

1
2
3



Mid-term Review of UNDP/GEF ‘Strengthened Protected Areas System and Integrated Ecosystem Management in Sudan’ Project (PIMS 5741)

Final Report

International Consultant: Mohammad Alatoom

National consultant: Adil Seedahmed

June - September 2024

Project title: Mid-term Review of UNDP/GEF ‘Strengthened Protected Areas System and Integrated Ecosystem Management in Sudan’ Project (PIMS 5741).

Evaluation timeframe: May- July 2024

GEF executing agency: UNDP.

Implementing partner: Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources

GEF Trust Fund (GEF TF) funding: USD 4,100,913 UNDP: USD 500,000. **Country:** Sudan

UNDP PIMS ID number: 5741

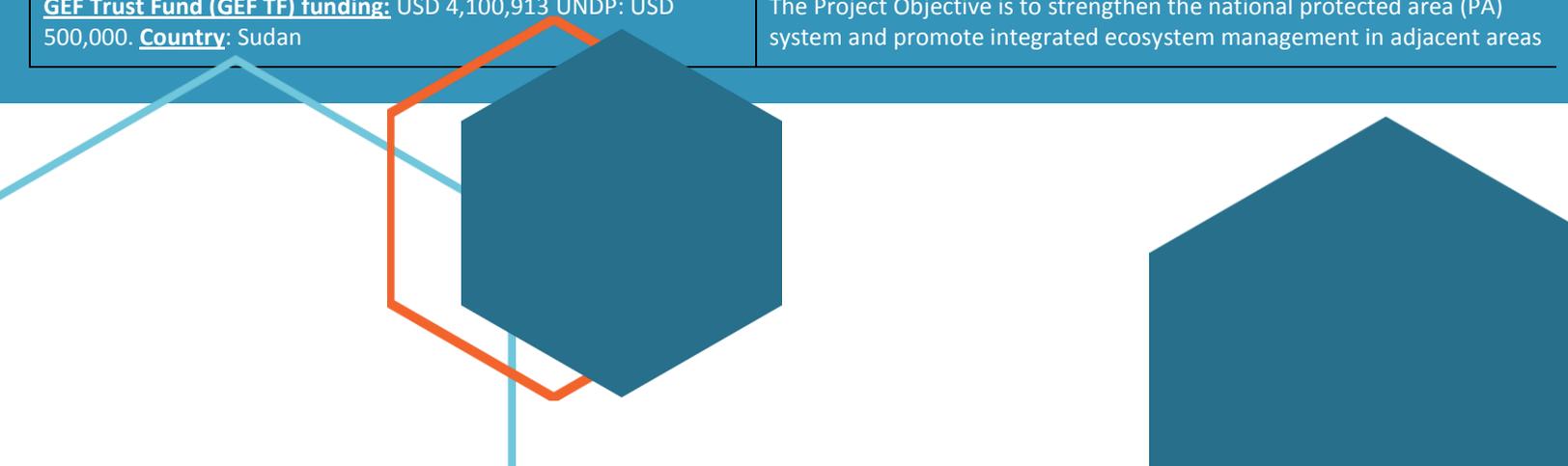
GEF ID number: 9425

GEF focal area: biodiversity and land degradation

Project start date: 1 October 2020

End date: 1 September 2025

The Project Objective is to strengthen the national protected area (PA) system and promote integrated ecosystem management in adjacent areas



4 **Acknowledgements**

5 The Evaluator would like to express gratitude to all of the project teams, partners and stakeholders who
6 participated in the evaluation. In particular to the project management unit and UNDP Country Office
7 for facilitating the evaluation activities, sharing information and data as well as the facilitating access to
8 stakeholders for interviews.

9 **Disclaimer**

10 This report is the work of independent consultants, and does not necessarily represent the views, policy,
11 or intentions of the GEF agency (i.e. UNDP), Government and project partners. The opinions and
12 recommendations in the evaluation will be those of the Evaluator's and do not necessarily reflect the
13 position of UNDP, Government or any of the Programme stakeholders.

14	1 Table of Contents		
15	Disclaimer		1
16	1 Table of Contents		2
17	1.1 List of tables		4
18	1.2 List of Figures		4
19	1.3 Acronyms and Abbreviations		5
20	1.4 Project information table		6
21	Executive summary		7
22	1.5 Project Description		7
23	1.6 Evaluation scope & methods		7
24	1.7 Progress Summary and main conclusions		8
25	1.8 MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table		9
26	1.9 Recommendations summary table		12
27	1. Introduction		15
28	1.1 Purpose & scope		15
29	1.2 MTR Approach		16
30	1.3 Methods		17
31	Data collection methods		17
32	Data analysis methods		18
33	1.4 Ethical Considerations		19
34	1.5 Limitations		19
35	1.6 Structure of the Report		20
36	2. Project Description		21
37	2.1 Development context		21
38	2.2 Problems that Project Seeks to Address		22
39	2.3 Project Description and Strategy		23
40	2.4 Project timeframe, funding and location		25
41	2.5 Theory of change		25
42	2.6 Main stakeholders		26

43 **3. Findings** 29

44 3.1 Project Strategy 29

45 Project Design 29

46 The Project Results Framework 33

47 Relevance 36

48 3.2 Progress Towards Results 40

49 Progress towards outcomes analysis 40

50 Project Objective: To Strengthen the National PA System and Promote Integrated

51 Ecosystem Management in Adjacent Areas to Reduce Threats to Biodiversity, Mitigate

52 Land Degradation, Sustain Ecosystem Services and Improve Livelihoods. 43

53 Component 1/Outcome 1: Enabling environment established at the national level for

54 expanded PA management..... 45

55 Component 2/Outcome 2: Improved management effectiveness at selected terrestrial

56 and marine PAs 49

57 Outcome 3: Integrated Natural Resource Management in multi-use landscapes in and

58 around targeted PAs 52

59 Component 4: Knowledge Management and M&E..... 57

60 Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective..... 59

61 3.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management 62

62 Management Arrangements 62

63 Work planning..... 64

64 Finance and co-finance 65

65 Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems..... 67

66 Stakeholder engagement 68

67 Reporting 69

68 Communications..... 70

69 3.4 Sustainability..... 70

70 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability..... 70

71 Financial risks to sustainability 71

72 Socio-political risks to sustainability 72

73 Environmental risks to sustainability..... 73

74 **4. Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons** 74

75 4.1 Main Findings & conclusions.....74

76 4.2 Recommendations and Lessons Learned.....80

77 **2 Annexes**..... 87

78 2.1 Annex 1: MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes).....87

79 2.2 Annex 2: List of documents reviewed.....87

80 2.3 Annex 3: Evaluation Matrix.....88

81 2.4 Annex 4: Interview questions.....98

82 Questions.....99

83 2.5 Annex 5: MTR Rating scales101

84 2.6 Annex 6: list of persons consulted102

85 2.7 Annex 7: Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form.....105

86 2.8 Annex 8: Signed MTR Report Clearance form.....106

87 2.9 Annex 9: Co-Financing for The Project by Name and By Type.....107

88 2.10 Annex 10: MTR Audit Trail (in a separate file)107

89

90 **1.1 List of tables**

91 Table 1: Recommendations table..... 12

92 Table 2: Key stakeholders of the project..... 26

93 Table 3: Assessment of the PRF indicators..... 33

94 Table 4: Changes in scorecards for the 7 agencies involved in the project 46

95 Table 5: Financial delivery 66

96 Table 6: Evaluation Matrix..... 88

97 Table 7: MTR Rating Scales & Evaluation Ratings Table 101

98

99 **1.2 List of Figures**

100 **Figure 1: Theory of Change diagram**..... 26

101 **Figure 3: Project organizational structure**..... 31

102

103

1.3 Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARC	Agriculture Research Corporation
CBNRM	Community-based Natural Resource Management
FNC	Forests National Corporation
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
HCENR	Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (Government of Sudan)
INRM	Integrated Natural Resource Management
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MAB	Man and Biosphere (UNESCO)
MoT	Ministry of Tourism
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MPA	Marine Protected Area
FNC	Forests National Corporation
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
PA	Protected Area
PERSGA	Programme for the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
RPGD	Range and Pasture General Directorate
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SECS	Sudanese Environment Conservation Society
SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SOC	Soil Organic Carbon
SUDIA	Sudanese Development Initiative Agency
SWPS	Sudanese Wildlife Protection Society
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNEG	United Nation Evaluation Guidelines
UNDP	United National Development Programme
UNDP CO	United Nations Development Programme Country Office
UNDP-GEF	UNDP Global Environmental Finance Unit
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCF	Wildlife Conservation Forces – formerly known as Wildlife Conservation General Administration
WRC	Wildlife Research Centre

104

105

106

1.4 Project information table

Project Title		Mid-term Review of UNDP/GEF 'Strengthened Protected Areas System and Integrated Ecosystem Management in Sudan' Project (PIMS 5741).	
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	5741	PIF Approval Date:	Nov 29, 2017
GEF Project ID (PMIS #):	9425	CEO Endorsement Date:	Mar 20, 2020
ATLAS Business Unit, Award # Project. ID:	00091841	Project Document (ProDoc) Signature Date (date project began):	May 24, 2021
Country(ies):	Sudan	Date project manager hired:	1 August 2021
Region:	Africa	Inception Workshop date:	Jul 15, 2021
Focal Area:	Biodiversity and Land Degradation	Midterm Review completion date:	June 2024
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective:	GEF 6- Biodiversity (Objective 1) and Land Degradation (Objectives 1, 3 and 4)	Planned closing date:	May 24, 2026
Trust Fund [indicate GEF TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF]:	GEF TF	If revised, proposed op. closing date:	
Executing Agency/ Implementing Partner:	Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources		
Other execution partners:	NA		
Project Financing	at CEO endorsement (US\$) in million	at MTR (US\$) in million	
[1] GEF financing:	4.1913 mil	963,566 (spent)	
[2] UNDP contribution:	0.5 mil		
[3] Government:	17.72 mil	NA	
[4] Other partners:	1.288		
[5] Total co-financing [2 + 3+ 4]:	19.508 mil	US\$ 963,566	
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1 + 5]	23.608913 mil	US\$ 963,566	

107

108

109

Executive summary

110

1.5 Project Description

111

The 'Strengthened Protected Areas System and Integrated Ecosystem Management in Sudan' project was designed to take a comprehensive landscape approach to address the multi-faceted nature of land degradation and impacts on natural resources by attempting to secure Sudan's PA system and ecosystems, focusing in particular on key sites of ecological and economic importance and investing in supporting effective community-level engagement in and around PAs and buffer zones, across key ecological systems. As such it seeks to address the following **key project objective**: "to strengthen the national PA system and promote integrated ecosystem management in adjacent areas so as to reduce threats to biodiversity, mitigate land degradation, sustain ecosystem services, and improve people's livelihoods". The objective will be achieved through the implementation of three project components:

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

- **Component 1:** An enabling environment established at the national level for expanded PA management;
- **Component 2:** Improved management effectiveness at selected terrestrial and marine PA;
- **Component 3** Integrated Natural Resource Management in multi-use landscapes in and around targeted PAs; and
- **Component 4:** Knowledge Management, Gender Mainstreaming, and M&E Finally, to ensure adaptive management and equity.

121

122

123

124

125

126

The project operates in **Dinder National Park (terrestrial), Jebel El Dair National Park (terrestrial) and Dungonab Bay Mukkawar Island National Park (marine)**. The timeframe of the project is October 2020 to September 2025.. The total cost of the project is USD 23,608,913. This is financed through a GEF grant of **USD 4,100,913** and USD 500,000 in cash co-financing, in addition to a further USD 19,008,000 of parallel co-financing.

127

128

129

130

The 'Strengthened Protected Areas System and Integrated Ecosystem Management in Sudan' Project (PIMS 5741) is implemented by the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR) following UNDP's National Implementation Modality (NIM). The project started on the 24th of May 2021 and is in its third year of implementation. With a total GEF allocated budget of US\$ 4,100,913, and spanning over a period of five years until May 2026, the project objective is to strengthen the national PA system and promote integrated management in adjacent areas that reduces threats to biodiversity, mitigates land degradation, sustains ecosystem services, and improves people's livelihood.

131

132

133

134

135

136

137

1.6 Evaluation scope & methods

138

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the 'Strengthened Protected Areas System and Integrated Ecosystem Management in Sudan' Project assessed the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved and drew lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and assessed early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR reviewed the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability. The purpose of the MTR was to provide an in-depth assessment of the results against the six

139

140

141

142

143

144 outcomes of the project and performance in terms of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability,
145 inclusiveness, participation, accountability, and transparency.

146 The methodology of the MTR encompassed a comprehensive desk review of project documentation, focus group
147 discussions with the participating communities and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, and virtual
148 engagement with local communities surrounding the PAs as field visits were not possible for security reasons. This
149 mixed-method approach allowed for data triangulation, increasing accuracy and informing the reliability of the
150 evaluation results. Throughout the process, purposive sampling aimed to capture a diverse range of stakeholder
151 perspectives, ensuring gender responsiveness and inclusivity in data collection and analysis. Analytical techniques
152 included descriptive analysis, content analysis, thematic analysis, and quantitative analysis, all aimed at identifying
153 common trends, themes, and quantifiable project impacts.

154 **1.7 Progress Summary and main conclusions**

155 The project design, despite the relevance and appropriateness of its conceptual design, is underlined by ambitious
156 goals, such as managing existing Protected Areas (PAs), expanding conservation efforts, and establishing new PAs,
157 are not supported by adequate financial and time resources, jeopardizing its success. The assumption that \$4
158 million in funding, supplemented by co-financing, would be sufficient to achieve these broad and complex
159 objectives is overly optimistic.

160 Overall, the project falls significantly behind its MTR targets with a very limited progress towards outputs,
161 outcomes and objectives so far. The MTR team assessed the project to be off track towards achieving its
162 objectives. Given the limited progress made so far, all key barriers identified in the project document remain valid
163 in terms of weak institutional, policy and legislative environment, ineffective PA system and threats from outside
164 PAs. Additionally, the MTR identified several significant barriers impacting the project's ability to achieve its
165 objectives. Key challenges include the unstable political environment in Sudan, marked by the 2021 military coup
166 and the ongoing conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which
167 has severely disrupted government operations and project activities. Political and institutional instability, frequent
168 staff turnover, and high inflation have further compounded these difficulties, leading to deficiencies in project
169 management and budgetary constraints.

170 The full NIM implementation modality has proven ineffective, with insufficient support for international
171 procurement and recruitment, while inadequate coordination among implementing agencies and unclear roles
172 have hindered progress. Mismanagement of community expectations and unresolved complaints led to
173 community objections, affecting local engagement. Additionally, the project faces challenges due to limited
174 technical and management capacities, delays in budget transfers, and the remote and inaccessible locations of
175 project sites. Persistent delays in finalizing safeguards assessments and the limited attainment of co-financing
176 further exacerbate these issues, all contributing to significant obstacles in meeting the project's goals.

