BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT SYRIA

(PIMS No. 227   Atlas No. 00071405)

MID-TERM EVALUATION

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIG	Alternative Income Generation
APR	Annual Project Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBD	Convention on Biological Resources
CDR	Combined Delivery Report
EC	Executive Committee (replacing Project Steering Committee)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GEF	Global Environment Facility
LogFrame	Logical Framework Matrix
MAAR	Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MLAE	Ministry of Local Administration and Environment
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NEX	National Execution (of UNDP projects)
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NPD	National Project Director (= Project Manager)
NPFP	National Project Focal Point (for the MAAR)
OFP	Operational Focal Point (for the GEF)
OP	Operational Programme (of the GEF)
PA	Protected Area
PAMB	Protected Area Management Board
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PIMA	Project Implementation and Monitoring Advisor
PIR	Project Implementation Report (for GEF)
PMU	Project Management Unit
ProDoc	Project Document
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit (UNDP for GEF activities)
SGP	Small Grants Programme (of the GEF)
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
SSCs	Site Steering Committees
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (of the GEF)
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Tri-Partite Review
UNDP-CO	United Nations Development Programme - Country Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the independent Mid-Term Evaluation of the project of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, supported by UNDP/GEF, on Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Area Management, carried out between May and August 2008.

The Mid-Term Evaluation

The evaluation was precipitated by the Marginally Unsatisfactory rating assigned by the UNDP/GEF RTA for the second PIR in a row. The 2007 PIR noted that "*The project is unable to report against a number of important indicators and appears to have made little verified progress towards the project objective*".

The MTE is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. It provides an opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

Overall guidance on methodology was obtained from the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation. The Evaluation Team based their approach on this guiding document together with the ToRs, and in consultation with UNDP Syria and the UNDP/GEF Regional Technical Advisor.

This has been a participatory evaluation which, without prejudice to the independence of the findings, has been carried out with the involvement of relevant Government officials, the Project Management Unit and UNDP-CO personnel. Consultations by the Evaluation Team took place in Damascus as well as in Hama, Lattakia and Hassakeh Governorates, with 111 individuals from a wide spectrum of sectors associated with the project. Many were consulted on a one to one basis.

Project concept and design

The Project aims to demonstrate practical methods of Protected Area management that conserve biodiversity effectively and protect the interests of local communities while supporting the consolidation of an enabling environment that will facilitate replication throughout the country.

The Project is now in its third year of implementation and the Project Strategy has been reviewed and some progress has been recorded. However, the early implementation stages have not been easy and only now is the project considered to have gathered momentum by the stakeholders.

The Project concept and design are basically sound. It is a standard approach to a project on enhancing the protected areas system. The Objective seeks *conservation* as a balance between protection and safeguarding the communities' way of life. The three Outcomes focus on enabling environment, PA management, and community participation and protection. The timescale of seven years appears adequate and so does the budget of just under $7 million including the Government contribution in kind.

The Project Document is weak and unhelpful and has contributed to some of the difficulties faced by the PMU. The Team recommends to UNDP/GEF to develop and implement a policy which confirms the importance of the ProDoc and establishes a Master Copy which should be updated each time substantive revisions are carried out on any of its elements.

Project implementation arrangements

The Project is being implemented under the NEX modality with MLAE as the Implementing Agency and MAAR as the Executing Agency. The relationship between the two ministries is cordial and cooperative and roles are clear. MAAR and MLAE should design and implement a strategic

approach to the PA System in Syria based on representativeness and reflecting "the best of what remains", with clear objectives, based on reliable ecological surveys, in partnership with the communities.

The office premises and other facilities provided by the Government as part of its contribution in-kind are more than adequate in most cases although they are not always in the most appropriate location or style expected in a PA. It is recommended that the Project should explore the possibility of developing a PA Headquarters and Visitor Centre for each of Abu Qubeis and Jebel Abdul Aziz PAs, similar to the facility available at Fronloq (which needs some improvement). These HQs and Visitor Centres must be purpose built, low profile and low impact, and open to be used by the public

The distinction between the Project and the Protected Area needs to be removed to the extent possible and the role of Project Steering Committee at the site should be taken up by the PA Management Board. Such an approach will reduce the potential for conflict, enhance the management capacity for both the PA and the Project, and ensure sustainability when the Project comes to an end.

Project governance

The Project Executive Committee, is functioning well and providing the necessary guidance and support to the PMU using the right authority and power as the highest governance level for the project.

At site level, project governance is very weak or non-existent and Site Managers are struggling without adequate guidance and direction from an effective committee or board. The opportunity to receive meaningful collaboration from the communities has yet to be realized.

Project management

The PMU is small and the management style is low key. Adequate support and guidance is provided by the National Project Director (Project Manager) to the Site Managers but there appears to be a lack of strategic thinking and confidence and a reluctance to be incisive and take risks. Project management at Central level needs more training and capacity building and should then be given more "space", with support and guidance from a distance.

The PEC should review the Project implementation framework/arrangements to create a clearer distinction between the policy and the management levels, and create a more direct link between the management and implementation levels.

Management at site level is not strong. The capacity of Site Managers has to be improved in project management, people management and PA management. They must be able to provide better leadership and direction to their respective teams. UNDP should arrange for the NPD and all three Site Managers to undergo the PRINCE-2 training in project management.

In spite of this, team spirit is excellent at two of the three sites, but less so at the third site. BUT, the majority of staff have no idea of what they are meant to be doing. Site Managers, guided by the PMU, must develop job descriptions for all staff as guidance on what needs to be done by each, and as a basis for performance assessment. Review job descriptions when work plans (ideally a Management Plan as well as an Annual Operational Plan) are adopted at each site.

Financial management

Some 25% of the Project budget appears to have been allocated for Project management and this is considered somewhat high. On the other hand, the allocation for Outcome 3 which has a focus on community work, seems a bit low in comparison to the other allocations (18% of the budget).

The Team has some reservations about the awarding of large contracts such as the $297,600 contract under Outcome 2. The size of this contract makes it feel like a project within a project with its own manager and staff, a large budget and full and total financial delegation. There is a serious risk that the Site Managers (and maybe even the NPD) will be effectively sidelined by whoever wins the contract. We recommend that the PMU and PEC reconsider the large contracts at company level – assign as much as possible of this work to project staff and engage consultants only as support persons and not to take over initiatives; break up the large contracts into individual smaller contracts.

There is confusion regarding the intended use of the petty cash float and the role of advance payments. Clarify the intended purpose of the petty cash float. Retain the current level of $500 but ensure that the amount available does not drop below $100 by triggering replenishment (after appropriate accountability for monies spent) when the balance comes close to $100. The use of the advance payments system is not well known or understood among Project staff and it is not used as it should be. The PMU should plan ahead sufficiently and send in requests for advance payment in good enough time to allow UNDP enough time to process the request and avoid inordinate delays.

There is a perceived need for more flexibility, a higher level of delegation, and a more streamlined system and that this will become essential when the micro-finance system is set up and is running. Many see the system as cumbersome and lacking delegation – but in general, the system seems the same as that applied successfully by UNDP elsewhere. The Team recommends further training of Project staff, particularly the Site Managers, by UNDP on the financial management procedures of the Project, and that this training should be a regular occurrence, at least annually.

Co-financing is being made available as scheduled. The government in-kind contribution was evident to the Team in the form of substantial premises, office space and furnishings, salaries of all Project site staff except for the Site Managers and the cost of fuel for the Project vehicles. This contribution comprises 36% of the total budget of the project and the project could not have survived without it.

Stakeholder participation, community empowerment

The key stakeholders for the Project are the two ministries and the communities that live in or around the PAs. The ministries are fully involved in the Project and show excellent ownership. The communities are still out of the Project.

The attitude to communities has been patronising. The approaches made by the Project teams are genuine enough and the rapport between individual Project staff and individual members of the community is good, but communities must be seen and treated as partners and joint-owners of the PA and its resources. Through meaningful membership of the PA Management Board, the communities must share in the decision-making, accepting participatory responsibility for finding solutions to the problems of biodiversity conservation, ecosystem approach and sustainability of resources.

Project monitoring and evaluation

Performance monitoring as carried out by the Project to date is not effective. While it may satisfy the bare essentials of the GEF, it is mainly mechanical, not analytical, and there is no evaluation.
The Project SRF was revised six times in the first few months of the Project with the latest version becoming available in June 2006. However, the revisions are less about adaptive management and more about the weaknesses of the original SRF and the adoption of new approaches to structuring the SRF.

The Project Goal, Objective and Outcomes have not changed, but the Indicators have and in some respects they are more difficult to use to assess progress. There is a need for the SRF to be revised again, particularly the Indicators, but possibly also the Outputs, to produce a useful SRF with SMART Indicators as a basis for monitoring and adaptive management. The PMU should organize a one-day workshop, facilitated by the PTA, to revise the SRF, particularly the Indicators but possibly also the Outputs, to produce a useful SRF with SMART Indicators as a basis for monitoring and adaptive management. The PMU is referred to the guidance provided in the Adaptive Management Workshop delivered by the Team.

The monitoring of ecosystem health is worrisome. No baselines have been set and no real ecosystem monitoring has been carried out to date except maybe for the METT. The Indicators developed by consultants for ecosystem monitoring await validation, training, and application. In this connection, there is a need for the Project to set up a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to provide peer review and quality control for the outputs of consultants as well as to provide advice to Project management. Establish the TAG as a national institution beyond the life of the project.

Involve the communities in monitoring performance as well as ecosystem health.

Progress towards the Project Objective and Outcomes

The Evaluation Team is concerned by the weak progress achieved by the Project towards the process indicators. The most serious of these is the lack of progress towards a Management Plan in each PA which was meant to become available by the end of Year 2. While it is acknowledged that the Site Teams do have annual operational plans, these are no substitute for the strategic and policy document normally expected in a Management Plan. This worrying situation is compounded by the fact that most if not all project personnel do not have job descriptions, have no capacity or capabilities for the position they have been assigned and are existing in a total vacuum with no personal work plans and no direction or guidance. This is in spite of numerous training sessions.

The Evaluation Team does not find the Indicators selected for the Objective as helpful in assessing progress and we are aware that the Project has also struggled with this. As a result, progress towards the project Objective, as illustrated by the Indicators, is unsatisfactory. However, the Team is aware of progress that has been made, albeit modest, towards the Objective, and after allowing for the weak Indicators, finds an overall rating of **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Progress towards the Outcome1 is not impressive, whether one looks at the Indicators or the Targets. As this is the "enabling" Outcome, this is especially disappointing because progress with this Outcome is required to underpin progress in the other two Outcomes. MAAR and MLAE need to expedite the establishment of the intended task force to commence the development of a strategy and action plans for the effective administration and management of the PA System as a system. The Project needs to review the Indicators for Outcome 1 and possibly some of the Outputs, so as to create a more robust basis for a PA System and help with the assessment of progress. As a result of the low delivery in this Outcome but also in recognition of the small amount of progress, the overall rating is seen as **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Outcome 2 revolves around management plans, and while annual operational plans are on the verge of being adopted ready for implementation, there is no sign of management plans. In the absence of management plans, the staff have been working very much in an *ad hoc* way with little focus or direction. Work on management plans is poised to start and the sooner this happens the better. There is an urgent need for the Project to review the Indicators for Outcome 2 and develop a more robust and meaningful set to help with the assessment of progress. They should reflect the various components and stages in the development of management plans. In the knowledge that the PTA is ready to make serious progress with this Outcome, and in recognition that some work has started, the rating assigned by the Evaluation Team for Outcome 2 has been raised from highly unsatisfactory to **Moderately Unsatisfactory.**

Under Outcome 3, rapport between Project personnel and the communities is good but nothing tangible has been delivered and if there is no progress soon, there is a risk that the Project will lose its credibility among communities. Surveys and training do not satisfy cynicism and fear – tangible products do. There is a need for "incentives", but more important, there is a need to find joint solutions to the problems that may be created in trying to reduce the impact on the PA. There is also a need to establish serious partnerships where communities are treated as equal owners, sharing in the hard decisions on protection, management, etc. The Team recommends to the PMU that it should develop and implement a strategy for communities' engagement and participation based on the principle that they are part owners of the PA and must be approached as partners. The Indicators for Outcome 3 need to be refined and it may not be a bad idea to do this in collaboration with the communities. The overall progress towards Outcome 3 has been **Unsatisfactory** and progress is urgently needed.

Capacity building and other Project impacts

It is a bit early to be considering Project impacts, however, some gains have already been made in capacity building at MLAE and MAAR. The impact of other training is not so sure and there is a possibility that either it has been ineffectual or it was the wrong type of training.

If the Project is successful in ensuring the sustainability of the three PAs, the global benefits of the project should be undisputed by virtue of the ecological resources that will have been safeguarded which are accepted as being of global significance. At the national level capacity at both Central and local levels for the administration and management of PAs is expected to be enhanced; and hopefully, irrespective of the direct benefits to them, community engagement will be another part of the project legacy. Expectations are high among communities that the Project will have an impact on their lives. Fear and uncertainty have been replaced by the misguided belief that this as a social development project and Project staff have to dispel this and replace it with a more realistic set of expectations.

Unfortunately, when the time comes to assess impacts, the Impact Indicators from the Project Brief are not going to be much help.

Sustainability and replicability

The institutional sustainability of the Project's products should be "guaranteed" by the Government's ownership of the PAs and the collaborative spirit of MLAE and MAAR. However, before this can be certain, the PA Management Boards must be in place and this has yet to happen. Financial sustainability is not yet secure either, even though prospects should be good.

The most important element that will assure the sustainability of this project is the effective participation of local communities based on a real partnership. That depends on the trust and credibility that Project staff can build.

The three PAs can be considered as good pilots which, if successful, can be used as models for replication in the other PA sites. The potential for replicability is very high – there are 23 other PAs in Syria without taking into account the wetlands and coastal areas. However, replication does not just happen and it needs to be facilitated, for example, by building capacity at some of the other PAs.

Experience gained and lessons learnt

A lesson learnt from the previous World Bank/GEF project and proven by this Project is that without harmony between Government agencies, a project is likely to fail. This is particularly so when one agency is acting as Implementing Agency and other as Executing Agency.

Another lesson, which is virtually universal, and which has emerged again from this project is that gaining the respect, credibility and trust of the community takes time. It also takes a special type of approach and expertise.

Working with local communities and involving them in the project activities is a slow and difficult process but once they are aware of the benefits and have accepted a share of the responsibilities, they are keen to work towards the project objectives.

Rightly or wrongly, the majority of Project staff believe that they do not have job descriptions and the lesson is that team spirit and enthusiasm among Project staff are essential but they are no substitute for a clear job description, leadership and direction.

Final conclusion

This project certainly has problems – but it is not a problem project. There is a great deal of good will, enthusiasm and energy among the stakeholders; there is adequate time and budget; and there is the fresh approach being contributed by the PTA.

The Project appears poised for a great leap forward through the operationalization of the plans and ideas brought by the new PTA and a lot rests on his shoulders. He would increase his chances of success if the adaptive management approach (as discussed in the Workshop delivered by the Evaluation Team) is applied whereby new predictions are made, new management approaches designed, and new options tested following thorough analysis of the results of monitoring.

The Team is optimistic about the Project's future. If the recommendations in this report are considered seriously and implemented, the chances of success of this Project are high.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The project

The GEF/UNDP Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Area Management Project aims to demonstrate practical methods of Protected Area (PA) management that conserve biodiversity effectively and protect the interests of local communities while supporting the consolidation of an enabling environment that will facilitate replication throughout the country. The original project document outlined three outcomes that would be targeted:

(1) Policies, legislation and institutional systems are in place that allow for the wise selection and effective operation of protected areas that conserve globally significant biodiversity
(2) Effective techniques for PA management and biodiversity conservation have been demonstrated at three sites totalling approximately 60,000 ha and are available for replication
(3) Sustainable use of natural resources in and around protected areas has been demonstrated through the development and implementation of a programme for alternative sustainable livelihoods and community resource management.

The project was conceived under GEF-3 and is consistent with the provisions of Operational Programme 1, Arid and Semi-Arid Ecosystems, crosscutting with the Land Degradation thematic area (OP#15). Its focus is on conservation and sustainable use of forest and dryland ecosystems and its major outputs include threat removal, sectoral integration, sustainable use and institutional strengthening. Many of the activities undertaken by the project are included among those described as 'typical' by the OP.

The project has a budget of just under US$7 million funded by GEF, UNDP and the Government. The project is designed to run over seven years and commenced in September/October 2005. The Inception Phase was subject to various delays due to a number of reasons.

The Implementing Agency of the project is the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MLAE), while the Executing Agency is the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the two ministries.

The Project is now in its third year of implementation and as will be discussed below, the Project Strategy (as illustrated by the LogFrame Matrix) has been reviewed and some progress has been recorded. However, the early implementation stage has not been easy and only now is the project considered to have gathered momentum by the stakeholders.

1.2 The Evaluation

1.2.1 Evaluation objectives

This is the independent Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the project of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, supported by UNDP/GEF, on Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Area Management, carried out between May and August 2008. The evaluation was precipitated by the Marginally Unsatisfactory rating assigned by the UNDP/GEF RTA for the second PIR in a row. The 2007 PIR[1] noted that "*The project is unable to report against a number of important indicators and appears to have made little verified progress towards the project objective*".

The ToRs (see Annex 1) require the Evaluation Team to provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of the project by assessing its design, process of implementation and

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[1] UNDP/GEF (2007) APR-PIR 2007, Biodiversity (01 July 2006 to 30 June 2007)

results vis-à-vis the project objective as endorsed by the GEF (including any changes agreed to in the course of project implementation).

According to the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation[2], *"Project evaluations assess the efficiency and effectiveness of a project in achieving its intended results. They also assess the relevance and sustainability of outputs as contributions to medium-term and longer-term outcomes. Project evaluation can be invaluable for managing for results, and serve to reinforce the accountability of project managers. Additionally, a project evaluation provides a basis for the evaluation of outcomes and programmes, as well as for strategic and programmatic evaluations and APRs, and for distilling lessons from experience for learning and sharing knowledge. In UNDP, project evaluations are mandatory when required by a partnership protocol, such as with the Global Environment Facility"*.

The specific objectives of the MTE are:
- Identify potential project design problems
- Assess progress towards the achievement of objectives
- Identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects)
- Make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project

The MTE is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. It provides an opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

1.2.2 Mission activities

Work on this evaluation commenced in mid-May 2008 by the two consultants that comprised the Evaluation Team, from homebase, with assignment planning, preparation of the schedule of work, interpretation of the Terms of Reference, documents review and websites searches. The International Consultants travelled to Syria over the weekend of 06 to 08 June and the Team convened in Damascus on Monday 09 June. That day saw the beginning of a series of briefing and consultative meetings with Government agencies, UNDP and other key stakeholders. On Thursday 12 June the Evaluation Team set off for field visits to Hama, Lattakia and Hassakeh Governorates and the three project sites for an extensive programme of consultations with project personnel, stakeholders, beneficiaries and others.

The Team returned to Damascus on Saturday 22 June and the time from then on was devoted primarily to drafting of the evaluation report and preparations for final sessions. The Team facilitated a workshop on Adaptive Management and Learning for the PMU and other project personnel on Wednesday 25 June. A presentation of preliminary findings was made to key stakeholders on Thursday 26 June. The Team provided a final draft of the Evaluation Report to the UNDP and the Government on 07 July. Following a brief period for comments on the draft, the Evaluation Report was finalized and dispatched by mid-August.

The full Schedule for this assignment is in Annex 2.

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[2] *Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results* (2002) United Nations Development Programme Evaluation Office

1.3 Methodology of the evaluation

1.3.1 The approach adopted

The Evaluation Team, recruited by UNDP and the Government, comprised two international evaluators combining international calibre evaluation expertise, the latest thinking in traditional knowledge and sustainable-use of natural resources, and co-management of protected areas with knowledge of the Syrian national protected areas system and the biodiversity context. It is important to note that one of the team was a native Arabic speaker and he served as interpreter for most of the consultations. Other interpretation was provided by the UNDP Programme Officer and the Team is confident that language was not a barrier in this evaluation. The evaluators were independent from both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of assistance surrounding the project.

Overall guidance on evaluation methodologies was obtained from the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation[3]. The Evaluation Team based their approach on this guiding document together with the ToRs, and in consultation with UNDP Syria and the UNDP/GEF Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) in Bratislava.

Opinions and information were sought and obtained through the following activities:
- Desk review of relevant documents and websites
- Discussions with UNDP Syria senior management and the UNDP/GEF RTA
- Consultation meetings with Central and Local Government and other stakeholders and partners
- Visits to the three project localities and discussions with project personnel, as well as with government officials, community members and other stakeholders and beneficiaries

This has been a participatory evaluation (as required by the ToRs) which, without prejudice to the independence of the findings, has been carried out with the involvement of relevant Government officials, the Project Management Unit (PMU) and UNDP-CO personnel.

Where required, according to the GEF Evaluation Office Guidelines[4], project performance was rated according to the following scale, adapted as necessary to apply to mid-term evaluation circumstances:

Highly Satisfactory (HS): The project has no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency
Satisfactory (S): The project has minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency
Moderately Satisfactory (MS): The project has moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): The project has significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency
Unsatisfactory (U): The project has major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The project has severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

1.3.2 Documents reviewed and consulted

The Evaluation Team was provided with an initial list of documents by UNDP and the Project Team. Additional documentation was sought by the Team to provide the background to the project, insights into project implementation and management, a record of project outputs, etc. The list of salient

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[3] *Op. cit.*

[4] GEF Evaluation Office (2007) *Guidelines for Implementing and Executing Agencies to Conduct Terminal Evaluations.* Global Environment Facility, Washington.

documents reviewed and/or consulted by the Team is in Annex 3 which also contains a reference to key websites which were visited and reviewed. Other references are inserted as footnotes.

1.3.3 Consultations with key stakeholders

Consultations by the Evaluation Team took place in Damascus as well as in Hama, Lattakia and Hassakeh Governorates where the project is based.

The Team met or consulted with 111 individuals in all and many were consulted on a one to one basis. These came from a wide spectrum of sectors associated with the project – from within UNDP (6), Central Government organizations (7), Governorates and other local authorities (6), project personnel and consultants (27), other stakeholders particularly project beneficiaries and communities (65). Most meetings followed the same pattern, namely, a brief introduction on the purpose of the mission followed by an identification of the relationship that the consultee had with the Project, if any, and his/her views on the Project.

The Team also made contact with UNDP/GEF through telephone conversations.

The initial list of consultees was proposed by UNDP and the PMU. This was supplemented through the Team's initiative.

The draft report was translated into Arabic and distributed for comment among the key stakeholders.

A full list of organizations and persons met and consulted by the Team is to be found in Annex 4.

1.3.4 Structure of this report

This Report is structured in four main parts. Following the Executive Summary, the first part of the Report comprises an Introduction which also covers the development context of the project and the methodology of the evaluation.

The next part covers the Findings and is made up of a number of discrete but closely linked sections following the scope and framework proposed for project evaluation reports by the UNDP Guidelines. There are four sections containing findings. The first findings section arises mainly from document reviews and deals with the project design. The second findings section is compiled mainly from the information obtained through consultations and discussions, and includes a sub-section of monitoring and evaluation. The third findings section deals with results achieved and reflects, both what the Evaluation Team was told during its discussions with stakeholders, as well as the Team's own observations. The fourth findings section discusses sustainability of the project products and comprises primarily the Team's own observations.

The third part comprises a Discussion of the information obtained from interviews with stakeholders and observations, and Conclusions made by the Team. The final part contains the Recommendations of the Evaluation Team.

A number of annexes provide additional, relevant information.

2 FINDINGS: PROJECT DESIGN, REVIEWS AND REVISION

2.1 Project formulation and design

2.1.1 The Project Document and basic design

The Project Document (ProDoc) follows the format current at the time (which has since been modified) and unfortunately it is not user-friendly. An example of the incoherence of the ProDoc is provided by the way it treats its most important part, namely the Project Strategy – it is reproduced below, in full:

Part Ib Strategy
Syria's approach to sustainable development while conserving biodiversity, and its national commitment to these goals, are described in Section 2, Table 1. UNDP's programme in support of these goals is described in Section 2, paragraph 98, while the specific activities undertaken through this project in support of policy development and strengthened national capacities are described in Section 2, paragraphs 83-85.

It continues in this style (referring to other parts or annexes or documents rather than creating a coherent document) for most of the document and only when it gets to Part III: Management Arrangements, does it have a section in full. The ProDoc relies heavily on annexes to make sense. In doing so, it makes the annexes an essential part of the document and thus it negates the wish for streamlining that led to this approach being adopted in the first place. The ProDoc is 17 pages long, while the annexes amount to 155 pages. To make matters worse, there is an unfortunate mix-up with page numbering which was meant to be sequential throughout the document including the annexes – the first page 73 is followed by page 60 and after the second page 72 is page 62! This lack of quality control is evident throughout the document with many typographical errors which are distracting.

The terminology used in the ProDoc for various positions within the project hierarchy is different from standard practice. The Project Manager (PM) is called National Project Director (NPD); and the National Project Director (NPD) is called the National Project Coordinator (NPC). The Team was advised that UNDP Syria has used this terminology for some time and while this is of no great consequence, it does tend to create confusion, at least initially, for the uninitiated reader.

Members of the PMU who tried to seek guidance from the ProDoc did not find it very helpful. As one staff said to the Team – it had to be re-interpreted. Another staff member noted that by the time it came to be signed, the ProDoc was already some two years old, and out of date – the LogFrame Matrix had to be changed, the implementation arrangements had to be changed, the financial arrangements had to be changed and the ToRs for hired expertise had to be reformulated. This latter task required the input of an outside expert on a contract basis, using project funds. The Team is aware that most projects undergo a long formulation process and that with changing circumstances, the ProDoc could become out of date by the time it is signed. However, the Team feels that this matter may need to be addressed by UNDP and GEF to make sure that the ProDoc which, after all, is the basis of a legal agreement between the parties, is as relevant and as up to date as possible when it is signed.

The above updating and other revisions and refinements of elements of the ProDoc and its annexes were carried out during the Inception Phase (see below) and the Inception Report refers to *"the revised Project Document"*. However, the Team could not access a revised ProDoc and these changes are not apparent to an outsider unless he/she also has access to the Inception Report. This tends to negate the purpose and usefulness of the ProDoc which is meant to be the guiding document for those implementing the project. The Team recommends that UNDP/GEF should develop and implement a policy which confirms the importance of the ProDoc and establishes a Master Copy which should be updated each time substantive revisions are carried out on any of its elements. It is such a Master Copy that should be used to guide project implementation and given to evaluators and other interested parties.

While the ProDoc is not considered effective as a document, the project design is basically sound. The Objective seeks *conservation* as a balance between protection and safeguarding the way of life of communities that have traditionally relied on the PA for their livelihoods. The three Outcomes targeted by the Project are considered very rational and complementary with their focus on strengthening the enabling environment (mainly through capacity building), providing for effective management of PAs (through management planning, but also through training and capacity), and community participation while safeguarding their livelihoods (including through alternative income generation schemes).

In fact, the sentiments expressed in the ProDoc and its annexes regarding the empowerment of local communities to enable them to participate in project implementation, are laudable and according to the best principles of PA management.

The major flaw in project design was its failure to recognize the weak capacity and the extent to which this went. The project is still faltering through lack of capacity at all levels, even now in its third year of implementation. This is discussed in section 3.1.3 below.

2.1.2 Assumptions and risks

Assumptions are the conditions necessary in order to ensure that the project activities will produce results. Risks are the possibility that they may not occur. Risks need to be recognized and prevented to the extent possible, and contingency plans put in place to deal with them should they happen. The Project Brief and the ProDoc did identify a number of assumptions and risks, and so did other platforms such as the PIRs.

2.1.2.1 The risk of conflict between MLAE and MAAR

The ProDoc identified one main area of risk and this was the conflict that could arise between the two ministries (MLAE and MAAR) and which had afflicted the World Bank/GEF Arz/El Shouh MSP project. If it happened again, it would jeopardize the project. The Project Brief annexed to the ProDoc, had analyzed the World Bank project in an attempt to identify lessons that could be learnt and reported that the *"PDF-B phase has placed substantial emphasis on developing a clear, unambiguous division of responsibilities for the main project partners. In addition, it has tried to develop implementation modalities that will minimize the possibility of any future inter-ministerial disagreement leading to serious delays or even project 'gridlock.'"*

In addition to the clarification of roles, project design and implementation resulted in the establishment of the Project Executing Committee (see section 3.1.2 below) which involved decision makers from both ministries. There was also the development of the MOU between the two ministries which identified very specifically, the role and responsibilities of each party in some detail.

The Team can confirm that relations between the two ministries are cordial and cooperative and their respective roles, one as Implementing Agency and the other as Executing Agency for the project are clear and unequivocal. Each ministry is performing its expected functions and together they are ensuring the successful implementation of the Project.

However, this auspicious situation at central level is not reflected completely at the level of the three PAs. Relations between the two ministries at each of the three sites are harmonious enough, but more work needs to be carried out to clarify roles. This is discussed below and the Team was advised that this is recognized by the two ministries themselves and efforts are underway to improve the situation.

The Team is satisfied that this major risk has been adequately addressed by the project and it is most unlikely that it will materialize.

2.1.2.2   Assumptions and risks identified in the SRF

Many of the risks and assumptions identified in the revised SRF are the same or similar and some are merely the risk that the project will not succeed if it does not carry out one or other of its planned tasks. There is also no evidence that having identified the risks, the implementation team has done anything further with them.

Of the risks identified in the revised SRF, the Team finds the following two as the salient ones:

• The risk of changes in socio-economic conditions (*e.g.* rural-urban migration trends, joblessness, natural aberrations such as the current severe drought in Hessakeh) which could have an impact on the PA and the project by forcing local communities to stress natural resources in order to survive.
• The risk that legislation and regulations will lag behind developments arising from the project such as management plans, meaningful participation by communities, protective measures in the PA, etc, all of which need legislative backing if they are to be successfully implemented.

