? Is any increment from the GEF project required for the implementation, compliance and enforcement mechanisms mentioned above?

21. **Monitoring and control** of ballast water significantly reduce the risk of new IAS introductions. Is any increment from the project expected in this regard? A harbour monitoring mechanism for IAS was suggested for the project support at the inception. Any work being done? Any activity of the Ministry that can be considered as parallel to the project and responsive to its objectives where it concerns monitoring and control of ballast water?
22. Risk evaluation program: the project reporting barely touches upon this. Is it something that the Ministry works on? Is it a working mechanism? Is any capacity building increment from the GEF project required?
23. Ballast Water Convention implementation when it concerns **eDNA** sampling and analysis: According to Project Document, The Ministry requires additional capacity building for its personnel to sample and handle ballast water. The project team held regular meetings with GDM and agreed to explore methods, such as e-DNA (environmental DNA) systems, for monitoring ballast water. Two meetings were held on September 02-16, 2020 with the participation of the Ministry and Environmental Sciences Institute. A practical workshop on capacity building of MoTI personnel working in sampling and analysis of ballast water and sediment, including the demonstration of eDNA sampling and analysis

planned to be held in 3Q 2021 with the close collaboration of IMO. So far, it is one of the major practical outputs of the project. How do you assess the value of the exercise and would there be any continuation and scale-up of the activities related to capacity building in ballast water sampling and handling?

12 practical guidelines related to Ballast Water Convention were translated from EN to TR. Was this done at the request of the Ministry? What is the use of the guidelines in English?

24. The Ministry was mentioned as a key beneficiary for the relevant project outputs; the main target group for the capacity-building activities is the personnel responsible for sampling, handling, and analysis of ballast water. So far, as a beneficiary and a key project development partner, how would you assess the relevance and the effectiveness of the project work on capacity building?
25. National capacity to implement and enforce Ballast Water Convention is one of the project success **indicators**. In your opinion, so far, was the Project's impact on the capacity to implement the Convention and the Ballast Water Agreement noticeable and measurable? There is no data on the particular sub-indicators; GDM is expected provide the data probably in 4Q of 2021 or the first half of 2022. The project team refers to the consultations with the GDM that confirmed some of the indicators being beyond the scope and capability of the project. It is also the opinion of the MTR. Are there any other indicators that would be more reflective of the project impact on capacity building?

The current sub-indicators for capacity building are as follows:

- a. % of ships docking at Turkish ports have Ballast Water Management Plans and Ballast Water Record Books
- b. % of ships docking at Turkish ports have approved ballast water management systems (BWC regulation D-3), and meet BWC Regulation D-2: Ballast Water Performance Standard
- c. % of ships carrying foreign ballast water in Turkish waters are surveyed and certified
- d. Ports receiving XX% of ballast water by volume have reception facilities for the reception of sediments
- e. % of ballast water entering Turkish waters that is tracked and monitored for management
- f. Amount of ballast water exchanges occur within 50 nautical miles of Turkish land
- g. Status of designation of ballast water exchange zones within Turkey's territorial waters

From the project reporting the project impact on any of these processes so far is unclear. Seems like the project needs to change the success indicator so that it becomes reflective of the project impact rather than the ministerial work on the implementation of the convention. Would be Ministry like to propose more relevant indicators, reflective of the project's work on capacity building?

26. According to the Project Document, a National **Technical Working Group** should have been established as the body for revision and updating of national ballast water strategy and action plan, ensuring effective inclusion of IAS-related measures and standards. The Working Group was supposed to assist the Ministry with developing the best compliance and enforcement mechanisms as well as monitoring systems. The Working Group was also considered as a mechanism to disseminate the knowledge and measures taken to prevent IAS dispersal via ballast water in Turkey. What is your opinion of the relevance and the value of the Working Group? Is there any catalytical or coordination role that the Project can be playing, through the support of the Working Group? Are there any particular concerns/requirements that the Ministry might wish to convey in this regard?

27. The Ministry is a member of the Project **Steering Committee**. Is there any concern that the Ministry would like to share regarding the project management practices and decision-making arrangements applied by the Project?
28. National level **co-financing**: so far, no co-financing was pledged for the Ministry on the Project Document. However, it is clear to MTR that the project plans and the mainstream work of the Ministry are strongly connected, and the success of the project effort will be determined by the work of the Ministry when it concerns the BWC implementation and relevant regulations, controls and practices at the national level. Will it be theoretically possible for the Ministry to report on the relevant activities as project parallel co-financing? Will it be possible to document, with the help of the project team, lessons learned, sustainability elements, synergetic effects, catalytic mechanisms, and up-scale plans for the Ministry as relevant to this project?
29. **Risks** to project success: For many of the projects implemented in the “new COVID normalty” an effect of a rapid switch of governmental priorities to emergency needs has been recorded. Is this the case with the Ministry where it concerns ballast water regulations? In your opinion, are the project plans still relevant? Would they be supported by the Ministry even during the crisis? Which would be the obvious limitations? In general, are the project objectives and outcomes still achievable, or any changes in the design should be suggested in response to the change in governmental priorities?
30. The Suez Canal is one of only two major pathways for invasive species (IAS) into Turkey’s marine waters. A huge blockage of the Suez Canal occurred earlier this year, with more than 350 ships getting caught in the Suez blockage through March 23-29. Ever since it was built, the Suez Canal has acted as a channel for the invasion of foreign species into the Mediterranean. Two-thirds of the total IAS in Turkey’s coastal waters arrive via the Suez Canal, while 30% arrive via ship transport. The blockage has caused a major discharge of ballast waters. Given this, does the Ministry feel that the Suez blockage aggravated the IAS problem for Turkey’s marine environment? Or, on the contrary, the discharges of treated ballast water did not have an impact, while lowering the number of ships that came into Turkish waters given the reduction in ship movements should have lowered the exposure to new IAS? Was there an impact on new alien species introduced to the coasts of Turkey? Any assessments carried out already? Anything that the Ministry might need to be supported from the GEF project? Perhaps some ad-hoc monitoring protocols for such accident cases as this? A training session, perhaps involving neighboring countries?

Annex 7. List of Documents Reviewed

PIF

UNDP Project Document

CEO Endorsement Request

UNDP Environmental and Social Screening results

Project Inception Report

All Project Implementation Reports (PIR's)

Combined Delivery Reports for 2018, 2019, 2020 and Jan-June 2021

Project Workplans

Project Budget Revisions

Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools at CEO endorsement and GEF Core Indicator Worksheet at mid-term

Minutes of the Project Board Meetings

Project Gender Mainstreaming strategy, Rapid Gender Assessment and Gender Screening

Project-specific Vertical Fund COVID Survey as of April 2020

UN Turkey COVID-19 Socio-Economic Assessment Report, July 2020

Project Risk Log

Project Awareness Raising Programme

Baseline Awareness Study Report, April 2021

Raw data on relevant project website activity, including number of unique visitors per month, number of page views, etc

Project awareness materials' distribution lists

Annex 8: Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form

Evaluators:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form⁹

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: Irina Golomina

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for this Evaluation.

Signed in *Moscow, Russia* on 3 June 2021

⁹ www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct

Annex 9: TE Report Clearance Form

**Terminal Evaluation Report for:
Reviewed and Cleared By:**

Commissioning Unit (UNDP Portfolio Manager)

Name: Nuri Özbağdatlı

Signature: *Nuri Ozbagdatli* Date: 02.11.2021

Technical Specialist, UNDP BPPS

Name: Maxim Vergeichik

Signature: *Maxim Vergeichik* Date: 02.11.2021