177 The financial delivery rate is low, with only 23% of the budget spent by mid-2024, and administrative costs have
178 consumed 93% of the project management budget, raising concerns about funding availability for the remaining
179 years. Co-financing data is not available and has not been tracked properly.

180 Coordination among the responsible parties (RPs) has also been weak, with some partners only engaged during
 181 annual board meetings, causing delays in decision-making and implementation. HCENR has faced challenges due
 182 to limited project management and coordination capacities, unclear roles, and difficulties with procurement and
 183 recruitment under the full NIM modality, especially for international contracts.

184 There is a critical need for strong and committed leadership and ownership from the implementing agencies,
 185 particularly HCENR. Without such commitment, the effectiveness and impact of the recommendations provided
 186 will likely be limited, hindering the project's ability to achieve its intended outcomes.

187 Institutional and financial sustainability is also at risk. The project has not enhanced the financial sustainability of
 188 PAs, with delays in developing a national tourism strategy and exploring other revenue-generating opportunities.
 189 The unstable political environment, marked by ongoing conflict, has severely disrupted project activities and
 190 shifted government priorities away from environmental conservation.

191 1.8 MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	<p>The MTR Team recognizes the relevance and appropriateness of the project's conceptual design but identifies significant concerns regarding its detailed execution. The project's ambitious targets and outcomes, which include managing existing PAs, expanding conservation efforts beyond their boundaries, and establishing new PAs, are not matched by the available financial and time resources. The assumption that \$4 million in funding, supplemented by co-financing, would be sufficient to achieve these broad and complex objectives is overly optimistic. Key activities, such as socio-economic baseline studies and training initiatives, are underfunded or entirely unbudgeted, which jeopardizes the overall success of the project.</p> <p>The project design acknowledges gender disparities in Sudan, particularly in natural resource management within conflict-affected areas, where women face limited access to resources and decision-making. The project targets 50% participation with a goal of at least 60% women beneficiaries in business and grant activities. However, achieving these gender equality goals may be challenging due to Sudan's conservative and patriarchal society, which limits women's opportunities in public and economic life.</p> <p>The Project's Results Framework (PRF) generally adheres to the "SMART" criteria, but some indicators have notable deficiencies. These include a focus on output-based rather than outcome-based indicators, difficulties in measuring and regularly reporting on impact-level indicators, and the lack of baselines and targets for certain indicators.</p> <p>The project is highly relevant to the needs of its target groups, particularly the local communities surrounding the PAs in Sudan, and it is also aligned with the Sudan's strategic frameworks particularly Sudan's National Vision and NBSAP.</p>
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: Moderately	Overall, the project falls significantly behind its MTR targets with a very limited progress towards outputs, outcomes and objectives so far. There are multiple reasons for these drawbacks including, mainly, war-related conditions; limited project management and technical capacities; weak coordination mechanisms; ineffective management arrangements; and political and institutional instabilities. As

<p>Unsatisfactory (MU)</p>	<p>a result, the MTR team assessed the project to be off track towards achieving its objectives. As far as objective-level targets, there are no additional area of land and marine habitat under protection, and very limited number of beneficiaries (594 of which 353 women) comparing to its MTR target of 5,000 beneficiaries.</p>
<p>Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</p>	<p>Project targets under this outcome are not on track to be achieved. MTR targets have not been met with limited progress.</p> <p>Progress in enhancing the institutional and technical capacities of the HCENR and WCGA has been limited. Despite efforts like on-the-job training, technical meetings, and a study tour in Jordan, the project has not succeeded in securing training partnerships with African institutes.</p> <p>Some advancements have been made in developing PAs and Wildlife policy, No new PAs have been formally declared, though preparations for PA expansion are underway.</p> <p>No progress in developing a national sustainable financing strategy for PAs.</p>
<p>Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</p>	<p>Project targets under this outcome are not on track to be achieved. MTR targets have not been met with limited progress.</p> <p>Progress in improving the management effectiveness of targeted PAs in Sudan has been limited.</p> <p>In Jebel Al Dair National Park, a baseline survey has been conducted to update the wildlife status.</p> <p>Crucial activities such as developing a fire management system, securing wildlife corridors, and expanding the biosphere transition zone have not progressed, with no consultations initiated, largely due to the war.</p> <p>In Dinder National Park, efforts are underway to rehabilitate the maya wetland. A fire management plan has been completed, and assessments of lions, Roan antelope, and kudu were conducted in May 2024.</p> <p>At Dungonab MPA, the project has made progress in rehabilitating the park HQ building, securing an MPA patrol boat, and beginning work on a marine research building and mangrove management. A baseline survey for key species has also been conducted.</p> <p>Essential infrastructure, including VHF radio communications, solar power systems, ranger outposts, patrolling equipment and seasonal fly camps, has not yet been installed in the three parks.</p>
<p>Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</p>	<p>Project targets under this outcome are not on track to be achieved. MTR targets have not been met with limited progress..</p> <p>Some progress has been made in land restoration efforts, particularly in Dinder National Park, where 450 hectares of invasive species were cleared and 168 hectares were seeded with palatable species. Additionally, a 10-hectare community range reserve was established in DNP, and tree nurseries were established in Sennar and Gedarif states.</p> <p>In Jebel Al Dair, community forests were established, and water harvesting techniques were implemented, although the full development of demonstration farms remains incomplete.</p> <p>SECS has developed Resource Use Inventory for both Dinder NP (for the 10 villages within the buffer zone of the park) and Jebel Eldair Park (two villages), the findings are used to develop the resource use guide.</p> <p>In Dungonab, 90 hectares of mangrove trees were planted, and efforts to promote community-based tourism and microfinance initiatives have begun..</p>

		Monitoring and evaluation capacity for land management also remains undeveloped.
	Outcome 4 Achievement Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	<p>Project targets under this outcome are not on track to be achieved. MTR targets have not been met with limited progress.</p> <p>No significant progress has been made. Although a gender strategy was developed during the Project Preparation Grant stage, it has not been updated or detailed, and a monitoring framework for gender indicators is still lacking. NGOs SECS and SUDIA are focusing on increasing women's participation in microfinance and training activities, but achieving the target of 50% female participation remains challenging in Sudan's conservative society. Women's participation has ranged between 13% and 40% in various project activities, falling short of the target, though efforts to enhance women's engagement and leadership continue.</p> <p>The project has not established a formal learning and adaptive management system that systematically captures, disseminates, and utilizes lessons learned.</p>
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	<p>There are significant deficiencies in the project's management arrangements, particularly related to the full NIM implementation modality and governance structure.</p> <p>The current management setup, where a single project board handles both strategic decision-making and stakeholder coordination, has proven inadequate. With over 16 stakeholders and only annual meetings, this arrangement has led to poor coordination and an impractical decision-making process.</p> <p>Also, there is a need for further clarification and communication of roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines to prevent the confusion that has negatively impacted the project.</p> <p>The financial delivery rate is low, with only 23% of the budget spent by mid-2024, and administrative costs have consumed 93% of the project management budget, raising concerns about funding availability for the remaining years.</p> <p>The MTR team also found a complete lack of available co-financing data, making it impossible to assess the actual contributions from participating agencies.</p> <p>Monitoring efforts have been inconsistent, resulting in key indicators being roughly estimated rather than systematically updated, which undermines the reliability of monitoring and evaluation. Reports have been poorly structured, lacking clarity and consistency, making it challenging to assess project progress accurately.</p> <p>Additionally, there is inadequate documentation of project beneficiaries, hindering the ability to track benefit distribution and assess impact.</p> <p>Coordination among the responsible parties (RPs) has also been weak, with some partners only engaged during annual board meetings, causing delays in decision-making and implementation.</p>
Sustainability	Institutional framework and governance: Moderately Unlikely (MU).	<p>There is a critical need for strong and committed leadership and ownership from the implementing agencies, particularly HCENR. Without such commitment, the effectiveness and impact of the recommendations provided will likely be limited, hindering the project's ability to achieve its intended outcomes.</p> <p>Institutional sustainability is impacted by the limited capacities in managing PAs and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in surrounding landscapes. Also, institutional sustainability requires better collaboration and cooperation among key stakeholders.</p>

	<p>Financial: Moderately Unlikely (MU).</p>	<p>The policy outcomes of the project, particularly in defining policy direction and targets for Protected Areas (PAs) and wildlife in Sudan, as well as declaring new PAs, have not shown signs of sustainability due to their premature status.</p>
	<p>Socio-economic: Unlikely (U)</p>	<p>No progress has been made in enhancing the financial sustainability of Protected Areas (PAs) in Sudan. The development of a national tourism strategy, crucial for generating revenue and supporting conservation, has delayed, as has the exploration of other revenue-generating opportunities. The absence of a national sustainable financing strategy for PAs further hampers efforts, with current public funding inadequate to cover operational costs.</p>
	<p>Environmental: Likely (L).</p>	<p>The ongoing conflict in Sudan poses a significant risk to the governance and institutional ownership of the project, shifting government priorities away from environmental conservation toward urgent humanitarian needs. Additionally, the project's failure to implement the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) as planned led to a limited understanding of community concerns, resulting in unmet expectations, community protests, and damage to the project's reputation.</p> <p>The project also risks creating inequitable impacts due to its selective support of certain villages and community groups, which has already sparked objections. To address these issues, a more inclusive approach to community engagement is needed, ensuring broad participation and equitable distribution of benefits.</p> <p>The project is expected to enhance environmental sustainability by focusing on the conservation of critical ecosystems in Sudan and promoting sustainable ecosystem management in degraded areas. Additionally, interventions such as community forests, range reserves, fish farms, and sustainable small businesses will provide alternative income sources for local communities, fostering sustainable livelihoods. Efforts have been made to ensure that replanting and reseeding activities do not introduce invasive species, with species selection based on thorough research. The project has also implemented invasive species control measures, particularly targeting Nile Hyacinth, through controlled burning and extraction. These actions collectively contribute to the project's positive long-term environmental impact.</p>

192

193 **1.9 Recommendations summary table**

194 The following are a mix of recommendations for corrective actions and forward-looking recommendations:
195 **more details on the recommendations are available in section 4.2.**

196 **Table 1: Recommendations table**

#	TE Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Timeframe
1	1. Change the implementation modality from a full National Implementation Modality (NIM) to a 'Supported NIM' approach.	UNDP and HCENR	ASAP
2	2. To reform and strengthen project governance and coordination structures by: a. Restructuring the Board:	HCENR & UNDP	October 2024

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Establishing a Coordination Platform c. Increasing the frequency of board meetings from once to at least twice per year. d. Establish regular one-on-one engagements between the PMU and each Responsible Party (RP). 		
3	3. Develop a RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) matrix at the activity level, in collaboration with all responsible parties.	PMU and HCENR	October 2024
4	4. Reactivate the roles of the two NGOs, SECS and SUDIA, within the project and resume their funding to ensure they resume their duties as outlined in the project document and the signed agreements.	UNDP & HCENR	ASAP
5	5. Immediately recruit an International Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) through UNDP to provide essential technical backstopping for the project.	UNDP & HCENR	ASAP
6	6. Immediately conduct a comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) to evaluate the environmental and social risks and impacts of the project activities.	PMU	ASAP
7	7. Update the project results framework particularly the indicators as suggested in table 3 of this report.	UNDP	2025
8	8. Recruit Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) personnel within the Project Management Unit (PMU) to establish and implement effective data monitoring systems.	PMU/ HCENR	ASAP
9	9. Develop a joint planning system that ensures consistency among all responsible parties and alignment with the overall project plan.	PMU and CTA	Before the end of 2024
10	10. Establish and operate an ongoing monitoring process of the SESP and gender action plan.	PMU	2024
11	11. Assess the impact of inflation and currency devaluation on the project financial resources.	PMU	Before budgeting for 2025
12	12. Develop and implement a resource mobilization plan to overcome the limited funding availability and make up deficits caused by the market inflation, and more importantly to secure additional resources for the PMU operation given 93% is already consumed.	UNDP	ASAP
13	13. Develop and implement project communication strategy to ensure effective collaboration among stakeholders, clear information dissemination, and the alignment of project goals with community expectations.	PMU	To be included in 2025 plan
14	14. Conduct specialized training on conflict management and resolution for project staff from all Responsible Parties (RPs) who interact directly with local communities.	PMU	2025
15	15. Convene RBM training targeting PMU and key project personnel who are involved in project implementation to strengthen RBM planning and implementation capacities.	UNDP	2025

16	16. Conduct annual audit as per UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules and applicable audit policies on NIM implemented projects	UNDP	Annually
17	17. Establish an appropriate system for identifying and tracking co-financing.	PMU	ASAP
18	18. Develop a detailed operational procurement plan with key steps, timelines and responsibilities in support of the AWP.	PMU	Oct-Dec 2024
19	19. Conduct quarterly oversight meetings, involving the PMU, UNDP CO, RTA, the RPA and RBAS COST desk officer to monitor progress and assist with troubleshooting.	UNDP	Quarterly
20	20. Ensure timely transfer of the budget from UNDP to implementing partners as soon as the 80% consumption threshold is met as per UNDP rules and procedures.	UNDP	Ongoing
21	21. As the project activities are currently on hold in Jebel Al Dair PA due to ongoing conflict, it is recommended that the project board continues to assess the situation there and reactivate the project in this particular PA when circumstances allow and when it is safe to do so.	Project board	Ongoing

198

1. Introduction

199

1.1 Purpose & scope

200

201

202

203

204

205

206

207

208

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Global Environment Facility (GEF)'s *'Strengthened Protected Areas System and Integrated Ecosystem Management in Sudan'* project assessed the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved and drew lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and assessed early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR reviewed the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability. The purpose of the MTR was to provide an in-depth assessment of the results against the six outcomes of the project and performance in terms of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, inclusiveness, participation, accountability, and transparency.

209

210

211

212

213

214

The MTR process is meant to open up essential learning space both for the UNDP and the implementing partner. This in turn will create an opportunity for possible re-alignment and refinement of some project actions to better embrace the ever-changing dynamics in community needs. Hence, the MTR extracted lessons, mainly to support effective implementation of the project, looking forward. As a result of MTR and its recommendations, key action areas have been developed to ensure that the project implementer strategically re/aligns itself to meet project expectations over the second half of project implementation period.

215

216

The MTR has been implemented in line with the *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*.¹

217

218

219

220

221

222

The MTR provides evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful and comply with the UNDP/GEF Evaluation Guidelines. The MTR was undertaken in line with United Nation Evaluation Guidelines (UNEG) principles concerning independence, credibility, utility, impartiality, transparency, disclosure, ethical, participation, competencies and capacities. The evaluation process has been independent of UNDP and project partners. The opinions and recommendations in the evaluation are those of the Evaluator's and do not necessarily reflect the position of any stakeholders.

223

224

225

226

The MTR was carried out between late May- September 2024 and was home-based with online engagement with project stakeholders and partners were undertaken in mid- June. The MTR evidence was gathered by documents review, key selected stakeholders' interviews, focus group discussions with beneficiaries as well as other ad hoc observations.

227

228

Mixed methods² were used for the MTR to generate mix of qualitative and quantitative data. The use of mixed methods has the advantage of supporting data triangulation across multiple sources, which creates the potential

¹ Available [here](#).