The Team suggests that the project implementation team should address these two risks and seek ways of minimizing them. It should also plan for the contingency should it happen.

2.1.2.3   Assumptions and risks raised in the PIRs

The 2006 PIR identified financial, operational, organizational, regulatory and other types of risks and proposed a management response, in a table that is reproduced below.

Table 1.   Risks table from the 2006 PIR

RISK TYPE	DATE IDENTIFIED	RISK DESCRIPTION	RISK MANAGEMENT RESPONSE
Financial	25/3/2006	Micro-credit scheme	Analyze previous GEF/UNDP experiences and build on lessons learned
Operational	28/8/2006	Project's Monitoring System	Devise and adopt a clear and neutral M&E plan (PIMA)
Organizational	29/8/2006	MLAE/MAAR: Unclear roles and responsibilities	Devise, adopt and maintain a national strategic framework agreement between MAAR MLAE beyond the project mandate
Regulatory	29/8/2006	Policy changes not accepted Legislation fails to pass	Ensure all the policy changes and legislations are shared and agreed upon by all stakeholders before initiating their final adoption
		Land-use conflicts	Research, document and incorporate various land use in the sites' planning and zoning processes
	29/8/2006	Local communities representatives, local govt. do not support project	Review and foster the roles of the local coordination committees particularly the secondary sites' and resource users committees Devise and adopt a local participation and involvement policy in all project activities and apply proper community consultation methodologies Devise and maintain effective local outreach programs for target groups (including targeted awareness programs and efficient information sharing system) Effectively use the project M&E to monitor local participation (including METTs)
others	29/8/2006	Local development activities (outcome 3) not linked to sustainable biodiversity outcomes i.e. the inappropriate use of "incentives"	Ensure appropriate targeting of social groups most related to the use of sites' biodiversity Devise specific outreach and awareness programs for target groups to explain the links Tie the incentives with regulations and enforcement (clarifying trade offs) Ensure that incentives are linked to alternative resource use

As can be seen from the table, some of the above are not written as risks at all, they are merely headings (*e.g.* Micro-credit scheme), and the response is not all that convincing.

The risk that legislation may lag behind project achievements also features in the SRF but the response proposed above is not seen as very effective. It is also a response that goes beyond the

competence and brief of the Project since the PMU cannot "initiate final adoption" of policies or legislation, it is the Government that does.

The risk that local communities and local government may not support project is very real and could have serious repercussions for the Project. Unfortunately, the Team feels that the most important response to this risk, namely to create a feeling of ownership among the communities and other stakeholders, is not among those considered by the Project, and this is discussed further below (see section 3.3.2).

The 2007 PIR does not report explicitly on whether the project's response had been successful in averting the risks. But the new table of risks does provide comments against some risks, on activities undertaken by the project. The table also adds a few new risks including the "Resignation of PIMA Consultant" – surely this was more than a risk, it was a fact!

2.2   The inception phase and Inception Report

The ProDoc was signed in February 2005 and the PMU became functional in September 2005. The inception phase, which was expected to last 3-4 months, ended in August 2006 when the final changes were made to the Inception Report (according to PIR-2006) – a period of some 10 months.

An inception phase of 10 months is somewhat longer than usual and the prime reason for the delay according to some respondents was the weak ProDoc. However, they also add the weak management capacity, the complex financial arrangements and the novelty of the PA concept in Syria as additional causes of the delay.

The Evaluation Team agrees that the single most influencing factor contributing to the long inception phase was the quality of the ProDoc. But coupled with this was the fact that staff capacity in the PMU was very weak at the beginning of the project and little or no guidance was provided to compensate – "*all what we got was two documents, one on UNDP procedures and one on monitoring and evaluation, the final project document was not provided or discussed at all, we had to learn the hard way with all unconsidered requests for guidance and support*". In addition to these influencing factors, the Inception Report also noted the delays in procurement due to lack of familiarity with the UNDP system. This is surprising since two PMU personnel had acquired international agency experience before joining the Project team.

In the circumstances, the Evaluation Team feels that the inception phase was not inordinately long, especially when considering the following main achievements since the signing of the ProDoc, and which were listed in the Inception Report:

- Extensive meetings and networking with stakeholders in preparation for the Project launch.
- Formal and informal meetings to review the procedures, regulations and available information with MLAE and MAAR unit managers and technicians
- Review of UNDP instructions and procedures
- Initial training on flexible management approach and response to challenges, by the GEF Regional Coordination Unit.
- The Project Steering Committee was renamed Project Executive Committee (PEC), its ToRs were reviewed and members named. The PEC met twice during the Inception Phase to review progress.
- First AWP and budget discussed and approved by PEC.
- National Project Coordinator (NPC) was nominated by the MLAE and the National Project Focal Point (NPFP) was nominated by the MAAR, after reviewing the relevant ToRs and defining their roles in project management.
- The NPD (Project Manager) was appointed during the second half of August 2005 and the remaining PMU members were appointed in September 2005. The three Site Managers were finally

appointed in April 2006 after a lengthy process of formal discussions between the two ministries and the UNDP[5]. The PIMA was appointed in March 2006.

- The PMU set up office – furniture as part of the MLAE in-kind contribution, while supplies, vehicles and office equipment including computers, were purchased through project budget. The procurement process for the three site offices got underway to supplement the Government in-kind contribution of premises and furniture.
- The Local Steering Sub-Committees established after making significant amendments to their ToRs.
- A workshop was conducted for site staff and the two ministries on protected area management principles and community participation approach.

The Inception Report says that the PMU sees this as time *"efficiently spent in ensuring that all project stakeholders are equally participating in various arrangements as well as in carefully consolidating the PD in order to tackle specific implementation complexities, and finally to make sure that strong Project foundations have been built"*. The Evaluation Team does not disagree.

3 FINDINGS: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

3.1 Project implementation

The entire project implementation team, including the international input which was sourced from within the region, operated in Arabic and required translation and interpretation services only to access documentation and information which was in English. Translation services were found to be weak when the draft Report required translation and this, coupled with the need to translate everything into Arabic, may have had a significant impact on the understanding and implementation of the ProDoc and other key documents into English[6].

3.1.1 The project implementation framework

The original project implementation framework, as proposed by the ProDoc, was complex and was revised during the Inception Phase – this was an improvement. However, there is probably room for some further improvements.

The framework comprises three levels – the policy level, the management level, and the implementation level. The policy level is made up of the Project Steering Committee renamed Project Executive Committee (see section 3.1.2 below). The management level comprises the Project Management Unit (PMU) (see section 3.1.3 below) led by the National Project Director and including the three Site Managers. The implementation level is made up of the Site Managers and their respective teams.

The Team finds that the distinction between the policy level and the management level is not clear enough and management feels that some elements of the policy level are too involved in day-to-day management decisions. However, according to UNDP, such hands-on involvement only occurs when requested.

The Team feels that elements of the policy level should not need to become involved in management and there is a need for a clearer distinction between the two levels. On the other hand, the link between the management level and the implementation level needs to be more direct and the Site Managers have a crucial role to play in this as they create the link. They should be involved

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[5] The appointments were made from a list of nominees provided by MAAR.
[6] However, the Evaluation Team is certain that language was not a barrier for the evaluation consultations since one of the team is an Arabic speaker.

fully (as appropriate and relevant) in the decision-making process of the PMU led more assertively and with more confidence by the NPD. This may indeed be the intention at present, but in actual fact it may require improvement.

It should also be noted that Site Steering Committees are in effect part of the policy level, albeit at the PA site. The Team will be recommending that the Site Steering Committees should be renamed as Protected Area Management Boards (PAMB), reviewing their membership and elevating them in status (see section 3.1.2 below). This change will consolidate the PAMB as the policy body at site level with the task of ensuring that Central Government policy is being implemented by the PA management.

A further new feature which is proposed for the Project implementation framework is the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The TAG, which is discussed further in section 3.4.4 below, is considered necessary to ensure quality control.

Such a framework is illustrated in the diagram below. It differs from the existing implementation framework by its clearer distinction between the policy and the management levels (and an indication of the relationship), the direct link between the management and implementation levels and by the addition of the Protected Area Management Boards and the Technical Advisory Group. These differences, while small, are expected to improve Project management.
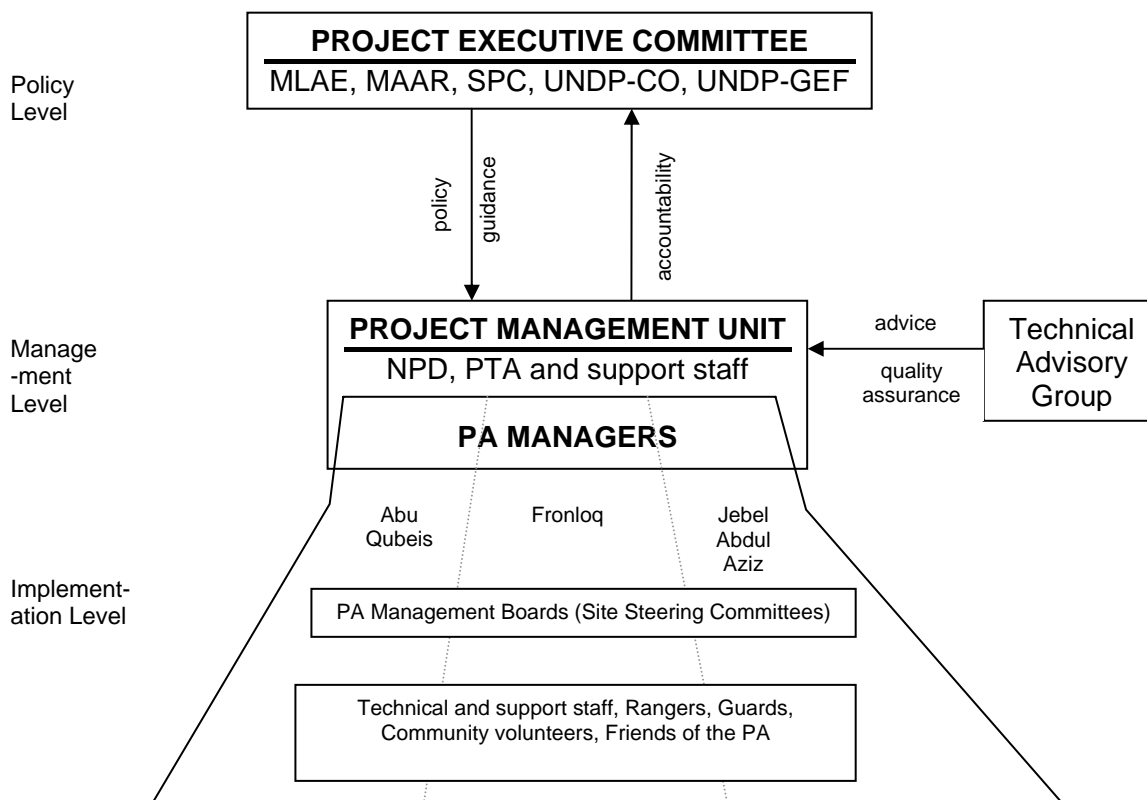
There is one further change in project implementation that the Evaluation Team wishes to recommend which we expect will result in significant gains. It is a change in approach and is applicable to projects addressing a Protected Area. The change involves reducing the distinction between the Project and the Protected Area to the extent possible. For example, the Project's Site Manager should also be the PA Manager, all staff[7] working in the PA should report to the same Manager, all equipment and resources of both the PA and of the Project should be pooled, and the role of Project Steering Committee at the site should be taken up by the PA Management Board.

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[7] Including all Rangers, Guards and any other personnel whose jobs are exclusively within the PA.

Such an approach will reduce the potential for conflict, enhance the management capacity for both the PA and the Project, and ensure sustainability when the Project comes to an end.

The Team was advised by MAAR that this merging of the Project with each of the three PAs has already started and has been the subject of a Ministerial decision. The Team feels that this is a priority.

3.1.2 Project Governance - the Project Steering Committee and Site Steering sub-Committees

The highest level of Project governance is the Project Steering Committee which has been renamed as the **Project Executive Committee (PEC)**[8] and its brief extended to give it a more active role in project implementation. The inclusion of two Ministers among the membership would seem a little too high at first sight. However, both have attended meetings and the PEC appears to be functioning well and effectively. It is recognized as the highest governance level for the project and it appears to have the necessary authority and power. It is playing a key role in setting policy for the project, monitoring project performance, providing guidance and directions to the NPD and other project stakeholders, and supporting UNDP which, as the GEF IA, has the ultimate accountability for delivery of project products and the administration of project funds.

The NPD considers the PEC as a valuable source of support and guidance to him personally, and very helpful to the PMU.

At local level, project governance is still weak because the **Site Steering sub-Committees (SSC)** are dysfunctional. As noted above, it is necessary to consider the Project and the Protected Area as one and the same entity and convert the SSCs into PA Management Boards or some such bodies for the protected areas themselves. Their membership needs to be reviewed to provide true representation of the communities that live and/or depend on the PAs for their livelihoods and existence. Such a participatory approach in PA management at local level is indeed Government policy and includes communities as well as other stakeholders.

The Evaluation Team detected some resistance to serious and meaningful sharing with communities in a partnership arrangement. This could be due to the recognition that involvement in PA management must be based on awareness and capacity so they can participate as equal partners. However, until there is true sharing of the decision-making (and responsibilities) for the PA management, Project site teams cannot expect to be successful and it is essential to start seeing the local communities not only as beneficiaries, but as joint-owners of the PAs. The best way to achieve this is to provide them with meaningful membership of the PA Management Board (previously the Site Steering sub-Committee) so they can assume a share of the responsibility for the hard decisions that need to be made in managing a PA.

3.1.3 Project resources

3.1.3.1 The physical premises and related facilities

Project management and implementation is in effect split between four units – the central Project Management Unit (PMU) located in Damascus in premises provided by the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (the General Commission for Environmental Affairs – GCEA) as part of the government in-kind contribution; and a local or site Management Office at each of Abu Qubeis, Fronloq and Jebel Abdul Aziz, in premises provided by the Forests Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Reform, also as part of the government in-kind contribution.

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[8] According to the Inception Report, the purpose of this change was to provide "a greater room for the committee to provide general guidance and support the Project activities by approving the detailed annual plans in addition to approving all project expenses within the annual budgets prepared by the Project administration team".

The **PMU** office in Damascus has been located within the MLAE office, unfortunately in a basement with no windows. However, MLAE is moving to better premises and the PMU office will move as well. It is hoped that this will also be a good opportunity to provide appropriate signage that identifies the Project and acknowledges the financial support of GEF and UNDP.

For a project such as this, spread out at four locations and with the important involvement of the MLAE, the MAAR and UNDP, effective communication is crucial, especially electronic communication. Unfortunately, the Project as a whole appears to be still struggling with this necessity. Offices are still using dial-up (and it is not available everywhere) which is slow and cumbersome and not able to handle large attachments efficiently. Unfortunately, this is the situation country-wide and is recognized as a barrier to implementation efficiency. The PMU has taken steps to rectify the situation but they have encountered some problems with the provider that has been selected.

The **Abu Qubeis** premises are located within a Government offices complex in Hama, but access did not seem to be restricted. It is readily identified by appropriate signage which acknowledges GEF and UNDP, both at the entrance to the complex as well as at the premises itself. It is a two-storey building of good standard. The ground floor comprises an open plan office with work stations for all staff and a good meeting table – it is roomy, bright and airy. In addition to the office space, it also has comfortable accommodation for visitors on an upper floor. The only missing feature is a counter, or simple table, or display stand to serve as a point of interaction with the public. The premises is also located some 15 minutes drive from the entrance to the PA and the Site Team has no presence inside the PA itself. While the project has been offered a building within the PA by the MAAR, its status is not clear (it is on land that is disputed as private) and its location, its imposing profile (built as a country mansion) and its design are inappropriate for a PA.

The **Fronloq** main premises are situated just inside one of the entrances to the Fronloq PA, but there is also a single room liaison office in the Forestry Department office in downtown Lattakia. The Fronloq premises is preceded by clear signage on the main road as well as near the building itself which clearly identifies both the PA and the Project, together with the support of UNDP and GEF for the latter. The premises, which are ideally situated, were purpose built as a centre for the PA with a large, circular display hall, a large meeting room and some offices, as well as accommodation for visiting specialists. Unfortunately, the office space available is not adequate and work stations for staff have been established in the display hall. If this building is confirmed as the office for the Project and the PA (and there is some concern about transport for staff from Lattakia) the Project proposes to partition the display hall into work stations. This is seen as a retrograde step by the Evaluation Team who would suggest that building an extension for additional office space at the back would be more appropriate. This would allow the display hall to be used for its original purpose and provide a point of interaction with the public.

The **Jebel Abdul Aziz** PA team also has two premises – one in downtown Hessakeh and another near the entrance to the PA. The downtown office, in a government block, is not distinguished by any signage and it comprises two rooms which cannot house all staff. The premises at the PA entrance, is well signed both at the road turn-off and on the building itself with acknowledgement of the UNDP and GEF support. It is a two-storey stone building with a high, prominent profile and not very appropriate for a PA. It has a large space at ground level which is being utilized to very good effect to display traditional handicrafts by the community and for some office space. On the upper level it has accommodation for visitors. The Site Manager, shared with the Team his idea of creating a "plant museum" or herbarium within the grounds of the building, comprising examples of the flora of the PA. This idea would be supported by the Evaluation Team if it is well planned and managed and utilized effectively as a learning facility. However, we are concerned about the water situation – it has to be trucked in regularly.

Vehicles provided by the project to the PMU and to each of the three site teams do not display any signage.

3.1.3.2 Project personnel

The **PMU in Damascus** comprises a Project Manager known as the National Project Director (NPD), a Project Technical Advisor (PTA), an Administrative Assistant, a Finance Assistant, and a Driver. The Administrative Assistant is female. The PMU has suffered from the resignation of the Deputy Project Manager and the Project Implementation and Monitoring Advisor (PIMA) who was on a part-time contract. Following a brief period of inactivity, it was decided to amalgamate the two vacant positions and the position of a full-time Project Technical Advisor was created. This is seen by the Evaluation Team as a positive development.

The unit is small, with a low key staff management style. All staff, at the PMU and at the PA sites consulted by the Team, confirmed that they are happy with the management style and that they have always received the full support, guidance and advice that they requested from the NPD. However, there appears to be a lack of confidence and strategic thinking and a reluctance to be incisive and take any risks. And maybe it was because of this weak capacity that the Project design led to the creation of a PMU which included "designated representatives from MLAE and MAAR" and this was enshrined in the MoU (clause 21) signed between MLAE and MAAR. Unfortunately, this seems to have backfired since it has constrained the NPD from exercising his judgement and initiative, prevented the building of capacity and slowed down the decision-making process. However, and in spite of all this, one consultee credited the NPD with being successful in maintaining "the delicate balance" between the two Ministries and being instrumental in the harmonious relationship current existing between MLAE and MAAR.

The Evaluation Team was advised that UNDP had offered PRINCE-2[9] for project management training but this had not been taken up. We believe that it would be beneficial, even at this stage, if this offer was renewed and taken up by all four Managers of the Project.

The Team believes that the PMU is currently functioning well with effective support from the NPC in particular. However, there are two perspectives to this issue and the Team recommends that following the PRINCE-2 training, the NPD could be afforded a bit more "space" to take initiatives, with advice and guidance being available from a "distance".

At **Site level**, the situation is variable among the three locations, but there are a lot of common features as well. At each site, the personnel are headed by a Site Manager who is on leave without pay from the Forestry Department and on the Project payroll. On the other hand, the other five or six members of staff are seconded on full pay from the Forestry Department. This arrangement has caused some to say that they feel they have two bosses and in fact they have reporting responsibilities to both the Site Manager and the Head of the Forestry Department in the local Governorate. But as the MAAR explained – these staff (except for the Site Managers) are technically still employees of MAAR (their salary is from MAAR) and therefore Government rules apply – this requires that administratively they respond to MAAR, even though technically they respond to the Project management. A further complaint is the fact that while their colleagues who are still in the Forestry Department can get compensation for overtime work, those who have joined the PA Project team allegedly do not. In response, the MAAR notes that Project staff have other incentives which more than compensate for any loss of overtime pay, and the Evaluation Team agrees.

The staff complement at site level is between 5 and 6 personnel in addition to the Site Manager. Typically, site personnel are meant to cover flora, fauna (mainly birds), ecotourism, GIS, public awareness, community liaison, SME and alternative income generation. In each of Abu Qubais and Jebel Abdul Aziz there are two women on staff, while at Fronloq there are three women. With one exception (a taxonomist), women are engaged in public, community, and alternative income activities.

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[9] PRINCE2 (PRojects IN Controlled Environments) is a process-based method for effective project management. See http://www.prince2.com/what-is-prince2.asp for details.

All staff with one exception reported that they get good management support and feedback but they also feel that there is little guidance and direction. In fact, the Site Managers as well as the staff are uncertain about the tasks that need to be carried out. When questioned by the Evaluation Team, most staff maintained that they have no job description and no basis for a "contract" on performance or delivery. The exceptions to this were the Site Managers who have job descriptions under their UNDP contract, and the recently recruited women members. The majority have no idea what they are meant to be doing and all they seem to have done in the past two years is training and more training. However, this is disputed by the NPC who advised the Team that a PA structure has been devised and approved by MAAR; and by the PTA who is adamant that he discussed job descriptions with all members of staff at each of the three sites during a recent visit!

The Team has grappled with this conundrum and we are still of the opinion that the majority of staff are not aware of what their job entails, and we are certain that this is not the result of language confusion in understanding the question. We conclude that regardless of whether job descriptions exist or not, they are absolutely essential; and if they do not exist, then it is a responsibility of the Site Managers, guided by the NPD, to develop a work plan of some sort (ideally a Management Plan and an Annual Operational Plan), determine what needs to be done by staff, and produce job descriptions as guidance to staff and as a basis for performance assessment.

When asked what are the major barriers that might be hindering them in performing their duties (if they only knew what those duties were), almost all staff mentioned the need for more training and capacity, and the difficulties they have with transport[10]. Also mentioned were equipment (including satellite imagery, survey equipment) and gaining the trust of local communities.

The Evaluation Team is concerned by the apparent fixation on "training" for the staff with little or no apparent benefits to date, and can only conclude that either the training was ineffective or it was the wrong sort of training, otherwise they would not all, without exception, be clamouring for more training. A new approach to this conundrum is being planned by the PTA in the form of "vocational training" or active training on the job. This will go a long way to filling this obvious gap but the Team believes that what staff need most is probably not training but a clear description of their duties and some direction on how these are to be carried out – they can then be invited to draw up their own work plan including an identification of specific training needs.

Another common feature for all three sites is the distinction that seems to be made between the Project team and the Protected Area and this has already been alluded to above. The project staff constitute the core technical staff for the PA. However, there are Ranger Stations within the PAs, each with four or more Rangers and each Ranger has a staff of five or more Guards. The Rangers and Guards, who are more involved in day-to-day management of the PA than Project staff, report to the Head of Forestry in the Local Government set-up and this creates a schism within the PA management structure. Ideally they should be part of the PA personnel reporting to one PA Manager. As discussed above, this has been recognized by the two ministries and will be addressed in the near future.

The above characteristics and problems are shared by all three sites, but there are also some specific differences.

For example, in **Abu Qubeis** and in **Fronloq,** the Team was impressed by the keenness and high morale of the staff. They are definitely operating as a team and they are enthusiastic and motivated. We believe that given the right set of tasks and clear direction, these two teams can be expected to achieve.

However, we are concerned about the situation in **Jebel Abdul Aziz.** With the exception of the two women staff members who have been recruited only recently, there is little enthusiasm among the staff and none of the motivation we saw at the other two sites.

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[10] Both issues are well-known to PMU and MAAR and plans are in hand to address both. Training and capacity will be addressed through "vocational" type training which is planned; transport will be improved to the levels that prevailed before the recent expansion of staff numbers.

The Evaluation Team wishes to repeat its recommendation above that all three Site Managers should undergo the PRINCE-2 training in project management[11].

3.1.4 The role of Government

The Government, through its Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (the General Commission on Environmental Affairs) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, displays strong ownership of the project which starts at the level of both Ministers. This is definitely a project of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Through the two ministries, the Government continues to make a significant contribution to the Project. The contribution includes co-financing (through the UNDP Programme Cost Sharing) to a total of $500,000. It also includes a significant contribution in kind which ranges from staff salaries, to premises, and even fuel for running of the Project vehicles.

As Implementing Agency for the Project, the MLAE is carrying out its functions effectively as agreed in the MoU with the MAAR which is doing the same but in its capacity as Executing Agency. This distinction in roles for the two organizations does not stop at the Project level – MLAE focuses on PA policy nationwide and MAAR has the operational responsibility for PAs[12]. Such a dual model for PA administration and management is not uncommon and there are advantages and disadvantages to both this approach and the alternative which combines policy and operations in one organization. As noted below, national policies for the PA system in Syria are still being developed and are not thought to have been unduly constrained by this set up and complementary mandates. The Team was advised that further collaboration between the two ministries will be enhanced through the creation of a task force comprising decision-makers from both MAAR and MLAE, and supported technically by the PMU. The task force will assess and analyze the gaps and aim for an effective organizational structure which will be sustainable beyond the end of the Project.

From the Project's perspective, the MLAE is playing an influential role at the upstream level which includes facilitation of strategies, policy and legislation for protected areas. It is also providing the necessary guidance to project management.

MAAR is involved more at the implementation level of the Project on a day-to-day basis. All the staff of the Project at site level, from the Site Manager down, are current MAAR employees. While they may have different engagement conditions, they are all from within the MAAR staff. MAAR has also provided the bulk of the office space and other physical requirements for each of the site teams.

Both MLAE and MAAR are members of the Project Executive Committee and as such are among the key stakeholders of the Project. However, both Ministries are also among the beneficiaries of the Project and are expected to gain significantly in their respective capacities to administer and manage PAs effectively.

3.1.5 The role of UNDP

As Implementing Agency for GEF, UNDP is responsible to the GEF for the timely and cost-effective delivery of the agreed project outputs and it achieves this through its understanding with the Government. UNDP has an obligation to ensure accountability, and its efforts in this respect are spearheaded by the Country Office which has legal responsibility for the GEF funds.

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[11] In view of their lack of fluency in English (and PRINCE-2 is in English), It is necessary to precede this either with a crash course in English language, or translation of PRINCE-2 into Arabic.

[12] The PA system in Syria is not under one administration. While the PAs in forests, deserts and steppe are under the MAAR jurisdiction, wetlands and coastal and marine areas are not.

UNDP has also made a significant contribution, in cash, to the project budget through its TRAC resources.

The UNDP Resident Representative in Syria may approve, following consultation and agreement with the UNDP/GEF Regional Office and the Government signatories to the project document, revisions or additions to any of the annexes of the ProDoc, revisions which do not involve significant changes in the outcomes, outputs or activities of the project, and mandatory annual revisions which re-phase the delivery of agreed project inputs or increased expert or other costs due to inflation or to take into account agency expenditure flexibility. The UNDP Resident Representative also co-chairs the Annual Tripartite Review, coordinates inputs into the annual Project Implementation Review (PIR) for submission to UNDP/GEF, ensures that project objectives are advanced through the policy dialogue with the Government and undertakes official transmission of reports to the national GEF Operational Focal Point.

The work of the UNDP Country Office is supported by the UNDP/GEF Regional Coordination Office, which also provides coordination within the whole UNDP/GEF portfolio of projects for the region. More specifically, the UNDP/GEF Regional Office provides technical support to the UNDP Country Office and the Government GEF Operational Focal Point, assists the executing agency with the recruitment of senior project personnel, approves the project inception report and terminal reports, reviews budget revisions prior to signature, follows up closely on implementation progress, assures the eligibility of project interventions in light of GEF policy guidance and approved project design, represents UNDP/GEF on the PSC/PEC, and approves Annual Project Implementation Reports, including performance ratings, for submission to GEF.

As is accepted practice, UNDP receives a fee aimed at reimbursing the costs of project development and supervision, and for monitoring project implementation.

The Country Office has attempted to balance its responsibilities as outlined above with the delegation of responsibility that is implied in the NEX modality. UNDP has provided support and backstopping to the project by training project staff in NEX administration procedures and monitored Project performance through regular field visits, participation in the PEC meetings and contributions to the mandatory annual reporting tasks.

3.2   Financial management

3.2.1 Overall observations

According to the Project Document, the original budget amounted to **$4,291,850** (without the Government in-kind contribution which is estimated to amount to $2,407,000). Of this, the GEF cash contribution is $3,291,850 and the UNDP cash contribution is $1,000,000 (including $500,000 through its Programme Cost Sharing). Identifiable allocations of the cash per Outcome were as follows:

Outcome 1	$1,078,000 for enabling environment and capacity building
Outcome 2	$1,117,000 for PA management and capacity building
Outcome 3	$ 756,000 for community work
M&E	$ 152,000

This comes to a total of $3,103,000 and the other $1,188,000 is presumed to be for Project Management, Facilities and Administration (5%) and GEF Cost Sharing (3%). If this is indeed the case, this amount which is close to 25% of the Project budget, is somewhat high. On the other hand, the allocation for Outcome 3 (18% of the budget) which has a focus on community work, seems a bit low in comparison to the other allocations.

The PMU was unable to provide the Team with the latest total budget on an Outcomes basis and these were kindly provided by UNDP. However, a direct comparison with the original allocations as in the ProDoc cannot be made since project management expenses are included within the allocations per Outcome which also comprise the contributions of GEF, UNDP and MLAE[13].

These latest allocations per Outcome are as follows:

        Outcome 1 $1,567,650
        Outcome 2 $1,624,200
        Outcome 3 $1,100,000

The total is now exactly $4,291,850. However, when the identifiable contributions of UNDP ($713,443) and MLAE ($491,000) are deducted, the GEF contribution appears to be $3,087,407, instead of the expected $3,291,850. No doubt there is an explanation for this apparent imprecision, but this is not a task of the MTE.