² Mixed methods involve desk review and semi-structured interviews for data collection, and also descriptive analysis, content analysis, thematic analysis and simple quantitative data analysis in excel for quantitative indicators for data analysis.

229 for increased data accuracy and credibility to inform the reliability of the evaluation results. Methods are explained
230 in more detail below.

231 **1.2 MTR Approach**

232 The primary phases of the MTR implementation included the development and presentation of the MTR Inception
233 Report, MTR online interviews and collection of primary data, engagement with the communities, presentation
234 of initial MTR findings to key stakeholders and reporting.

235 ***MTR inception phase***

236 The purpose of the inception report was to define the overall approach and set out the conceptual framework to
237 be applied in the evaluation. The inception report included the understanding of the evaluation objectives,
238 evaluation questions and possible evidence to be generated, defined the methodology, and provides information
239 on data sources and collection, sampling, and key indicators.

240 This phase included a review of project documentation, review of evaluation questions, and the establishment of
241 criteria for assessing project outcomes. Stakeholder analysis was conducted to identify all parties relevant to the
242 evaluation. The inception report was crucial for ensuring that all parties have a clear understanding of the
243 evaluation scope, methods, and expected deliverables.

244 ***MTR primary data collection***

245 The objective of this phase was to gather first-hand data from project sites, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders.
246 Online primary data collections and interviews with the project's key stakeholders were undertaken by the MTR
247 team. Due to security situation in Sudan, field visit was not possible to PA, so online engagement with communities
248 and stakeholders were deployed instead.

249 The data collected forms the backbone of the evaluation, providing essential insights into the project's
250 implementation and effectiveness.

251 ***Presentation of initial MTR findings***

252 This phase aimed to share preliminary findings with stakeholders to validate the information and gather additional
253 feedback. An initial wrap-up meeting and presentation of initial findings was conducted at the end of the MTR
254 mission to present preliminary findings, assessments, conclusions and emerging recommendations.

255 Feedback from stakeholders during this phase was used to refine and finalize the evaluation report, ensuring it
256 accurately reflects the project's outcomes and the perspectives of those involved.

257 ***Drafting evaluation report***

258 The final phase involved compiling this comprehensive evaluation report which includes detailed findings,
259 conclusions, and recommendations. The report integrates all data and analyses from the evaluation process and
260 is crafted to provide clear evidence-based conclusions about the project's effectiveness and impact. The final
261 report is essential for accountability and learning. It is used to inform future projects, improve ongoing strategies,
262 and fulfill reporting obligations to donors or other key entities.

263 1.3 Methods

264 Data collection methods

265 To strengthen the robustness of the evaluation evidence, a mixed method approach was used to generate
266 qualitative and quantitative data to best describe project results based on the on the results framework as
267 outlined in the project document. The evaluation used methods of document review and interviews for data
268 collection to obtain answer all of the evaluation questions outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR). The
269 evaluation had three levels of data collection and validation of information:

- 270 • A desk review of project documentation where both qualitative and quantitative data have been
271 collected.
- 272 • Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders for qualitative data collection (Annex 7 list of 19
273 persons interviewed).
- 274 • Focus group discussions with the communities surrounding the PAs.

275 An evaluation matrix was developed as a base for gathering of qualitative inputs for analysis. The evaluation matrix
276 defined the objective for gathering non-biased, valid, reliable, precise, and useful data with integrity to answer
277 the evaluation questions.

278 **Desk review:** The initial stage involved the review of project documentation and associated documents. An
279 information package was provided by the project management team to the MTR team. The evaluators reviewed
280 all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including annual reports,
281 progress reports, project files, previous evaluations, national strategic and policy documents, and any other
282 materials that the evaluator considers useful for an evidence-based evaluation assessment. See annex 2 for list of
283 documents reviewed.

284 The key output of the desktop review was to collect data and information as potential evidence that underpin
285 evaluation and also help the evaluator to familiarize with the work context in details. Annex 2 includes full list of
286 documents were reviewed.

287 **Semi-structured interviews:** Engaging stakeholders has been critical for the success of the evaluation. The
288 project involved multi-stakeholders and teams in different capacities and the MTR engaged with various
289 stakeholders to cover different perspectives taking into account the principle of gender responsiveness. The MTR
290 team took into account the geographical coverage, representative diversity, gender balance etc. and inclusivity of
291 key stakeholders and beneficiaries in designing the interview schedule. Engaging stakeholders was undertaken
292 mainly based on online interviews. The MTR team engaged with stakeholders mainly through virtual means (online

293 calls, WhatsApp calls, etc) in light of the inability to convene face to face interviews due to the security situation
294 in Sudan.

295 The main purpose of the engagement was to collect evidence that support MTR process and findings and gain
296 sufficient understanding of their perspectives on the program successes and challenges. All interviews were
297 undertaken in full confidentiality. See Annex 6 for list of people consulted.

298 **Engaging with local communities:** Due to security situation in Sudan, field visit was not possible to any of the
299 PAs. So, the MTR engaged with the communities surrounding PAs virtually and ran focus group discussions online
300 to better understand their experiences in interacting with the project activities and impacts have these activities
301 had on them.

302 **Sampling:** Purposive sampling was used to achieve the level of rigor that is required for a robust evaluation. The
303 evaluation responded to the existing diversity across the project stakeholder groups. In essence, the purposive
304 approach to sampling was used to identify the key informants who are best suited to provide detailed responses
305 to the evaluation questions, to accurately reflect given elements of the work experience. This also allowed for
306 additional data generation at any stage of the evaluation, to facilitate results reliability and completeness.

307 **Gender responsiveness** was integrated throughout the evaluation process including gender balance during the
308 engagement with stakeholders by ensuring both genders are engaged and assessing the gender integration in the
309 project design and delivery, and ensuring that data collection and analysis are gender sensitive. The evaluation
310 used gender-disaggregated data of personnel engaged by the project to identify barriers and differentiate roles
311 that may be more suited to each gender. The evaluation also checked whether all “people count” indicators are
312 gender segregated and if the project had reported women ratio in related indicators.

313 **Data analysis methods**

314 Data analysis was based on observed facts, evidence, and data. Findings are specific, concise, and supported by
315 quantitative and/or qualitative information that is reliable, valid and generalizable.

316 Information was analysed and consulted with project team or commissioning unit and then an evaluation report
317 draft was prepared. All analysis must be based on observed facts, evidence and data. The broad range of data
318 provided strong opportunities for triangulation. This process is essential to ensure a comprehensive and coherent
319 understanding of the data sets, which was generated by the evaluation.

320 The data analysis method involved:

321 **Descriptive analysis:** A descriptive analysis of the project was used to understand and describe its main
322 components, including related activities; partnerships; modalities of delivery; etc. Descriptive analysis preceded
323 more interpretative approaches during the evaluation.

324 **Content analysis:** A content analysis of relevant documents and the literature was conducted to identify common
325 trends and themes, and patterns for each of the key evaluation issues (as the main units of analysis). Content

326 analysis was used to flag diverging views and opposite trends and determine whether there was a need for
327 additional data generation.

328 **Thematic analysis:** Responses collected from semi-structured interviews and observations were analyzed
329 through thematic analysis, this is a method of analyzing qualitative data. The evaluator closely examined the data
330 to identify common themes – topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly from interviews and
331 other sources.

332 **Quantitative analysis:** A simplified analysis was conducted on all quantitative measures (for example number of
333 beneficiaries) by reviewing and validating project datasets on quantitative indicators. The generated statistics
334 were used to develop emergent findings and inform the triangulation process.

335 **Triangulation:** In this evaluation, triangulation involved validation of data through cross verification from at least
336 two sources, and evaluation findings and conclusions were synthesized based on triangulated evidence from the
337 desktop review and interviews. This process was essential to ensure a comprehensive and coherent understanding
338 of the data sets, which have been generated by the evaluation.

339 **Evaluation criteria and ratings:** The different scales for rating various criteria are in accordance with *Guidance*
340 *for Conducting Midterm Reviews of GEF-financed, UNDP Implemented Projects*. Annex 6 includes the rating criteria
341 used in the MTR.

342 1.4 Ethical Considerations

343 The MTR consultants were held to the highest ethical standards and were required to sign a code of conduct upon
344 acceptance of the assignment. This evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the
345 UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'³. The evaluators ensured to safeguard the rights and confidentiality of
346 information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and
347 other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The evaluators also ensured security of
348 collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of
349 sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation
350 process has been solely used for the evaluation and not be used for other purposes without the express
351 authorization of UNDP and partners.

352 1.5 Limitations

353 The main constraints related to data collections are current security situation and inaccessibility to the project
354 sites. The instable security situation has been a limiting factor for the MTR team to conduct field visits to the
355 Dinder and Jebel Al Dair PAs in accordance with UNDP security rules and procedures, so the MTR team had to
356 engage with stakeholders and beneficiaries virtually in these PAs. The online engagement with stakeholders has
357 also been challenging given the limited connection capabilities that stakeholders and communities have in Sudan
358 particularly in remote areas, some stakeholders needed to travel long distances to find a stable connection for the

³ UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, 2020, available [here](#).

359 evaluation interview. Further, the project management team facilitated engagement with all stakeholders to
360 ensure availability during the scheduled evaluation interviews and try to find alternatives for those who will not
361 be available, however the MTR team found it difficult to get timely responsiveness including from main
362 implementing partner.

363 **1.6 Structure of the Report**

364 The MTR report follows the format suggested by the UNDP-GEF MTR guidelines, with a description of the
365 methodology, a description of the project and findings organized around: Project Strategy, Progress towards
366 results, Project Implementation and Adaptive Management, and Sustainability. Conclusions, Recommendations
367 and Lessons Learnt complete the report. Consistently with requirements, certain aspects of the Project are rated,
368 according to the rating scale of the Guidelines. Co-financing information is presented in the chapter under financial
369 management.

370

371

2. Project Description

372

2.1 Development context

373

374

375

376

377

378

Sudan has a wide range of ecosystems and species diversity which are subjected to a number of threats mainly as a result of anthropogenic pressures. These pressures include deforestation, overgrazing, soil erosion, desertification, as well as unsustainable resource use. Sudan has tried to protect some key ecosystems through its system of protected areas (PAs). However, not only does this system not fully represent all critical ecosystems, but it has also not been fully protected from degradation due to limited human and financial resources and capacity.

379

380

381

382

Sudan's rich biodiversity and natural environment is subject to a number of threats related to the lack of a strong, functional PAs system, both at policy level and in management terms, as well as an increasing impact on natural resources and land degradation, marine and terrestrial, in and around PAs due to limited livelihoods options and limited planning.

383

384

385

386

387

388

389

390

391

Biodiversity in and around terrestrial PAs is facing numerous threats caused by unclear wildlife policy, limited awareness and poor enforcement. PAs are affected by increasing trespassing by nomads and their livestock, poaching, and illegal extractive activities. PAs are underfinanced and have limited resources for management. Trespassing by livestock is not only competing with wildlife for resources, but could also be a cause of introducing epidemics (such as rinderpest and anthrax), introducing invasive alien range plants, and causing wildfires. Changes in land use patterns in areas surrounding PAs has resulted in fragmentation of wildlife habitats reducing chances of wildlife survival and genetic diversity. Power lines, dumping sites and used polluted water in petroleum production areas are killing large numbers of migratory birds (including soaring birds) by direct collision, electrocution and poisoning respectively.

392

393

394

Biodiversity of inland waters is facing several threats such as limited scientific attention addressed to aquatic macrophytes and their conservation, and over-exploitation of fish communities through excessive uncontrolled fishing and illegal fishing methods.

395

396

397

398

399

400

401

Marine ecosystems, including marine PAs (MPAs) in Sudan face numerous threats such as the adverse impacts of coastal infrastructure development, tourism related impacts, and fishers targeting higher-level predators such as groupers and sharks and climate change. Although MPAs have been established there has been limited investment and technical and management capacity remains low. Fishing is largely unregulated and unsustainable, particularly with regards to the targeting of important spawning aggregations of grouper, in addition to impacts associated with tourism such as anchor damage. Other threats include coral bleaching (due to temperature rise), diseases, sediments, boring sponges, and corallivorous snails *Drupella spp.*

402

403

404

405

From 1936 onwards, 27 PAs were established in Sudan. 86% of these areas are in what is now South Sudan, when South Sudan gained sovereignty in 2012, Sudan was left with four national parks, two game reserves, and three game sanctuaries. Three more national parks were subsequently established in Sudan (one of them is still not officially recognized by the state of Gedarif). The existing network is spread in seven states with ten other states

406 having no PAs. The current network of PAs covers desert, semi-desert, savannah, marine and coastal, arid region
407 mountains, and riverine ecosystems. The terrestrial PAs amounts to just under 6% of the area of the country (less
408 than the Aichi Targets), while marine parks coverage is above the 10% Aichi Target at 16%.

409 The Wildlife Conservation General Administration (WCGA) has limited manpower and skills and is, therefore,
410 unable to provide effective presence in all PAs. Wildlife habitats, populations and varieties are generally declining.
411 Furthermore, land use practices in the wider landscape surrounding the PAs are putting further pressure on the
412 PAs and their biodiversity. A wildlife policy has been drafted to give guidance for WCGA activities across the
413 county.

414 Lack of sustainable alternative livelihood options force communities to depend directly on park resources, thereby
415 exerting pressure on the park and degrading park ecosystems, but also becoming increasingly vulnerable as parks
416 are increasingly degraded. Communities living in and around the parks are among the poorest in Sudan.

417 **2.2 Problems that Project Seeks to Address**

418 The current status of natural resources in Sudan is one of continuous loss of biodiversity land degradation without
419 a holistic landscape approach to the intersection between human use and nature, and the root causes include
420 armed conflict, lack of effective land use planning and the implementation thereof, uncontrolled expansion of and
421 unsustainable agriculture into forests, rangeland and wildlife areas, uncontrolled fires in natural rangelands and
422 forests, overgrazing, imprudent use of natural resources, poaching, and overfishing.

423 At the landscape level, the project has been working in and around three selected PAs landscapes in Sudan : **Dinder**
424 **National Park (terrestrial), Jebel El Dair National Park (terrestrial), and Dungonab Bay Mukkawar Island National**
425 **Park (marine).**

426 Land surrounding the Dinder National Park is predominantly owned by Government and traditional authorities,
427 according to customary laws, can decide who can use the land and what it can be used for. Members of tribes
428 have secured rights to use communal land. These customary laws and rules are well known but have no legal
429 force. As a result, over recent decades, large tracts of land have been officially leased to investors to establish
430 mechanized and semi-mechanized farms.

431 Crop damage is another root cause of environmental mismanagement and one of the main conflicts between the
432 farmers and the pastoralists as the livestock migration routes become narrower and narrower due to the
433 expansion of mechanised farmers, the small-holder farmers then cultivate the resting lands of nomads which
434 further creates tension.

435 Additionally, lack of viable sustainable livelihood alternatives and land degradation over competing land use and
436 land ownership issues is another root cause for conflicts and challenges in the areas surround Dinder National
437 Park. The degradation of natural resources and loss of traditional economic bases and lifestyles have forced the
438 majority of the population to widen their livelihood base and adopt a wide range of coping mechanisms for
439 survival. Most groups supplement their farming and livestock rearing activities with strategies such as labour
440 migration, remittances, and collection of natural resource products such as firewood, charcoal, and wild food

441 (including fish from the 'maya' wetlands). To exacerbate these challenges, water scarcity is a looming challenge,
442 and communities feel increasingly vulnerable as rains become more infrequent. Degradation of current catchment
443 areas and repeated fires have increased the erosion rate and lead to siltation of the Mayas, among other
444 degradation drivers (e.g. invasive species such as Nile Hyacinth).

445 In and around Jebel El Dair, land use planning and access is a key root cause. Tribal authorities have been granted
446 formal judicial powers to manage natural resources, and thus customary laws have been honored in this area.
447 There is an act that sanctions livestock migration routes for the nomadic pastoralists (both camel, and livestock),
448 but the act has been found to be generally ineffective.

449 Root causes for the coast are similar to further inland in many ways, such as lack of land use planning, overgrazing,
450 encroachment through over-fishing and lack of economic investment. Customary laws amongst the Beja people
451 of the area around Dungonab and Mohamed Qol in Red Sea State govern the society through a patriarchal
452 leadership structure, both in terms of general disputes, but also in terms of resource use and land tenure.

453 The main barriers to development are:

454 **Barrier 1: Weak institutional, policy and legislative environment:** Land use and wildlife protection strategies and
455 policies are weak and where they exist insufficiently enforced, often due to a lack of clarity within the strategy or
456 policy (or lack thereof) do not effectively impede or control encroachment of rain-fed farming into rangeland,
457 wildlife areas and forest areas, lack of policy and legal harmonization further exacerbates unsustainable land use
458 and land degradation. Lack of a clear strategy for PA management and expansion hinders their potential and their
459 management effectiveness. Lack of a clear tourism plan and financial planning limits the potential for PAs and
460 buffer zones to be sustainable.

461 **Barrier 2: Ineffective PA system:** PAs are not ecologically representative and do not provide effective protection
462 to several endemic species. There is no PA system-wide standard for assessing and monitoring PA effectiveness,
463 nor is there adequate experience with effectively engaging local communities in the management of marine and
464 terrestrial PAs. Further, there is a need to develop capacities for PA monitoring and business planning. Most PAs
465 lack effective management in terms of ecological monitoring and species management, operations and
466 enforcement systems and financial planning and economic sustainability.

467 **Barrier 3: Threats from outside PAs:** Poor management of lands and natural resources outside PAs by local
468 communities and limited knowledge of sustainable land management practices threaten the viability of PAs and
469 their ability to secure biodiversity conservation objectives. There is also limited experience linking sustainable land
470 management (SLM) and PA work under a community based-approach, and the government has not been in a
471 position to provide much assistance to the most vulnerable natural resource-dependent communities.

472 2.3 Project Description and Strategy

473 The project seeks to implement solutions that will overcome the barriers, as described above, and take an
474 integrated approach to implementing biodiversity conservation and SLM across the ecosystems of the three
475 selected parks. To this effect, a comprehensive landscape approach, including aspects of biodiversity conservation

476 and tackling land degradation in and around the PAs has been undertaken by the project through the
477 implementation of the following project outcomes, outputs and activities below.

478 **Project Objective: To strengthen the national PA system and promote integrated management in adjacent areas**
479 **that reduces threats to biodiversity, mitigates land degradation, sustains ecosystem services, and improves**
480 **people's livelihood.** The project plans to strengthen the national PA system and promote integrated management
481 in adjacent areas by delivering the following four integrated components:

482 **Component 1: Enabling environment established at the national level for expanded PA management**

483 Key outputs to achieve the outcomes are as follows:

- 484 • Output 1.1: Systematic training on PA System planning and management provided to WCGA staff, to be
485 able to manage PA systems, to assess and track status of all PAs and ensure effective implementation of
486 national United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-accredited biosphere
487 reserves.
- 488 • Output 1.2: A PA management structure formalised in Higher Council for Environment and Natural
489 Resources (Government of Sudan) HCENR and WCGA in collaboration with other agencies/ministries,
490 ensuring PA system structured and categorised in line with International Union for Conservation of Nature
491 (IUCN) and UNESCO international and national guidelines.
- 492 • Output 1.3: Protected Area boundaries for Dinder, Jebel Al Dair and Dungonab PAs are finalised and
493 agreed, including buffer zone land use, associated public consultations are completed and respective
494 management plans are completed, considering the outcomes for both.
- 495 • Output 1.4: National PA System Policy, Strategy and PA Expansion Plan developed, adopted and
496 implemented by government and partners.
- 497 • Output 1.5: Implementation of the National PA System Expansion Plan initiated through the legal
498 designation of two new PAs (one being a proposed biosphere) providing increased coverage for critical
499 biodiversity in critical marine and terrestrial habitats.
- 500 • Output 1.6: Strategy for consolidated and effective financing and financial management of Sudan's national
501 system of PAs developed and implemented.
- 502 • Output 1.7: Finalisation and initial implementation of a national tourism strategy, targeting domestic and
503 international tourism markets.
- 504 • Output 1.8: Creation of an information unit for managing ecological data, GIS information, remote sensing,
505 and park management data.

506 **Component 2: Improved management effectiveness at selected terrestrial and marine PAs**

507 Key outputs include:

- 508 • Output 2.1: Ecological Management, Restoration and Monitoring carried out in three PAs - (Dungonab,
509 Dinder, Jebel El Dair).
- 510 • Output 2.2: Effective PA management, enforcement and operational support to Three Protected Areas
511 (Dungonab, Dinder and Jebel Eldair).
- 512 • Output 2.3: Development and Enhancement of Economic Infrastructure in 3 PAs (Dungonab, Dinder, Jebel
513 El Dair).
- 514 • Output 2.4: Situational analysis, stock-taking and needs assessment in Radom and Wadi Hawar PAs – with
515 recommendations provided for improved management.

516 **Component 3: Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) in multi-use landscapes in and around**
517 **targeted PAs**

518 Key outputs to achieve the outcome are as follows:

- 519 • Output 3.1: Capacity developed on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for measuring land degradation and
520 SLM and INRM interventions.
- 521 • Output 3.2: Enhanced capacity on INRM and SLM among government extension services and communities.
- 522 • Output 3.3: Degraded rangeland in targeted areas restored and biodiversity protected through a
523 combination of government-driven and community-based INRM and SLM interventions.

524 **Component 4: Knowledge Management, Gender Mainstreaming, and M&E**

525 Key outputs to achieve the outcome are as follows:

- 526 • Output 4.1: Gender mainstreaming strategy implemented.
- 527 • Output 4.2: M&E provides sufficient information for adaptive management and learning via active participation
528 of key stakeholders in the project implementation.

529 **2.4 Project timeframe, funding and location**

530 The 'Strengthened Protected Areas System and Integrated Ecosystem Management in Sudan' Project (PIMS 5741)
531 is implemented by the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR) following UNDP's National
532 Implementation Modality (NIM). The project started on the 24th of May 2021 and is in its third year of
533 implementation. With a total GEF allocated budget of US\$ 4,100,913, and spanning over a period of five years
534 until May 2026, the project objective is to strengthen the national PA system and promote integrated
535 management in adjacent areas that reduces threats to biodiversity, mitigates land degradation, sustains
536 ecosystem services, and improves people's livelihood.

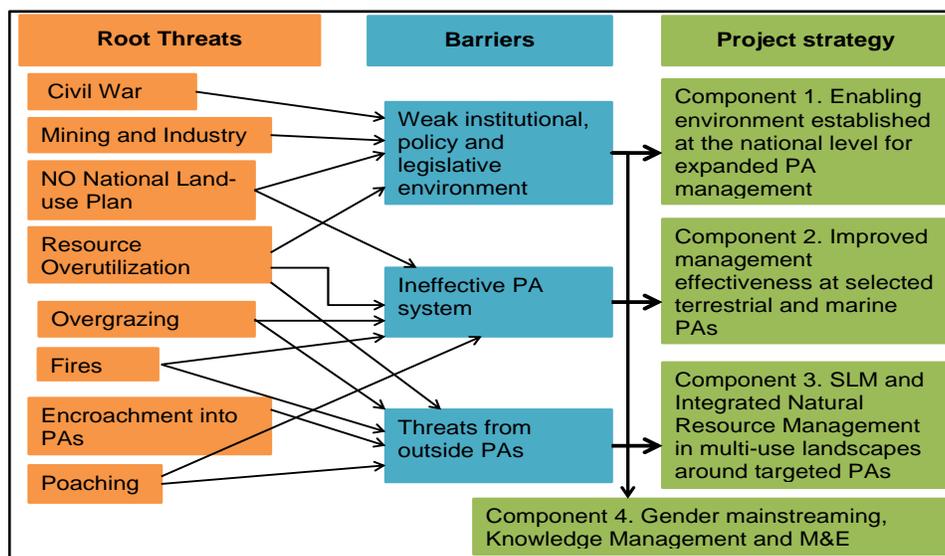
537 **2.5 Theory of change**

538 The '*Strengthened Protected Areas System and Integrated Ecosystem Management in Sudan*' project was designed
539 to take a comprehensive landscape approach to address the multi-faceted nature of land degradation and impacts
540 on natural resources by attempting to secure Sudan's PA system and ecosystems, focusing in particular on key
541 sites of ecological and economic importance and investing in supporting effective community-level engagement
542 in and around PAs and buffer zones, across key ecological systems. The project objective is to strengthen the
543 national PA system and promote integrated ecosystem management in adjacent areas so as to reduce threats to
544 biodiversity, mitigate land degradation, sustain ecosystem services, and improve people's livelihoods. The
545 objective will be achieved through the implementation of three project components which address the key
546 barriers that threaten development (see Figure 1 below) as well as through a fourth component that will focus on
547 ensuring effective lessons are learned, that the project is managed in an equitable manner and that adaptive
548 management is in place throughout (refer to Section 2.3).

549 The project is seeking to implement solutions that will overcome the barriers, as described above, and to achieve
550 the project's objective: To strengthen the national PA system and promote integrated management in adjacent
551 areas that reduces threats to biodiversity, mitigates land degradation, sustains ecosystem services, and improves

552 people’s livelihood. No real progress will be made unless the project takes a comprehensive landscape approach,
 553 including aspects of biodiversity conservation and tackling land degradation in and around the protected areas.
 554 As a result, the project aims to take an integrated approach to implementing biodiversity conservation and
 555 sustainable land management across the ecosystems of the three selected parks. The project objective will be
 556 achieved through three components that address the key barriers that threaten development (tackled through a
 557 theory of change, see below) as well as through a fourth component that will focus on ensuring effective lessons
 558 are learned, that the project is managed in an equitable manner and that adaptive management is in place
 559 throughout. Also refer to section 3.1 for assessment of the ToC appropriateness.

560 **Figure 1: Theory of Change diagram**



561

562 **2.6 Main stakeholders**

563 During the implementation of the project, the project management team has engaged with wide spectrum of
 564 stakeholders. There are two levels at which participation/engagement occurs in this regard (i) within the
 565 implementing group; and (ii) the broader constituent group. The implementing group incorporates organizations
 566 responsible and accountable for the project and those responsible for activities that influence the project, for
 567 example, institutions that have a role in the management of the project.

568 **Table 2: Key stakeholders of the project**

Type of stakeholders	Roles and Responsibilities
Government	
Range and Pasture Administration (RPA), at national level and at state and local level	Implementer of parts of Component 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use agreement development. • Enforcement of 2015 Act. • Registration of rangeland in surrounding PAs. • Leading the range reserves work.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rangeland rehabilitation and fire lines operations, supporting land use workshops, capacity building especially in bailing pasture and adoption of community management of grazing land, reseeding rangeland.
Forests National Corporation (FNC), at national level and at State and local level (will be part of local implementing unit and field work execution)	<p>Key implementer of parts of Component 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of private and community forest around PAs. Replanting of forest areas, also supporting in the mangrove areas. Land use policies. Baseline data collection. Participate in any assessment of any sustainable use of any tree species in selected PAs.
Wildlife Research Centre (WRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead some of the ecological monitoring inside PAs (part of component 2). Ensure sustainable use of PAs resources, give inputs to the park authorities about any interventions or activities part of component 3).
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, at federal and local level (member of the high body governing the project)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help and facilitate the decision of replanting of rain fed around PAs will contribute to the success of the project and land use reform and hence communities' livelihood and a key member of technical committee at all levels.
Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, at federal and local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the project to enhance sustainability, including through the rehabilitation of the Dinder maya wetlands (component 3).
Agricultural Research Corporation (ARC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARC will play a leading role in various elements of Component 3, particularly conducting biophysical land condition assessments (in addition to capacity development of other institutions).
Tourism authorities at national and local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the tourism areas of the project in all components.
Water Resources Authorities, at national and local levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support project in interventions related to improve wildlife habitat, livestock and communities.
Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	
Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (SECS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading various parts of Component 3 focusing on Dinder and Jebel El Dair National Parks, including facilitating workshops, leading CBNRM work, managing grant facility.
The Sudanese Development Initiative Agency (SUDIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading various parts of Component 3 focusing on Dungonab. Training, facilitation, support to business development, facilitating sustainable tourism and sustainable fisheries value chains (development and process) for the park communities as well as managing the grant facility
Sudanese Wildlife Protection Society (SWPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support capacity only, engaging them in some Component 2 work on ecological monitoring together with WRC, grant facility management.
Communities	
Communities in and around PAs (20 Km app.) (or Dinder this includes river Rahad villages in and outside the park, Kadallo, Magano Algri in the Blue Nile in addition of Sennar zone Ummbagra and neighbouring villages) Nomads and farmers and other groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide land for project interventions in collaboration with the government and NGOs. Co-implement all aspects of component 3. Organize all communities work. Select the representatives to represent the communities in the engagements.
Private Sector	

Tour Operators and Tourism agencies in Khartoum and States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise eco- tourism in PAs (i.e. diving, wildlife safari and connection the antiquities tourism with nature tourism and infrastructure investment).
International Organizations	
United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop Man and Biosphere Reserves work.
Programme for the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The protection of the environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and promotion of establish MPAs and their appropriate management.
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential collaboration and interested party

569

570 3. Findings

571 3.1 Project Strategy

572 Project Design

573 Overall, the MTR Team found the conceptual design of the project is relevant and appropriate in principle,
574 however, the detailed design of the project is underpinned by overly ambitious targets and outcomes which do
575 not align with the available financial and time resources.

576 The project is significantly under-resourced for what it is set to achieve and considering the breadth and
577 complexity of its objectives. The assumption that \$4 million in funding from the GEF, along with additional co-
578 financing, would suffice to accomplish the project's goals is overly optimistic. These goals include strengthening
579 the management of three existing PAs, integrating natural resource management at the landscape level—beyond
580 the boundaries of the PAs—, declaring two new PAs, developing policies for PAs and wildlife, and conducting
581 capacity building and awareness initiatives. The scope of these tasks requires substantial financial investment and
582 time, which the current funding levels do not support, including some activities are not budgeted at all for example
583 the socio-economic baseline studies in the area surrounding the selected PAs, training and knowledge
584 management. Consequently, the project's success is at risk due to its ambitious scope not being matched by the
585 necessary resources.