Taking a different approach, the allocations in the ProDoc according to budget line, of which there are eight, make a total of $6,668,710 which presumably includes the Government in-kind contribution. The largest budget line is for "Contracts-Companies" and makes up over 30% of the entire budget. When this line is added to budget lines for "International and Local Consultants", "Contracts-Individual" and "Professional Services", the total amount is $3,604,824, and the question arises – What are the Project staff doing in terms of Outcomes and Outputs, if the input required from external experts and contracts is so high and extensive? Are the Project "staff" simply beneficiaries and not staff at all?

In this connection, the Team has some questions about the awarding of two contracts which are due soon, namely the $297,600 contract under Outcome 2 and the $125,000 contract under Outcome 3. The Team has been advised by the PMU that these two comprehensive contracts were redesigned after a lot of thought by combining a number of smaller contracts and approved by all stakeholders. But the Team wonders if this change was for the better.

The Team accepts that the contractual services contractors (companies, NGOs, etc) are meant to recruit a high level of expertise, including international and regional expertise. It is also accepted that the contract will include the cost of the consultancy, reporting, training workshops and other key outputs. However, on examining the ToRs for the contract under Outcome 2, the Team finds no reference to the need to work with counterparts from within the Project staff; no justification for the 4-year timescale; the deliverables are mainly reports, etc. The Team also wonders about the risk associated with awarding the varied tasks envisaged in the ToRs to one single contractor (even if it is a company) under one single contract. We also question the wisdom of something like a PA Management Plan being prepared by an "outsider" to the Project or the PA.

The size of these contracts makes them feel like a project within a project, with their own manager and staff, a large budget and full and total financial delegation. There is a serious risk that the Site Managers (and maybe even the NPD) will be effectively sidelined completely by whoever wins the contract.

3.2.2 The disbursement process

The disbursement process is managed by UNDP and, according to an agreement reached with the Government, while UNDP rules are followed, they are subject to the final sanction by Government. Expenditures are approved at the time the AWP or 6-monthly WP is approved by the PEC. However, there seems to be a need for further approval (by the implementing agencies - UNDP, MLAE and MAAR) when it comes to actual disbursement.

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[13] This is presumably part of the revised UNDP contribution which is now covered through Programme Cost Sharing – see Section 3.2.3 below.

Site Managers in particular were adamant that the disbursement process is slower than it should be and they gave settling consultancy fees as an example (even though they are not directly involved in this). The slow disbursement process may have contributed to the low delivery rate (which is certainly influenced by other factors as well). According to the AWPs and the Combined Delivery Report (CDR), and as summarized in Table 2 below, the delivery rate for 2006 was merely 41% of forecast and while in 2007 it was much better, it was still only 64%. If an improved disbursement process can lead to any improvement in the delivery rate, it might be worth attempting.

Table 2. Project financial disbursement for the last two years

YEAR	PLANNED BUDGET	EXPENDITURES	DISBURSEMENT %
2006	536,250	221,858	41
2007	568,350	366,764	64

There is confusion regarding the intended use of the petty cash float and the role of advance payments.

The use of the advance payments system is not well known or understood among Project staff and it is not used as it should be. If the PMU could plan ahead sufficiently and send in requests for advance payment in good time, UNDP will have enough time to process the request and no inordinate delays should ensue.

One of the main areas of contention in Project financial management is the petty cash scheme. At the PMU level, the limit of financial delegation is allegedly the $500 petty cash float which must be finished and accounted for before it can be replenished. This is interpreted by some as a lack of delegation and almost a lack of trust. However, if used for its intended purpose of petty expenses, the current level of $500 is seen as adequate by the Team and the only improvement that the Team can see is in the timing of the replenishment. We feel that replenishment should be available when, say $400 have been spent. After accounting for the $400 expenditure, the petty cash float should be topped up again to $500, to make sure that the Project does not run out of petty cash.

Some additional difficulties are created by the UNDP financial management system (ATLAS) which has been adopted globally. ATLAS uses budget categories that do not always match Project budget lines and which at times lack transparency. The ATLAS system is also not available electronically to the Project Manager or the Project Financial Assistant, not even for query and balances, except in the form of an Excel spreadsheet on request. The Team wonders if a solution to this not uncommon problem is to provide guidance to project formulators (and implementers) so project budgets can be structured along the same lines as the ATLAS budget.

All spoken to by the Evaluation Team (except UNDP), see the need for more flexibility in financial management, a higher level of delegation, and a more streamlined system. In the consultees' opinion, this is necessary for a complex project such as this one, ranging over four locations and they maintain that this will become essential when the micro-finance system is set up and is running. In this connection, it was suggested that UNDP could precipitate a sharing of experiences between programmes and projects, particularly those with similar activities such as micro-finance schemes. The Team was advised by UNDP that such an opportunity was indeed organized some time ago and suggests that a repetition would be of significant help.

The Evaluation Team gained the impression that financial arrangements and roles and responsibilities are not well understood by all. Many see the system as cumbersome and lacking delegation – but in general the system seems the same as that applied successfully by UNDP elsewhere. The Team concluded that the irritations caused by aspects of the financial management system are affecting the project implementation. We recommend that there is a need for some

further training of Project staff, particularly the Site Managers, by UNDP, on the financial management procedures of the Project, and that this training should be a regular occurrence, at least annually.

3.2.3 Co-financing

According to the ProDoc the original co-financing by UNDP from TRAC funds was US$1,000,000. However, the PEC at its second meeting decided to redistribute this amount. This was necessary due to the substantial payments that had to be made in local currency, and as a result the UNDP contribution was revised to become $500,000 from TRAC and $500,000 from Programme Cost Sharing. It would seem from the latest budget spreadsheet provided by UNDP that the Cost Sharing co-financing ($491,000 from the Syrian Government) has been earmarked for project management costs associated with Outcome 2 and Outcome 3; whereas the UNDP TRAC contribution is budgeted for Activity 3.3 Alternative Livelihood activities. These funds are being made available as scheduled.

The government contribution in kind and in cash equivalent was estimated as US$2,407,000. This contribution was evident to the Team especially in the form of substantial premises, office space and furnishings made available to the Project as well as the salaries of all Project site staff except for the Site Managers. In addition, the Government is also covering substantial running costs including the cost of fuel for the Project vehicles. This contribution comprises 36% of the total budget of the project and the project could not have survived without it.

3.3 Stakeholder participation and ownership

3.3.1 Participation at the project formulation phase

The ProDoc makes no reference to stakeholder or communities participation during the project formulation phase. However, the Project Brief refers to the PDF 'B' Phase and provides some detail on the consultations carried out. Unfortunately, they seem to be virtually restricted to officials from central and local Government levels. There is also little or no disaggregation of the data and the information seemed to flow only in one direction. For example: "*Site-level forestry department officials and local inhabitants were again consulted, this time at length, during the preparation of site profiles. During this process, a team of eight national consultants spent several weeks at the sites, gathering information for their sectoral reports. These consultations were essential for gaining a better view of what was happening at each site.*" This is not really consultation, but more information gathering and it does not seem to have involved the communities.

The Evaluation Team is saddened by this lack of real consultation with grassroots stakeholders and beneficiaries – they never knew what the Project was proposing and they allowed their fears to run away with them. We were told by community members that they had been very fearful of the Project initially because they had heard that they may be evacuated from their villages. Others told us that they were afraid that wild African animals were going to be introduced into the PA to convert it into a sort of safari park.

This lack of meaningful consultation, with no transparent or open discussion and no real information flowing in both directions, has made the task of the Project implementation teams that much harder.

3.3.2 Participation during the implementation phase

The Project Brief pledges that "*Stakeholder participation during project implementation will be ensured through a number of mechanisms*", and it then describes two – the Advisory Committees of

Direct Resource Users, and the Sub-Steering Committees. The Project Brief also mentions the need to set up a Monitoring Committee so as to determine whether *"these programs are having a positive or negative impact on the community"*. This is admirable if it were not for the patronizing attitude implied by the statement in the same paragraph - *"Local stakeholders have been purposely excluded from this committee due to the need for objective analysis"* (= we know best what is good for them). In the event, the Monitoring Committees do not seem to have materialized and the Advisory Committees of Direct Resource Users were not established either. The only input from local communities seems to be through the Site Steering sub-Committees which have replaced both the Advisory Committees of Direct Resource Users and the Sub-Steering Committees and, as noted above, have not been functional.

In other words, while some Project staff have done their best to try and build bridges with the local communities and while it is gratifying to see the rapport that has been established between some staff members and individuals within the community, their efforts have not been well planned, and have not been very successful. Fears, mainly fears of the unknown, still plague the communities; they have little or no understanding of what the Project is all about; and their expectations have been raised to unrealistic levels by the erroneous impression that this Project will solve all their social welfare problems.

The Team does not think that these difficulties with engaging communities are restricted to this project. The situation in Syria is reasonably well known and the risk was identified in the ProDoc. However, the necessary experience to address this risk was not recruited into the implementation teams[14] which, in spite of their genuine efforts, have yet to create the trust and participation by the communities, which is essential for the Project's success.

3.3.2.1   Community in Abu Qubeis

At Abu Qubeis we meet with 11 persons representing the communities of Birat Al-Jabal and Al-Mazra. There were two women among the community members.

The local community are well aware that there is a Project to protect the land that has been declared a protected area around them – they have lived here for generations. However, they are totally unaware of the objectives of the Project and unclear of their relationship with the Project or the PA. They are totally oblivious to the concept of ecosystem approach and that they are part of the ecosystem; they are also not too sensitive to the concept of sustainability. They are concerned about their needs for firewood, grazing and food which are currently provided by the PA, and which may be curtailed without an alternative. Incentives and compensation were also mentioned often. They have little appreciation that this is a biodiversity Project which will be addressing their social welfare needs only as a means of achieving biodiversity conservation through PAs.

The local Steering Sub-Committee is not effective, and does not provide an avenue for community input to Project and PA management. The community members expressed concern that their representatives on the Committee would be overwhelmed by the greater numbers of Government officials if it came to a vote. They asked for site meetings at village level with Project management and are prepared to participate as equal partners. The Evaluation Team felt that these people were genuinely concerned, but that a full explanation of the Project and PA objectives would allay most of that fear. If treated as equal partners, the Abu Qubeis community appear likely to respond positively to what the Project is trying to do.

3.3.2.2   Communities in Fronloq

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[14] Only within the past 3-4 months have the site teams filled the positions of "Community Liaison", "Public Awareness", "Public Education", etc, almost three years after project start. None of the new appointees have any background or experience in public participation and expect to be trained, from naught.

At Fronloq the Evaluation Team met with 33 community members representing five villages in three separate meetings at Etaira Village, Durra Village and Al-Mazra Village. There were three women at the meeting at Durra Village and they participate actively in the discussion. We also met with a representative of the Women's Union who is also a member of the Site Steering sub-Committee. The Team was advised by the Project Team that some of the community members we met were absent from their community for most of the year and come back only during the summer. This could have resulted in them knowing less about the Project than if they had been more permanent residents.

Although the Evaluation Team noted the lack of awareness of the Project among the community, we could not but admire the good rapport that members of staff have with the local community members. Unfortunately, this does not seem to translate into knowledge of the project objective, its targets, where the communities fit in, why is there a project, etc. Even community members who took part in the study tour of Dana Protected Area in Jordan appear to have missed the reason why PAs exist – the Project will need to go back to square one with these communities and explain in a transparent manner what the Project is all about.

For the community, their daily problems are paramount and they are concerned, for example, that they may lose their source of firewood. The same misconception that this is a social development project ready to disburse money and provide facilities, was evident here as in other villages. This misconception could be corrected through the involvement of local community members in decision-making and implementation of the project activities. They need to be part of the Site Steering sub-Committee, or its successor, but the Committee is currently inactive and lacks good representation from the local community. It has only met twice (once in Damascus) and the deputy chair was not even aware of the meetings – this is not the way to inspire confidence and trust in the Project and the PA.

Once again, the Evaluation Team is optimistic that if approached well and in a transparent manner, the communities in Fronloq will respond positively to the concept of a PA of which they are joint owners.

3.3.2.3 Communities in Jebel Abdul Aziz

In Jebel Abdul Aziz the Evaluation Team met with 22 community members in two meetings. The meeting at Seba Aslam Village had representatives from four villages. The meeting at Mdeynah Village had representatives from two villages. Two women participated fully at the Seba Aslam meeting; there were no women at the Mdeynah meeting.

The differences between these two localities were very marked. One was a little reserved but not conservative; women participated fully and in fact a local woman community leader had just clinched a GEF SGP Project and this created the other big difference from the other meeting. At the first meeting, the mood can be described as wary and a bit hesitant, but positive – they were still buzzing at the news of the SGP Project success. The second meeting (in a more conservative setting without women present) can best be described as polite, but very cynical and the Project will need to do something positive and tangible, urgently, to avoid losing this community. They were even sceptical of the efforts of one of their leaders who had travelled to Damascus in search of a SGP Project and returned empty-handed. The power of incentives cannot be overestimated.

The priority among these communities is employment, but they also mention firewood, grazing and medicinal plants for which they rely on the PA. They are also concerned about the lack of water (Hessakeh Governorate is experiencing a serious drought at the moment) and the high fire risk.

When asked if they are ready to cooperate on a partnership basis in the management of the PA, their reply was positive. And they still confirmed this when told that partnership meant sharing of the problems and worries, as well as the benefits.

The Evaluation Team believes that the proposal from Mdeynah which did not gain SGP support, should be investigated fully. A business plan should be drawn up and if it is seen as viable (which is expected), the Project could help the community find the necessary support in the shape of a small low interest loan. The community is proposing to set up a communal bakery which will run on fuel oil. While it remains to be seen whether total carbon emissions will be reduced, it will certainly reduce the reliance on firewood for cooking, and therefore is in harmony with the objectives of the Project.

If the Project can assist Mdeynah community in its quest for a bakery (as long as it is commercially viable), the Evaluation Team is confident that the Jebel Abdul Aziz communities will support the Project and its aims.

3.4   Monitoring and evaluation

3.4.1   Project performance monitoring and adaptive management

Performance monitoring as carried out by the Project to date is not effective. While it may satisfy the bare essentials of the GEF, it is mainly mechanical, not analytical, and there is no evaluation. The situation is not helped by the weak SRF and the difficult Indicators. Quarterly Reports do assess progress, but little is said about the constraints encountered, the lessons that could be learnt or the follow-up action that is needed. The Evaluation Team believes that it is not enough to monitor – management must do something with the results of monitoring.

The Project Brief sets up two sets of indicators for monitoring project performance – process indicators and impact indicators and the following table of process indicators is taken from the Project Brief with the addition of comments from the Evaluation Team.

Table 3.   Process indicators to be monitored under M&E programme according to Project Brief

BY END OF YEAR	INDICATOR	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	EVALUATION TEAM COMMENTS AND RATING ON PROGRESS
2	A detailed and agreed set of streamlined national institutional arrangements describing the functions of all units and agencies involved in PA management and clarifying their respective roles and mechanisms of co-operation	National policy statement	The Team is not aware of the existence of such an explicit strategic statement and although cooperation between agencies has improved greatly, a formal policy statement from high Government levels would provide a clearer picture. Unsatisfactory
4	Relevant HQ units possess a critical mass of trained staff able to effectively manage the overall PA system, including oversight of individual PAs	Project reporting	A needs assessment has been carried out and some training undertaken; but a lot still needs to be done before the "critical mass of trained staff" mentioned in the Indicator, becomes a serious possibility. Moderately Satisfactory
7	MAAR has developed and is implementing a comprehensive set of HQ-based activities aimed at managing and extending PAs within forest areas and other dryland ecosystems (rangelands)	Project reporting: mid-term and final evaluations	Although not targeted until the end of the Project, these two targets have not progressed far and the mechanism for their implementation is still missing. One of the first steps in this direction could be a national forum where those responsible for protected areas of forest and rangeland, protected wetlands and protected coastal and marine areas, can get together to achieve a nation-wide, comprehensive approach. It is also worth noting that simply extending the PA system is not necessarily useful. Unsatisfactory
7	MLAE is implementing a system for inter-sectoral co-ordination through which it is able to closely monitor and provide direction to other ministries to ensure that the national system of PAs plays a visible role in achieving national biodiversity conservation and	Project reporting: mid-term and final evaluations	

	sustainable development objectives		
4	Local cadres and managers at project sites are trained in ecosystem-based management and have been exposed to examples of international best practices	Project reporting	This is an on-going activity which is still at a very early stage at each of the three sites. The only international exposure has been in Jordan and this is considered as somewhat limited. Moderately Satisfactory
2	Baseline monitoring reports on biodiversity dynamics and natural resource management are available for each project site	Project reporting	The Team has not sighted these reports which are considered essential monitoring tools as well as the basis for adaptive management of the PAs. Unsatisfactory
2	Integrated management plans are agreed at each site. Plans may be updated annually on a rolling basis thereafter	Site management plans	No Management Plans have been prepared to date and this is considered one of the major barriers to project success. Unsatisfactory
5	Management actions are being implemented in accordance with management plans	Site management plans; monitoring reports prepared by SMs	Without Management Plans this indicator cannot be satisfied. However the question arises – if Management Plans were expected to become available at the end of Year 2, why wait until end of Year 5 before they are implemented? Unsatisfactory
4	Examples of participatory management mechanisms and stakeholder feedback systems are incorporated into management plans and operations.	Management plans and operational policies; feedback from local stakeholders, management committees and community consultations	Similar comment as above – no Plans available and why wait two years to incorporate participatory management? Unsatisfactory
7	75% of rural and Bedouin communities have been involved in sustainable use of natural resources in the 3 sites	Reports measuring local stakeholder participation in the project	The indicator is very vague and difficult to measure. And, why wait until the end of the Project? Unsatisfactory

As can be seen from the table, the Evaluation Team is concerned by the weak progress achieved by the Project towards the process indicators. Out of ten indicators, progress is deemed to have been Unsatisfactory for eight, with the other two scoring Moderately Satisfactory. The most serious of these is the lack of progress towards a Management Plan in each PA which was meant to become available by the end of Year 2.

While it is acknowledged that the Site Teams do have annual operational plans, these are no substitute for the strategic and policy document normally expected in a Management Plan. This worrying situation is compounded by the fact that most if not all project personnel do not have job descriptions (or are unaware that they have), have no capacity or capabilities for the position they have been assigned and are existing in a total vacuum with no personal work plans and no direction or guidance.

Overall progress as measured by the process indicators set up by the Project Brief is considered to be Unsatisfactory as there are major shortcomings in the achievement of the project outcomes.

However, the Evaluation Team must record that the Project appears poised for a great leap forward through the operationalization of the plans and ideas brought by the new PTA. Most, if not all the above indicators can be expected to show significant progress in the next two quarters. A lot rests on the PTA's shoulders (as the technical member of the PMU). He would increase his chances of success if the adaptive management approach (as discussed in the Workshop delivered by the Evaluation Team) is applied whereby new predictions are made, new management approaches designed, and new options tested following thorough analysis of the results of monitoring.

3.4.2 The Strategic Results Framework

The Strategic Results Framework (SRF), which replaced the former Logical Framework Matrix, is recognized as the paramount tool for measuring project performance and progress towards targets. It is also an excellent tool for adaptive management. The SRF is not intended to be a static summary of the project strategy, and its continuing revision, updating and refinement is a manifestation of adaptive management.

The Project SRF was revised six times in the first few months of the Project with the latest version becoming available in June 2006 (and it has remained static ever since) although there is some uncertainty regarding its formal approval. However, the revisions are less about adaptive management and more about the weaknesses of the original SRF and the adoption of new approaches to structuring the SRF. Following are comments from the Evaluation Team on each of the SRF hierarchical elements.

The Overall Objective became known as the Project Goal but there was no change in the wording. It is a lofty statement which, quite rightly, creates the context for the Project. As a Goal, it is somewhat extravagant in its choice of language, but changing the Goal is not an option, and indeed there is no need.

The Project Purpose has been renamed as Project Objective but the wording has not changed. It is somewhat verbose and unnecessarily complicated and it could be rewritten simply as: *Effective PA management balancing biodiversity conservation with the interests of local communities*. However, changing the Objective is not an option either and among all the words, the message is reasonably clear.

The next level comprises the Outcomes which are also somewhat wordy but if trimmed down to their essential focus they form a strong tripod on which to base the Protected Areas System for Syria – 1) an enabling environment of policies and institutions at national level, 2) management plans at individual PA level, and 3) an active role for communities while safeguarding their livelihoods. The wording of the Outcomes could have been tighter, but as this is not critical and there is no need for change.

As noted above, the Indicators have changed – some have been omitted, new ones added and the wording has changed for all that remain. In addition, Baselines and Targets have been added to the more recent version of the SRF. These changes were made in an effort to fit in with more recent SRF structural elements as well as to provide a useful tool for Project management. The transformation from the old to the new SRF has not been easy for the Project team and stakeholders and the result is less than satisfactory because it is not as helpful as it could be.

The table below, compares the Indicators from the original SRF with the new ones of June 2006.

Table 4.   Comparison of the Indicators from the original SRF to those from the June 2006 revision

PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	
	From Annex B of the original Project Brief	From LogFrame 6th Revision of 05 June 2006
Objective: To demonstrate practical methods of protected area management that effectively conserve biodiversity and protect the interest of local communities while supporting the	Overall human footprint within demonstration PAs, as defined by an impact reduction index to be developed under biodiversity monitoring programme, is measured annually and reduced 25% by Year 3 and 50% by end of project.	Change in overall human footprint within demonstration PAs, as defined by an impact reduction index.
	Species-specific surveys indicate at least 25% recovery in populations of target globally significant species by end of project	
	40% of local communities involved in sustainable use of the natural resources in the 3 sites by end of the project	Level of local communities involvement in sustainable use of the natural resources in

		the 3 sites
consolidation of an enabling environment that will facilitate replication and effective PA management throughout the country	50% increase in ecosystem integrity by end of the project and 50% decrease in level of threats	Level of increase in ecosystem integrity
	At national level, 40% increase in land area under PA status by end of project	Increase in land area under PA status "at least in one new site". (Added in 2007 – Consider reduction in the size in hand. - Limit indicator to new areas initiated by the project. - Consider Cedar and Fir Reserve. - Review feasibility of three existing sites. No specific.
		Level of development in PA related national policies and legislations supporting effective and collaborative approaches
Outcome 1: Policies and institutional systems that allow for the wise selection and effective operation of protected areas to conserve globally significant biodiversity	By end of Year 2, a detailed and agreed set of streamlined national institutional arrangements describing the functions of all units and agencies involved in PA management and clarifying their respective roles and mechanisms of co-operation	Level of effectiveness of the national institutional arrangements in relation to PA planning and management supported by sound policies and legislations
	By end of Year 4, relevant HQ units possess a critical mass of trained staff able to effectively manage the overall PA system, including oversight of individual PAs	Level of capacity of MAAR and MLAE to effectively manage the overall PA system
	By end of project, MAAR has developed and is implementing a comprehensive set of HQ-based activities aimed at managing and extending PAs within forest areas and other dryland ecosystems (rangelands)	Level of MAAR's capacity to effectively manage and extend PAs within forest areas and other dryland ecosystems
	By end of project, MLAE is implementing a system for inter-sectoral co-ordination through which it is able to closely monitor and provide direction to other ministries to ensure that the national system of PAs plays a visible role in achieving national biodiversity conservation and sustainable development objectives	Level of MLAE's capacity to ensure that the national system of PAs is well integrated in the national biodiversity conservation and sustainable development objectives
Outcome 2: Effective techniques for PA management and biodiversity conservation have been demonstrated through the design and implementation of management plans at three sites	By end of Year 4, local cadres and managers at project sites are trained in ecosystem-based management and have been exposed to examples of international best practices	Level of effectiveness of local cadres and managers at project sites in ecosystem-based management
	By end of Year 2, baseline monitoring reports on biodiversity dynamics and natural resource management are available for each project site	Level of effectiveness of all monitoring programs related to biodiversity dynamics and natural resource management
	By end of Year 2, integrated management plans are agreed at each site. Plans may be updated annually on a rolling basis thereafter	Level of completeness and effectiveness of site management plans (METTS
	Management actions are implemented in accordance with management plans	Level of implementation of management plans actions (METTS)
		Level of PA management effectiveness on the medium and long terms
		Level of government budgetary support for the implementation of the sites management plans
Outcome 3: Sustainable use of natural resources in and around protected areas has been demonstrated through the development and implementation of a programme for alternative sustainable livelihoods and community resource management	Examples of participatory management mechanisms and stakeholder feedback systems are incorporated into management plans and operations.	Level of integration of participatory management mechanisms and stakeholder within site management plans
	40% of rural and Bedouin communities involved in sustainable use of the natural resources in the 3 sites by end of the project	% of local community involvement in sustainable use of natural resources in the three sites

Because of their reliance on the Baseline and Targets, the new Indicators are not necessarily an improvement on the original ones. In fact, the new Indicators on their own are not very meaningful – they are best described as indicators of indicators. If the S.M.A.R.T. yardstick is applied to them, many are not Specific enough on their own, they are not Measurable without the Targets and neither can it be determined whether they are Achievable, Realistic or Timely unless one goes to the Targets.

The Evaluation Team supports the inclusion of the Baseline in the SRF as a departure point for monitoring progress towards the Objective and Outcomes and their Indicators. However, we submit that a Targets column is often unnecessary because they could easily be incorporated in the wording of the Indicator, making it more meaningful in the process.

The Team recommends to Project management and the key stakeholders to organize a one-day workshop on the SRF, facilitated by the PTA, and using the approach demonstrated at the Final Session of the Adaptive Management Workshop by the Evaluation Team. The aim of such a Workshop would be to produce a useful SRF with SMART Indicators as a basis for monitoring and adaptive management.

3.4.3 Ecosystem monitoring (the METT)

The three PAs were submitted to the METT[15] analysis at the beginning of the project in 2006. As part of this evaluation the analysis was repeated in 2008. The results of the analysis are collated into a somewhat long tabulation and in the case of this Project this is even more substantial since three PAs are involved.

It was the intention of the Evaluation Team to produce a comprehensive table (some 25 pages long) showing the ratings achieved in the 2006 analysis against the 2008 analysis and this juxtaposition was to be commented on by the Team. Unfortunately, this exercise was not possible due to the state of the electronic file – the template used by the project has some glitches and it was not possible to rectify these sufficiently for our purpose. The Team therefore decided to forgo the comparison between the ratings of 2006 and 2008 and focus on the latest METT analysis for each of the three PAs in the light of our consultations and findings. Our comments are below and they should be read with reference to the METT report for 2008 produced by the Project team and found in Annex 5.

3.4.3.1 Jebel Abdul Aziz Protected Area

The analysis for Jebel Abdul Aziz Protected Area (26,604 ha) was carried out by Sami Tarabieh, Adnan Saad, Ziad Jebawi, Omar Zourek, Akram Darwish, Riad Tarko, and Ali Khalouf. The PA is described as "Arid Mediterranean of cool variant with a continental dominance" and is expected to be designated as a National Park. It has a permanent staff of 64 (nine Rangers and 55 guards) and 82 temporary staff (six rangers, 75 guards and one driver). There are two objectives for the PA:
• To conserve the characteristic habitats and species while restoring the degraded representative habitats where necessary
• To develop a range of alternative sustainable livelihoods for the local communities

The two main threats are overgrazing (mainly by goats) and illegal hunting; and the two critical management activities are – control of overgrazing and afforestation currently on the periphery *(Pistacia* spp and *Pinus* spp*)*.

The analysis correctly noted that the PA has been gazetted and that there are some problems with controlling inappropriate land use. However, the Team disagrees with the analysis that "The staff have acceptable capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations". We feel that it would have been more appropriate to select "There are major deficiencies in staff capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations".

The Team agrees with the analysis regarding the PA objectives and the boundaries, but feels that it would have been more appropriate to state that "There is no management plan for the protected area". On the

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[15] Tracking Tool for GEF Biodiversity Focal Area Strategic Priority One: Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems at National Levels, derived from the "World Bank/WWF Alliance for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Use Site-Level Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) for Protected Areas"

other hand we agree that "A regular work plan exists but activities are not monitored against the plan's targets", that "Information on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area is not sufficient to support planning and decision-making" and that "There is some ad hoc survey and research work".

The Team does not agree with the analysis that "Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values are known". We also believe that it would be more accurate to say that "Staff numbers are inadequate for critical management activities" and that "Problems with personnel management constrain the achievement of major management objectives". We agree that "Staff training and skills are low relative to the needs of the protected area".

Since the analysis stated that "Budget is part of the general budget allocated at provincial level" it would have been more accurate to say that "There is no budget for the protected area". We agree that "There are some equipment and facilities but these are wholly inadequate" with "some ad *hoc* maintenance of equipment and facilities". We also agree that "There is a limited and ad *hoc* education and awareness programme, but no overall planning for this" and from what we have seen, we feel that "There is regular contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users, but only limited cooperation".

The analysis claims that the clause on indigenous people is not applicable, but the Team disagrees and feels that the term should be interpreted wide enough to encompass the Bedouin minorities that live around the PA and have traditionally depended on its resources to a great extent.

The Team saw no evidence of "Local communities have some input into discussions relating to management" and feels that "Local communities have no input" may have been more accurate. We also feel that the statement "There is open communication and trust between local stakeholders and protected area managers" is a little bit too strong.

We agree with the analysis that there are no visitor facilities, no rapport with tourism operators and no fees by PA users. But the Team disagrees that only "Some biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are being severely degraded".

Finally, the Team agrees that "There is some flow of economic benefits to local communities from the existence of the protected area but this is of minor significance to the regional economy" and that "There is some ad hoc monitoring and evaluation, but no overall strategy and/or no regular collection of results"

The Project analysts concluded with a score of 32 (33.1%). This is a vast improvement on the 2006 score of 25.86 awarded by the Project analysts on that occasion. However, the Team feels that a score of about 24 would have been more appropriate for this 2008 analysis and this would reflect the very modest changes in the PA since the beginning of the Project.