586 On the positive side, the project design has successfully identified key barriers that need to be addressed in order
587 to strengthen PAs system in Sudan and enhance biodiversity conservation within and outside PAs. In response,
588 the project design presents a mix of solutions addressing both PAs system level as well as local level (within and
589 outside selected PAs) shaping an integrated solution for addressing complex problems.

590 In response to these identified barriers, the project design presents a well-considered mix of solutions. It addresses
591 both the system-level challenges and the specific local-level issues within and outside the selected PAs. This dual
592 approach allows for an integrated solution that effectively tackles complex problems across multiple dimensions.

593 At the system level, the project aims to improve governance, policy frameworks, and institutional capacities that
594 are essential for the long-term sustainability of Sudan's PAs. Meanwhile, at the local level, the project focuses on
595 applying broader landscape approach for PAs management inside and outside the PAs boundaries, engaging
596 communities, enhancing sustainable livelihood options, PAs management effectiveness and promoting
597 conservation practices that directly impact biodiversity and ecosystem health.

598 By combining these system-wide and localized strategies, the project is well-positioned to create a cohesive and
599 comprehensive framework for biodiversity conservation. This integrated approach not only strengthens the PAs
600 system but also ensures that conservation efforts are sustainable and beneficial for local communities.

601 The project document provides a detailed description of the project outcomes and outputs, down to the activity
602 level, offering generous guidance to the Project Management Unit (PMU) for implementation. This comprehensive
603 detailing ensures that the PMU has a clear roadmap for executing the project's various components.

604 The defined **Theory of Change (ToC)** maps out the root threats and barriers relevant to the project components.
605 It identifies key challenges such as ineffective PA system, outside threats to PAs and weak institutional, policy and
606 legislative environment. However, the current ToC lacks clear pathways of change that demonstrate how these
607 barriers will be addressed through immediate and behavioral changes. It does not sufficiently link these changes
608 to the underlying assumptions and the anticipated Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs), and it is not supported
609 with narrative that explains how change is going to happen and what would lead to the GEBs and how these will
610 be achieved.

611 **Problem addressed by the project:** The project design has successfully identified the root threats and key barriers
612 that stand in the way of advancing biodiversity conservation in Sudan and PAs management, including the need
613 for creating PAs-System wide standards for assessing and monitoring PA effectiveness, limited capacities and
614 experience in PAs management, and weak land use and wildlife protection strategies and policies. At the local
615 level, the project design recognized the threats from outside PAs combined with the limited experience linking
616 SLM and PA work under a community based-approach. These barriers have been directly addressed and linked to
617 the project interventions.

618 **Lessons learned from other projects:** The project document references several relevant projects identified during
619 the PPG phase, along with their alignment strategy, aiming to build on and complement these initiatives. These
620 included listing of all baseline projects happening in the three selected PAs and their surroundings. The lessons
621 learned and recommendations coming out of these projects have been absorbed into this project's strategy and
622 results framework. The project design recognizes the way that this project adds value to the existing baseline
623 initiatives by addressing a strategic look at the national PA system as a whole, and how it can be strengthened in
624 terms of its ecological representation, its management effectiveness, and how PAs can be better integrated into
625 the wider landscape

626 **Management arrangements and decision making:** The Implementing Partner for this project is the Higher Council
627 for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR) of the Government of Sudan. The Implementing Partner is the
628 entity to which the UNDP Administrator has entrusted the implementation of UNDP assistance specified in this
629 signed project document along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use
630 of UNDP resources and the delivery of outputs, as set forth in this document.

631 UNDP is accountable to the GEF for the implementation of this project. This includes oversight of project execution
632 to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with agreed standards and provisions. UNDP is
633 responsible for delivering GEF project cycle management services comprising project approval and start-up,
634 project supervision and oversight, and project completion and evaluation. UNDP is responsible for the Project
635 Assurance role of the Project Board/Steering Committee.

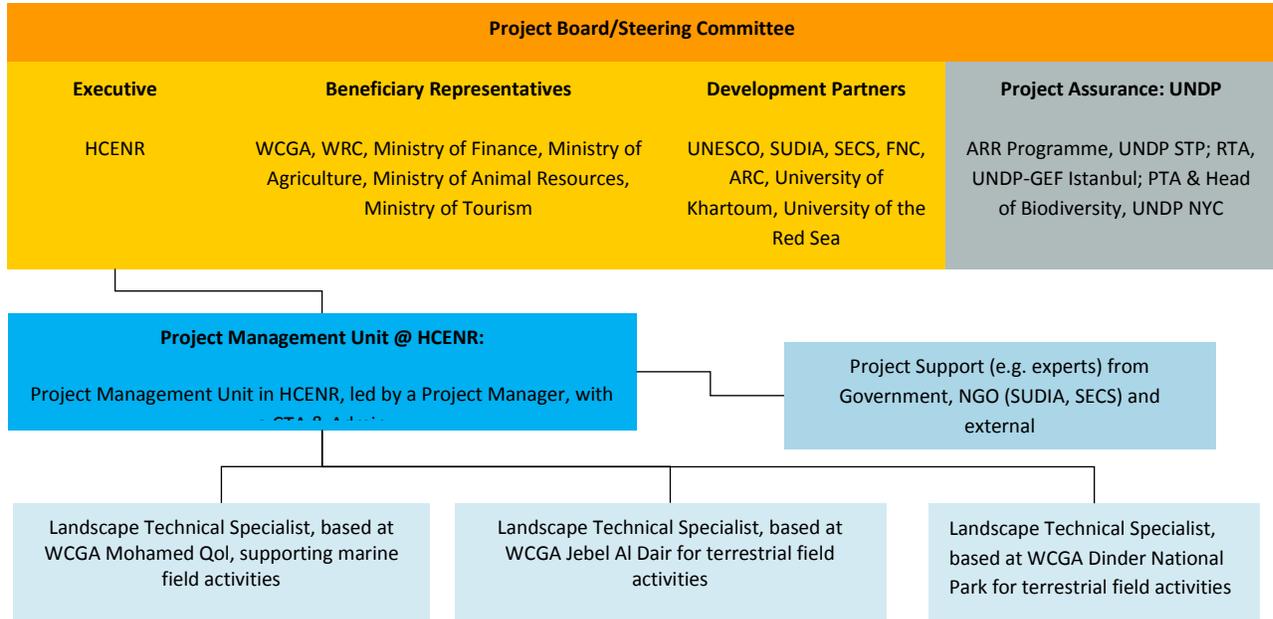
636 The Project Management Unit (PMU) has been established, and is hosted by, HCENR and responsible for running
 637 the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Implementing Partner and within the constraints laid down by
 638 the PSC.

639 In addition to HCENR, the project involves another 5 government agencies in the implementation, namely:
 640 Agricultural Research Corporation (ARC), Forests National Corporation (FNC), Range and Pasture General
 641 Directorate (RPGD), Wildlife Conservation General Administration (WCGA), and Wildlife Research Centre (WRC).
 642 Also, two Responsible Party Agreements have been signed between UNDP and both SUDIA and SECS as NGOs also
 643 contributing to the project implementation.

644 The Project Board (also called Project Steering Committee) is responsible for taking corrective action as needed
 645 to ensure the project achieves the desired results. In order to ensure UNDP's ultimate accountability, Project
 646 Board decisions should be made in accordance with standards that shall ensure management for development
 647 results, best value money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international competition.

648 The project is designed to be implemented following UNDP's NIM execution modality, the MTR team believes that
 649 the expectations for a full NIM was not realistic from the beginning based on the limited level of capacities of the
 650 government agencies in delivering a project at such scale. The management arrangements of the project
 651 management are rather complex and required to be backed with clear roles and responsibilities and governance
 652 and coordination structures. The effectiveness of the management arrangements is assessed in section 3.3 of this
 653 report – management arrangements.

654 Figure 2: Project organizational structure.



655

656 **Gender responsiveness of project design:** The project design acknowledged gender disparities in Sudan and the
657 role of gender differences in natural resource management particularly in conflict and internal displacement
658 environment, including limited access to resources in terms of scope, type and value for women compared to
659 men, rural women have different traditional roles (including agricultural and resource use), gender divisions of
660 labor vary substantially by age, race, ethnicity and marital status, benefit sharing of income and power over
661 financial resources are limited for women, limited participation of women in community-level decision-making
662 processes, and different levels of education between men and women.

663 The project design was informed by gender assessment and analysis by enhancing women inclusion and
664 participation, and a gender strategy has been developed with a clear gender action plan. The intervention design
665 incorporates and recognizes the differences between men and women in the context of labor, knowledge, needs,
666 and priorities. Special mechanisms are envisaged under the project to enhance the role of women in various
667 conservation and livelihood activities such as involving women in accessing low value grant mechanisms for small-
668 business development in the buffer and transitional zones of the three selected PAs focusing on female led
669 households, and/or to households that apply for low value grants with activities that have an emphasis on female-
670 led activities.

671 The project falls within the gender targeted ranking (2) mainly because changes to the status quo (a predominantly
672 patriarchal society) will require long-term changes beyond the project's life, and, beyond the influence of this
673 project, in many respects. Project interventions will seek greater and more equal gender representation with
674 gender mainstreaming in relevant activities.

675 The project results framework and defined indicators are also gender sensitive, ensuring that both men and
676 women are equitably represented in all project interventions. A specific target has been set for 50% participation
677 in all interventions, with an ambitious aim of at least 60% women beneficiaries, particularly in business and low-
678 value grant mechanisms. This approach not only aligns with principles of gender equality but also seeks to
679 empower women economically and socially.

680 However, while the 50% participation target is a laudable goal from an equality perspective, it may be challenging
681 to achieve in the context of Sudan's conservative and patriarchal society. The traditional gender roles and cultural
682 norms prevalent in many areas of Sudan often limit women's opportunities for participation in public and
683 economic life. These societal constraints can make it difficult to reach the desired level of female involvement,
684 potentially requiring additional strategies to encourage and support women's participation.

685 **UNDP Social and Environmental and Social Screening (SESP):** SESP has been delivered during the PPG stage. The
686 SESP of the project provides a clear definition of how the project incorporates overarching principles to enhance
687 Social and Environmental Sustainability. It outlines the integration of a human-rights based approach, gender
688 equality and environmental sustainability. The SESP defined 11 social and environmental risks (7 moderate and 4
689 high) which have been assessed in terms of likelihood and impact and supported with management measures
690 aiming to monitor and mitigate the identified risks.

691 The project SES risk is rated as High, due to High risks to women's rights, to Indigenous Peoples, from IAS
692 introductions and from PA staff potentially wearing/using weapons. Given the last-minute change (earlier versions
693 of the SESP had indicated moderate-low levels of risk prior to the change in situation), an ESIA/ESMP was expected
694 to be done at inception, before project activities get underway, to assess all risks identified in this SESP and any
695 others that emerge. However, this has not been done until now (at the time of this MTR).

696 **Planned stakeholders participation:**

697 There have been extensive and inclusive consultations during the PPG stage with all stakeholders involved or
698 impacted by the project ended with a validation workshop (April 2019) which sought final approval of the project
699 document by key stakeholders and implementing partners.

700 The project document outlines a long list of government agencies, NGOs, initiatives, private sector, communities,
701 and international organisations that are relevant to the project and identifies their mandates and role in the
702 project. However, the engagement strategy provides only generic actions (such as regular meetings, distribution
703 of knowledge products, etc) that the project will do, but it does not specifically articulate how the coordination
704 among stakeholders is going to take place and what coordination platforms will be established to facilitate a
705 systematic engagement with stakeholders, especially in a project that involves 8 responsible agencies from both
706 government and non-government sectors.

707 A significant and sensitive piece of stakeholders engagement is the one with the local communities surrounding
708 the PAs. The project document acknowledges that communities are essential parties to the smooth running of
709 project and achievement of its objectives the output but defines no specific engagement strategy.

710 **The Project Results Framework**

711 This section provides a critical assessment of the Project Results Framework (PRF) in terms of clarity, feasibility
712 and logical sequence of the project outcomes/outputs and their links to the project objective. It also examines the
713 specific indicators and their target values in terms of the SMART criteria.

714 The majority of the indicators defined in the Project's Performance Results Framework (PRF) meet the "SMART"
715 criteria to a certain extent, although some indicators included deficiencies and lack clarity. Key shortcomings in
716 the PRF include: 1) some indicators are more output-based rather than outcome-based, 2) impact-level indicators,
717 such as the status of key species and soil quality metrics, are challenging to measure and report on regularly, and
718 3) the absence of baselines and targets for certain indicators. Below table identifies key deficiencies in the
719 indicators

720 On the positive side, the descriptions of the Project's objectives and outcomes are concise and easily
721 understandable, with clear numeric targets and time frames for SMART indicators. Additionally, the project design
722 included Mid-Term Review (MTR) and Terminal Evaluation (TE) targets to support the planning process, although
723 it did not define annual targets.