3.4.3.2 Abu Qubeis Protected Area

The analysis for Abu Qubeis Protected Area (3,674 ha) was carried out by Adnan Saad, Ziad Jebawi, Omar Zourek, Akram Darwish, Fadi El Mahmoud, and Sami Tarabieh. The PA is described as "within the sub-humid to humid Mediterranean climate with cool to cold variant" and it is designated as a National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation. It has a permanent staff of 25-30 and 15-20 temporary staff. There are two objectives for the PA:
• restore and maintain the characteristic forest habitat and associated biodiversity
• Increase the populations of known threatened species to reach viable density densities.

The two main threats are woodcutting and charcoal making, and overgrazing mainly goat herding; and the two critical management activities are –
• Enforcement of Forestry of Law # 7 including patrolling for compliance and monitoring
• Forestry activities including: mono-specific afforestation, fire fighting and forest development as part of the general plan of the General Commission for Management and Development of Al-Ghab

The Team agrees with the analysts that the PA has been gazetted and that while mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use exist, there are major problems implementing them effectively. On the other hand, the Team does not agree that "The staff have acceptable capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation" and it would have been closer to reality to say that "There are major deficiencies in staff capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation".

We agree that "The protected area has agreed objectives, but is not managed according to these Objectives", that the "Design is not significantly constraining achievement of major objectives, but could be improved", and that "The boundary of the protected area is known by the management authority but is not known by local residents/neighboring land users". The Team also accepts that a management plan is being prepared and that while "A regular work plan exists, activities are not monitored against the plan's targets".

The Team believes that "There is little or no information available on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area" and disagrees completely with the statement that "There is considerable survey and research work but it is not directed towards the needs of protected area management" – there is only "some ad hoc survey and research work".

We do not think that the "Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values are known", and, contrary to the analysts, we feel that "Staff numbers are inadequate for critical management activities". We also strongly dispute that "Personnel management is adequate" and suggest that "Problems with personnel management constrain the achievement of major management objectives".

The Team is certain that "Staff training and skills" are not adequate and that, strictly speaking "There is no budget for the PA". We also believe that "There are little or no equipment and facilities". On the other hand, we agree that "There is a limited and ad *hoc* education and awareness programme, but no overall planning for this" and likewise that "There is limited contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users" as well as the statement that "Local communities have some input into discussions relating to management but no direct involvement in the resulting decisions". However, we question whether "There is open communication and trust between local stakeholders and protected area managers".

Contrary to the analysts, the Team believes that "There are no visitor facilities and services". We are unaware of any "contact between managers and tourism operators" but are unable to state the opposite. And we agree that fees are not collected.

The Team believes that "Important biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are being severely degraded", contrary to the analysts' conclusion. But we agree that "Protection systems are only partially effective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives".

The Team feels that "There is some flow of economic benefits to local communities from the existence of the protected area but this is of minor significance to the regional economy" – this is a slightly higher rating from that of the analysts. Finally, we disagree that "There is some ad hoc monitoring and evaluation, but no overall strategy and/or no regular collection of results" and suggest that "There is no monitoring and evaluation in the protected area" would have been a more accurate assessment.

The Project analysts concluded with a score of 37 (38.27%). This is a vast improvement on the 2006 score of 25.86 awarded by the Project analysts at the time. However, the Team feels that a score of about 24 would have been more appropriate for the present analysis and this would reflect the very modest changes in the PA since the beginning of the Project.

3.4.3.3 Fronloq Protected Area

The analysis for Fronloq Protected Area (5,390 ha) was carried out by Adnan Saad, Ziad Jebawi, Omar Zourek, Akram Darwish, Firas Badour and Sami Tarabieh. The PA is described as "within the Eu-Mediterranean to the Upper Mediterranean vegetation zones, climatically, the area falls within the cool

variant of the sub-humid to humid bio-climatic zone of the Mediterranean climate" and it is designated as a National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation. It has a permanent staff of 14-18 and 7-10 temporary staff. There are two objectives for the PA:
- Improve the management of visitor pressure and minimize harmful impacts on the forest habitat.
- Restore and maintain the characteristic forest habitat and associated biodiversity

The two main threats are unplanned tourism and fire; and the two critical management activities are – Fire control and monitoring, and Patrolling Law enforcement (wood cutting).

The Team agrees with the analysts that the Fronloq PA has been gazetted, that "Mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area exist", that "There are major deficiencies in staff capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations", that "The protected area has agreed objectives, but is not managed according to these Objectives", and that "Inadequacies in design mean that achievement of major objectives are constrained to some extent."

We also agree that "The boundary of the protected area is known by the management authority but is not known by local residents/neighbouring land users", that "A management plan is being prepared or has been prepared but is not being implemented" and that "A regular work plan exists but activities are not monitored against the plan's targets".

However, the Team feels that "There is little or no information available on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area" and did not see "There is considerable survey and research work" and believes that what there is, is ad hoc. We also believe that "Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values have not been assessed".

The Team disagrees with the analysts on staff and believes that "Staff numbers are inadequate for critical management activities". On the other hand we agree that "Problems with personnel management partially constrain the achievement of major management objectives" and that "Staff training and skills are low relative to the needs of the PA".

The Team believes that strictly speaking "There is no budget for the protected area", but we agree that "There are some equipment and facilities but these are wholly inadequate", that equipment is maintained, that "There is a limited and ad *hoc* education and awareness programme, but no overall planning for this", and that "There is limited contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users."

We disagree with the analysts that question 22 on indigenous people is not applicable. We are aware of Turkish ethnic minorities in and around the PA. But we agree that "Local communities have some input into discussions relating to management but no direct involvement in the resulting decisions". On the other hand, we do not agree that "There is open communication and trust between local stakeholders and protected area managers".

While the Team does not think that "There are no visitor facilities and services", these are rudimentary and a full point is not merited. We agree that there is no contact with tourism organizers and that no fees are collected, but we disagree regarding resources and values degradation and our view is that "Important biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are being severely degraded".

From what we have seen, we believe that "Protection systems (patrols, permits etc) are ineffective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives". Also from what we have seen, we do not think that the PA is neutral in its impact on the communities and feel that "There is some flow of economic benefits to local communities from the existence of the protected area but this is of minor significance to the regional economy" – and this is a more positive assessment than the analysts.

Finally, the Team believes that meaningful monitoring is totally absent and would rate the PA situation as "There is no monitoring and evaluation in the protected area".

The Project analysts concluded with a score of 33 (34.14%). This is an improvement on the 2006 score of 20.68 awarded by the Project analysts at the time. However, the Team feels that a score of

about 24 would have been more appropriate for the latest analysis and this would reflect the very modest changes in the PA since the beginning of the Project.

3.4.3.4 Overall conclusion on the METT

As an overall conclusion on the METT, the Team notes that by and large, we concur with the assessments of the situation but we would have awarded slightly lower scores on some of the parameters. While the final result is not too different, the overall score by the Team is slightly lower than the PMU. However, as the authors of the METT[16] noted, *"The whole concept of "scoring" progress is fraught with difficulties and possibilities for distortion"* and its limitations should therefore be acknowledged. The Team believes that the METT becomes a useful tool when it is used regularly, by the same persons (*e.g.* PMU), over a period of time (*e.g.* over the life of a project). When taken like this, by an evaluation team who are not familiar with the PAs concerned, it has very limited value.

3.4.4 Ecosystem health and the quality of the Protected Areas

The ultimate indicator of a successful Project or a successful PA management effort, is the health of the ecosystem and the quality of the environment within the PA. Each of the three PAs which are the focus of the Project has its own unique ecological assemblage including threatened and endemic species of both flora and fauna. Some survey work was carried out during the PDF 'B' investigations and the available ecological data in the three PAs have been reviewed and assessed and gaps in information have been identified. However, there has not yet been a systematic ecological survey carried out in any of the PAs, and therefore no reliable baseline exists and this is a major concern.

Ecosystem quality in those parts of **Abu Qubeis PA** that were visited appears good, and if the extent of the understorey is to be taken as an indicator, the ecosystem observed seems healthy. There were some signs of tree felling, presumably for firewood, but these were not recent. However, incursions are rampant throughout those parts of the PA visited by the Team – small and not so small crops plantations, wandering livestock and residential buildings; some on pockets of private land, others on PA land (State). There appears to be an intricate mosaic of private land and State land which is not delineated at all and is open to mistakes and abuse. Neither are the boundaries of the PA clearly delineated – no obvious indication at what point the PA starts because there is little or no signage. There are no facilities whatsoever to avoid litter and this, together with an expanding footprint through barbecue areas is creating an unnecessary impact.

Those areas of **Fronloq PA** that were visited showed the same signs of an intricate mosaic of private and State land as in Abu Qubeis. The understorey appeared healthy in spite of flocks of sheep and goats[17], signs of recent tree felling, significant impact of commercial activity (mainly food vendors), and substantial litter (in spite of a clean-up campaign conducted by the Project). The damage of a recent fire is still very evident and the scars will take a long time to heal. The PA is dissected by sealed, through roads that have to accommodate heavy trucks, some travelling at speed, horns blaring.

The **Jebel Abdul Aziz PA** has only one village within its boundary (which is not clearly demarcated), however, the PA land is used extensively for grazing as well as for firewood collection. But it does

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[16] Stolton, Sue, Marc Hockings, Nigel Dudley, Kathy MacKinnon and Tony Whitten (2003) *Reporting Progress in Protected Areas - A Site-Level Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool*. World Bank/WWF Alliance for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Use. Washington

[17] The Team was advised that the grazing of sheep and goats is not a common occurrence and was only observed on this occasion because of the drought conditions being experienced.

not seem to have the patchwork of private and State land evident at the other two sites. There is a quarry in the vicinity of the PA. The region is currently in the middle of a severe drought so the PA was not seen at its best. The PA does not seem to have the same problem with through traffic that afflicts the other two PAs, neither does it have the same number of visitors. In many ways, Jebel Abdul Aziz, could be easier to manage and protect, especially if the Bedouin communities who are dependent on it can be convinced of the benefits of partnership.

The above assessment of ecosystem health in the three PAs would have been helped had there been a good baseline survey to start from and a regular monitoring process of key ecosystem health indicators. A start has been made on this through consultancies on possible indicators and the Evaluation Team feels that the sooner such a monitoring system is in place the better for the Project to assess its success.

In this connection, the Evaluation Team wishes to suggest that in the interest of both the Project and the Consultants themselves, their reports should be subjected to peer review before the recommendations are taken up. Such quality control could be provided by a Project Technical Advisory Group (TAG) which can be set up to advise the PMU and Site Managers on any technical matters and provide critical peer review of technical reports by consultants. The TAG should be chaired by the PTA and membership should not be on a representative basis but on a personal basis to reflect required expertise, level of credibility and accomplishment and availability. Membership should include international experts, electronically. If this is acceptable and feasible, appointments to the TAG will be on a voluntary basis and no fees will be paid, but all expenses will be covered. There should be a core group of no more than 8-10 experts and a roster of others who may attend discussion meetings if they wish but who will primarily be called upon when a specific area of advice is sought. The TAG should be considered as part of the sustainability package of the Project and expected to survive beyond the Project as the Technical Advisory Group for Protected Areas in Syria.

4   FINDINGS: RESULTS AND IMPACTS

4.1   Results achieved

The Evaluation Team constructed the table below to show progress towards the Project Objective and Outcomes as recorded by PIR 2006, PIR 2007, and Project management on 01 June 2008 with reference to the Indicators from the latest version of the SRF (June 2006). The final column carries comments from the Evaluation Team together with a rating according to the following scale:

Highly Satisfactory (HS): The project has no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency
Satisfactory (S): The project has minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency
Moderately Satisfactory (MS): The project has moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): The project has significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency
Unsatisfactory (U): The project has major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The project has severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

Table 5. **Progress towards the Project Objective and Outcomes as recorded by PIR 2006, PIR 2007, and Project management on 01 June 2008, together with comments of the Evaluation Team**

PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES (as in 6th draft of 05 June 2006)	INDICATORS	PROGRESS			
		AT 30 JUNE 2006 according to PIR	AT 30 JUNE 2007 according to PIR	AT 01 JUNE 2008	
				ACCORDING TO PROJECT MANAGEMENT	EVALUATORS' COMMENTS
Objective: To demonstrate practical methods of protected area management that effectively conserve biodiversity and protect the interest of local communities while supporting the consolidation of an enabling environment that will facilitate replication and effective PA management throughout the country	1 Change in overall human footprint within demonstration PAs, as defined by an impact reduction index.	N/A (new indicator, baseline being measured)	Not measured as IRI not developed. Expected to be completed by the end of 2008)	Not measured due to unavailability of specialized expert to develop and complete such new and complicated index but it included in the thematic sub contract of the project outcome: 2 due to be carried out in the second half of 2008. But certain measures have been adopted and implemented that mitigated the impact of tourists and grazing within some areas of the three PAs(Preliminary zoning, grazing control, raising awareness of visitors in Fourounloq, andGEF-SGP in Jebel Abdul Aziz) to adopt new eco-friendly practices.	No progress whatsoever has been made towards this Indicator over 2 years and it is likely that it will never happen – **Highly Unsatisfactory**. Recommend that IRI be abandoned and that a new Indicator/s be adopted as a measure of reduced human impact. Possible Indicators: damage to vegetation, litter, car horns, transit of heavy vehicles, etc.
	2 Level of local communities involvement in sustainable use of the natural resources in the 3 sites	The formation of three site steering committees in targeted project sites including stakeholders and direct resource users	The installation of the three site sub-committees (at local level) including all stakeholders and direct resource users. Representation was not satisfactory to project team. An adaptive strategy is being developed to increase representation at local level definitely by installing site committees at local level. Periodical and consultative meetings, workshops organized by project management and site work teams on the importance of local community role in PA management.	Installing three site local committees to represent more effectively local communities within and around PA sites. Periodical consultative meetings local community representatives both by project staff and contracted experts have been organized on their role in PA management.	The Indicator asked for level of involvement in sustainable use – the project delivered Local Site Committees with a majority of Govt officials and which are dysfunctional – **Unsatisfactory**. Recommend that Site Committees be replaced with Management Boards with a representative of each recognizable village/community and for which the development of a Management Plan is the top priority task
	3 Level of development in PA related national policies and legislations supporting effective and collaborative approaches	N/A (new indicator, baseline being measured)	Assessment of institutional and human capacities relating to PA is in progress. An attempt to influence the new forestry law was undertaken with modest impact but represented a good start.	Completion of the Assessment of institutional and human capacities relating to PA management.	The Indicator targeted policies and legislation but the project delivered a Capacity Assessment – this is a mismatch. However, it is known that some input was made to the revision of the Forestry Law, and this brings the rating to **Moderately Satisfactory**.

	4 Level of increase in ecosystem integrity	N/A (new indicator, baseline being measured)	-		While this Indicator was extremely vague and impossible, ecosystem health is an excellent Indicator of the project's success and an Indicator fashioned around ecosystem health/integrity is recommended
	5 Increase in land area under PA status "at least in one new site".	Accurate demarcation of three PAs is in progress	Initial demarcation of three PAs was achieved jointly by MAAR and MLAE with three scenarios for each protected area. Scenarios to be finalized in a few weeks and final demarcation to be shared with all stakeholders.	Demarcation of three PAs was achieved jointly by MAAR and MLAE with three scenarios for each protected area. Scenarios are finalized and final demarcation shared with all stakeholders and already done.	The wording of this Indicator is confusing and needs to be tightened. It appears to target increase in the area of protected land and as such is not very useful on its own without an indication of representativeness, quality and effectiveness. The project delivered no increase in protected land and merely carried out boundary surveys. This is seen as **Moderately Satisfactory**.

- Progress towards the project Objective, as illustrated by the Indicators, is not at all satisfactory. However, this could be due as much to the difficult Indicators as to the actual progress made. It is recommended that the project review the Indicators for the Objective and develop a more robust suite.
- In the circumstances and being aware of the progress, albeit modest, made by the project, an overall rating of **Moderately Satisfactory** is deemed appropriate.

Outcome 1: Policies and institutional systems that allow for the wise selection and effective operation of protected areas to conserve globally significant biodiversity	1.1 Level of effectiveness of the national institutional arrangements in relation to PA planning and management supported by sound policies and legislations	Formation of the Project Executive Committee at ministerial level, Refine project agreement between Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MLAE) and Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR) which will be used as the base to develop National institutional arrangement for PA planning and management.	Target for year 2 not achieved. Assessment of current institutional and human capacities and functions of all stakeholders involved in PA management is in progress. Progress on years 3 and 4 targets not reported.	Assessment of current institutional and human capacities and functions of all stakeholders involved in PA management is achieved. Assessment will be sent to executive committee members for adoption. Identifying the proper framework to investigate the major gaps in PAs management and governance to find out a proper and effective governance and organizational structure. An organizational structure at the three demonstration sites has been developed and approved by PMU and minister of MAAR.	This indicator is vague and progress towards it cannot be measured without reference to the Targets. The MOU between the MLAE and MAAR is a good basis for institutional arrangements, but it is not a measure of effectiveness. The assessment of institutional and human capacity conducted by the project and awaiting approval by the EC is a step in the right direction. But the Project is far behind in the Targets. Even without referring to the institutional framework at site level, where a lot of work is required, progress towards this Indicator is seen as **Moderately Satisfactory**.
	1.2 Level of capacity of MAAR and MLAE to effectively manage the overall PA system	N/A (new indicator, baseline being measured)	A training program based on a professional training needs assessment on PA management has been developed and its implementation initiated. MAAR,MLAE work teams are its main targets. A review of the staff capacities of MAAR at the central level resulted in an	A vocational training based on a professional training needs assessment on PA management has been initiated and its implementation in progress. MAAR, MLAE work teams are its main targets. An increase in project work team numbers to meet the need for vocational capacity building and the newly adopted structures of three PA sites management .	The training programme has been approved by the EC, but still requires clear objectives, areas of training and training time table. The impact of previous training is not clear. Although the Target date is yr 4, more progress would have been expected and as can be seen from the PMU comments, not much has

			increase in staff numbers and unit status.		happened since PIR 2007 and progress is considered as **Moderately Satisfactory.**
	1.3 Level of MAAR's capacity to effectively manage and extend PAs within forest areas and other dryland ecosystems	N/A (new indicator, baseline being measured)	New approaches to PA management were introduced by project as part of the capacity building and training programme. Next step would be to adopt a strategy to incorporate approaches into the overall policy of MAAR. MAAR staff at central and local levels is main target of training programme. The three sites managers are all MAAR staff on secondment. Discussions on the development of the PA manager position and its link to the current project setup.	MAAR work team at central and PA sites is main target of vocational training program. So far 14 training courses were carried out for work team at the center and sites. 2 vocational courses were carried out since the beginning of 2008 after adoption of the new PA sites structure by the minister of MAAR. New TOR for site managers has been developed and adopted with new responsibilities according to the new PA sites structures.	The Baseline and Targets for this Indicator focus on strategy and action plans and therefore training is only a means to an end. Furthermore, these strategies and action plans are expected at both Central and local levels. As far as the Team is aware, most of the training was through short training courses and concentrated on theoretical lectures. The impact of training was not evident during site visits (except for GIS) and there has been no follow-up or feed-back. There has been no progress towards the Targets, but the Team accepts that training does contribute to capacity and therefore the rating is **Moderately Satisfactory.**
	1.4 Level of MLAE's capacity to ensure that the national system of PAs is well integrated in the national biodiversity conservation and sustainable development objectives	N/A (new indicator, baseline being measured)	A full review and feedback was developed and provided to MAAR for the new forestry law. The attempt for positive impact was largely missed. Impact was largely reduced by MAAR's level of reception to project and MLAE's comments and advice.	MAAR's level of reception to project and MLAE advice is more acceptable.	The Indicator targets MLAE capacity and the report on progress is about MAAR. This is a mismatch. Progress is **Unsatisfactory**.

- Progress towards the Outcome1 is not impressive, whether one looks at the Indicators or the Targets. As this is the "enabling" Outcome, this is especially disappointing. Urgent attention must be given to the development of a strategy and action plans for the effective administration and management of the PA System.
- It is recommended that the Project review the Indicators for Outcome 1 and develop a more robust suite to help with the assessment of progress.
- As a result of the low delivery in this Outcome but also in recognition of the small amount of progress the overall rating is **Moderately Satisfactory**.

| **Outcome 2:** Effective techniques for PA management and biodiversity conservation have been demonstrated through the design and implementation of management plans at three sites | 2.1 Level of effectiveness of local cadres and managers at project sites in ecosystem-based management | Site staff from both ministries are in place and exposed to two introductory workshops on management planning for protected areas. | Based on the 2006 training needs assessment, a full fledged training programme was developed and is being implemented as schedules targeting all related staff and target groups. Training in progress on all aspects and tools related to ecosystem and protected areas management planning including regional study tours, zoning planning, GIS and | A systematic training based on assessment needs is in progress in addition a vocational training was initiated by the beginning of 2008, including all aspects of PA management relating to ecosystem-based management in addition to GIS application, and micro-credit and micro enterprise. Job description has been developed according to organizational structure. | The indicator is not measurable without the Target and the Target refers to training rather than effectiveness – the Project designers seem to have made a fetish out of training for training's sake!

Apart from GIS specialist, no benefit is obvious from all this training.

Progress towards this Indicator is Moderately Unsatisfactory |

			remote sensing.	
	2.2 Level of effectiveness of all monitoring programs related to biodiversity dynamics and natural resource management	TORs ready and announced. for socio-economic and ecological baseline studies.	Baseline indicators, partially "70%" completed: Flora, Fauna, Socio-economic indicators will be incorporated within the abbreviated management plans. However, monitoring programmes not developed.	Base line indicators were completed. Monitoring programs for baseline indicators (socio-economic, flora, fauna, and forest survey plans are developed and updated by national consultants through consultative meetings with the work teams and local communities' representatives. An ecological baseline and monitoring survey plan are in process to be developed.	The indicator is vague and not easily measured and the Target simply provides a timescale. The indicators developed by consultants need to be verified, monitoring plans must be developed and a monitoring programme started. The training required for this is minimal – what is more important is leadership. In recognition of the Indicators consultancies (although still subject to verification and peer review), progress is deemed to have been **Moderately Satisfactory.**
	2.3 Level of completeness and effectiveness of site management plans (METTS	N/A (new indicator, baseline being measured)	Interim management plans for the three sites are being developed and almost ready for implementation by January 2008. This represents an adaptive management measure undertaken in response to project priorities. The MPs are being developed by the site teams themselves with mentoring from the project PIMA.	Interim management plans for the three sites are being developed and applied at the three sites and an annual work plan for each site was prepared in January 2008. And will be applied till the start up of the thematic sub contract of the outcome 2 in the second half of 2008.	The Indicator is misleading with its reference to the METT. Some draft operational plans have been developed after almost 3 years but the situation has not changed since the baseline. No management plans are developed and progress is **Unsatisfactory**
	2.4 Level of implementation of management plans actions (METTS)	N/A (new indicator, baseline being measured)	Interim management actions are undertaken as part of the project interventions (e.g. demarcation, GIS, training, local communities awareness, local committees, baseline, etc.) Structured implementation of management actions is to commence by January 2008.	Management actions have started in the beginning of 2008(.Results will be delivered as soon as possible)	Same as above **Unsatisfactory**
	2.5 Level of PA management effectiveness on the medium and long terms	Current METT data: Fronloq 20.68% Abu Qbais 25.86% Jabal Abdul Aziz 25.86%	Site staff are well trained on the use of Management effectiveness tracking tool Next METTs revision will commence in April 2008. Progress towards financial goals not provided.	METTs will be achieved for early mid term evaluation by June 2008.	METT is not the target, management effectiveness is – therefore training for the METT is not progress, training for management effectiveness would have been! But even if METT %ages are taken as the Targets, progress is far short of the Targets. Site staff were meant to be proficient

					in applying METT. Why was 2008 METT carried out by PMU and Central Govt staff with only the Site Manager "consulted"? Progress is **Unsatisfactory.**
	2.6 Level of government budgetary support for the implementation of the sites management plans			Government support for the implementation of the sites plans is satisfactory up to the limit of the interim management plan ambitions.	In the absence of management plans it is not possible to assess this Indicator. The Target raises serious questions regarding sustainability – by final year, only 75% of budget from Govt and self-finance – where is the other 25% coming from?

- The assessment of progress toward Outcome 2 is hindered by the ineffectual Indicators. However, the only slight progress is with ecological indicators and monitoring and this is only Moderately Unsatisfactory. Work on management plans is poised to start and the sooner this happens the better.
- There is an urgent need for the Project to review the Indicators for Outcome 2 and develop a more robust and meaningful set to help with the assessment of progress.
- In the knowledge that the PTA is ready to make serious progress with this Outcome, the rating assigned by the Evaluation Team for Outcome 2 is Moderately **Unsatisfactory**.

Outcome 3: Sustainable use of natural resources in and around protected areas has been demonstrated through the development and implementation of a programme for alternative sustainable livelihoods and community resource management	3.1 Level of integration of participatory management mechanisms and stakeholder within site management plans	The project team held a meeting with representatives of local communities and three sub-Steering Committees (which include representatives of all stakeholders and local communities) were established including members of local community.	The project team (PMU and work teams) held a meeting with representatives of local communities. Three site committees (which include representatives of all stakeholders and local communities and direct resource users) expected to be established in the second half of 2007.	Local sites committees with new responsibilities have been installed after approval of the project executive committee in its fourth meeting in the 28/6/2007. The sites committees have held their first meetings at each site Local community representatives were exposed to successful regional experiences in PA management. The impact of exposing them to regional experiences was reflected by establishing three community based organizations at project sites by locals.	Since the management plans do not exist there is nothing to integrate the participatory mechanisms with, even if they had been devised. The progress as reported is tied to the Steering Sub-Committees which have been found to be dysfunctional. There has been no progress towards this Indicator and the rating is **Unsatisfactory**
	3.2 Level of direct and indirect benefits gained by local communities through alternative sources of income derived from the protected areas and as a result of their new management programs in he three sites	N/A (new indicator, baseline being measured)	Traditional community knowledge gathering study completed. The socio-economic indicators study is almost finalized and will feed into this outcome. The full fledged socio-economic study has started and is foreseen to set the framework for the project SE strategy at the three sites.	Full fledged socio-economic study has been achieved and set the framework for the project SE strategy at the three sites. Micro credit and micro enterprise study for thee sites has been achieved. Local communities' representatives and sites work team have been exposed to four training courses on micro credit and micro finance and small grant project of GEF.	Socio-economic study and traditional approaches work is acknowledged, but not much progress with the communities themselves – do not do it for them, do it with them. Each community should have identified by now their AIG strategy to reduce pressure on the PA. Progress has been **Unsatisfactory.**

- Progress towards Outcome 3 is urgently needed if the Project is to retain its credibility among communities. Surveys and training do not satisfy cynicism and fear – tangible products do.
- The Indicators need to be refined and it may not be a bad idea to do this in collaboration with the communities.
- The overall progress towards Outcome 3 is **Unsatisfactory.**

4.1.1 Progress towards the Project Objective

The Project Objective targeted practical methods of protected area management that effectively conserve biodiversity and protect the interests of local communities, together with an enabling environment that will lead to effective PA management. The Indicators selected to show progress ranged from the human footprint in PAs to community involvement, to policies and legislation and increase in the land area of PAs.

The Evaluation Team does not find these Indicators helpful in assessing progress towards this Objective and we are aware that the Project has also struggled with this. As a result, progress towards the project Objective, as illustrated by the Indicators, is not at all satisfactory.

However, the Team is aware of progress that has been made, albeit modest, towards the Objective, and after allowing for the weak Indicators, finds an overall rating of **Moderately Satisfactory** as appropriate because the project has shown only moderate shortcomings in the achievement of the Objective, particularly in terms of its efficiency.

The Team believes that the project is on target towards achieving its Objective and is expected to be able to demonstrate practical methods of protected area management that effectively conserve biodiversity and protect the interest of local communities. Whether it does achieve this balance between conservation and community will depend on the rapport it establishes with the communities and the buy-in from the communities – the recommendations in this report should facilitate this.

4.1.2 Progress towards the Project Outcomes

4.1.2.1 Progress with Outcome 1

Outcome 1 has a focus on the enabling environment for the establishment and operation of a PA System, and mentions specifically policies and institutional systems. The selected Indicators range from institutional effectiveness to the capacity of MAAR and MLAE.

Progress towards the Outcome1 is not impressive, whether one looks at the Indicators or the Targets. As this is the "enabling" Outcome, this is especially disappointing because progress with this Outcome is required to underpin progress in the other two Outcomes. Urgent attention must be given to the development of a strategy and action plans for the effective administration and management of the PA System as a system.

The project has carried out a needs assessment of MAAR and MLAE and some training has been carried out. There was also a modest input into legislation review which was not initiated by the Project. However, what is needed is some strategic planning at Central level to set up the system in the first place. Such a PA Management System will be developed by the task force mentioned above (see section 3.1.4) according to proposals by the PTA. The PA System needs to be comprehensive, representative and effective. In order to do this, it must not be restricted to forests and drylands, but it must include wetlands and coastal and marine areas. Furthermore, it needs to extend to the local level where community participation and involvement need to be institutionalized.

It is recommended that the Project review the Indicators for Outcome 1 and possibly some of the Outputs so as to create a more robust basis for a PA System and help with the assessment of progress.

As a result of the low delivery in this Outcome but also in recognition of the small amount of progress as well as the planning for future work, the overall rating is seen as **Moderately Satisfactory.** The project still has some moderate shortcomings in the achievement of this Outcome, in terms of relevance and effectiveness.

4.1.2.2 Progress with Outcome 2

Outcome 2 has a focus on the design and implementation of PA management plans. The selected Indicators target effectiveness of staff and monitoring programmes, the design and implementation of management plans, management effectiveness and funding security.

The whole Outcome revolves around management plans, and while annual operational plans are on the verge of being adopted ready for implementation, there is no sign of management plans. In the absence of management plans, the staff have been working very much in an *ad hoc* way with little focus or direction. Work on management plans is poised to start and the sooner this happens the better.

In spite of the ineffectual Indicators, some slight progress has been made with "baseline" survey work and the selection of ecological indicators for monitoring. However, this work which was carried out by consultants, awaits validation (through peer review), it must then lead to an implementation plan, and some training before it can be usefully applied.

There is an urgent need for the Project to review the Indicators for Outcome 2 and develop a more robust and meaningful set to help with the assessment of progress. They should reflect the various components and stages in the development and implementation of management plans.

In the knowledge that the PTA is ready to make serious progress with this Outcome, and in recognition that some work has started, the rating assigned by the Evaluation Team for Outcome 2 is **Moderately Unsatisfactory** since the Project still has major shortcomings in the achievement of this Outcome, in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

4.1.2.3 Progress with Outcome 3

Outcome 3 completes the tripod for an effective PA System with its focus on communities. The two selected Indicators target participatory management and benefits to the community.

Rapport between the Project personnel and communities is good but nothing tangible has been delivered and if there is no progress soon, there is a risk that the Project will lose its credibility among communities. Surveys and training do not satisfy cynicism and fear – tangible products do. There is a need for "incentives", but more important, there is a need to find joint solutions to the problems that may be created in trying to reduce the impact on the PAs.

There is also a need to establish serious partnerships where communities are treated as equal owners, sharing in the hard decisions on protection, management, etc.

The Indicators for Outcome 3 need to be refined and it may not be a bad idea to do this in collaboration with the communities – ask them what they would consider an indication of progress.

The overall progress towards Outcome 3 has been **Unsatisfactory** and progress is urgently needed.

4.2 Project impacts

4.2.1 Impact indicators

While it is recognized that it is too early in the project life to be seeking progress towards project impacts, the Evaluation Team has examined the impact indicators provided in the Project Brief. In the table below, the Team's comments are limited to the indicators themselves and their expected usefulness. Following the table is the Team's prediction of the likely impacts of the Project.

Table 6.   Impact indicators to be monitored under M&E programme according to the Project Brief

BY END OF YEAR	INDICATOR	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	EVALUATION TEAM COMMENTS
3 and 7	Overall human footprint within demonstration PAs, as defined by an impact reduction index to be developed under biodiversity monitoring programme, is measured annually and reduced 25% by Year 3 and 50% by end of project.	Biodiversity monitoring reports (see AA 1.3 and 1.4)	This indicator is proving very elusive but even if the index was available its reliability and usefulness are not assured.
7	Species-specific surveys indicate at least 25% recovery in populations of target globally significant species	Biodiversity monitoring reports (see AA 1.3 and 1.4)	No baseline has been set against which to measure this impact. In fact, the species have not yet been selected. And why 25%?
7	40% of local communities involved in sustainable use of the natural resources in the 3 sites	Monitoring reports measuring people participation in the project	Measuring community involvement is difficult enough, but determining what 40% is, may be impossible.
7	50% increase in ecosystem integrity and 50% decrease in level of threats	Biodiversity and natural resource monitoring reports	How is it proposed to measure "ecosystem integrity"? Is there a confirmed threats baseline? And why 50%?
7	At national level, 40% increase in land area under PA status	PA annual reports	Such a bland indicator is not very meaningful without a qualifier regarding the representativeness and the quality of the land area. And why 40%?

The Evaluation Team is concerned that when the time comes to assess Project impact, the indicators in the table above will not be very useful. Their reliance on numeric percentages is very artificial and it may have been more meaningful to use qualitative targets. The Team wishes to refer the PMU and stakeholders to the material from the Adaptive Management Workshop, held by the Evaluation Team, for criteria and guidance on setting useful Indicators.

4.2.2 Global and national level impacts

If the Project is successful in ensuring the sustainability of the three PAs, the global benefits of the project should be undisputed. They will accrue from the ecological resources that will have been safeguarded which are accepted as being of global significance.

At the national level, expectations are high among communities that the Project will have an impact on their lives. Fear and uncertainty have been replaced by the misguided belief that this is a social development project. Whether the Project delivers according to their expectations remains to be seen.

On the other hand, if it is successful, the Project will leave the PAs as a very valuable legacy to the Government and people of Syria; capacity at both Central and local levels for the administration and management of PAs would have been enhanced; and hopefully, irrespective of the direct benefits to them, community engagement will be another part of the legacy (but much more needs to be done before this can be expected to happen).

4.2.3 Gender and minorities

The Project Brief states that "*Women, youth and other minority voices in village communities will be empowered through training and capacity-building activities to develop and diversify income and livelihood sources, and to achieve a more participatory voice in village leadership and decision-*

making". The Project provides an opportunity for the empowerment and emancipation of women and minority groups, while respecting local cultural and traditional mores. Project success will be constrained if it fails to identify the special role that women have in communities that live in or around PAs. It is usually women who collect the firewood, gather the medicinal herbs, bring in the water, and teach the children.

As far as can be ascertained, the Project employs 15 men and 8 women. At the local level, a small number of Project staff come from within the communities or have direct contact/relations with them. While respecting the social traditions and wishes of the communities, the Project appears to be encouraging the participation by women in Project activities. The communities visited by the Evaluation Team do not appear resistant to this and they welcome the involvement of their womenfolk in alternative income generation activities facilitated by the Project. It is gratifying to note that it was the proposal put forward by a woman from the Bakkara Tribe (Jebel Abdul Aziz) that was successful in gaining support through the GEF SGP.

The Women's Union and their representatives are participating in Project activities and we met with one such representative who is also a member of the (non functioning) local Steering Sub-Committee. Such membership was provided for in the ProDoc.

The Evaluation Team has not been able to ascertain the extent to which data and information have been disaggregated by gender, whether or not women have a particular role to play in helping the Project reach its objectives, and whether or not they have been given the space to do so. These are issues that the Project staff appear to be aware of and as implementation and community involvement gather speed, they are expected to come to the fore.

During its site visits, the Evaluation Team observed that at each of the three sites, the Project had recently engaged two women (about three months ago), whereas one team had employed a female member of staff right from the start of the Project, bringing its total of women staff to three. We could not but notice the enthusiasm and professional approach of the two women staff members at one of the three sites, in sharp contrast to the attitude of the three male staff members.

5   FINDINGS: SUSTAINABILITY

With still five years for the Project to run, it may be a bit early to be discussing sustainability but the brief discussion below identifies trends and likelihoods.

5.1   Institutional and financial sustainability

The most important institution for a PA is the Management Board where government, managers, scientists and local communities meet to provide guidance and direction on the implementation of the Management Plan. Currently there are no Management Plans and no Management Boards, and while this role can be taken up by the Site Steering sub-Committees, these are currently dysfunctional and this does not augur well for the sustainability of this product of the Project. However, this has now been recognized by the Project, particularly the PTA, and the Evaluation Team is optimistic that there will be rapid progress on both management plans and management boards. A further positive development is the plan to set up a task force to develop a national PA Management Strategy with assurances from the NPC that this will be *"a guarantee of sustainability of project activities".*

The next institution is the PA team/unit and its sustainability should be secure because staff are on secondment from the Forestry Department and when the Project finished they will simply continue

doing what they are doing now. However, this cannot be taken for granted and a great deal of work is still required -

• to dispel the distinction which is being made between the PA and the Project when it comes to PA management – the Project Site Manager needs to be also considered as the PA Manager with appropriate job description, role and responsibilities
• to resolve the complex staff deployment situation with secondments, reporting lines, accountability, etc
• to establish on a more secure footing the PA Division within Central Government and at Local Government level

Only then can institutional sustainability be expected.

The Minister did mention budgetary allocations for PA management during his meeting with the Evaluation Team and this is a very encouraging step towards financial sustainability. However, there are also possibilities for some income generation activities by the PA management such as concessions, licences, permits, etc, and a financial sustainability strategy will need to be put in place before the end of the Project and confirmed as part of the exit strategy.

One serious threat to sustainability overall is the attitude of communities and that depends on the trust and credibility that Project staff can build – without the cooperation of the communities, there will be no PAs.

5.2 Knowledge management

The Project has not engaged in knowledge management efforts to date. It has started to generate numerous documents and many more and likely to follow. Annex 6 lists the Project output to date in terms of documents. These need to be archived and made available as required and plans for a Project website should take care of that.

As can be seen from Annex 6, the majority of documents are consultants' reports which, as discussed in section 3.4.4 above, should be subject to peer review as a means of quality control.

5.3 Replicability

The three PAs are similar in many respects but they are also very different. As such, they serve as good pilots which, if successful, can be used as models for replication in the other PA sites. The potential for replicability is very high – there are 23 other PAs in Syria without taking into account the wetlands and coastal areas. However, replication does not just happen and it needs to be facilitated, for example, by building capacity at some of the other PAs.

It is acknowledged that many challenges remain before this can be seen as a possibility, but the Project should start laying the foundations for replicability.

In this connection, the Project has been offered an opportunity to collaborate with the GEF SGP to establish a training centre that could provide customized technical and practical skills in PA management. The training programme could assist the Project with its own capacity building in the first place and eventually start graduating staff from MAAR, MLAE, putting into practice the know-how and lessons arising from the project experience. The Team believes that this idea is worth investigating.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions have been drawn throughout this report. They are gathered here as a summary and as a basis for the Recommendations in the next section.

6.1 Project concept and design

The Project concept and design are basically sound. It is a standard approach to a project on enhancing the protected areas system. The Objective seeks *conservation* as a balance between protection and safeguarding the communities' way of life. The three Outcomes focus on enabling environment, PA management, and community participation and protection. The timescale of seven years appears adequate and so does the budget of just under $7 million including the Government contribution in kind.

The project is consistent with the provisions of Operational Programme 1, Arid and Semi-Arid Ecosystems and meets the GEF long term objectives and strategic programmes for biodiversity especially sustainability of protected area systems, mainstreaming biodiversity in development, building capacity and access and benefit sharing.

The most significant flaw in project design was the lack of adequate provision to deal with the very weak capacity; other difficulties revolve around the implementation arrangements. In addition, the Project Document is weak and unhelpful and has contributed to some of the difficulties faced by the PMU.

6.2 Project implementation arrangements

The Project is being implemented under the NEX modality with MLAE as the Implementing Agency and MAAR as the Executing Agency. The relationship between the two ministries is cordial and cooperative and roles are clear.

The office premises and other facilities provided by the Government as part of its contribution in-kind are more than adequate in most cases although they are not always in the most appropriate location or style expected in a PA.

The distinction between the Project and the Protected Area needs to be removed to the extent possible - the local Project Manager should also be the PA Manager, all staff working in the PA should report to the same Manager, all equipment and resources of both the PA and of the Project should be pooled, and the role of Project Steering Committee at the site should be taken up by the PA Management Board. Such an approach will reduce the potential for conflict, enhance the management capacity for both the PA and the Project, and ensure sustainability when the Project comes to an end.

6.3 Project governance

At central level the PSC, renamed the Project Executive Committee (PEC), is functioning well and providing the necessary guidance and support to the PMU using the right authority and power as the highest governance level for the project.

At local level, project governance is very weak or non-existent and Site Managers are struggling without adequate guidance and direction from an effective committee or board.

There seems to be some resistance to serious and meaningful sharing with communities in a partnership arrangement. The opportunity to receive meaningful collaboration from the communities has yet to be realized.

6.4   Project management

The PMU is small and the management style is low key. Adequate support and guidance is provided by the National Project Director (Project Manager) to the Site Managers but there appears to be a slight lack of strategic thinking and confidence and a reluctance to be incisive and take risks. This may be due to the involvement of "designated representatives from MLAE and MAAR" as part of the PMU. Project management at Central level needs more training and capacity building and should then be given more "space", with support and guidance only from a distance.

Management at site level is not strong. The capacity of Site Managers has to be improved in project management, people management and PA management. They must be able to provide better leadership and direction to their respective teams.

In spite of this, team spirit is excellent at two of the three sites, but less so at the third site. BUT, the majority of staff have no idea of what they are meant to be doing. Job descriptions are required urgently – and this is a task of Site Managers with support and advice from the PMU.

6.5   Financial management

If the Team is correct in assuming that the allocation of some 25% of the Project budget was meant for Project management, it is of the opinion that this is somewhat high. On the other hand, the allocation for Outcome 3 (18% of the budget) which has a focus on community work, seems a bit low in comparison to the other allocations.

The Team has some reservations about the awarding of large contracts such as the $297,600 contract under Outcome 2. The Team has concerns with the ToRs and wonders about the risk associated with awarding the varied tasks envisaged in the ToRs to one single contractor under one contract. We also question the wisdom of something like a PA Management Plan being prepared by an "outsider" to the Project or the PA. The size of this contract makes it feel like a project within a project with its own manager and staff, a large budget and full and total financial delegation. There is a serious risk that the Site Managers (and maybe even the NPD) will be effectively sidelined by whoever wins the contract.

There is confusion regarding the intended use of the petty cash float and the role of advance payments (in the absence of adequate forward planning). However, if used for its intended purpose of petty expenses, the current level of $500 is seen as adequate by the Team and the only improvement that the Team can see is in the timing of the replenishment. We feel that replenishment should be available when, say $400 have been spent. After accounting for the $400 expenditure, the petty cash float should be topped up again to $500, to make sure that the Project does not run out of petty cash.

There is a perceived need for more flexibility, a higher level of delegation, and a more streamlined system and that this will become essential when the micro-finance system is set up and is running. Many see the system as cumbersome and lacking delegation – but in general the system seems the same as that applied successfully by UNDP elsewhere. The Team concluded that there is a need for some further training of Project staff, particularly the Site Managers, by UNDP on the financial management procedures of the Project, and that this training should be a regular occurrence, at least annually.

The Cost Sharing co-financing ($491,000 from the Syrian Government) earmarked for project management costs and the UNDP TRAC contribution budgeted for Alternative Livelihood activities are being made available as scheduled. The government co-financing contribution in kind and in cash equivalent was evident to the Team in the form of substantial premises, office space and furnishings, salaries of all Project site staff except for the Site Managers and running costs including the cost of fuel for the Project vehicles. This contribution comprises 36% of the total budget of the project and the project could not have survived without it.

6.6   Stakeholder participation, community empowerment

The key stakeholders for the Project are the two ministries and the communities that live in or around the PAs. The ministries are fully involved in the Project and show excellent ownership. The communities are still out of the Project.

The attitude to communities has been patronising – we were told often "… *these are simple people*". The approaches made by the Project teams are genuine enough and the rapport between individual Project staff and individual members of the community is good, but the approach must change. Communities must be seen and treated as partners and joint-owners of the PA and its resources. Through meaningful membership of the PA Management Board, the communities must share in the decision-making, accepting participatory responsibility for finding solutions to the problems of biodiversity conservation, ecosystem approach and sustainability of resources.

6.7   Project monitoring and evaluation

Performance monitoring as carried out by the Project to date is not effective. While it may satisfy the bare essentials of the GEF, it is mainly mechanical, not analytical, and there is no evaluation. The situation is not helped by the weak SRF and the difficult Indicators. Quarterly Reports do assess progress, but little is said about the constraints encountered, the lessons that could be learnt or the follow-up action that is needed. The Evaluation Team believes that it is not enough to monitor – management must do something with the results of monitoring.

The Project SRF was revised six times in the first few months of the Project with the latest version becoming available in June 2006. However, the revisions are less about adaptive management and more about the weaknesses of the original SRF and the adoption of new approaches to structuring the SRF.

The Project Goal, Objective and Outcomes have not changed, but the Indicators have. Unfortunately, the changes have not improved the Indicators; in fact, in some respects they are more difficult to use to assess progress. Because of their reliance on the Baseline and Targets, the new Indicators on their own are not very meaningful – they are best described as indicators of indicators. If the S.M.A.R.T. yardstick is applied to them, many Indicators are not Specific enough on their own, they are not Measurable without the Targets and neither can it be determined whether they are Achievable, Realistic or Timely unless one goes to the Targets.

There is a need for the SRF to be revised again, particularly the Indicators, but possibly also the Outputs, to produce a useful SRF with SMART Indicators as a basis for monitoring and adaptive management.

The monitoring of ecosystem health is even more worrisome. No baselines have been set and no real ecosystem monitoring has been carried out to date except maybe for the METT. Unfortunately,

as the authors of the METT[18] noted, *"The whole concept of "scoring" progress is fraught with difficulties and possibilities for distortion"* and its limitations should therefore be acknowledged. The Team believes that the METT becomes a useful tool when it is used regularly, by the same persons (*e.g.* PMU), over a period of time (*e.g.* over the life of a project). When taken like this, by an evaluation team who are not familiar with the PAs concerned, it has very limited value.

The Indicators developed by consultants for ecosystem monitoring await validation, training, and application. In this connection, there is a need for the Project to set up a Technical Advisory Group to provide peer review and quality control for the outputs of consultants.

A final conclusion regarding monitoring – it is very desirable, and likely to be very beneficial, to involve the communities in monitoring performance as well as ecosystem health.

6.8   Progress towards the Project Objective and Outcomes

The Evaluation Team is concerned by the weak progress achieved by the Project towards the process indicators. The most serious of these is the lack of progress towards a Management Plan in each PA which was meant to become available by the end of Year 2. While it is acknowledged that the Site Teams do have annual operational plans, these are no substitute for the strategic and policy document normally expected in a Management Plan. This worrying situation is compounded by the fact that most if not all project personnel do not have job descriptions, have no capacity or capabilities for the position they have been assigned and are existing in a total vacuum with no personal work plans and no direction or guidance. This is in spite of numerous training sessions.

The Evaluation Team does not find the Indicators selected for the Objective as helpful in assessing progress and we are aware that the Project has also struggled with this. As a result, progress towards the project Objective, as illustrated by the Indicators, is not at all satisfactory. However, the Team is aware of progress that has been made, albeit modest, towards the Objective, and after allowing for the weak Indicators, finds an overall rating of **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Progress towards the Outcome1 is not impressive, whether one looks at the Indicators or the Targets. As this is the "enabling" Outcome, this is especially disappointing because progress with this Outcome is required to underpin progress in the other two Outcomes. MAAR and MLAE need to expedite the establishment of the intended task force to commence the development of a strategy and action plans for the effective administration and management of the PA System as a system. The Project needs to review the Indicators for Outcome 1 and possibly some of the Outputs, so as to create a more robust basis for a PA System and help with the assessment of progress. As a result of the low delivery in this Outcome but also in recognition of the small amount of progress, the overall rating is seen as **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Outcome 2 revolves around management plans, and while annual operational plans are on the verge of being adopted ready for implementation, there is no sign of management plans. In the absence of management plans, the staff have been working very much in an *ad hoc* way with little focus or direction. Work on management plans is poised to start and the sooner this happens the better. There is an urgent need for the Project to review the Indicators for Outcome 2 and develop a more robust and meaningful set to help with the assessment of progress. They should reflect the various components and stages in the development of management plans. In the knowledge that the PTA is ready to make serious progress with this Outcome, and in recognition that some work has started, the rating assigned by the Evaluation Team for Outcome 2 is **Moderately Unsatisfactory.**

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[18] Stolton, Sue, Marc Hockings, Nigel Dudley, Kathy MacKinnon and Tony Whitten (2003) *Reporting Progress in Protected Areas - A Site-Level Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool*. World Bank/WWF Alliance for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Use. Washington

Under Outcome 3, rapport between Project personnel and the communities is good but nothing tangible has been delivered and if there is no progress soon, there is a risk that the Project will lose its credibility among communities. Surveys and training do not satisfy cynicism and fear – tangible products do. There is a need for "incentives", but more important, there is a need to find joint solutions to the problems that may be created in trying to reduce the impact on the PA. There is also a need to establish serious partnerships where communities are treated as equal owners, sharing in the hard decisions on protection, management, etc. The Indicators for Outcome 3 need to be refined and it may not be a bad idea to do this in collaboration with the communities. The overall progress towards Outcome 3 has been **Unsatisfactory** and progress is urgently needed.

6.9   Capacity building and other Project impacts

It is a bit early to be considering Project impacts, however, some gains have already been made in capacity building at MLAE and MAAR. The impact of other training is not so sure and there is a possibility that either it has been ineffectual or it was the wrong type of training.

If the Project is successful in ensuring the sustainability of the three PAs, the global benefits of the project should be undisputed by virtue of the ecological resources that will have been safeguarded which are accepted as being of global significance. At the national level capacity at both Central and local levels for the administration and management of PAs is expected to be enhanced; and hopefully, irrespective of the direct benefits to them, community engagement will be another part of the project legacy. Expectations are high among communities that the Project will have an impact on their lives. Fear and uncertainty have been replaced by the misguided belief that this as a social development project and Project staff have to dispel this and replace it with a more realistic set of expectations.

Unfortunately, when the time comes to assess impacts, the Impact Indicators from the Project Brief are not going to be much help.

6.10 Sustainability

The institutional sustainability of the Project's products should be "guaranteed" by the Government's ownership of the PAs and the collaborative spirit of MLAE and MAAR.   However, before this can be certain, the PA Management Boards must be in place and this has yet to happen.   Financial sustainability is not yet secure either, even though prospects should be good.

The most important element that will assure the sustainability of this project is the effective participation of local communities based on a real partnership. That depends on the trust and credibility that Project staff can build.

6.11 Replicability

The three PAs can be considered as good pilots which, if successful, can be used as models for replication in the other PA sites. The potential for replicability is very high – there are 23 other PAs in Syria without taking into account the wetlands and coastal areas. However, replication does not just happen and it needs to be facilitated, for example, by building capacity at some of the other PAs.

6.12 Experience gained and lessons learnt

A lesson learnt from the previous World Bank/GEF project and proven by this Project is that without harmony between Government agencies, a project is likely to fail. This is particularly so when one agency is acting as Implementing Agency and other as Executing Agency.

Another lesson, which is virtually universal, and which has emerged again from this project is that gaining the respect, credibility and trust of the community takes time. It also takes a special type of approach and expertise.

Working with local communities and involving them in the project activities is a slow and difficult process but once they are aware of the benefits and have accepted a share of the responsibilities, they are keen to work towards the project objectives.

Rightly or wrongly, the majority of Project staff believe that they do not have job descriptions and the lesson is that team spirit and enthusiasm among Project staff are essential but they are no substitute for a clear job description, leadership and direction.

6.13 Final conclusion

This project certainly has problems – but it is not a problem project. There is a great deal of good will, enthusiasm and energy among the stakeholders; there is adequate time and budget; and there is the fresh approach being contributed by the PTA.
The Project appears poised for a great leap forward through the operationalization of the plans and ideas brought by the new PTA and a lot rests on his shoulders. He would increase his chances of success if the adaptive management approach (as discussed in the Workshop delivered by the Evaluation Team) is applied whereby new predictions are made, new management approaches designed, and new options tested following thorough analysis of the results of monitoring.

The Team is optimistic about the Project's future. If the recommendations in the next section are considered seriously and implemented, the chances of success of this Project are high.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the recognition that the Project team needed support with adapting and applying a robust project strategy and associated SRF including indicators against which to measure progress and success, the Evaluation Team presents the following clusters of recommendations each of which is addressed to one or more key actors. The Team is optimistic that if the following recommendations are adopted, the Project can be taken to a successful conclusion.

7.1 To UNDP/GEF on project administration and management

Develop and implement a policy which confirms the importance of the ProDoc and establishes a Master Copy which should be updated each time substantive revisions are carried out on any of its elements.

7.2 To the PMU and PEC on project management and implementation arrangements

Review the Project implementation framework/arrangements to create a clearer distinction between the policy and the management levels, and create a more direct link between the management and implementation levels.

Provide the NPD with a bit more "space", and advice and guidance from a "distance", primarily by the NPC.

Arrange for the NPD and all three Site Managers to undergo the PRINCE-2 training in project management.

Develop job descriptions for all staff as guidance on what needs to be done by each, and as a basis for performance assessment. Review job descriptions when work plans (ideally a Management Plan as well as an Annual Operational Plan) are adopted at each site.

Clarify the employment status for staff who are seconded or on loan to the Project team from the Forestry Department. Ensure that their deployment is according to a clear, contract which includes a job description.

7.3 To MAAR, MLAE and the PMU on management of the three PAs

Eliminate the distinction between the Project and the Protected Area to the extent possible - the local Project Manager should also be the PA Manager; all staff (including all Rangers and Guards) working in the PA should report to the same Manager; all equipment and resources of both the PA and of the Project should be pooled.

Establish a Protected Area Management Board for each PA to replace the Site Steering sub-Committees; review their membership to include representation from each village/community living within the PA or affected by it; review their terms of reference to clearly focus on the implementation of the management plan according to Central Government's policy on PAs.

Initiate the process of assessment of ecosystem health in each of the three PAs, with the first survey serving to establish a baseline. Adopt and monitor regularly key ecosystem health indicators. A start has been made on this through consultancies on possible indicators and the Evaluation

Team feels that the sooner such a monitoring system is in place the better for the Project to assess its success.

Develop and adopt management plans plus annual operational plans (tied in with the Project AWPs) for each of the three PAs, under Output 2 after developing a more robust and meaningful set of Indicators to help with the assessment of progress reflecting the various components and stages in the development of management plans.

Explore the possibility of developing a PA Headquarters and Visitor Centre for each of Abu Qubeis and Jebel Abdul Aziz PAs, similar to the facility available at Fronloq (which needs some improvement). These HQs and Visitor Centres must be purpose built, low profile and low impact, and open to be used by the public.

7.4 To MAAR and MLAE (with support from the Project), on the PA System in Syria

Design and implement a strategic approach to the PA System in Syria based on representativeness and reflecting "the best of what remains", with clear objectives, based on reliable ecological surveys, in partnership with the communities.

Set up a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to provide peer review and quality control of consultants' technical outputs as well as to provide advice to Project management. Establish the TAG as a national institution beyond the life of the project.

7.5 To the PMU, the PEC and UNDP on financial management aspects

Make the ATLAS system available to the NPD and the Finance Assistant at Project level, at least for query. UNDP should consider making the budget categories in ATLAS more transparent and meaningful to someone entrusted with managing a project.

Utilize fully all the financial mechanisms available at UNDP to facilitate the efficient implementation of the project activities.

Clarify the intended purpose of the petty cash float. Retain the current level of $500 but ensure that the amount available does not drop below $100 by triggering replenishment (after appropriate accountability for monies spent) when the balance comes close to $100.

Provide further training for Project staff, particularly the Site Managers, on the financial management procedures of the Project, and make this training a regular occurrence, at least annually.

Reconsider the large contracts at company level – assign as much as possible of this work to project staff and engage consultants only as support persons and not to take over initiatives; break up the large contracts into individual smaller contracts.

7.6 To the PMU and Site Teams on communities and public participation

Provide for true participation (through meaningful membership of the PA Management Board) by the communities that live and/or depend on the PAs for their livelihoods and existence – a true sharing

of the decision-making (and responsibilities) for the PA management. Start seeing the local communities not only as beneficiaries, but as joint-owners of the PAs.

Create an interface between the Project/PA and the public at site level through the development of a visitor centre (see above) at each of the PAs.

Develop and implement a strategy for communities' engagement and participation based on the principle that they are part owners of the PA and must be approached as partners. Eliminate the phrase "these are simple people" from the vocabulary.

Refine the Indicators for Outcome 3 and do this in collaboration with the communities.

7.7 To the PMU and PEC on the SRF, monitoring and adaptive management

Organize a one-day workshop, facilitated by the PTA, to revise the SRF, particularly the Indicators but possibly also the Outputs, to produce a useful SRF with SMART Indicators as a basis for monitoring and adaptive management; refer to the guidance provided in the Adaptive Management Workshop.

Address the risk of changes in socio-economic conditions, and the risk that legislation and regulations will lag behind developments arising from the project, and seek ways of minimizing them. Plan for the contingency should it happen.

ANNEX 1 : TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

I. INTRODUCTION

UNDP-GEF M&E Policy

UNDP-GEF's M&E policy is available on-line at: http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html. In accordance with the policy, all projects are encouraged to conduct mid-term evaluations. In addition to providing an independent in-depth review of implementation progress, this type of evaluation is responsive to GEF Council decisions on transparency and better access of information during implementation.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives: i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts; ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements; iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and iii) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned. A mix of tools is used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the lifetime of the project – e.g. periodic monitoring of indicators -, or as specific time-bound exercises such as mid-term reviews, audit reports and independent evaluations.

In accordance with UNDP/GEF M&E policies and procedures, all projects with long implementation periods (e.g. over 5 or 6 years) are strongly encouraged to conduct mid-term evaluations. In addition to providing an independent in-depth review of implementation progress, this type of evaluation is responsive to GEF Council decisions on transparency and better access of information during implementation.

Mid-term evaluations are intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. The mid-term evaluation provides the opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

The Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Area Management Project

The Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Area Management project aims at demonstrating practical methods of protected area management that effectively conserve biodiversity and protect the interests of local communities while supporting the consolidation of an enabling environment that will facilitate replication throughout the country. In order to achieve this objective, the project strategic result framework in the original project document outlined that three outcomes would be produced: (1) Policies, legislation and institutional systems are in place that allow for the wise selection and effective operation of protected areas that conserve globally significant biodiversity; (2) Effective techniques for PA management and biodiversity conservation have been demonstrated at three sites totaling approximately 60,000 ha and are available for replication, and; (3) Sustainable use of natural resources in and around protected areas has been demonstrated through the development and implementation of a program for alternative sustainable livelihoods and community resource management.