724 **Table 3: Assessment of the PRF indicators**

Project result	Indicator	MTR assessment	Proposed indicator	new
Objective level	Indicator 1: Area of land and marine habitat under protection (hectares)	No change is proposed to the indicator and its target, but because Talla Talla Island is not accessible for MPA establishment, a new site has been proposed. Accordingly, the total value of the target remains unchanged, but the breakdown of the target should change as follows: Tokar: + 60,000ha Tokar (+ 30,000ha terrestrial + 30,000ha marine) West Kordofan: + 40,000ha (terrestrial)	NA	
UNDP Outcome 1: Enabling environment established at the national level for expanded PA management	Indicator 4: National policy framework developed and finalized (National PA Policy, Tourism Strategy)	This is an output indicator and provides no insights on outcome. In order to lift it up to outcome level, it is recommended to measure those policy frameworks that are developed, endorsed and set to be implemented with financial and institutional arrangements	Indicator 4: National policy framework developed, endorsed and set to be implemented with financial and institutional arrangements (National PA Policy, Tourism Strategy)	
	Indicator 6: Financial strategy in place	Similarly, this is an output indicator and provides no insights on outcome. In order to lift it up to outcome level, it is recommended to measure those strategy is developed, endorsed and set to be implemented with financial and institutional arrangements.	Indicator 6: Financial strategy developed, endorsed and set to be implemented with financial and institutional arrangements	

		Also, the indicator has no EOP target defined.	
<p>GEF Component 2 / UNDP Outcome 2</p> <p>Improved management effectiveness at selected terrestrial and marine PAs</p>	<p>Indicator 8: Conservation status of keystone species (e.g. Red-fronted Gazelle, lion in DNP, kudu in JADNP, turtles and seabirds, particularly terns in DNMP) through improved numbers</p>	<p>Although this looks like an impact level indicator, the baseline is not available, status of these species is not defined according to IUCN and no data available.</p> <p>Despite the work on baseline surveys, there is no data available for all sites.</p> <p>The practicality of measuring and reporting on this indicator regularly is challenging within available resources and capacities.</p> <p>The attribution for changes at that level can not be established within project resources and capacities.</p> <p>According to the PRF, the baseline is defined as 0, and it is unclear what does zero means here, especially that conservation status cannot be a number.</p> <p>The Wildlife Research Centre (WRC) has yet to carry out research on turtles and seabirds, particularly terns, within the DNMP</p>	<p>The MTR suggest removing this from the PRF and retain the baseline and monitoring research activities..</p>
<p>GEF Component 3 / UNDP Outcome 3:</p> <p>Integrated Natural Resource Management in</p>	<p>Indicator 10: Area of land restored in buffer and transitional zones of the three PAs (agricultural land, forest land, grasslands, wetlands)</p>	<p>The first part of the indicator is SMART and reasonable, however, the three metrics attached are very technical and not</p>	<p>Keep the head indicator as is and remove the associated metrics.</p>

multi-use landscapes in and around targeted PAs	Three key metrics for LDN (land cover change, net primary productivity (NPP), soil organic carbon (SOC)) based on land condition assessments are significantly improved from baseline for buffer zones of the three PAs	practical for project reporting at this scale.	
	Indicator 12: Average percentage of household income increase of recipients of low value grant mechanism in project areas (disaggregated for gender)	The indicator is not measurable within current capacities and resources. Household income data, if existed, would be not accurate nor reliable. Alternatively, this could measure the number of households reporting income increase	Indicator 12: number of households who report increase in their income as a result of engagement in the low value grant mechanism in project areas (disaggregated for gender)
	Indicator 13: Gender strategy developed and implemented throughout project lifetime	This is an output-based indicator that offer no insight on the outcome of gender mainstreaming.	To be removed as the outcome of gender mainstreaming is already covered in indicator 14
	Indicator 14: Women participation and direct access to resources and decision-making improved through business and training investments	The expectation to achieve 50% female participation may be unrealistic in Sudan's conservative and patriarchal society.	No change to the indicator itself, however, the target is to be reviewed to 35%

725

726 **Relevance**

727 **Relevance to the needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries**

728 Based on the MTR team's direct engagement with stakeholders and beneficiaries, it is clear that the project is
 729 highly relevant to the needs of its target groups, particularly the local communities surrounding the PAs in Sudan.
 730 These communities are in great need for support to sustain their livelihoods while sustainably use natural
 731 resources. The beneficiaries have expressed that this support was not only necessary but has also positively
 732 impacted their livelihood. They have consistently voiced a strong desire for continued assistance in the same
 733 manner, addressing the same critical needs. However, given the current harsh economic situation in Sudan, the

734 communities have developed expectations to address the economic crisis with more direct financial support to
735 their households and livelihoods.

736

737 The project stakeholders at the community level have echoed the great needs of the local communities to support
738 livelihoods whilst promoting sustainable use of natural resources, affirming the high relevance of the support
739 provided. Stakeholders have also confirmed that the project is highly relevant to their needs at the institutional
740 level and align with their priorities, however, stakeholders have raised concerns about the adequacy of funding
741 available for their participation in the project.

742 **Relevance to Sudan's National Vision (Comprehensive 25 Year Strategy) 2007-2031**

743 The project aligns well with Sudan's national priorities, as outlined in the National Vision (Comprehensive 25 Year
744 Strategy) 2007-2031. This strategy strongly supports Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM), with a
745 particular focus on agriculture's contribution to the economy, expanding forest cover, and reversing land
746 degradation to maintain healthy rangelands for grazing by livestock and wildlife. The strategy aims to reduce
747 poverty through sustainable use, rangeland management, and the promotion of alternative livelihoods. It also
748 emphasizes the importance of pastoralism, prioritizing livestock health, extensive pasture reseeding, and the
749 adaptation of land tenure frameworks, including the recognition of customary rights to land.

750 The project directly aligns with these priorities through its sustainable land management component, its efforts
751 to lay the groundwork for land tenure reform within protected areas, and its focus on safeguarding key ecosystems
752 and improving the livelihoods of those living in and around national protected areas. Additionally, the project is
753 in line with Sudan's five-year program of economic reform (2015–2019), which underscores the need to combat
754 resource deterioration, enhance living standards for low-income populations, reduce severe poverty, and build
755 capacities to adapt to climate change.

756 **Sudan's second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2020 (NBSAP)**

757 The project is closely aligned with the priorities specified in Sudan's second National Biodiversity Strategy and
758 Action Plan (NBSAP) 2015-2020. It aims to strengthen the policy and legislative foundation, as well as the
759 institutional capacity, for establishing a sustainable Protected Area (PA) network in the country. This effort
760 includes developing a National PA System Strategy and PA Expansion Plan, revising the WCGA Wildlife Policy,
761 updating the Wildlife and National Parks Act, and adopting a PA classification system in line with the IUCN/WCPA
762 standards.

763 Sudan's NBSAP has established national targets to address the root causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming
764 biodiversity across government and society, reducing direct pressures on biodiversity, promoting sustainable use,
765 safeguarding ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity, and enhancing the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem
766 services. The NBSAP also emphasizes the importance of participatory planning, knowledge management, and
767 capacity building for effective implementation.

768 The project's Components 1 and 2 are well-aligned with the NBSAP's call for actions such as:

- 769 1. Establishing new protected areas, game reserves, and sanctuaries to represent all ecological zones and states,
770 adopting international categories of protected areas, and paying special attention to areas like semi-deserts,
771 inland freshwater systems, coastal and marine environments.
- 772 2. Creating protected areas for specific species and habitats, including those for Nubian Ibex, Klipspringer, and
773 important ecological regions such as Kundi and Abayd lakes, Khor Yabous, Upper Jebel Marra, and areas along
774 the Red Sea coast and Lake Nubia.
- 775 3. Improving management effectiveness by implementing existing management plans and developing new plans
776 where they do not exist.
- 777 4. Facilitating greater stakeholder involvement in the establishment and management of protected areas.

778 Furthermore, Component 3 of this project directly responds to NBSAP targets, including the mainstreaming of
779 wildlife conservation in other sectors and land use plans, as well as the integration and mainstreaming assessment
780 of protected areas.

781 **Link with National Adaptation Programme of Action**

782 As part of its National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), Sudan has identified priority adaptation actions,
783 and this project, particularly Component 3, aligns with several of these key priorities. Specifically, the project
784 supports rangeland rehabilitation and water harvesting in Gedarif State, the improvement of sustainable
785 agricultural practices under increasing heat stress in the Nile State, and environmental conservation and
786 biodiversity restoration in northern Kordofan State as a strategy for protecting rangelands. These alignments
787 ensure that the project contributes directly to Sudan's broader adaptation efforts and addresses critical areas of
788 vulnerability.

789 **Link with National Adaptation Plan:**

790 The project will also support the achievement of several priority adaptation measures outlined in the country's
791 NAP. These include, overall, diversification of incomes, sustainable management of rangelands, environmental
792 and forest conservation, soil conservation measures, water harvesting, microfinancing opportunities, replanting
793 and reseeded programmes, establishment of community forests/community range reserves, in- and ex-situ
794 conservation of plant genetic resources through nurseries, capacity development of ministerial institutions and
795 NGOs dealing with environmental resources management, policy reform at national and state level (including
796 land reform), as well as strengthening ecosystem based management approaches in marine protected areas
797 through strengthening coastal communities and enhancing community benefits.

798 **Other policies**

- 799 • The Forestry Policy (2006): The project objective is also in line with several sectoral policies. The Forestry
800 Policy (2006) supports the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and provides clear guidelines for
801 rehabilitation and raising awareness of communities.

- 802
- 803
- 804
- 805
- 806
- 807
- The Wildlife Policy (2014): encourages establishment of new protected areas. The Strategic Action Plan for Range and Pasture Plants in Semi-desert and Low Rainfall Savannah aims at strengthening communities' capacities. The National Investment Plan for the Agricultural Sector (2012) aims to support the natural resources sector in order to ensure its regeneration and sustainability. Similarly, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and Population Policy also mention the importance of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

808 **Alignment with GEF focal area strategy**

809 This project is primarily focused on two interlinked biodiversity and land degradation related goals around

810 strengthening the PA network in Sudan through focused national policy interventions and enhancing the

811 operational capacity of targeted national parks, terrestrial and marine and secondly on ensuring sustainable land

812 management practices are in place and functioning in three key terrestrial ecosystems that border three

813 national parks.

814 The project is consistent with:

- 815
- 816
- 817
- 818
- 819
- 820
- 821
- 822
- 823
- 824
- 825
- 826
- 827
- 828
- 829
- 830
- Objective 1 of the GEF-6 Biodiversity Strategy: Improve sustainability of protected area systems (Programs 1 and 2) and
 - Objective 1 of GEF-6 Land Degradation Strategy (Maintain or improve flow of agro-ecosystem services to sustain food production and livelihoods), Program 1 and
 - Objective 3 of GEF-6 Land Degradation Strategy (Reduce pressures on natural resources by managing competing land uses in broader landscapes), Program 4 and
 - Objective 4 of GEF-6 Land Degradation Strategy (Maximise transformational impact through mainstreaking of SLM for agro-ecosystem services, Program 5.
 - The Wildlife Research Center's Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2030 presents a detailed and multi-faceted roadmap for advancing wildlife conservation efforts across Sudan. This forward-looking plan is crafted to integrate seamlessly with various sectoral policies, ensuring that conservation goals are aligned with national development priorities and environmental sustainability strategies. The plan emphasizes several critical areas, including Ecological Monitoring, which aims to continuously track the health and dynamics of wildlife populations; and Habitat Assessment, focusing on evaluating and preserving the natural environments that support biodiversity.
 -

831

832

833 **3.2 Progress Towards Results**

Assessment element	Rating
Objective Achievement	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)
Outcome 1 Achievement	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)
Outcome 2 Achievement	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)
Outcome 3 Achievement	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)
Outcome 4 Achievement	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)

834 **Progress towards outcomes analysis**

835 Overall, the project falls significantly behind its MTR targets with a very limited progress towards outputs,
 836 outcomes and objectives so far. There are multiple reasons for these drawbacks including, mainly, war-related
 837 conditions; limited project management and technical capacities; weak coordination mechanisms; ineffective
 838 management arrangements; delays in budget transfer; and political and institutional instabilities. As a result, the
 839 MTR team assessed the project to be off track towards achieving its objectives. As far as objective-level targets,
 840 there are no additional area of land and marine habitat under protection, and very limited number of beneficiaries
 841 (594 of which 353 women) comparing to its MTR target of 5,000 beneficiaries.

842 **Under component 1:** There has been limited progress in improving the institutional and technical capacities of
 843 the HCENR and the WCGA despite efforts such as on-the-job training, technical meetings, and study tours. The
 844 project has attempted to support training with various African institutes but no success, and only a study tour in
 845 Jordan for a limited number of participants. The development of the PAs and Wildlife policy has seen some
 846 advancements, including a draft policy in Arabic, but it lacks specific targets and assessments for new PAs. The
 847 alignment with IUCN and UNESCO standards is still in progress, with ongoing consultations and the finalization of
 848 an international consultant.

849 The boundaries for key PAs are not finalized, and the development of a National Tourism Strategy has seen little
 850 progress with only preparatory consultations have taken place. No new PAs have been formally declared, but
 851 efforts have focused on preparing for PA expansion, including baseline studies for the proposed Suakin/Talla Talla
 852 MPA and Toker marine site.

853 There has been no advancement in developing a national sustainable financing strategy for PAs, and public funding
 854 remains insufficient, primarily covering salaries with minimal operational costs. Additionally, no progress has been
 855 made in establishing an information management unit at WCGA.

856 **Under component 2,** also limited progress has been made in the management effectiveness of targeted PAs in
 857 Sudan. In Jebel Al Dair National Park, a baseline survey has been conducted to update wildlife status, particularly
 858 focusing on key species such as the Greater kudu. This survey has set the groundwork for future monitoring and
 859 management efforts. However, a fire management system has not yet been developed, and efforts to secure
 860 wildlife corridors remain uninitiated. Additionally, the biosphere transition zone expansion has not commenced,
 861 and no consultations have started.

862 In Dinder National Park, efforts have begun to rehabilitate the maya wetland by enhancing its water-holding
 863 capacity and strengthening the surrounding water network. Invasive species control is being implemented through

864 controlled burning and extraction practices, particularly targeting the Nile Hyacinth. A fire management plan has
865 been completed, and an assessment of lions, Roan antelope, and kudu was conducted in May 2024. A baseline
866 survey was conducted in Dinder National Park in 2022 to assess the status of wildlife, followed by ecological
867 monitoring in 2024, with a focus on key species such as lions, Roan antelopes, and Kudus. These surveys have laid
868 the groundwork for future monitoring and management efforts.

869 For the Dungonab MPA, progress includes the rehabilitation of the park HQ building and an MPA patrol boat for
870 law enforcement. The project supported rehabilitation of the HQ building and patrol boat, and work has also
871 commenced on rehabilitating a marine research building and managing mangrove plantations. A baseline survey
872 for key species has been conducted.

873 SECS has implemented the resource use inventory for both Dinder NP (for the 10 villages within the buffer zone
874 of the park) and Jebel Eldair Park (two villages Sidra and Kamla), the findings are used to develop the resource use
875 guide.

876 Essential infrastructure in three parks such as VHF radio communications, solar power systems, ranger outposts,
877 and seasonal fly camps have not yet been installed.

878 **Under component 3**, efforts to increase the area of land restored in buffer and transitional zones of the three PAs
879 in Sudan have been made particularly in Dinder National Park, where activities included clearing 450 hectares of
880 invasive species in nine wetlands and planting palatable range species; 35 hectares of invasive plants were
881 eradicated in Sennar state, and 168 hectares were seeded with palatable species in Abdelghani, Ein Elshamis, and
882 around Galagu. A 10-hectare community range reserve was established in DNP, and another 10 hectares of range
883 reserves were established in the buffer zones of Blue Nile and Senar. The establishment of tree nurseries in Sennar
884 and Gedarif state has progressed, and cultivation and reseedling of 325 feddans in the buffer zone south of Ras
885 Elfeel have been conducted.

886 In Jebel Al Dair, two community forests, each covering 24 feddans (10 hectares), were demarcated and prepared
887 using a two-plate plough. Water harvesting techniques were implemented by creating longitudinal gears
888 perpendicular to the water flow direction at the selected sites. Seedlings of Hashab (*Acacia Senegal*) and Talih
889 (*Acacia seyal*), spaced four meters apart, were planted. Additionally, Kitir (*Acacia mellifera*) tree seeds were
890 broadcast in some areas to enhance tree species diversity. Six sites in Jebel Al Dair were identified for
891 demonstration farms, and 50 farmers (30 men and 20 women) were trained to manage demonstration sites.
892 However, the full development and demonstration of the demonstration farms has not been completed.