The total budget of the project is $6.92m funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and government (cash and in kind contributions). The Executing Agency of the project is Ministry of Local administration and Environment in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform. A Memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between the two ministries. The MOU provided the framework of coordination between the two ministries, particularly, regarding the implementation of the Project activities and defining the obligations of each party; stipulating that activities are executed in full cooperation and agreement between the two ministries according to the work plan included in the PD.

The duration of the project is seven years. The project document was signed in Feb 2005, the PMU started working officially in September 2005, however, the implementation did not commence until October upon the recruitment of the NPD.

The planned Inception period had been 3-4 months, but it was delayed for several reasons and the inception phase took over a year to be finalized. The Inception Report presented the final step in the Project's Inception Phase, which announces the entry into the implementation Phase; it included the amendments to the original Project Document, particularly (i) the administrative and institutional arrangements and (ii) the Terms of Reference for committees, agencies, individuals and subcontracts. During the inception phase the original log-frame of project was revised according to new GEF requirements to include baseline data and targets in addition the monitoring and evaluation tracking tools (METTs) for the three targeted protected areas were developed.

Expected Project Results

The progress towards the attainment of the project's objectives is measured according to the revised logical framework as outlined in 2006 PIR.

2. EVALUATION AUDIENCE

This Mid-term Evaluation is initiated by UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency. It aims to provide managers (Ministry of Local Administration and Environment / GCEA and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, project management, UNDP-Syria and UNDP-GEF levels) with strategy and policy options for more effectively and efficiently achieving the project's expected results and for replicating the results. It also provides the basis for learning and accountability for managers and stakeholders.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

The Mid-term Evaluation serves as an agent of change and plays a critical role in supporting accountability. Its main objectives are:

1. To strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring functions of the project
2. To ensure accountability for the achievement of the GEF objective
3. To enhance organizational and development learning
4. To enable informed decision-making

4. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The scope of the evaluation will cover
-   The entire GEF-funded project components of the project.
-   The co-financed components such as the UNDP TRAC, government cost sharing fund, and the in-kind contributions from the government, which have been included in the project document.
-   It should also give some attention to other protected area managed by the Ministry of Agriculture, particularly, the CIDAR-FIR PA near Al Fronloq site in order to compare the effectiveness of the project's management interventions.

The Mid-term Evaluation will cover the following aspects:

I.   Progress towards Results

-   ***Changes in development conditions****.* Assess the progress towards the following, with a focus on the perception of change among stakeholders, including the local communities in an around the three sites (i.e. user surveys)
    -   Particularly, the following question should be asked, has there been any change in the perception towards the protected area management?
    -   How has the broader context evolved to affect the project in achieving its stated objective, both positively i.e. changes supportive of the project's objectives, or negatively i.e. changes in the broader context that generate constraints to achieving the project's objective.

-   ***Measurement of change****:* Progress towards results should be based on a comparison of indicators before and after (so far) the project intervention. Progress can also be assessed by comparing conditions in the project site to conditions in similar unmanaged sites (areas surrounding the three protected area sites, for instance). The GEF BD Tracking Tool will be applied too by the Project Team with support and verification from the Evaluation Team.

-   ***Project strategy****:* how and why outcomes (listed as outputs) in the project document, result log-frame, and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results:
    -   Examine their relevance and whether they provide the most effective route towards results.
    -   Assess adequacy of the revised log- frame and indicators in responding to the GEF strategic priorities and achieving project objective
    -   Assess if the logical framework, indicators and base line developed during the inception phase and outlined in PIR 2006 still represent the best project strategy for monitoring and measuring the progress? Is it more feasible to consider the new indicators proposed in 2007 PIR? Consider alternatives giving specific attention to justifying the intervention logic and proposing a realistic and budgeted monitoring and evaluation system to be implemented by the project and through a final external evaluation.

-   ***Sustainability****:* assess the extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after it has come to an end. Relevant factors include for example: development of a sustainability strategy, establishment of financial and economic instruments and mechanisms, mainstreaming project objectives into the economy or community production activities. The question whether sites of the protected areas will receive future support from the government after the project ends needs to be addressed, as this affects the project's approach to sustainability.

- *Gender perspective*: Extent to which the project accounts for gender differences when developing and applying project interventions. How are gender considerations mainstreamed into project interventions and the management of the protected area; Suggest measures to strengthen the project's gender approach.

II. Project's Adaptive Management Framework

(a) Monitoring Systems
- Assess the monitoring tools currently being used:
    - Do they provide the necessary information?
    - Do they involve key partners?
    - Are they efficient?
    - Are additional tools required?
- Reconstruct baseline data if necessary[19]. Reconstruction should follow participatory processes and could be achieved in conjunction with a learning exercise[20]
- Ensure the monitoring system, including performance indicators, at least meets GEF minimum requirements[21]. Apply SMART indicators as necessary.
- Apply the GEF Tracking Tool and provide a description of comparison with initial application of the tool. If the Tracking Tool has not been previously applied, provide a comparison against the estimated baseline.

(b) Risk Management

- Validate whether the risks identified in the project document and PIRs are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate. If not, explain why. Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted.
- Assess the project's risk identification and management systems:
    - Is the UNDP-GEF Risk Management System[22] appropriately applied (with particular emphasis on the financial risks related to micro-grants)?
    - Are risks being adequately internalized into the project strategy? If not, how can the UNDP-GEF Risk Management System be used to strengthen project management?

(c) Work Planning

- Assess the use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it
    - Ensure the logical framework meets UNDP-GEF requirements in terms of format and content
    - What impact did the retro-fitting of impact indicators have on project management?
- Assess the use of routinely updated workplans. How have they been used to respond to the revised logical framework?
- Assess the use of electronic information technologies to support implementation, participation and monitoring, as well as other project activities
- Are work-planning processes result-based[23]? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning.
- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions. Any irregularities must be noted.

(d) Reporting

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management
- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Underlying Factors

- Assess the underlying factors beyond the project's immediate control that influence outcomes and results. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project's management strategies for these factors.
- Re-test the assumptions made by the project management and identify new assumptions that should be made
- Assess the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project

UNDP Contribution

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[19] See p.67 of UNDP's "Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results", available at http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html
[20] See Annex C of "Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: approaches to sustainability", available at http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html
[21] See section 3.2 of the GEF's "Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures", available at http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html
[22] UNDP-GEF's system is based on the Atlas Risk Module. See the UNDP-GEF Risk Management Strategy resource kit, available as Annex XI at http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html
[23] RBM Support documents are available at http://www.undp.org/eo/methodologies.htm

- Assess the role of UNDP against the requirements set out in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results. Consider:
  - Field visits
  - Executive Committee/TOR follow-up and analysis
  - PIR preparation and follow-up
  - Combined Delivery Report
  - Quarterly Progress and Financial Report
  - GEF guidance

- Consider the new UNDP requirements outlined in the UNDP User Guide[24], especially the Project Assurance role, and ensure they are incorporated into the project's adaptive management framework
- Assess the contribution to the project from UNDP "soft" assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, coordination, use of knowledge products and worldwide experience to the benefit of the project) looking specifically at linkages and synergies with other UNDP practice areas (e.g. governance, gender, poverty…). Suggest measures to strengthen UNDP's soft assistance to the project management.

Partnership Strategy
- Assess how partners are involved in the project's adaptive management framework:
  - Involving partners and stakeholders in the selection of indicators and other measures of performance
  - Using already existing data and statistics
  - Analysing progress towards results and determining project strategies.
- Identify opportunities for stronger substantive partnerships between Ministry of Local Administration and Environment/ GCEA , Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform UNDP and other counterparts, with particular reference to:
  - The development and implementation of Public-Private (local communities) Partnership for the management of the protected area
  - The development and implementation of the micro-finance component of the project, incorporating UNDP's world-wide experience
- Assess how local stakeholders participate in project management and decision-making. Include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project and suggestions for improvement if necessary.
- Consider the dissemination of project information to partners and stakeholders and if necessary suggest more appropriate mechanisms.

5. METHODOLOGY OR EVALUATION APPROACH

An outline of an evaluation approach is provided below. However, it should be made clear that the evaluation team is responsible for revising the approach as necessary. Any changes should be in-line with international criteria and professional norms and standards (as adopted by the UN Evaluation Group[25]). They must be also cleared by UNDP before being applied by the evaluation team.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. It must be easily understood by project partners and applicable to the remaining project duration.

The evaluation should provide as much gender disaggregated data as possible.

The Evaluation will be carried out by the team through:

(i)   Documentation review (desk study); the list of documentation to be reviewed is included as an Annex to the TORs. All documents will be provided in advance by the Project Management Unit and/or UNDP.

(ii)   Interviews will be held with the following organizations and persons as a minimum

- **UNDP:** DRR, Energy and Environment Team, other practice teams as necessary, SGP and GEF Regional Technical Adviser, Biodiversity (NYC and Bratislava).

- **Ministry of local Administration and Environment/ GCEA & Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform:** National project Coordinator (NPC), Head of biodiversity department, GEF national Operational Focal Point, General Manager of the GCEA , National Focal Point from the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform , Head of Forestry Department and all relevant units.

- Project team: Project Manager, Consultants, Technical and Administrative team.

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[24] The UNDP User Guide is currently only available on UNDP's intranet. However UNDP can provide the necessary section on roles and responsibility from http://content.undp.org/go/userguide/results/rmoverview/progprojorg/?src=print
[25] See http://www.uneval.org/

(iii)   **Field visits** should be made to the three sites of the project.

(iv)   **Semi-structured interviews –** the team should develop a process for semi-structured interviews with the different interviewees to ensure that the different aspects are covered. Focus group discussions with project beneficiaries will be held as deemed necessary by the evaluation team**.**

- **Local Stakeholders**
  - Local government representatives/ Head of forestry department at the three sites
  - Representatives of the local communities
  - Site managers

(v)   **Presentation of findings –** the team will present its preliminary findings to the national counterparts (Ministries, local communities, PMU, UNDP) prior to the preparation of the final report.

To the extent possible due to language requirements, and in order to ensure the independent nature of the evaluation, the evaluation team will meet with the different stakeholders in the absence of the PMU/UNDP. The PMU and UNDP will facilitate access and organize mission schedules in support of the evaluation; the evaluation team may request additional meetings as deemed necessary. In keeping with the same independent spirit, the findings and recommendations of the evaluation team cannot be altered, but factual corrections may be suggested by the counterparts and a management response is to be prepared by the PMU and national counterparts upon submission of the final report.

6. EVALUATION TEAM

The equivalent of two international evaluators has been budgeted for this evaluation. The team is required to combine international calibre evaluation expertise, the latest thinking in traditional knowledge and sustainable-use of natural resources, co-management of protected areas with knowledge of the Syrian national protected area and biodiversity context.

Team Qualities:

- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying participatory monitoring approaches;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Recent knowledge of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
- Recent knowledge of UNDP's results-based evaluation policies and procedures;
- Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to conservation or natural resource and protected area management projects;
- Recognized expertise in biodiversity conservation and protected area management;
- Familiarity with protected area policies and management structures in Syria or the region;
- Familiarity with the IUCN protected areas category systems and with laws and regulations pertaining to protected area management in the region, preferably in Syria;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Experience with multilateral or bilateral supported conservation projects;
- At least one team member able to speak Arabic fluently and possess sufficient Arabic reading and writing skills to be able to develop and interpret a user survey in Arabic;
- Both team members with excellent English communication skills (oral, aural, written and presentation).

Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for a position. Applications are welcome from anyone who feels they can contribute to the team because they possess three or more of the listed qualities. Obviously, the more the qualities that can be demonstrated, the better the chance of selection.

Joint proposals from two independent evaluators are welcome. Or alternatively, proposals will be accepted from recognized consulting firms to field a complete team with the required expertise within the evaluation budget.

The evaluation will be undertaken in-line with GEF principles[26]:

- Independence
- Impartiality
- Transparency
- Disclosure
- Ethical
- Partnership
- Competencies and Capacities
- Credibility
- Utility

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[26] See p.16 of the GEF's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy

The evaluators must be independent from both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of assistance. Therefore, applications will not be considered from evaluators who have had any direct involvement with the design or implementation of the project. This may apply equally to evaluators who are associated with organizations, universities or entities that are, or have been, involved in GCEA or MAAR policy-making process and/or delivery of the project. Any previous association with the project, MAAR, GCEA, UNDP-Syria or other partners/stakeholders must be disclosed in the application. This applies equally to firms submitting proposals as it does to individual evaluators.

If selected, failure to make the above disclosures will be considered just grounds for immediate contract termination, without recompense. In such circumstances, all notes, reports and other documentation produced by the evaluator will be retained by UNDP.

If individual evaluators are selected, UNDP will appoint one Team Leader. The Team Leader will have overall responsibility for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products. Team roles and responsibilities will be reflected in the individual contracts. If a proposal is accepted from a consulting firm, the firm will be held responsible for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products and therefore has responsibility for team management arrangements.

7. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Management arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation lies with UNDP-Syria. The UNDP Syria Country Office is the main operational point for the evaluation responsible for liaising with the project team to set up the stakeholder interviews, arranges the field visits and co-ordinate with Ministry of Local Administration and Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform and other counterparts. UNDP-Syria will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team.

Although the final report must be cleared and accepted by UNDP before being made public, the UNDP Evaluation Policy is clear the evaluation function should be structurally independent from operational management and decision-making functions in the organization. The evaluation team will be free from undue influence and has full authority to submit reports directly to appropriate levels of decision-making. UNDP management will not impose restrictions on the scope, content, comments and recommendations of evaluation reports. In the case of unresolved difference of opinions between any of the parties, UNDP may request the evaluation team to set out the differences in an annex to the final report.

Time frame

The duration of the evaluation will last for 8 weeks, starting from the 4th week of Feb. 2008, with the draft report being available for comment 2 weeks after the completion of the mission. A schedule of activities is set out below.

Resources, logistical support and deadlines

- **ONE working week preparation before field work– Damascus based:** to review documents, obtain necessary non-project background or supporting documents, finalize evaluation methodology, prepare learning sessions, surveys etc, develop hypotheses about the project strategies and management and consider methods for testing hypotheses.

- **TWO working weeks field work – Damascus, Lattakia, Hassakeh and Hama Governorates :** evaluators are expected to work 6-day a week when on mission. With the evaluation's emphasis on the project's adaptive management framework, the team is expected to work closely with the project team. The in-country period will include learning sessions with the project team and other adaptive management strengthening measures.

- **TWO weeks – desk-based:** after the mission to prepare the first draft of the evaluation report.

- **TWO weeks for comments on the draft report – not paid time:** The draft Mid-term Evaluation report should be submitted to the Resident Representative of UNDP Syria. UNDP Syria should analyze, provide comments and share it with different stakeholders.

- **ONE week to integrate the comments and finalize the evaluation report – desk-based:** The evaluation team will incorporate the comments into the final version within one week of receiving the comments. The evaluation team is responsible for ensuring matters of fact are revised in the report, but matters of opinion may be reflected at their discretion. The final report must be cleared and accepted by UNDP. In the case of any unresolved difference of opinions between any of the parties, UNDP may instruct the evaluation team to set out the differences in an annex to the final report.

During the evaluation period, the team will require office accommodation. The first week, this will be provided in the UNDP Syria office or GCEA. In the governorates, it will be provided by the SUB- Project Management offices.

Suggested time schedule for the mid-term evaluation, to be adapted by the team as appropriate

	Responsible / support	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Week beginning with		20 May	27 May	3june	10June	17June	26June	2July	8-30 July
Mission Preparation(20 May to 08 June)									
Document Review	Evaluation team	██	██	██					
Design approach and methods	Evaluation team	██	██	██					
Finalize evaluation methodology	Evaluation team	██	██	██					
Develop hypotheses about the project strategies and management	Evaluation team	██	██	██					
Prepare surveys	Evaluation team	██	██	██					
Prepare learning sessions	Evaluation team	██	██	██					
Mission (9June- 27 June)									
Briefing for evaluators	UNDP				██	██			
Meet PMU, partners and stakeholders	Evaluation team/ UNDP & Project				██	██			
Field visits	Evaluation team/ UNDP & Project				██	██			
Interviews	Evaluation team/ UNDP GEF RCU / UNDP & Project				██	██			
Adaptive management learning	Evaluation team/ Project				██	██			
Debriefings / Presentation	Evaluation team				██	██			
After-mission(1July -30 July)									
Report writing- drafting	Evaluation team						██		
Finalize report	Evaluation team						██		
Report Submission – UNDP and Circulation of Report for comment	Team leader, UNDP, GCEA, MAAR, PMU, others…							██	
Review and final submission of the report	Team Leader								██

TASKS FOR THE EVALUATION TEAM	APPROACH (Methodology)	PROPOSED TIMING
Initial communications and negotiations Assignment design, methodology, approach (including the methods for data collection and analysis) Desk review of existing documents, data and materials; Web searches	From Home base, electronically	20 May to 7 June
Briefing with UNDP Programme Team and DRR Tel- interview with GEF/RCU First meeting of Evaluation Team, discuss strengths and preferences, confirm methodology Introductory meeting with Project Manager, partners and stakeholders Schedule planning, arranging appointments	In Damascus	09 June to 12 June
Field visits Meet with Local Government and Project Team. Meet beneficiaries at community level and obtain perspective on Project, especially on opportunities for participation	Travel to field sites, consult grassroots communities	13 June to 24 June
Adaptive Management and Learning Further consultations, debriefing, drafting Presentation of preliminary findings to stakeholders	Back in Damascus	25 June to 27 June
Drafting of the evaluation report Submitting of Final Draft for comments	From Homebase, electronically	01 July to 06 July
Period for comments from Stakeholders Comments to reach Team Leader		07 July to 20 July
Final drafting of Evaluation Report Dispatch to UNDP	From homebase, electronically	21 July to 30 July

8. PRODUCTS EXPECTED FROM THE EVALUATION

There will be two main products:

- Mid-term evaluation report, including an executive summary, fulfilling the evaluation requirements set out in these TORs. The final report is to be cleared and accepted by UNDP before final payment. The final report (including executive summary, but excluding annexes) should not exceed 35 pages.
- A power-point presentation of the findings of the evaluation. Depending upon the complexity of the evaluation findings, UNDP Syria may consider organizing a half-day stakeholders meeting at which to make a presentation to the partners and stakeholders.

Indicative outline of the evaluation report

1. Executive summary (2 pages)

2. Introduction (5 pages)
   - Status of project (problem being addressed, expected results, measures of success, project strategy, key partners/stakeholders, project progress)
   - Methodology of the evaluation

3. Findings and Evaluation Outcomes (25 pages)
   - Progress Towards Expected Results
   - Project's Adaptive Management Framework
   - Underlying Factors
   - UNDP Contribution
   - Partnership Strategy

4. Recommendations (3 pages)

5. Evaluation report Annexes
   - Evaluation TORs
   - Itinerary
   - List of persons interviewed
   - Summary of field visits
   - List of documents reviewed
   - Questionnaire used and summary of results
   - Comments by stakeholders (only in case of discrepancies with evaluation findings and conclusions)

ANNEX: LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVIEWED BY THE EVALUATORS

The following documents are essential reading for the evaluators:

- Project Document and any revisions
- www.undp.org/gef/ 05/monitoring/policies.html
- M & E Operational Guidelines, all monitoring reports prepared by the project
- Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
- Quarterly Progress Report and detailed activity progress reports
- Minutes of Executive Committee, Tripartite Programme Review and other project management and technical meetings.
- Presentations and other inputs to Executive Committee and project management meetings
- Combined Delivery Report
- Atlas Reports (such as the AWP and Project Budget Balance report)
- Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs)
- Inception Report
- UNDP User Guide (relevant sections)

Other products and reports produced by the Project including:

- Technical Reports.
- Baseline reports
- Strategy documents, internal system, management plans.
- Maps
- Publications
- Annual Reports

Rationale:

MA brings local knowledge and understanding of local situation, local biodiversity issues. He also has the advantage of local language.
PT brings an outsider's independent perspective, and experience with GEF/UNDP evaluation procedures.
Most investigative and consultation tasks will be jointly shared, but with one team member taking the lead.
Initial drafting will be carried out by the lead member as indicated, but with the final responsibility for the Report resting with PT as Team Leader.

	TASK (from ToRs)	LEAD	NOTES
I. Progress towards Results	- *Changes in development conditions*. Assess the progress towards the following, with a focus on the perception of change among stakeholders, including the local communities in and around the three sites (i.e. user surveys) • Has there been any change in the perception towards the protected area management? • How has the broader context evolved to affect the project in achieving its stated objective, both positively i.e. changes supportive of the project's objectives, or negatively i.e. changes in the broader context that generate constraints to achieving the project's objective.	MA	Questionnaire to be administered to members of communities
	- *Measurement of change:* Progress towards results should be based on a comparison of indicators before and after (so far) the project intervention. Progress can also be assessed by comparing conditions in the project site to conditions in similar unmanaged sites (areas surrounding the three protected area sites, for instance). The GEF BD Tracking Tool will be applied too by the Project Team with support and verification from the Evaluation Team.	PT + Project Team	The Project Team will be requested to assess progress towards Objective/Outcomes, according to the Indicators; in addition to Tracking Tool
	- *Project strategy*: how and why outcomes (listed as outputs) in the project document, result log-frame, and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results: • Examine their relevance and whether they provide the most effective route towards results. • Assess adequacy of the revised log- frame and indicators in responding to the GEF strategic priorities and achieving project objective • Assess if the logical framework, indicators and base line developed during the inception phase and outlined in PIR 2006 still represent the best project strategy for monitoring and measuring the progress? Is it more feasible to consider the new indicators proposed in 2007 PIR? Consider alternatives giving specific attention to justifying the intervention logic and proposing a realistic and budgeted monitoring and evaluation system to be implemented by the project and through a final external evaluation.	PT + MA	This is basically an assessment of project design to identify its logic/rationale, the clarity of the ProDoc, its guidance value, its strengths and weaknesses
	- *Sustainability*: assess the extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after it has come to an end. Relevant factors include for example: development of a sustainability strategy, establishment of financial and economic instruments and mechanisms, mainstreaming project objectives into the economy or community production activities. The question whether sites of the protected areas will receive future support from the government after the project ends needs to be addressed, as this affects the project's approach to sustainability.	PT	Possibly too soon for an MTR, however, trends and indications may have already emerged to make an informed forecast
	- *Gender perspective*: Extent to which the project accounts for gender differences when developing and applying project interventions. How are gender considerations mainstreamed into project interventions and the management of the protected area; Suggest measures to strengthen the project's gender approach.	MA	Best handled by MA who can appreciate local social mores

II. Project's Adaptive Management Framework	(a) Monitoring Systems	- Assess the monitoring tools currently being used: • Do they provide the necessary information? • Do they involve key partners? • Are they efficient? • Are additional tools required? - Reconstruct baseline data if necessary. Reconstruction should follow participatory processes and could be achieved in conjunction with a learning exercise - Ensure the monitoring system, including performance indicators, at least meets GEF minimum requirements. Apply SMART indicators as necessary. - Apply the GEF Tracking Tool and provide a description of comparison with initial application of the tool. If the Tracking Tool has not been previously applied, provide a comparison against the estimated baseline.	PT	Starting from Monitoring Plan in ProDoc and in Inception Report; assess monitoring process applied; determine what was done with the results of monitoring
	(b) Risk Management	- Validate whether the risks identified in the project document and PIRs are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate. If not, explain why. Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted. - Assess the project's risk identification and management systems: • Is the UNDP-GEF Risk Management System appropriately applied (with particular emphasis on the financial risks related to micro-grants)? • Are risks being adequately internalized into the project strategy? If not, how can the UNDP-GEF Risk Management System be used to strengthen project management?	MA	Requires local knowledge, at least initially. Discuss with UNDP for the second part
	(c) Work Planning	- Assess the use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it • Ensure the logical framework meets UNDP-GEF requirements in terms of format and content • What impact did the retro-fitting of impact indicators have on project management? - Assess the use of routinely updated workplans. How have they been used to respond to the revised logical framework? - Assess the use of electronic information technologies to support implementation, participation and monitoring, as well as other project activities - Are work-planning processes result-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning. - Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions. Any irregularities must be noted.	PT	Determine whether the terminology, prescription and processes are as LogFrame or as SRF. Review PSC minutes of meetings. Review PIRs. Discuss finances with Project Team and UNDP
	(d) Reporting	- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management - Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.	PT	Review PSC minutes of meetings. Review PMU minutes of meetings MA to provide PT with a brief on the content
Underlying Factors		- Assess the underlying factors beyond the project's immediate control that influence outcomes and results. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project's management strategies for these factors. - Re-test the assumptions made by the project management and identify new assumptions that should be made - Assess the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project	MA	Consider political, social and other external influences

UNDP Contribution	- Assess the role of UNDP against the requirements set out in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results. Consider: • Field visits • Executive Committee/TOR follow-up and analysis • PIR preparation and follow-up • Combined Delivery Report • Quarterly Progress and Financial Report • GEF guidance - Consider the new UNDP requirements outlined in the UNDP User Guide, especially the Project Assurance role, and ensure they are incorporated into the project's adaptive management framework - Assess the contribution to the project from UNDP "soft" assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, coordination, use of knowledge products and worldwide experience to the benefit of the project) looking specifically at linkages and synergies with other UNDP practice areas (e.g. governance, gender, poverty...). Suggest measures to strengthen UNDP's soft assistance to the project management.		PT	Obtain report from UNDP-CO and RCU, validate conclusions. Ascertain extent of synergy with other UNDP programme areas
Partnership Strategy	- Assess how partners are involved in the project's adaptive management framework: • Involving partners and stakeholders in the selection of indicators and other measures of performance • Using already existing data and statistics • Analyzing progress towards results and determining project strategies. - Identify opportunities for stronger substantive partnerships between Ministry of Local Administration and Environment/ GCEA , Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform UNDP and other counterparts, with particular reference to: • The development and implementation of Public-Private (local communities) Partnership for the management of the protected area • The development and implementation of the micro-finance component of the project, incorporating UNDP's world-wide experience - Assess how local stakeholders participate in project management and decision-making. Include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project and suggestions for improvement if necessary. - Consider the dissemination of project information to partners and stakeholders and if necessary suggest more appropriate mechanisms.		MA	Mainly anecdotal But also investigative through questionnaire
Evaluation Report	1. Executive summary (2 pages)		PT	
	2. Introduction (5 pages)	- Status of project (problem being addressed, expected results, measures of success, project strategy, key partners/stakeholders, project progress)	MA	
		- Methodology of the evaluation	PT	
	3. Findings and Evaluation Outcomes (25 pages)	- Progress Towards Expected Results	PT	
		- Project's Adaptive Management Framework	PT	
		- Underlying Factors	MA	
		- UNDP Contribution	PT	
		- Partnership Strategy	MA	
	4. Recommendations (3 pages)		PT+MA	
	5. Annexes	- Evaluation TORs	-	
		- Itinerary	PT	
		- List of persons interviewed	MA	
		- Summary of field visits	MA	
		- List of documents reviewed	PT	
		Questionnaire used and summary of results	MA	
		- Comments by stakeholders (only in case of discrepancies with evaluation findings and conclusions)	PT	

ANNEX 2 ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

20 May to 07 Jun		Initial communications and negotiations; Assignment design, methodology, approach (including the methods for data collection and analysis); Desk review of existing documents, data and materials; Web searches
Sun 08		Moh'd arrives Damascus
Mon 09	0135	Philip arrives Damascus
		Meetings at UNDP
	0900	Evaluation Team meeting (Mohammad and Philip) EE team Leader (Ms. Abir Zeno)
	1100	Finance assistant (Mr. Zakaria Askar)
	1200	UNDP Deputy Resident Representative (Ms. Zena Ali Ahmad)
	1330	Director of Biodiversity/ National Project Coordinator (Dr. Akram Darwish)
Tue 10		**Meetings in the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR)**
	1000	Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (Dr. Adel Safar)
	1130	Director of Forestry (Mr. Zeyad Jabawe)
		National Project Focal Point (Mr. Omar Zrik)
	1500	Telecon with Tim Clairs and Mirey Atallah
Wed 11		**Meetings in the Ministry of Local Administration & Environment (MLAE**)
	1100	Minister of Local Administration & Environment (Mr. Hilal Al-Atrash)
	1130	Deputy Minister of Local Administration & Environment (Mr. Imad Hasson) – GEF OFP
		Director General for General Commission for Environmental Affairs (Dr. Akram Khori)
		Project Management Unit
	1400	Project Manager (Mr Adnan Saad), Fin/Admin, other personnel
Thu 12		Follow-up meeting with PMU
	1600	Travel to Hama
Fri 13	0900	Meeting with project site team
Sat 14	All day	Meeting with communities
Sun 15	1000	Head of General Commission of Al Ghab area (dep Head of local steering Committee)
	1200	Head of Forestry Department
	1400	Wrap up meeting with site team
	1600	Travel To Lattakia
Mon 16	0900	Project site team
Tue 17	All day	Meeting with communities
Wed 18	0900	Head Forestry Department
	1100	Follow-up meeting with local project team
	1300	Depart for Damascus
Thu 19	0800	Travel to Hassakeh
	1200	Meeting with project site team
Fri 20	All day	Meeting with communities
Sat 21	0900	Head Forestry Department
	1100	Follow-up meeting with project site team
	2000	Head Agriculture Department
	2100	Head sitre local committee
Sun 22	0700	Travel back to Damascus
Mon 23	0900	SGP Coordinator (Mr. Firas Shuman)
	1100	Follow-up meeting with consultants
Tue 24		Drafting and preparing for presentation
Wed 25	0900	Adaptive Management and Learning Workshop
	1500	UNDP Res Rep
		Drafting and preparing for Presentation
Thu 26	0900	Presentation of Preliminary Findings to Key Stakeholders
	1300	Final debrief UNDP DRR
Fri 27	0445	Philip departs Damascus
30 Jun to 06 Jul		Drafting of Draft Report from Homebase
Mon 07		Delivery of Draft Report, electronically
07 Jul – 10 Aug		Consideration of Draft Report by stakeholders and sending in comments
10-18 Aug		Final drafting, incorporating comments
18 Aug		Delivery of Final Report, electronically

ANNEX 3   DOCUMENTS AND WEBSITES REVIEWED OR CONSULTED

A)   Key documents reviewed or consulted

- Project Document
- Project Logical Framework revisions
- UNDP/ GEF Monitoring Policies
- Monitoring and Evaluation Operational Guidelines
- Monitoring reports prepared by the project
- Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
- Quarterly Progress Reports
- Minutes of Executive Committee and project management and technical meetings
- Combined Delivery Report
- Project Annual Work Plan for year 2008
- Project Budget Balance Report
- Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) for the years 2006 and 2007
- Inception Report
- PIMA Technical Reports
- Project Technical Consultant Report on the Administrative Structure of the PAs
- Natural Protected Areas in Syria, Types, Objectives and Selection criteria
- Memorandum of Understanding between MLAE and MAAR
- Traditional Knowledge documentation Report
- Socio-Economic Baseline Indicators Report
- Baseline Indicators for Fauna Report

B)   Key websites visited and consulted

UNDP Country Office, Syria http://www.undp.org.sy/
Syria Biodiversity Project http://www.undp.org.sy/index.php?page=content&id=project27
PRINCE2 for Project Management http://www.prince2.com/what-is-prince2.asp
Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity http://www.cbd.int/
GEF Evaluation Office http://www.thegef.org/gefevaluation.aspx

ANNEX 4   PERSONS MET AND CONSULTED

UNDP
Mr. Ismail Weld Ahmad, Resident Representative
Ms Zena Ahmad, Deputy Resident Representative.
Ms. Abir Zino, EE team leader.
Ms Abeer Mulnahassan, Consultant EE team.
Zakaria Asker, UNDP Financial assistance.
Ms. Miria Atalah, GEF Regional Coordinator (Telecom Conference)

Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MLAE)
Mr. Hilal Al-Atrash, Minister of Local Administration and Environment.
Mr. Imad Hasson, Deputy Minister of Local Administration and Environment.
Dr. Akram Khori, Director General for General Commission for Environmental Affairs.
Dr. Akram Darwish, Director of Biodiversity, General Commission for Environmental Affairs/ Project Coordinator

Project Management Unit
Mr. Adnan Saad, National Project Director
Mr. Osama Haj Muhammad, Project Accountant
Mr. Sami Tarabi, Project Technical Consultant
Mr. Taraq Abu Alhawa, ex-Project Implementation and Management Advisor
Ms. Abeer Mulnahassan., Consultant, Traditional Knowledge Documentation
Dr. Skander Ismail, Consultant, Socio-Economic Baseline Indicators
Dr. Wajeeh Kassiss, Consultant, Forest Ecology (Fauna baseline indicators)

Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform
Mr. Nabi Mohammad, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform
Mr. Zeyad Jabawe, Director of Forestry
Mr. Omar Zrik, National Project Focal Point

Abu Qubeis Protected Area/ Hama

Local Government
Mr. Mohammad Mansour, Director General for the General Commission of Al-Ghab Area/Deputy Head of the Local Steering Committee
Mr. Amar Razoug, Director of Natural Resources Directorate/ General Commission of Al-Ghab Area

The Site Management Unit
Mr. Fadi Al-Mahmoud, Site manager and flora expert
Mr. Yasser Nassour, Fauna and GIS expert
Mr. George Daoud, Bird expert
Mr. Yasser Al-Ahmad, Eco-tourism expert
Ms. Nuha Deeb, Development projects and local community liaison
Ms. Diana Deeb, Awareness and education expert

Birat Al-Jabal Village
Mr. Aboud Ismail (Mukhtar)
Mr. Mohammad Duob
Mr. Khazem Aboud
Mr. Mungith Aboud
Mr. Mahmoud Aboud
Mr. Fouad Aboud

Al- Mazraa Village

Mr. Ali Aboud
Mr. Taysser Aboud
Mr. Jihad Hatem
Mr. Isa Aboud
Ms Sahar Fandi

Al Fronloq Protected Area/ Lattakia

Local Government
Mr. Malik Shaboul, Governorate Executive Board Responsible of Agriculture and Irrigation/ Head of Local Steering Committee
Mr. Hassan Bdour, Agriculture Director/ Deputy Head of the Local Steering Committee

The Site Team:
Mr. Firas Bdour, Site manager
Mr. Osama Hatem, Local community liaison.
Mr. Somar Mariam, Flowera expert.
Mr. Maher Deoub, GIS expert.
Ms. Khoulod Sbiah, Eco-tourism expert.
Ms. Ottor Eskaif, Public awareness and education expert.
Ms. Gaida Younis, Environmental researcher.

Local Community
Ms. Suzan Kourdy, Representative of the Women Union/ member of the Local Steering Committee

Atirah Village
Mr. Othman Qoura Darbak (School Teacher).
Mr. Houssain Qoura Darbak
Mr. Yousaf Qoura Darbak
Mr. Ahmad Qoura Darbak
Mr. Zaria Qoura Mousa
Mr. Kamal Qaraja
Mr. Nadiam Qaraja
Mr. Jafar Qaraja

Al Dourah Village
Mr. Kamal Mohamad Agja
Ms. Fatimah Arqawi
Mr. Naziah Mustafah Agja
Mr. Mohammad M. Rajab
Mr. Ayman M. Rajab
Mr. Mohammad A. Agja
Mr. Nidal M. Agja
Mr. Farias A. Agja
Mr. Samiah O. Agja
Ms. Sahilah A. Agja
Mr. Nour Aldian Bouz Aoglan

Almazrah, Biat Sbirah and Biat Al shakh
Mr. Waliad Sharif (Al Mukhtar)
Mr. Ali Mohammad Ibrahim
Mr. Hassan Ghassan Ibrahim
Mr. Rafiak Ibrahim Aldiak.
Mr. Kariam Mustafah Sbirah
Mr. Ismail Ali Sbirah
Mr. Ahmad Mustafah Sbirah

Mr. Badir Mohammad Sbirah
Mr. Abdualla Ali Sbirah
Mr. Jamial Hussan Sbirah
Mahar Shaban Mhana
Mr. Adnan Ali Sbirah
Mr. Ibrahim Daoud Aldiak

Jabal Abdul Aziz Protected Area/ Hassakeh

Local Government
Mr. Hussan Bakour, Agriculture Director/ Deputy Head of the Local Steering Committee.
Mr. Ali Khallouf Al Jassem, Forestry Department Dead of Al-Hasaka Governorate

Site Team:
Mr. Riad Tarkho, Site manager
Ms. Hala Deeb, Local community and awareness
Mr. Ayssar Benjamin, Flowera expert.
Ms. Laila Al Barkho, Eco-tourism expert.
Mr. Zubeir AlAlabdo, Bird Research.
Mr. Mohammad Atieh, Development Research

Local Community

Saba Zlam Village
Ms. Fuza Al-Farhan
Mr. Abd Al-Aziz Aloush
Mr. Hussan Al Soulby
Mr. Mohammad Hussan
Mr. Habiab Al-Sadam
Mr. Ali Al-Mahmoud
Mr. Jazia Al-Alfarhan
Mr. Ahmad Al Hussan
Mr. Mahmoud Al-Aldarias

Al-Madianeh Village
Mr. Nourai Al Jadoua
Mr. Khalial Ismail
Mr. Bashiar Al Abduallah
Mr. Mahmoud Mustafah Mohammad
Mr. Ali Mohammad AlSair
Mr. Mahmoud Mohammad AlSair
Mr. Ahmad Mohammad AlSair
Mr. Mohammad Khalial Mohammad
Mr. Mohammad Ahmad Al Jadoua
Mr. Salah Ahmad Aloklah
Mr. Ali Mustafah Mohammad
Mr. Abd Mustafah Mohammad
Mr. Abu Talla (ex-parliament member), Local Steering Committee Member

The Draft Report was distributed (in English and Arabic versions) to:
UNDP CO
UNDP/GEF RTA
PMU
MAAR
MLAE

Site Manager and staff of Jebel Abdul Aziz Project Unit
Mr. Hussain Bakkour , Head of Agricultural Directorate, Hassakeh
Mr. Ali Khallof , Head of Forestry Department, Hassakeh

Site Manager and staff of Fronloq Project Unit
Mr Hassan Badour
Mr Moukdad Al Aji
Autierah Village - Uthman Karah Driek, Khalid Karah Driek, Zakaria Karah Mousa
Beit Subierah and Mazraa Village - Bader Subierah, Ismail Subierah, Maher Koujah

Site Manager and Staff of Abu Qubeis Project Unit
Mr Mohammad Mansour
Mr Ammar Rasouk
Bierah Al Jabal Village - Aboud Ismail, Mhmd Daioub, Munkiz Aboud , Mahmoud Aboud, Fouad
Aboud, Samir Aboud
Mazraa Village - Alli Aboud, Tayssir Aboud, Jihad Hatem, Issa Aboud, Ibrahim Aboud
Mashta Bierah Village - Nazieh Baloul, Ali Nasser, Sha'ban Baloul, Ali Assad, Jamil BAloul

ANNEX 5 DATA SHEETS FROM THE GEF TRACKING TOOL (METT) 2008
(as provided by the PMU)

Name of protected area	**JEBEL ABDUL AZIZ**

Location of protected area (country, ecoregion, and if possible map reference)	Syria, Al Hasakeh: Arid Mediterranean of cool variant with a continental dominance

Date of establishment (distinguish between agreed and gazetted*)	Agreed	Gazetted 11/May/2002

Ownership details (i.e. owner, tenure rights etc)	State ownership
Management Authority	Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform
Size of protected area (ha)	**28,604/ha** *(4,220 ha decision No 20 of 1993, then increased to 18,900 ha then to 49.000 in 2002 finally in 2007 28,604/ha)*

Number of staff	Permanent**64** (9 Rangers 55 guards)	Temporary**82** (6 rangers 75 guards 1 driver)

Annual budget (US$)	No budget specifically allocated for the protected area
Designations (IUCN category, World Heritage, Ramsar etc)	(Category II) National Park : foreseen designation
Reasons for designation	Initial area of 4,220 ha had more than 10% vegetation density. Protect and restore *Pestacia Atlantica plantation*
Brief details of GEF funded project or projects in PA	1-The World Bank-GEF MSP project at Arz/El Shouh protected area near Slenfe Latakia, Syria, project planned outputs include:(i)development of enabling legislation; (ii) institutional strengthening of MLAE and MAAR; (iii) extension and legal designation of the pilot PA; (iv) development and implementation of a management plan, and; (v) public awareness program. **2-**UNDP-GEF's regional project for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Dryland Agro-Biodiversity of the Fertile Crescent. the project has promoted conservation of agro-biodiversity, training and public awareness.
Brief details of other relevant projects in PA	Projects in Jordan (Tarek) Projects In Lebanon(Nathalie)

List the two primary protected area objectives

Objective 1	To Conserve the characteristic habitats and species while restoring the degraded representative habitats where necessary
Objective 2	To develop a range of alternative sustainable livelihoods for the local communities.

List the top two most important threats to the PA (and indicate reasons why these were chosen)

Threat 1	Overgrazing (mainly goats)
Threat 2	Illegal hunting

List top two critical management activities

Activity 1	Control of overgrazing.
Activity 2	Afforestation currently on the periphery *(Pistacia spp & Pinus spp)*

Name/s of assessor (including people consulted):_ Sami Tarabieh, Adnan Saad, Ziad Jebawi, Omar Zourek, Akram Darwish, Riad Tarko, , Ali Khalouf.
Contact details (email etc.): adnan.saad@undpprojects.sy

Date assessment carried out (Day/Month/Year):23/ June/2008

* Or formally established in the case of private protected areas

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
1. Legal status Does the protected area have legal status? *Context*	The protected area is not gazetted	0		
	The government has agreed that the protected area should be gazetted but the process has not yet begun	1		
	The protected area is in the process of being gazetted but the process is still incomplete	2		
	The protected area has been legally gazetted (or in the case of private reserves is owned by a trust or similar)	**3**	The protected area was gazetted by formal governmental act 27T/11-May-2002. The area was extended from 4,220 ha decision No 20 of 1993, then increased to 18,900 ha then finally to 49,000 in 2002	
2. Protected area regulations Are inappropriate land uses and activities (e.g. poaching) controlled? *Context*	There are no mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area	0		
	Mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area exist but there are major problems in implementing them effectively	**1**	.	
	Mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area exist but there are some problems in effectively implementing them	2		
	Mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area exist and are being effectively implemented	3		
3. Law enforcement	The staff have no effective capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations	0		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Can staff enforce protected area rules well enough?	There are major deficiencies in staff capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations (e.g. lack of skills, no patrol budget)	1		
Context	The staff have acceptable capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations but some deficiencies remain	**2**	The current staff consists of rangers and forestry guards that need capacity and resources to effectively enforce existing legislations within the area designated.	• Staff Training is required; • Budget allocation; • Equipment is needed.
	The staff have excellent capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and Regulations	3		
4. Protected area objectives	No firm objectives have been agreed for the protected area	0		
Have objectives been agreed?	The protected area has agreed objectives, but is not managed according to these Objectives	**1**	The objectives are stated by the authorities; however, less attention was paid to set a plan that incorporate those objectives. (afforestaion program is already in place to plant *Pistacia spp & Pinus spp* on the periphery of the protected area)	Comprehensive Management plan is needed which includes protected area objectives and all stakeholders.
Planning	The protected area has agreed objectives, but these are only partially implemented	2		
	The protected area has agreed objectives and is managed to meet these objectives	3		
5. Protected area design	Inadequacies in design mean achieving the protected areas major management objectives of the protected area is impossible	0		
Does the protected area need enlarging,	Inadequacies in design mean that achievement of major objectives are constrained to some extent	**1**		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
corridors etc to meet its objectives? *Planning*	Design is not significantly constraining achievement of major objectives, but could be improved	2		
	Reserve design features are particularly aiding achievement of major objectives of the protected area	3		
6. Protected area boundary demarcation Is the boundary known and demarcated? *Context*	The boundary of the protected area is not known by the management authority or local residents/neighbouring land users	0		
	The boundary of the protected area is known by the management authority but is not known by local residents/neighbouring land users	**1**	The protected area was extended three times during 1993-2002 "4,220 to 18,900 finally 49,000 ha), 18,900 ha is the only area known by local communities.	Accurate demarcation is required, Local communities should be informed about the accurate boundaries of the protected area
	The boundary of the protected area is known by both the management authority and local residents but is not appropriately demarcated	2		
	The boundary of the protected area is known by the management authority and local residents and is appropriately demarcated	3		
7. Management plan Is there a management plan and is it being implemented? *Planning*	There is no management plan for the protected area	0	Existing plan is part of the general plan of forestry department on the provincial level, the only activates include patrolling, fire control and periphery afforestation.	Comprehensive Management plan is needed which includes all the protected area objectives exist and implemented.
	A management plan is being prepared or has been prepared but is not being implemented	**1**		
	An approved management plan exists but it is only being partially implemented because of funding constraints or other problems	2		
	An approved management plan exists and is being implemented	3		
Additional points	The planning process allows adequate opportunity for key stakeholders to influence the management plan	+1		
	There is an established schedule and process for periodic review and updating of the management plan	+1		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
Planning	The results of monitoring, research and evaluation are routinely incorporated into Planning	+1		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
8. Regular work plan	No regular work plan exists	0		
Is there an annual work plan?	A regular work plan exists but activities are not monitored against the plan's targets	**1**	The work plan is part of the forestry department work plan	Defined work and performance monitoring plan is needed based on the management plan specifically designed for the protected area.
	A regular work plan exists and actions are monitored against the plan's targets, but many activities are not completed	2		
Planning/Outputs	A regular work plan exists, actions are monitored against the plan's targets and most or all prescribed activities are completed	3		
9. Resource inventory	There is little or no information available on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area	0	.	
Do you have enough information to manage the area?	Information on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area is not sufficient to support planning and decision making	**1**	The only information available was gathered during the PDF-B using International and local expertise.	Planned studies and monitoring programs should be conducted. Some information are scattered and need to be compiled: this include MSc studied, researches, data management System etc
Context	Information on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area is sufficient for key areas of planning/decision making but the necessary survey work is not being maintained	2		
	Information concerning on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area is sufficient to support planning and decision making and is being maintained	3		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
10. Research	There is no survey or research work taking place in the protected area	0		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Is there a programme of management-orientated survey and research work?	There is some ad hoc survey and research Work	**1**	MSc study on flora, small scale taxonomy and some surveys were conducted.	• Compile available data and historic information such as "fauna, flora, social ...etc"; • Identify research and management needs; • Establish research programme based on the above points.
	There is considerable survey and research work but it is not directed towards the needs of protected area management	2		
	There is a comprehensive, integrated programme of survey and research work, which is relevant to management needs	3		
11. Resource management	Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values have not been assessed	0		
Is the protected area adequately managed (e.g. for fire, invasive species, poaching)?	Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values are known but are not being Addressed	**1**	The only management activities are :fire control and patrolling	• Extensive assessment of present ecosystems,species and cultural values; • Establishment of active management component to monitor ecosystem integrity
	Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values are only being partially addressed	2		
Process	Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values are being substantially or fully Addressed	3		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
12. Staff numbers	There are no staff	0		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Are there enough people employed to manage the protected area?	Staff numbers are inadequate for critical management activities	1		.
	Staff numbers are below optimum level for critical management activities	**2**	Biodiversity section within the forestry service office includes two engineers, in addition to 64 permanent staff and 82 temporary staff *(rangers and forestry guards).*current staff number are not enough to cover the whole area designated 49,000 ha.	The need for: • Human resource assessment; • Capacity building programme
Inputs	Staff numbers are adequate for the management needs of the site	3		
13. Personnel management	Problems with personnel management constrain the achievement of major management objectives	0		
Are the staff managed well enough?	Problems with personnel management partially constrain the achievement of major management objectives	**1**		
Process	Personnel management is adequate to the achievement of major management objectives but could be improved	2		
	Personnel management is excellent and aids the achievement major management objectives	3		
14. Staff training Is there enough	Staff are untrained	0		
	Staff training and skills are low relative to the	**1**		
training for staff?	needs of the protected area			
	Staff training and skills are adequate, but	2		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
	could be further improved to fully achieve the objectives of management			
Inputs/Process	Staff training and skills are in tune with the management needs of the protected area, and with anticipated future needs	3		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
15. Current budget	There is no budget for the protected area	0		
	The available budget is inadequate for basic	**1**	Budget is part of the general budget allocated at provincial level	Assessment of the budget allocation to properly mange the protected area and propose the establishment of special budget.
Is the current budget sufficient?	management needs and presents a serious constraint to the capacity to manage			
	The available budget is acceptable, but could be further improved to fully achieve effective management	2		
Inputs	The available budget is sufficient and meets the full management needs of the protected area	3		
16. Security of budget	There is no secure budget for the protected area and management is wholly reliant on outside or year by year funding	0		
Is the budget secure?	There is very little secure budget and the protected area could not function adequately without outside funding	**1**	Secured budget allocated for the protected area is part of the general yearly budget allocated at provincial level	Propose the allocation of secured budget
	There is a reasonably secure core budget for the protected area but many innovations and initiatives are reliant on outside funding	2		
Inputs	There is a secure budget for the protected area and its management needs on a multi-year cycle	3		
17. Management of budget	Budget management is poor and significantly undermines effectiveness	0		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
Is the budget managed to meet critical management needs?	Budget management is poor and constrains effectiveness	**1**		
	Budget management is adequate but could be improved	2		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Process	Budget management is excellent and aids effectiveness	3		
18. Equipment	There are little or no equipment and facilities	0		
Are there adequate equipment and	There are some equipment and facilities but these are wholly inadequate	**1**	Equipment for patrolling are inadequate to cover the total PA effectively,	The need to : • Identify and procure required equipment according to the management plan; • Provide the facilities to support responsible staff to carry on their assigned duties and implement the management work plan designed for the protected area.
facilities?	There are equipment and facilities, but still some major gaps that constrain management	2		
Process	There are adequate equipment and facilities	3		
19. Maintenance of equipment	There is little or no maintenance of equipment and facilities	0		
Is equipment adequately maintained?	There is some ad *hoc* maintenance of equipment and facilities	**1**		
Process	There is maintenance of equipment and facilities, but there are some important gaps in maintenance	2		
	Equipment and facilities are well maintained	3		
20. Education and awareness programme	There is no education and awareness programme	0	.	
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Is there a planned education programme?	There is a limited and ad *hoc* education and awareness programme, but no overall planning for this	**1**	Available program is through the extension service of the ministry of agriculture and agrarian reform which has considerable staff. In resent years, environmental issues emerged and ministry of education played a role in introducing environmental concepts in its educational system. Yet, no programme specifically for protected areas	Establishment of an education and awareness programme targeting different levels that involve: • Ministry of Education • Ministry of Tourism • Agricultural Rural Theater • Extension service (MAAR) • MLAE • NGO's • Others initiatives, FAO..etc
Process	There is a planned education and awareness programme but there are still serious gaps	2		
	There is a planned and effective education and awareness programme fully linked to the objectives and needs of the protected area	3		
21. State and commercial neighbours Is there co-operation with adjacent land users?	There is no contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users	0		
	There is limited contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users	**1**	Despite the fact that some of the staff are from the local communities resident within the protected area; there has been insignificant contact between managers and Local communities	Enhance and create the trust between managers and local communities through participatory approached to increase their participation in implementing the management plan.
	There is regular contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users, but only limited co-operation	2		
Process	There is regular contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users, and substantial co-operation on management	3		
22. Indigenous people	Indigenous and traditional peoples have no input into decisions relating to the management of the protected area	0	Not applicable: no indigenous people living in or around the protected area	

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Do indigenous and traditional peoples resident or regularly using the PA have input to management decisions? *Process*	Indigenous and traditional peoples have some input into discussions relating to management but no direct involvement in the resulting decisions	1		
	Indigenous and traditional peoples directly contribute to some decisions relating to management	2		
	Indigenous and traditional peoples directly participate in making decisions relating to management	3		
23. Local communities	Local communities have no input into decisions relating to the management of the protected area	0		Adopt the participatory approaches to include the local communities in the decision process
Do local communities resident or near the protected area have input to management decisions?	Local communities have some input into discussions relating to management but no direct involvement in the resulting decisions	**1**		
	Local communities directly contribute to some decisions relating to management	2		
	Local communities directly participate in making decisions relating to management	3		
Additional points	There is open communication and trust between local stakeholders and protected area managers	**+1**		
Outputs	Programmes to enhance local community welfare, while conserving protected area resources, are being implemented	+1		
24. Visitor facilities	There are no visitor facilities and services	**0**		
	Visitor facilities and services are Inappropriate for current levels of visitation or	1		
	Visitor facilities and services are adequate for current levels of visitation but could be improved	2		
Outputs	Visitor facilities and services are excellent for current levels of visitation	3		
25. Commercial tourism	There is little or no contact between managers and tourism operators using the protected area	**0**		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
Do commercial tour operators	There is contact between managers and tourism operators but this is largely confined to administrative or regulatory matters	1		

Process	There is limited co-operation between managers and tourism operators to enhance visitor experiences and maintain protected area values	2		
	There is excellent co-operation between managers and tourism operators to enhance visitor experiences, protect values and resolve conflicts	3		
26. Fees If fees (tourism, fines) are applied, do they help protected area management? *Outputs*	Although fees are theoretically applied, they are not collected	**0**	No fees originally	
	The fee is collected, but it goes straight to central government and is not returned to the protected area or its environs	1		
	The fee is collected, but is disbursed to the local authority rather than the protected area	2		
	There is a fee for visiting the protected area that helps to support this and/or other protected areas	3		
27. Condition assessment Is the protected area being managed consistent to its objectives? *Outcomes*	Important biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are being severely degraded	0	No sufficient information is available	Ecological and social surveys to verify
	Some biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are being severely degraded	**1**		
	Some biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are being partially degraded but the most important values have not been significantly impacted	2		
	Biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are predominantly intact	3		
Additional points *Outputs*	There are active programmes for restoration of degraded areas within the protected area and/or the protected area buffer zone	+1		
28. Access assessment	Protection systems (patrols, permits etc) are ineffective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives	0	Due to limited staff, inadequate training and skills and unavailability of required equipment	Design and Implement an effective protection system as part of the management plan for protected area management.

TOTAL SCORE		**32**	
Total Percentage		**33.1%**	
~~access/resource~~ controlled?

Outcomes | ~~in controlling access or use of the reserve in~~ accordance with designated objectives | | |
| | Protection systems are moderately effective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives | 2 | |
| | Protection systems are largely or wholly effective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives | 3 | |
| 29. Economic benefit assessment

Is the protected area providing | The existence of the protected area has reduced the options for economic development of the local communities | 0 | |
| | The existence of the protected area has neither damaged nor benefited the local economy | 1 | |
| economic benefits to local communities?

Outcomes | There is some flow of economic benefits to local communities from the existence of the protected area but this is of minor significance to the regional economy | **2** | |
	There is a significant or major flow of economic benefits to local communities from activities in and around the protected area (e.g. employment of locals, locally operated commercial tours etc)	3	
30. Monitoring and evaluation	There is no monitoring and evaluation in the protected area	0	
Are management activities monitored	There is some ad hoc monitoring and evaluation, but no overall strategy and/or no regular collection of results	**1**	
against Performance?	There is an agreed and implemented monitoring and evaluation system but results are not systematically used for management	2	
Planning/Process	A good monitoring and evaluation system exists, is well implemented and used in adaptive management	3	

Reporting Progress in Protected Areas: Data Sheet

Name of protected area	Abou-Qubies		
Location of protected area (country, ecoregion, and if possible map reference)	Syria, governorate of Hama, eco-region: it falls within the sub-humid to humid Mediterranean climate with cool to cold variant.		
Date of establishment (distinguish between agreed and gazetted*)	Agreed		Gazetted 29/May/1999
Ownership details (i.e. owner, tenure rights etc)	State ownership with minor private ownerships (*including villages and private land ownerships*)		
Management Authority	Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform through its newly established body: the General Commission for Management and Development of Al-Ghab (*established in 2005 effective 2006*).		
Size of protected area (ha)	**3,674/ha** (*however, in PDF-B the national team survey concluded that the area actually designated is only 5000 ha*)		
Number of staff	Permanent: 25-30	Temporary: 15-20 (*holding yearly contracts*)	
Annual budget (US$)	No budget specifically allocated for the protected area		
Designations (IUCN category, World Heritage, Ramsar etc)	(Category II) National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation		
Reasons for designation	*The decision did not specify the type of protected area, however, it clearly banned all activities within it boundaries.*		
Brief details of GEF funded project or projects in PA	1-The World Bank-GEF MSP project at Arz/El Shouh protected area near Slenfe Latakia, Syria, project planned outputs include:(i)development of enabling legislation; (ii) institutional strengthening of MLAE and MAAR; (iii) extension and legal designation of the pilot PA; (iv) development and implementation of a management plan, and; (v) public awareness program. **2-**UNDP-GEF's regional project for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Dryland Agro-Biodiversity of the Fertile Crescent. the project has promoted conservation of agro-biodiversity, training and public awareness.		
Brief details of other relevant projects in PA	Projects in Jordan (Tarek) Projects In Lebanon(Nathalie)		

Objective 1	restore and maintain the characteristic forest habitat and associated biodiversity
Objective 2	Increase the populations of known threatened species to reach viable density
List the top two most important threats to the PA (and indicate reasons why these were chosen)	
Threat 1	Woodcutting and charcoal making
Threat 2	Overgrazing mainly goat herding
List top two critical management activities	
Activity 1	Enforcement of Forestry of Law # 7 including patrolling for compliance and monitoring.
Activity 2	Forestry activities including: mono-specific afforestation, fire fighting and forest development as part of the general plan of the General Commission for Management and Development of Al-Ghab.