893 In Dongonab, 90 hectares of mangrove trees (1,500 seedlings) were planted within the Dungonab Marine Park as
894 part of the project's conservation efforts. However, to ensure the long-term success of these plantation activities,
895 it is critical that the project management incorporates a comprehensive maintenance plan. This plan should
896 address the ongoing care, monitoring, and protection of the newly planted mangroves to promote their growth
897 and resilience. Ensuring long-term maintenance, including community engagement, sustainable resource
898 allocation, and regular monitoring, is essential to the ecological success of the plantation and the overall health
899 of the marine ecosystem. Without such measures, the benefits of the mangrove restoration may be at risk.

900 Despite some progress, several planned activities have not yet started. These include the advancement of land
901 use planning around PAs. Also, no capacity has been developed for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to measure
902 land degradation and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Integrated Natural Resources Management
903 (INRM) interventions.

904 NGOs SUDIA and SECS have carried out sensitization and awareness-raising efforts. SUDIA has established two
905 Women's Savings and Loans Associations (WSLAs) in Dunganab and Mohamed Qol villages, delivering training and
906 business-skills development activities. Additionally, a microfinance facility is being designed to provide revolving
907 loans and link groups with specialized banks. Efforts to explore the viability of an oyster/pearl farming business in
908 Dunganab Bay have also been initiated.

909 In Dunganab Bay, SUDIA has conceptualized the first nature-based tourism product, but it has not advanced to
910 full development. Efforts to co-develop tourism plans with local communities have started but have not
911 progressed to fully developed products, and no in-kind low-value grants have been provided to support
912 community-based tourism activities.

913 **Under component 4**, no measurable progress has been achieved. During the Project Preparation Grant (PPG)
914 stage, a gender strategy was developed to prioritize women's participation in all activities. However, updating this
915 strategy to a more detailed level and establishing a monitoring framework for gender indicators has not yet
916 occurred.

917 The NGOs SECS and SUDIA, which are engaged in community training, are focusing on women's groups,
918 particularly in accessing microfinance. Achieving 50% female participation remains a challenge in Sudan's
919 conservative and patriarchal society, but efforts are ongoing to increase women's involvement. In Dinder National
920 Park, several workshops were conducted with varying levels of gender balance. For the Resource Mapping
921 workshop, there were 30 participants (4 females, 26 males). The JDNP training on resource mapping had 20
922 participants (4 females, 16 males), fieldwork participation included 33 participants (11 females, 22 males), and the
923 Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) workshop had 53 participants (5 females, 48 males).

924 Women's participation has increased to between 13% and 40% in activities related to Jabal Eldair and 13% in
925 Dinder activities. While the 50% women participation target has not been achieved and may not be realistic based
926 on the experience of the first two years, the focus will remain on enhancing women's engagement, leadership,
927 and the sustainability of the project.

928 Progress towards results is provided on below tables against the MTR targets in the project PRF. Ratings and
929 comments are provided in the following paragraphs. For these Tables, the "achievement rating" is color-coded
930 according to the following colour coding scheme:

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved
-----------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------------------

931

932 **Project Objective: To Strengthen the National PA System and Promote Integrated Ecosystem Management in**
933 **Adjacent Areas to Reduce Threats to Biodiversity, Mitigate Land Degradation, Sustain Ecosystem Services and**
934 **Improve Livelihoods.**

935 **Progress:** In brief, the project is assessed to fall behind its MRT's objective targets. The indicators under the
936 project's objective are primarily measuring the area of additional land and marine habitat under protection and
937 number of projects' direct beneficiaries who have gained access to resources and capacity in INRM and alternative
938 livelihoods through the project. The proposed extension of MPAs and terrestrial PAs has been initiated recently,
939 but has yet to be completed to achieve the targeted PA extension areas. The initial assessment of Talla Talla island
940 revealed that the site is hardly accessible with so much logistic challenges make the establishment of a MPA not
941 possible, thus, the project decided to move towards Toker marine site as an alternative new site for the MPA
942 establishment where 5 surveys have taken place already to assess the ecological values.

943 The total number of project beneficiaries who have gained access to resources and capacity in INRM and
944 alternative livelihoods through the project is **594 (353 women and 241 men)**. These numbers are well below the
945 MTR target (i.e., 5,000 beneficiaries). Overall, progress towards MTR targets has not been achieved.

946 Indicator 1: Area of land and marine habitat under protection (hectares)

947 So far, the project focus has been on the existing PA system and surrounding areas. However, in preparation for
948 PA expansion, some progress has been made in developing a baseline for the proposed Suakin/Talla Talla MPA.
949 Three surveys have been conducted to produce a nomination file for the gazettelement of the Suakin Archipelago,
950 including Talla Talla. The surveys aimed to determine the suitability of the area as an MPA, assess biodiversity,
951 prepare a draft biodiversity report, and evaluate the social and economic situation and community opinions. A
952 baseline study has been conducted to highlight the area's uniqueness, emphasizing its importance for fisheries
953 resources and traditional fishing activities. Baseline work for proposed new terrestrial PAs is planned for later
954 stages, with initial efforts starting in 2025. So far, no designation files have been developed.

955 Indicator 2: Number of project beneficiaries who have gained access to resources and capacity in INRM and
956 alternative livelihoods through the project

957 An inclusive record of project beneficiaries and their access to project-related benefits is not adequately
958 maintained, some of the numbers reported by the PMU have been estimated roughly.

959 Due to the cultural context where men and women often engage in activities separately, ensuring female
960 participation, especially in governance, was prioritized from the outset but remained challenging. Although it's
961 early to measure resource access and alternative livelihoods, progress in capacity building for INRM is evident.

962 For instance, the NGO RP SUDIA has trained women in Dungonab MPA in the Women's Savings and Loans
963 Association, enhancing their livelihood capacities. Participants were 35 women in Mohamed Gol and 22 women
964 in Dungonab. Women's participation in decision-making events has also been facilitated, with 80 women in
965 Mohamed Gol, 45 women in Dungonab and 35 in the formation, constitution writing, and election of officers.

- 966 Around Dinder National Park, 14% of participants in the Natural Resources Inventory Workshop were women. A
 967 team of 11 men and 6 women (45% women) participated in wildlife and ecological monitoring.
- 968 Community participation in rangeland/SLM activities included 150 community members (100 men and 50
 969 women), with similar participation levels around JADNP in North Kordofan.
- 970 An orientation session on climate change and environmental adaptation, held on March 16, 2022, in collaboration
 971 with the UNESCO Chair for Women, Science, and Technology, had 38 participants (22 women and 16 men).
- 972 In Jebel Eldair, gender participation in ARC activities was over 30%, demonstrated through women's engagement
 973 in community and public meetings and direct interviews with women farmers. Steering and technical committees
 974 included 14 men and 8 women and approximately 35% female participation in policy consultation meetings.

Project Strategy	Objectively Verifiable Indicators				MTR assessment	MTR rating
	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End-of-Project Target		
OBJECTIVE: To Strengthen the National Protected Area (PA) System and Promote Integrated Ecosystem Management in Adjacent Areas to Reduce Threats to Biodiversity, Mitigate Land Degradation, Sustain Ecosystem Services and Improve Livelihoods.	Indicator 1: Area of land and marine habitat under protection (hectares)	PA system 11,211,200 ha	-	Extension of PAs: Terrestrial: + 30,000ha Tokar + 40,000ha West Kordofan Marine: +30,000 ha (Talla Talla Islands)	Zero ha additional to the baseline. There is no MTR target for this indicator. However, the focus was on the existing PA system and surrounding areas. Progress has been made in developing a baseline study for the proposed Suakin/Talla Talla MPA. The initial assessment of Talla Talla island revealed that the site is hardly accessible with so much logistic challenges make the establishment of a MPA not possible, thus, the project decided to move towards Toker marine site as an alternative new site for the MPA establishment where 5 surveys have taken place already to assess the ecological values.	
	Indicator 2: Number of project beneficiaries who have gained access	0	5,000	15,023 (women: 7,192;	There is no reliable source of data for this indicator as the PMU has changed the definition of 'beneficiaries' to maximize the count.	

	to resources and capacity in INRM and alternative livelihoods through the project (disaggregated by gender)			men: 7,831)	The 2023 PIR reported a total of 594 (353 women and 241 men). While 2024 PIR reported 2000 beneficiaries (of which 200 women) which seem to be roughly estimated rather than precisely tracked. In any case, these numbers are well below the MTR target.	
--	--	--	--	----------------	--	--

975

976 **Component 1/Outcome 1: Enabling environment established at the national level for expanded PA**
 977 **management**

978 **Outcome 1.1: Improved institutional and technical capacity in HCENR/WCGA.**

979 There has been limited progress in improving the institutional and technical capacities of the HCENR and WCGA.
 980 Efforts include on-the-job training through active government involvement in technical meetings, dialogues,
 981 wildlife and PA management communications, regular missions to the three targeted PAs, and joint discussions
 982 on technical needs, recruitment of experts, and procurement of equipment.

983 For structured training, the project sponsored 5-10 individuals to participate in a study tour in Jordan in
 984 collaboration with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) to learn about PA management and
 985 effectiveness. The project has contacted several African institutes, including the Kenya Wildlife Service Training
 986 Institute, Mweka Wildlife Management College in Tanzania, and the South African Wildlife College, to request
 987 quotations for training on Protected Area Systems, IUCN and UNESCO category training and implementation and
 988 Protected Areas Management Planning.

989 The development of the Protected Areas and Wildlife policy has progressed but not finalised yet, a draft policy is
 990 now ready in Arabic language and the final draft has been translated into English, the policy defines generic policy
 991 directions for PAs and wildlife conservation but it doesn't provide specific targets for new PAs and no assessment
 992 of potential sites including the new PAs that the project is planning to establish. The first consultation meeting on
 993 the Protected Areas Policy and Strategy took place on January 26, 2022. Three groups were formed to prepare the
 994 strategy and policy. The first draft of the policy and strategy was produced in 2022, with revisions to PA legislation
 995 and related institutional arrangements ongoing. The progress towards the policy has not led yet to a national
 996 strategy for the PA system of Sudan.

997 The PAs system has not been aligned yet with the IUCN categories (in terms of definition of protected areas, by
 998 status) and UNESCO MAB guidelines (in terms of fitting into biosphere management guidelines and standards),
 999 however, contacts have been established with the UNESCO regional office and Arab World Heritage Sites
 1000 regarding biosphere reserve guidelines to align Sudan's protected areas system with IUCN and UNESCO standards.
 1001 The engagement of an international consultant for UNESCO/IUCN guidelines is being finalized.

1002 The boundaries for Dinder, Jebel Al Dair and Dungenab PAs are not yet finalised and agreed, and no development
 1003 of signage system detailing entry to the individual PA and associated regulations.

1004 The development of National Tourism Strategy has not progressed substantially. While no measurable progress
 1005 has been made yet, preparatory consultations with the Ministry of Tourism, local communities, and the private
 1006 sector have taken place. An agreement to develop a tourism strategy for Red Sea State has been reached in
 1007 advance of starting the process.

1008 Below table represents data on MTR scorecards that have been self-reported by the implementing agencies. It
 1009 should be noted that during the MTR process, stakeholder engagement revealed that the baseline data for the
 1010 capacity scorecards were not collected through adequate consultations with relevant agencies, and the baseline
 1011 values were considered inaccurate. Consequently, the slight increases in the scores of the capacity scorecards,
 1012 based on this unreliable baseline, do not necessarily reflect genuine improvements in agency capacities. In fact,
 1013 given the limited progress in project activities and the overall war conditions in Sudan, it is reasonable to assume
 1014 that agency capacities may not have improved significantly and could have potentially weakened. Therefore, the
 1015 scorecard numbers in this report should be interpreted with this context in mind.

1016 **Table 4: Changes in scorecards for the 7 agencies involved in the project**

Agency	Baseline score (total score)	MTR score (total score)
1. Sudanese Range and Pasture General Directorate (RPGD)	54	61
2. Sudanese Environmental Conservation Society (SECS)	69	71
3. Wildlife Research Centre (WRC) -	50	60
4. Agricultural Research Corporation (ARC)	58	68
5. Forests National Corporation (FNC)	67	No data provided
6. Sudanese Development Initiative Agency (SUDIA)	68	75
7. Wildlife Conservation Forces (WCFs)	42	64

1017

Project result	Objectively Verifiable Indicators				MTR assessment	MTR rating
	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End-of-Project Target		
Component 1/ Outcome 1: Enabling environment established at the national	Indicator 3: Score on UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for HCENR/WCGA	Staffing levels and skills levels in place. Limitation over	Increase in capacity development scorecard by 20%	Increase in capacity development scorecard by 30%	The limited data available shows a very limited progress.	

Project result	Objectively Verifiable Indicators				MTR assessment	MTR rating
	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End-of-Project Target		
level for expanded PA management		financial and some technical resources				
	Indicator 4: National policy framework developed and finalized (National PA Policy, Tourism Strategy)	Only draft Wildlife Policy (with many weaknesses)	PA Policy and Strategy, as well as Tourism Strategy developed	PA Policy and Strategy, Tourism Strategy and financed and accepted by cabinet, and recommendations of land use planning process integrated into national planning	No tourism strategy developed. The Tourism Strategy development is behind schedule. The development of the Protected Areas and Wildlife policy has progressed but not finalised yet, a draft policy is now ready in Arabic language and the final draft has been translated into English, the policy defines generic policy directions for PAs and wildlife conservation but it doesn't provide specific targets for new PAs and no assessment of potential sites including the new PAs that the project is planning to establish.	

1018

1019 **Outcome 1.2: Sudan's PA estate legally expanded to include the full diversity of its eco-regions and endemic**
 1020 **biodiversity.**

1021 To date, there have been no formal declaration of new PAs and the little efforts done on preparing the nomination
 1022 requirements. The focus has been on the existing PA system and surrounding areas. However, in preparation for
 1023 PA expansion, efforts have been made in developing a baseline for the proposed Suakin/Talla Talla MPA. Three
 1024 surveys have been conducted to produce a nomination file for the gazettelement of the Suakin Archipelago covering
 1025 30000ha, including Talla Talla. The surveys aimed to determine the suitability of the area as an MPA, assess
 1026 biodiversity, prepare a draft biodiversity report, and evaluate the social and economic situation and community
 1027 opinions. A baseline study has been conducted to highlight the area's uniqueness, emphasizing its importance for

1028 fisheries resources and traditional fishing activities. Baseline work for proposed new terrestrial PAs is planned for
 1029 later stages, with initial efforts starting in 2025. The initial assessment of Talla Talla island revealed that the site is
 1030 hardly accessible with so much logistic challenges make the establishment of a MPA not possible, thus, the project
 1031 decided to move towards Tokar marine site as an alternative new site for the MPA establishment where 5 surveys
 1032 have taken place already to assess the ecological values.

1033 For west Kordofan first mission was done a month before the war and ALmeerim Protected Area was proposed
 1034 with the acceptance of the local communities.