Name/s of assessor (including people consulted):, Adnan Saad, Ziad Jebawi, Omar Zourek, Akram Darwish, Fadi El Mahmoud,Sami Tarabieh
Contact details (email etc.): adnan.saad@undpprojects.sy
Date assessment carried out (Day/Month/Year):23/ June/2008

* Or formally established in the case of private protected area

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
1. Legal status	The protected area is not gazetted	0		
Does the protected area have legal status?	The government has agreed that the protected area should be gazetted but the process has not yet begun	1		
	The protected area is in the process of being gazetted but the process is still incomplete	2		
Context	The protected area has been legally gazetted (or in the case of private reserves is owned by a trust or similar)	**3**		
2. Protected area regulations	There are no mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area	0		
Are inappropriate land uses and activities (e.g. poaching) controlled?	Mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area exist but there are major problems in implementing them effectively	**1**	The only mechanisms ready in place is the enforcement of *Forestry Law No 7*.the law sets rules and regulations for the protection exploitations of the forests and penalties for violations. With the current staff capacities and existing equipment, implementation is not efficient to cover the area designated	• Staff resource; • Staff Training ; • Equipment is needed • (transportation); • Budget allocation;
Context	Mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area exist but there are some problems in effectively implementing them	2		
	Mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area exist and are being effectively implemented	3		
3. Law enforcement	The staff have no effective capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations	0		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Can staff enforce protected area rules well enough? *Context*	There are major deficiencies in staff capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations (e.g. lack of skills, no patrol budget)	1		
	The staff have acceptable capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations but some deficiencies remain	**2**		
	The staff have excellent capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and Regulations	3		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
4. Protected area objectives	No firm objectives have been agreed for the protected area	0		
Have objectives been agreed?	The protected area has agreed objectives, but is not managed according to these Objectives	**1**	The objectives are well stated by the authorities; however, less attention was paid to set a plan that incorporate those objectives.	Comprehensive Management plan is needed which includes all the protected area objectives.
Planning	The protected area has agreed objectives, but these are only partially implemented	2		
	The protected area has agreed objectives and is managed to meet these objectives	3		
5. Protected area design	Inadequacies in design mean achieving the protected areas major management objectives of the protected area is impossible	0		
Does the protected area need enlarging,	Inadequacies in design mean that achievement of major objectives are constrained to some extent	1		
corridors etc to meet its objectives? *Planning*	Design is not significantly constraining achievement of major objectives, but could be improved	**2**		
	Reserve design features are particularly aiding achievement of major objectives of the protected area	3		

6. Protected area boundary demarcation Is the boundary known and demarcated? *Context*	The boundary of the protected area is not known by the management authority or local residents/neighboring land users	0		
	The boundary of the protected area is known by the management authority but is not known by local residents/neighboring land users	**1**		
	The boundary of the protected area is known by both the management authority and local residents but is not appropriately demarcated	2		
	The boundary of the protected area is known by the management authority and local residents and is appropriately demarcated	3		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
7. Management plan Is there a management plan and is it being implemented? *Planning*	There is no management plan for the protected area	0		
	A management plan is being prepared or has been prepared but is not being implemented	**1**		
	An approved management plan exists but it is only being partially implemented because of funding constraints or other problems	2		
	An approved management plan exists and is being implemented	3		
Additional points *Planning*	The planning process allows adequate opportunity for key stakeholders to influence the management plan	+1		
	There is an established schedule and process for periodic review and updating of the management plan	+1		
	The results of monitoring, research and evaluation are routinely incorporated into planning	+1		
8. Regular work plan	No regular work plan exists	0	No specific work plan for the protected area. The work plan is part of the the General Commission for Management and Development of Al-Ghab work plan.	Defined work and performance monitoring plan is needed based on the management plan specifically designed for the protected area

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Is there an annual work plan?	A regular work plan exists but activities are not monitored against the plan's targets	**1**		
	A regular work plan exists and actions are monitored against the plan's targets, but many activities are not completed	2		
Planning/Outputs	A regular work plan exists, actions are monitored against the plan's targets and most or all prescribed activities are completed	3		
9. Resource inventory	There is little or no information available on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area	0	The only information available was gathered during the PDF-B using International and local expertise.	Planned studies and monitoring programs should be conducted. Some information are scattered and need to be compiled: this include MSc studied, researches, data management System etc.
Do you have enough information to manage the area?	Information on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area is not sufficient to support planning and decision making	**1**		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Context	Information on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area is sufficient for key areas of planning/decision making but the necessary survey work is not being maintained	2		
	Information concerning on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area is sufficient to support planning and decision making and is being maintained	3		
10. Research Is there a programme of management-orientated survey and research work?	There is no survey or research work taking place in the protected area	0		
	There is some ad hoc survey and research work	1		
	There is considerable survey and research work but it is not directed towards the needs of protected area management	**2**		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Inputs	There is a comprehensive, integrated programme of survey and research work, which is relevant to management needs	3		
11. Resource management	Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values have not been assessed	0		
Is the protected area adequately managed (e.g. for fire, invasive species, poaching)?	Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values are known but are not being addressed	**1**		
	Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values are only being partially addressed	2		
Process	Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values are being substantially or fully addressed	3		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
12. Staff numbers Are there enough people employed	There are no staff	0		
	Staff numbers are inadequate for critical management activities	1		
	Staff numbers are below optimum level for critical management activities	**2**		
Inputs	Staff numbers are adequate for the management needs of the site	3		
13. Personnel management	Problems with personnel management constrain the achievement of major management objectives	0		
Are the staff managed well enough?	Problems with personnel management partially constrain the achievement of major management objectives	1		
	Personnel management is adequate to the	**2**		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Process	achievement of major management objectives but could be improved			
	Personnel management is excellent and aids the achievement major management objectives	3		
14. Staff training Is there enough	Staff are untrained	0		
training for staff?	Staff training and skills are low relative to the	1		
	Staff training and skills are adequate, but could be further improved to fully achieve the objectives of management	**2**		
Inputs/Process	Staff training and skills are in tune with the management needs of the protected area, and with anticipated future needs	3		
15. Current budget	There is no budget for the protected area	0		
Is the current budget sufficient?	The available budget is inadequate for basic management needs and presents a serious constraint to the capacity to manage	**1**		
	The available budget is acceptable, but could be further improved to fully achieve effective management	2		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
Inputs	The available budget is sufficient and meets the full management needs of the protected area	3		
16. Security of budget	There is no secure budget for the protected area and management is wholly reliant on outside or year by year funding	0		
Is the budget secure?	There is very little secure budget and the protected area could not function adequately without outside funding	**1**		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Inputs	There is a reasonably secure core budget for the protected area but many innovations and initiatives are reliant on outside funding	2		
	There is a secure budget for the protected area and its management needs on a multi-year cycle	3		
17. Management of budget Is the budget managed to meet critical management needs? *Process*	Budget management is poor and significantly undermines effectiveness	0	No budget exist to be managed	
	Budget management is poor and constrains effectiveness	**1**		
	Budget management is adequate but could be improved	2		
	Budget management is excellent and aids effectiveness	3		
18. Equipment Are there adequate equipment and facilities? *Process*	There are little or no equipment and facilities	0		
	There are some equipment and facilities but these are wholly inadequate	**1**		
	There are equipment and facilities, but still some major gaps that constrain management	2		
	There are adequate equipment and facilities	3		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
19. Maintenance of equipment Is equipment adequately maintained? *Process*	There is little or no maintenance of equipment and facilities	0		
	There is some ad *hoc* maintenance of equipment and facilities	**1**		
	There is maintenance of equipment and facilities, but there are some important gaps in maintenance	2		
	Equipment and facilities are well maintained	3		
20. Education and awareness programme	There is no education and awareness programme	0		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Is there a planned education programme? *Process*	There is a limited and ad *hoc* education and awareness programme, but no overall planning for this	**1**	Available program is through the extension service of the ministry of agriculture and agrarian reform which has considerable staff. In resent years, environmental issues emerged and ministry of education played a role in introducing environmental concepts in its educational system. Yet, no programme specifically for protected areas	Establishment of an education and awareness programme targeting different levels that involve: • Ministry of Education • Ministry of Tourism • Agricultural Rural Theater • Extension service (MAAR) • MLAE • NGO's • Others initiatives, FAO..etc
	There is a planned education and awareness programme but there are still serious gaps	2		
	There is a planned and effective education and awareness programme fully linked to the objectives and needs of the protected area	3		
21. State and commercial neighbours Is there co-operation with adjacent land users? *Process*	There is no contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users	0		
	There is limited contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users	**1**		
	There is regular contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users, but only limited co-operation	2		
	There is regular contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users, and substantial co-operation on management	3		
22. Indigenous people	Indigenous and traditional peoples have no input into decisions relating to the management of the protected area	**0**	not be applicable Question (Omit)	

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Do indigenous and traditional peoples resident or regularly using the PA have input to management decisions? *Process*	Indigenous and traditional peoples have some input into discussions relating to management but no direct involvement in the resulting decisions	1		
	Indigenous and traditional peoples directly contribute to some decisions relating to management	2		
	Indigenous and traditional peoples directly participate in making decisions relating to management	3		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
23. Local communities Do local communities resident or near the protected area have input to management decisions? *Process*	Local communities have no input into decisions relating to the management of the protected area	0		Adopt the participatory approaches to include the local communities in the decision process
	Local communities have some input into discussions relating to management but no direct involvement in the resulting decisions	**1**		
	Local communities directly contribute to some decisions relating to management	2		
	Local communities directly participate in making decisions relating to management	3		
Additional points *Outputs*	There is open communication and trust between local stakeholders and protected area managers	**+1**		
	Programmes to enhance local community welfare, while conserving protected area resources, are being implemented	+1		
24. Visitor facilities Are visitor facilities (for tourists, pilgrims etc) good enough? *Outputs*	There are no visitor facilities and services	0		
	Visitor facilities and services are Inappropriate for current levels of visitation or are under construction	**1**		
	Visitor facilities and services are adequate for current levels of visitation but could be improved	2		
	Visitor facilities and services are excellent for current levels of visitation	3		
25. Commercial tourism	There is little or no contact between managers and tourism operators using the protected area	0	of contributions	

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Do commercial tour operators contribute to protected area management?	There is contact between managers and tourism operators but this is largely confined to administrative or regulatory matters	**1**		
	There is limited co-operation between managers and tourism operators to enhance visitor experiences and maintain protected area values	2		

Process	There is excellent co-operation between managers and tourism operators to enhance visitor experiences, protect values and resolve conflicts	3		
26. Fees If fees (tourism, fines) are applied, do they help protected area management? *Outputs*	Although fees are theoretically applied, they are not collected	**0**	No fees originally	
	The fee is collected, but it goes straight to central government and is not returned to the protected area or its environs	1		
	The fee is collected, but is disbursed to the local authority rather than the protected area	2		
	There is a fee for visiting the protected area that helps to support this and/or other protected areas	3		
27. Condition assessment Is the protected area being managed consistent to its objectives? *Outcomes*	Important biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are being severely degraded	0	*Possible issue for comment:* It is important to provide details of the biodiversity, ecological or cultural values being affected	
	Some biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are being severely degraded	1		
	Some biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are being partially degraded but the most important values have not been significantly impacted	**2**		
	Biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are predominantly intact	3		
Additional points *Outputs*	There are active programmes for restoration of degraded areas within the protected area and/or the protected area buffer zone	+1		
28. Access assessment	Protection systems (patrols, permits etc) are ineffective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives	0		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Is access/resource use sufficiently	Protection systems are only partially effective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives	**1**	Due to limited staff, inadequate training and skills and unavailability of required equipment	Design and Implement an effective protection system as part of the management plan for protected area management.

controlled? *Outcomes*	Protection systems are moderately effective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives	2		
	Protection systems are largely or wholly effective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives	3		
29. Economic benefit assessment Is the protected area providing economic benefits to local communities? *Outcomes*	The existence of the protected area has reduced the options for economic development of the local communities	0		
	The existence of the protected area has neither damaged nor benefited the local economy	**1**	Still all activities are being implemented; however, there was a decreased in alternatives	Alternative income generation program is crucially needed. Micro finance scheme
	There is some flow of economic benefits to local communities from the existence of the protected area but this is of minor significance to the regional economy	2		
	There is a significant or major flow of economic benefits to local communities from activities in and around the protected area (e.g. employment of locals, locally operated commercial tours etc)	3		
30. Monitoring and evaluation Are management activities monitored against performance? *Planning/Process*	There is no monitoring and evaluation in the protected area	0		Monitoring and evaluation system in place that gives positive feedback for a better adaptive management plan.
	There is some ad hoc monitoring and evaluation, but no overall strategy and/or no regular collection of results	**1**		
	There is an agreed and implemented monitoring and evaluation system but results are not systematically used for management	2		
	A good monitoring and evaluation system exists, is well implemented and used in adaptive management	3		
TOTAL SCORE		**37**		
TOTAL PERCENTAGE		**38.27%**		

Reporting Progress in Protected Areas: Data Sheet

Name of protected area	**FRONLOQ**		
Location of protected area (country, ecoregion, and if possible map reference)	Syria, governorate of Lattakia, eco-region: it falls within the Eu-Mediterranean to the Upper Mediterranean vegetation zones, climatically, the area falls within the cool variant of the sub-humid to humid bio-climatic zone of the Mediterranean climate.		
Date of establishment (distinguish between agreed and gazetted*)	Agreed		Gazetted 29/May/1999
Ownership details (i.e. owner, tenure rights etc)	State ownership with minor private ownership		
Management Authority	Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform		
Size of protected area (ha)	**5,390/ha** (during *PDF-B, additional 3,000 ha were recommended for gazetting, then final demarcation In 2007*)		
Number of staff	Permanent 14-18	Temporary 7-10	
Annual budget (US$)	No budget specifically allocated for the protected area		
Designations (IUCN category, World Heritage, Ramsar etc)	(Category II) National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation		
Reasons for designation	Conservation of the poly climax vegetation as it is the most developed/mature ecosystem in Syria. This ecosystem is considered very fragile and sensitive to pressures.		
Brief details of GEF funded project or projects in PA	1-The World Bank-GEF MSP project at Arz/El Shouh protected area near Slenfe Latakia, Syria, project planned outputs include:(i)development of enabling legislation; (ii) institutional strengthening of MLAE and MAAR; (iii) extension and legal designation of the pilot PA; (iv) development and implementation of a management plan, and; (v) public awareness program. **2-**UNDP-GEF's regional project for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Dryland Agro-Biodiversity of the Fertile Crescent. the project has promoted conservation of agro-biodiversity, training and public awareness.		
Brief details of other relevant projects in PA	Projects in Jordan (Tarek) Project In Lebanon(Nathalie)		

List the two primary protected area objectives

Objective 1	Improve the management of visitor pressure and minimize harmful impacts on the forest habitat.
Objective 2	restore and maintain the characteristic forest habitat and associated biodiversity

List the top two most important threats to the PA (and indicate reasons why these were chosen)

Threat 1	Unplanned tourism
Threat 2	Fire

List top two critical management activities

Activity 1	Fire control and monitoring
Activity 2	Patrolling Law enforcement (wood cutting)

Name/s of assessor (including people consulted):, Adnan Saad, Ziad Jebawi, Omar Zourek, Akram Darwish, Firas Badour,Sami tarabieh.
Contact details (email etc.): adnan.saad@undpprojects.sy
Date assessment carried out (Day/Month/Year):23/Junel/2008
* Or formally established in the case of private protected areas

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
1. Legal status Does the protected area have legal status?	The protected area is not gazetted	0		
	The government has agreed that the protected area should be gazetted but the process has not yet begun	1		
	The protected area is in the process of being gazetted but the process is still incomplete	2	.	
	The protected area has been legally gazetted (or in the case of private reserves is owned by a trust or similar)	**3**		
2. Protected area regulations Are inappropriate land uses and activities (e.g. poaching) controlled? *Context*	There are no mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area	0		
	Mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area exist but there are major problems in implementing them effectively	**1**	The only mechanisms ready in place is the enforcement of Forestry Law No 7.the law sets rules and regulations for the protection exploitations of the forests and penalties for violations. With the current staff capacities and existing equipment, implementation is not efficient to cover the area designated.	• Staff resource; • Staff Training is required; • Equipment is needed • (transportation); • Budget allocation
	Mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area exist but there are some problems in effectively implementing them	2		
	Mechanisms for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the protected area exist and are being effectively implemented	3		
3. Law enforcement	The staff have no effective capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations	0	*Possible issue for comment:* What happens if people are arrested?	

Can staff enforce protected area rules well enough? *Context*	There are major deficiencies in staff capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations (e.g. lack of skills, no patrol budget)	**1**		
	The staff have acceptable capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations but some deficiencies remain	2		
	The staff have excellent capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and Regulations	3		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
4. Protected area objectives Have objectives been agreed? *Planning*	No firm objectives have been agreed for the protected area	0		
	The protected area has agreed objectives, but is not managed according to these Objectives	**1**		
	The protected area has agreed objectives, but these are only partially implemented	2		
	The protected area has agreed objectives and is managed to meet these objectives	3		
5. Protected area design Does the protected area need enlarging, corridors etc to meet its objectives? *Planning*	Inadequacies in design mean achieving the protected areas major management objectives of the protected area is impossible	0		
	Inadequacies in design mean that achievement of major objectives are constrained to some extent	**1**		
	Design is not significantly constraining achievement of major objectives, but could be improved	2		
	Reserve design features are particularly aiding achievement of major objectives of the protected area	3		
6. Protected area boundary demarcation	The boundary of the protected area is not known by the management authority or local residents/neighbouring land users	0		

Is the boundary known and demarcated? *Context*	The boundary of the protected area is known by the management authority but is not known by local residents/neighbouring land users	**1**	The currant area gazetted; however, there is a proposal to increase its size by 3,000 ha.	Accurate demarcation is required, Local communities should be informed about the accurate boundaries of the protected area
	The boundary of the protected area is known by both the management authority and local residents but is not appropriately demarcated	2		
	The boundary of the protected area is known by the management authority and local residents and is appropriately demarcated	3		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
7. Management plan	There is no management plan for the protected area	0		
Is there a management plan and is it being implemented? *Planning*	A management plan is being prepared or has been prepared but is not being implemented	**1**		
	An approved management plan exists but it is only being partially implemented because of funding constraints or other problems	2		
	An approved management plan exists and is being implemented	3		
Additional points	The planning process allows adequate opportunity for key stakeholders to influence the management plan	+1		
	There is an established schedule and process for periodic review and updating of the management plan	+1		
Planning	The results of monitoring, research and evaluation are routinely incorporated into planning	+1		
8. Regular work plan	No regular work plan exists	0		
Is there an annual work plan?	A regular work plan exists but activities are not monitored against the plan's targets	**1**		
	A regular work plan exists and actions are monitored against the plan's targets, but many activities are not completed	2		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Planning/Outputs	A regular work plan exists, actions are monitored against the plan's targets and most or all prescribed activities are completed	3		
9. Resource inventory	There is little or no information available on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area	0		
Do you have enough information to manage the area?	Information on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area is not sufficient to support planning and decision making	**1**	The information available was gathered during the PDF-B using International and local expertise.	Planned studies and monitoring programs should be conducted. Some information are scattered and need to be compiled: this include MSc studied, researches, data management System etc
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
Context	Information on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area is sufficient for key areas of planning/decision making but the necessary survey work is not being maintained	2		
	Information concerning on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the protected area is sufficient to support planning and decision making and is being maintained	3		
10. Research Is there a programme of management-orientated survey and research work?	There is no survey or research work taking place in the protected area	0		
	There is some ad hoc survey and research work	1		
	There is considerable survey and research work but it is not directed towards the needs of protected area management	**2**		
Inputs	There is a comprehensive, integrated programme of survey and research work, which is relevant to management needs	3		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
11. Resource management Is the protected area adequately managed (e.g. for fire, invasive species, poaching)? *Process*	Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values have not been assessed	0	Fronloq has poly climax vegetation and considered as the most developed /mature ecosystem in Syria. This ecosystem is considered very fragile and sensitive to pressures. despite all of that, the only management activities carried out are :fire control and patrolling.	• Extensive assessment of present ecosystems,species and cultural values; • Establishment of active management component to monitor ecosystem integrity
	Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values are known but are not being addressed	**1**		
	Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values are only being partially addressed	2		
	Requirements for active management of critical ecosystems, species and cultural values are being substantially or fully addressed	3		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
12. Staff numbers Are there enough people employed to manage the protected area? *Inputs*	There are no staff	0		.
	Staff numbers are inadequate for critical management activities	1		
	Staff numbers are below optimum level for critical management activities	**2**		
	Staff numbers are adequate for the management needs of the site	3		
13. Personnel management Are the staff managed well enough? *Process*	Problems with personnel management constrain the achievement of major	0		
	Problems with personnel management partially constrain the achievement of major management objectives	**1**		
	Personnel management is adequate to the achievement of major management objectives but could be improved	2		
	Personnel management is excellent and aids the achievement major management objectives	3		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
14. Staff training	Staff are untrained	0		
Is there enough training for staff?	Staff training and skills are low relative to the needs of the protected area	**1**		
	Staff training and skills are adequate, but could be further improved to fully achieve the objectives of management	2		
Inputs/Process	Staff training and skills are in tune with the management needs of the protected area, and with anticipated future needs	3		
15. Current budget	There is no budget for the protected area	0		
Is the current budget sufficient?	The available budget is inadequate for basic management needs and presents a serious constraint to the capacity to manage	**1**		
	The available budget is acceptable, but could be further improved to fully achieve effective management	2		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
Inputs	The available budget is sufficient and meets the full management needs of the protected area	3		
16. Security of budget	There is no secure budget for the protected area and management is wholly reliant on outside or year by year funding	0		
Is the budget secure?	There is very little secure budget and the protected area could not function adequately without outside funding	**1**		
	There is a reasonably secure core budget for the protected area but many innovations and initiatives are reliant on outside funding	2		
Inputs	There is a secure budget for the protected area and its management needs on a multi-year cycle	3		
17. Management of budget	Budget management is poor and significantly undermines effectiveness	0	No budget exist to be managed	
Is the budget managed to	Budget management is poor and constrains effectiveness	**1**		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
meet critical management needs? *Process*	Budget management is adequate but could be improved	2		
	Budget management is excellent and aids effectiveness	3		
18. Equipment Are there adequate equipment and facilities? *Process*	There are little or no equipment and facilities	0		
	There are some equipment and facilities but these are wholly inadequate	**1**		
	There are equipment and facilities, but still some major gaps that constrain management	2		
	There are adequate equipment and facilities	3		
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
19. Maintenance of equipment Is equipment adequately maintained? *Process*	There is little or no maintenance of equipment and facilities	0		
	There is some ad *hoc* maintenance of equipment and facilities	**1**		
	There is maintenance of equipment and facilities, but there are some important gaps in maintenance	2		
	Equipment and facilities are well maintained	3		
20. Education and awareness programme	There is no education and awareness programme	0		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Is there a planned education programme? *Process*	There is a limited and ad *hoc* education and awareness programme, but no overall planning for this	**1**	Available program is through the extension service of the ministry of agriculture and agrarian reform which has considerable staff. In resent years, environmental issues emerged and ministry of education played a role in introducing environmental concepts in its educational system. Yet, no programme specifically for protected areas	Establishment of an education and awareness programme targeting different levels that involve: • Ministry of Education • Ministry of Tourism • Agricultural Rural Theater • Extension service (MAAR) • MLAE • NGO's • Others initiatives, FAO..etc
	There is a planned education and awareness programme but there are still serious gaps	2		
	There is a planned and effective education and awareness programme fully linked to the objectives and needs of the protected area	3		
21. State and commercial neighbours Is there co-operation with adjacent land users? *Process*	There is no contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users	0		
	There is limited contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users	**1**		
	There is regular contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users, but only limited co-operation	2		
	There is regular contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land users, and substantial co-operation on management	3		
22. Indigenous people	Indigenous and traditional peoples have no input into decisions relating to the management of the protected area	**0**	not be applicable Question (Omit)	
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	Next steps
Do indigenous and traditional peoples resident or regularly using	Indigenous and traditional peoples have some input into discussions relating to management but no direct involvement in the resulting decisions	**1**		
	Indigenous and traditional peoples directly contribute to some decisions relating to management	**2**		

Process	Indigenous and traditional peoples directly participate in making decisions relating to management	3		
23. Local communities	Local communities have no input into decisions relating to the management of the protected area	0		
Do local communities resident or near the protected	Local communities have some input into discussions relating to management but no direct involvement in the resulting decisions	1		
	Local communities directly contribute to some decisions relating to management	2		
	Local communities directly participate in making decisions relating to management	3		
Additional points	There is open communication and trust between local stakeholders and protected area managers	+1		
Outputs	Programmes to enhance local community welfare, while conserving protected area resources, are being implemented	+1		
24. Visitor facilities	There are no visitor facilities and services	0		
Are visitor facilities (for tourists, pilgrims etc) good enough?	Visitor facilities and services are Inappropriate for current levels of visitation or are under construction	1		
	Visitor facilities and services are adequate for current levels of visitation but could be improved	2		
Outputs	Visitor facilities and services are excellent for current levels of visitation	3		
25. Commercial	There is little or no contact between	0	Possible issue for comment: examples	

tourism	managers and tourism operators using the protected area		of contributions	
Issue	**Criteria**	**Score**	**Comments**	**Next steps**
Do commercial tour operators contribute to protected area	There is contact between managers and tourism operators but this is largely confined to administrative or regulatory matters	1		
	There is limited co-operation between managers and tourism operators to enhance visitor experiences and maintain protected area values	2		
Process	There is excellent co-operation between managers and tourism operators to enhance visitor experiences, protect values and resolve conflicts	3		
26. Fees If fees (tourism,	Although fees are theoretically applied, they are not collected	0	No fees originally	
fines) are applied, do they help protected area	The fee is collected, but it goes straight to central government and is not returned to the protected area or its environs	1		
management?	The fee is collected, but is disbursed to the local authority rather than the protected area	2		
Outputs	There is a fee for visiting the protected area that helps to support this and/or other protected areas	3		
27. Condition	Important biodiversity, ecological and cultural	0		
assessment	values are being severely degraded			
Is the protected area being managed consistent to its	Some biodiversity, ecological and cultural	1		

	values are being severely degraded			
	Some biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are being partially degraded but the most important values have not been significantly impacted	2		
Outcomes	Biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are			
	predominantly intact	3		
Additional points	There are active programmes for restoration			
Outputs	of degraded areas within the protected area and/or the protected area buffer zone	+1		
28. Access assessment	Protection systems (patrols, permits etc) are ineffective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives	0		

Issue	Criteria	Score	Comments	Next steps
Is access/resource use sufficiently controlled? *Outcomes*	Protection systems are only partially effective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives	**1**	Due to limited staff, inadequate training and skills and unavailability of required equipment	Design and Implement an effective protection system as part of the management plan for protected area management.
	Protection systems are moderately effective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives	2		
	Protection systems are largely or wholly effective in controlling access or use of the reserve in accordance with designated objectives	3		

29. Economic benefit assessment Is the protected area providing economic benefits to local communities? *Outcomes*	The existence of the protected area has reduced the options for economic development of the local communities	0		
	The existence of the protected area has neither damaged nor benefited the local economy	**1**		
	There is some flow of economic benefits to local communities from the existence of the protected area but this is of minor significance to the regional economy	2		
	There is a significant or major flow of economic benefits to local communities from activities in and around the protected area (e.g. employment of locals, locally operated commercial tours etc)	3		
30. Monitoring and evaluation Are management activities monitored against performance? *Planning/Process*	There is no monitoring and evaluation in the protected area	0		
	There is some ad hoc monitoring and evaluation, but no overall strategy and/or no regular collection of results	**1**		
	There is an agreed and implemented monitoring and evaluation system but results are not systematically used for management	2		
	A good monitoring and evaluation system exists, is well implemented and used in adaptive management	3		
TOTAL SCORE		**33**		
TOTAL PERCENTAGE		**34.14 %**		

ANNEX 6   MAIN TECHNICAL REPORTS PRODUCED BY THE PROJECT

1- Project Inception Phase (PIP) report: included the following
- Detailed and final project institutional arrangements.
- Description of the roles, responsibilities and capacities of project team members, particularly vis-à-vis projectoutputs
- Planning and preparation for Year 1 of the project
- An Adaptive Management framework for the implementation of the proj*ect*
- Project Risks (possible barriers to successful project implementation and identified externalities that may reduce project effectiveness).
- Prepare a detailed risk management strategy for project implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation plan.
- Updating project planning matrix.

Prepared by PMU staff

2- Report on updating project (consultancies TORs): for first two years**.**
Updating TORs according to the new concepts and recent developments in PA management and new GEF and UNDP strategies.
Prepared by regional expert Dr. Nedal Al-Ouran

3- Report on demarcation of Abu-Qubies PA site.
4- Report on demarcation of Al -Fourounlouq PA site
5- Report on demarcation of Al -Fourounlouq PA site
The three reports prepared by national experts from MAAR, MLAE, and the national remote sensing commission. The three reports include details of demarcation process in the three sites. The objective is to set accurate and clear boundaries for the 3 sites.

6- Report on traditional community knowledge gathering:
To assess and record community knowledge of, and traditional practices towards, natural resources, including medicinal herbs.
Prepared by national consultant Mrs Abeer Munlla Hassan

7- Report on socio-economist – Baseline indicators: For Definition of baseline socio-economic indicators and monitoring program for demonstration sites. Determine their baseline levels (with field work as appropriate) and devise a system for ongoing monitoring (by Forestry Directorate) at all three sites.
Prepared by national consultant Dr Iskander Ismail

8- Report on Forest ecologist – Baseline indicators (Fauna) : For definition of baseline Ecological indicators and monitoring program for demonstration sites: define ecological indicators determine their baseline levels (this is trickier) and devise a system for ongoing monitoring (by Forestry Directorate) at all 3 sites**.**
Prepared by national consultant Dr Wajeeh Kassiss

9-Report on Forest ecologist – Baseline indicators (Flora) : For definition of baseline Ecological indicators and monitoring program for demonstration sites: define ecological indicators determine their baseline levels (this is trickier) and devise a system for ongoing monitoring (by Forestry Directorate) at all 3 sites.
Prepared by national consultant Dr Ghalia Martini

10- Report includes   Interim PA management plan for Abu-Qubies PA site: The plan explains in details all activities to be done till a permanent plan be prepared.
Prepared by PIMA and project workteam

11- Report includes Interim PA management plan for Al-Fourounlouq PA site: The plan explains in details all activities to be done till a permanent plan be prepared.
Prepared by PIMA and project workteam.

12- Report includes Interim PA management plan for Jebel Abdul Aziz PA site:
The plan explains in details all activities to be done till a permanent plan be prepared.
Prepared by PIMA and project workteam.

13- **Report includes critical knowledge areas: regarding the TOR 17 on institiutional and human capacities assessment.**
Prepared by Regional Sub-contractor "ELARD firm".

14- PA Data base on-line report.
Prepared by national consultant Camille Gaspard.

15- Report on assessment of institutional and legislative structure relating to biodiversity conservation and PA management.
Prepared by sub- contractor ELARD.

16- Financial sustainable plan, marketing strategy and business plan.
Prepared by regional consultant Eyad Abdyl Khaleq.

17- Developing eco-tourism at the three project sites.
Prepared by Regional consultant Ammar Al Azzeh.

18- Micro-credit and micro-enterprise specialist (MMS).
Prepared by National consultant Samer Kantakji.

19- Socio-economic study report for the three project PA sites.
Prepared by Socio-economic specialist (SES).International consultant Geraldine Chatelard.

19- PA Administrative and organizational structures for the three sites.
Prepared by PTA Sami Tarabieh.

20- Training manual for the integrated PA management(Vocational training).
Prepared by PTA Sami Tarabieh.

21- Miscellaneous reports: as required to various concerned parties about project activities and accomplishments.
Prepared by NPD (PMU)