Project result	Objectively Verifiable Indicators				MTR assessment	MTR rating
	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End-of-Project Target		
Component 1/ Outcome 1: Enabling environment established at the national level for expanded PA management	Indicator 5: Area and key ecosystem coverage of gazetted national PA system	PA system 11,211,200 ha		Extension of PAs: + 30,000ha Tokar + 40,000ha West Kordofan Marine: +30,000 ha (Talla Talla Islands)	There is no MTR target for this indicator. However, there has been limited progress to achieve the TE target. The focus was on the existing PA system and surrounding areas. Progress has been made in developing a baseline study for the proposed Suakin/Talla Talla MPA a nomination file for the gazettelement of the Suakin Archipelago, including Talla Talla Islands Baseline work for proposed new terrestrial PAs is planned for later stages, with initial efforts starting in 2025.	

1035
 1036 **Outcome 1.3: Financial resources for national PA system improved. PA Policy and Strategy, Tourism Strategy**
 1037 **agreed, financed and accepted by cabinet**

1038 There is no progress on advancing a national protected areas sustainable financing strategy for PAs in Sudan.
 1039 Currently, the public funding available for WCGA for the three PAs under this project's focus is approximately
 1040 \$72,000 USD, with 95% allocated to salaries, leaving insufficient funds for operational costs. Additional resource
 1041 mobilization and financing mechanisms are expected to be addressed primarily during the development of the
 1042 tourism strategy.

1043 Similarly, also no progress optimised for the development of national tourism strategy which is expected to be
 1044 essential element in advancing the financial sustainability of the PAs in Sudan.

1045 No progress made in establishing an information management unit at WCGA equipped with staff and specialist as
 1046 envisaged in the project document.

1047 The indicators under Outcome 1 are presented below.

Project result	Objectively Verifiable Indicators				MTR assessment	MTR rating
	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End-of-Project Target		
Component 1/ Outcome 1: Enabling environment established at the national level for expanded PA management	Indicator 6: Financial strategy in place	WCGA Budget Support of around \$13.5 million pa.a, focused mostly on salaries and PA management running costs	Financial strategy in place, Tourism Strategy in place	Please see Indicator 6.	No financial strategy developed	

1048 **Component 2/Outcome 2: Improved management effectiveness at selected terrestrial and marine PAs**

1049 **Outcome 2.1: Improved conservation of globally important biodiversity through enhanced management**
 1050 **effectiveness in 3 existing PAs (2 terrestrial, 1 marine: Total area: 2,039,000 ha, being 1,762,700 ha terrestrial**
 1051 **and 276,300 ha marine).**

1052 The PA Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) report have not been completed, but it is very unlikely
 1053 to observe changes in light of the overall limited progress and other circumstance in the country.

1054 Progress has been made in management effectiveness, as follows:

1055 **Jebel Al Dair:** A baseline survey has been conducted to update wildlife status, setting the plan for future monitor
 1056 key species (especially the Greater kudu), and utilize this information for future management of the protected
 1057 area.

1058 Fire management system in Jebel El Dair has not been developed yet to establish early burning technique
 1059 throughout the protected area.

1060 No work done yet to secure the wildlife corridors to safeguard those vulnerable species.

1061 Jebel El Dair Biosphere Transition Zone⁴ has not yet been expanded, and consultation process didn't start.

1062 **Dinder National Park:** Rehabilitation of one maya wetland started by strengthening water holding capacity and
1063 work towards strengthening the general water network in and around Dinder. Invasive species control through
1064 controlled burning and extraction practices, especially of Nile Hyacinth. A fire management plan has been
1065 completed. A baseline survey was conducted in Dinder National Park in 2022 to assess the status of wildlife,
1066 followed by ecological monitoring in 2024, with a focus on key species such as lions, Roan antelopes, and Kudus.
1067 These surveys have laid the groundwork for future monitoring and management efforts. Furthermore, two
1068 workshops were organized for WRC researchers and WCGA staff in Jebel Al Dair and Dinder National Parks, under
1069 the supervision of the WRC administration..

1070 **Dungonab MPA:** A baseline survey of species and habitat was conducted, with initial findings including 13 red-
1071 fronted gazelles and 270 ostriches in DNP. Although lions were not seen, they are regularly heard and observed
1072 by park guards. In Jebel Al Dair, the kudu population is estimated at 24.

1073 **Outcome 2.2: Relevant community representatives, private landowners and private business operators (e.g.**
1074 **ecotourism) implement PA/ MPA friendly practices and plans under the Nation-Wide Conservation Strategy.**
1075 **These include agricultural ranches in terrestrial areas, tourism marketing companies in Khartoum, and diving**
1076 **operators in the marine areas.**

1077 Under this outcome, there has been some progress in rehabilitation the HQ building of the Dungonab and ongoing
1078 rehabilitation of an MPA patrol boat for law enforcement, and no major progress done in Dinder National Park
1079 and Jebel El Dair National Park.

1080 **Dinder National Park:**

- 1081 • No VHF Radio communications and monitoring system at Dinder NP installed yet,
- 1082 • No drones for patrolling and monitoring purposes
- 1083 • No solar power system installed at El Senait in Dinder NP for communications system
- 1084 • Ranger outposts are not yet constructed to monitor both wildlife and human activities, and increase
1085 enforcement capacity.
- 1086 • Seasonal fly camps are not yet built on or around permanent maya wetlands.

1087 This year an assessment of Lion ,Roan antelope and Kudu were done in Dinder National Park this mission was in
1088 late May 2024.

1089 **Dungonab Bay and Mukkawar Island National Park**

1090 The project supported WCGA park infrastructure rehabilitation of Dungonab Park Head Quarters building, ongoing
1091 rehabilitation of an MPA patrol boat for law enforcement, commencement of marine research building
1092 rehabilitation, and mangrove plantation management.

⁴ The transitional zone is reference to a UNESCO term, meaning the perimeter of the buffer zone. The community want to increase the level of protection for the transitional zone surrounding the park.

1093 However, no VHF Radio communications and monitoring system at Dungonab NP installed yet, and no solar power
 1094 system upgraded and expanded at Mohamed Qol for the radio communications system. Also, there are no tourism
 1095 products developed for the PA including fly camps, camel safaris, diving and snorkelling, developed through public-
 1096 private-community partnerships.

1097 **Jebel El Dair National Park**

1098 No walking/hiking trails and simple fly camp designed and installed in Jebel El Dair highlands.

1099 The indicators under Component 2/Outcome 2 as follows:

Project result	Objectively Verifiable Indicators				MTR assessment	MTR rating
	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End-of-Project Target		
Outcome 2: Climate adaptive management adopted by local communities through accessible climate information and decision-making tools	Indicator 7: Enhanced METT scores as a result of improved conservation and management of three parks (DNP, JADNP, DMNP)	METT baseline at PPG: Dinder National Park 48 Jebel Al Dair National Park 41 Dungonab Bay Mukkawar Island Marine National Park 37	10% improvement on METT scores	15% improvement on METT scores since baseline	Dinder National Park 51 Dungonab Bay Mukkawar Island Marine National Park 55 Jebel Al Dair National Park: NA ⁵ It should be noted that during the MTR process, stakeholder engagement revealed that the baseline data for the METTs were not collected through adequate consultations with relevant PAs, and the baseline values were considered inaccurate. Consequently, the increases in the scores of the METTs, based on this unreliable baseline, do not necessarily reflect genuine improvements in PA effectiveness. In fact, given the limited progress in project activities and the overall war conditions in Sudan, it is reasonable to assume that PA effectiveness may not have improved significantly and could have potentially weakened. Therefore, the METT numbers in this report should be interpreted with this context in mind.	

⁵ Given the ongoing war conditions particularly in the surroundings of Jebel Al Dair National Park, it was not possible to obtain METT scores during this MTR.

	Indicator 8: Conservation status of keystone species (e.g. Red-fronted Gazelle, lion in DNP, kudu in JADNP, turtles and seabirds, particularly terns in DNMP) through improved numbers	0	10%	20%	No data available to measure change in conservation status. A baseline survey of species and habitat has been completed through the first animals count in both Dinder and Jebel Aldair. In 2024, A total of five lions were recorded, whereas kudu and roan antelopes were not seen. In 2022, a 68 Ostrich. DNP: The findings include an estimated number of red- fronted gazelle is 13, while lions are not seen during the count however, they are regularly heard at night and have been seen by park guards on regular basis. There are a 270 Ostrich	
	Indicator 9: Tourism operations at Dinder National Park, Jebal Al Dair National Park and Dungonab Bay Mukkawar Island Marine National Park up and running by end of project	No infrastructure or activities set up	Fly-camp infrastructure set up	Fly-camp operational and tourism activities operational	MTR target is not achieved. Initial communications have taken place with the Ministry of Tourism and Red Sea State tourism authorities. Consultations with the private sector and identification of potential sites for future fly camps have also occurred. However, fly-camp infrastructure set up has not been undertaken, therefore; the MTR target has not been achieved.	

1100

1101 **Outcome 3: Integrated Natural Resource Management in multi-use landscapes in and around targeted PAs**
 1102 **Outcome 3.1: Uptake of INRM and SLM by communities living in areas within and surrounding PAs supports**
 1103 **conservation through reduced exploitative pressure on PAs and improved and sustainable livelihoods.**

1104 Efforts to increase the area of land restored in buffer and transitional zones of the three PAs (agricultural land,
 1105 forest land, grasslands, wetlands) have been made.

1106 No capacity developed on M&E for measuring land degradation and SLM and INRM interventions.

1107 **Jebel Al Dair:** A baseline survey was conducted to establish reference soil conditions in the Buffer Zone.
1108 Representative sites for soil characterization and sampling were selected to evaluate soil and terrain data, with
1109 detailed baseline conditions assessed for reclamation suitability, land capability for forest ecosystems, soil profile
1110 thickness and erosion potential and potential project impacts on landscape and terrain.

1111 An initial survey on plant agrobiodiversity in Jebel El Dair National Park was also undertaken, the survey aimed to
1112 gather information on plant genetic resources around the park, including crops, varieties, and wild plants as well
1113 as initiate awareness activities on the importance of conserving PGRFA. Findings showed that 100-200 feddans
1114 per farmer are cultivated, with crops including sorghum, sesame, groundnut, cowpea, sweet sorghum, maize,
1115 watermelon, okra, tomato, and hot pepper. Both improved and local cultivars are used, with seed sources mostly
1116 being farmer-saved. There is no gene bank knowledge.

1117 A soil variation survey was undertaken in and around Dinar National Park aimed to identify main soil types based
1118 on physiographic position and surface features, select problematic areas for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN),
1119 select representative sites for soil characterization and sampling, identify soil-related limitations reducing crop
1120 yield and find solutions, increase farmer knowledge and awareness about environmental degradation and
1121 understand farmer needs and preferences and their local problem-solving experiences.

1122 Land degradation baseline survey in in Jebel Al Dair PA reported 20% land degradation and estimated 50% multi-
1123 land use and land cover. Six sites were identified for further rating and characterization for land degradation. A
1124 total of 50 farmers (30 men and 20 women) were trained to manage these demonstration sites, and five farms
1125 were proposed for conservation agriculture using sorghum varieties. Additionally, kitir seeds were broadcasted
1126 on a large farm in Sennar. Four sites in both parks were delineated for soil organic carbon (SCO) assessment, and
1127 15 lead farmers were nominated for composting training. Plant biodiversity degradation was observed and
1128 reported in both parks.

1129 Furthermore, as part of this baseline process, the project has enabled an early increase in farmer knowledge and
1130 raises awareness about saving the environment from degradation specially that caused by human such as wood
1131 cutting and/or severe grazing. This will be continued once the SLM activities become further entrenched in the
1132 target landscapes.

1133 Two community forests, each covering 24 feddans (10 hectares), were demarcated and prepared using a two-
1134 plate plough. Water harvesting techniques were implemented by creating longitudinal gears perpendicular to the
1135 water flow direction at the selected sites. Seedlings of El Hashab (*Acacia senegal*) and Talih (*Acacia seyal*), spaced
1136 four meters apart, were planted. Additionally, Kitir tree seeds were broadcast in some areas to enhance tree
1137 species diversity.

1138 SECS drafted Resource Use Inventory (RUI) for Jebel Eldair Park (two villages Sidra and Kamla) in the DNP identified
1139 the main resources utilized by the communities, the focus of the RUI was on the presence, distribution, and
1140 condition of natural resources in these villages. The findings are used to develop the resource use guide.**Dinder**
1141 **National Park:** Activities in Dinder National Park included

- 1142 - 450 ha. Invasive species control was cleared in 9 Wetlands in DNP in addition of planting by palatable range
- 1143 species.
- 1144 - Eradication of invasive plants on 35 hectares (41% of the target area) in Sennar state
- 1145 - Seed broadcasting of palatable species on 168 hectares (67% of the 250-hectare target) in Abdelghani, Ein
- 1146 Elshamis, and around Galagu
- 1147 - Rehabilitation of 10 ha. Community range reserve in DNP AND THIS YEAR 10 Kg. of seeds is added to the reserve
- 1148 10 villages Alrahad area
- 1149 - 200h were seeded in the buffer zone Blue Nile Side and 200 ha. In the buffer zone in Senar zone trees species
- 1150 mainly Acacias
- 1151 - Establishment of a 10-hectare nursery in Sennar state (100% of the targeted area),
- 1152 - 10-hectare tree nursery establishment in Gedarif and
- 1153 - Cultivation and reseeded of 325 feddans (79% of the target) in the buffer zone 13 km south of Ras Elfeel by FNC
- 1154 Sinnar, with 55,000 out of 70,000 seedlings produced and community forests mapped.
- 1155 - 500 ha. In animals routes reseeding Gadarif site
- 1156 - 4 ha as Dem farm in the 10 villages
- 1157 - 90 ha. Of mangrove trees (1500 seedlings) were planted in Dungonab Marine Park
- 1158 - The project will also pilot two community forests in the buffer zone of the DNP, each 10 ha in size (one near
- 1159 Alebak Village in Gedarif State, and the other along the park boundary in Algari in Blue Nile State).
- 1160 - FNC Blue Nile was unable to meet commitments due to security issues
- 1161 No work done so far on the building the capacity of 10 farmers and developing ten 5 ha demonstration farms. And
- 1162 no work done so far on the land use planning in the surrounding of the Dinder National Park.
- 1163 An assessment to select grant recipients has been conducted, but limited progress has been made due to the lack
- 1164 of a baseline for household income, making it difficult to measure changes at this stage. Grants and loans support
- 1165 is planned to start later. However, NGOs SUDIA and SECS have carried out significant sensitization and awareness-
- 1166 raising efforts.
- 1167 SECS delivered Resource Use Inventory (RUI) for the Dinder National Park in the ten villages in the DNP identified
- 1168 the main resources utilized by the communities, the focus of the RUI was on the presence, distribution, and
- 1169 condition of natural resources in these villages. The findings are used to develop the resource use guide.
- 1170 SUDIA is using the Village Savings and Loans Association model to establish the Women's Savings and Loans
- 1171 Association (WSLAs). The model is based on the delivery of six training modules over the course of a year. To date
- 1172 SUDIA has established two WSLAs in Dungonab and in Mohamed Qol villages and delivered a series of activities
- 1173 with women in the two villages.
- 1174 Business-skills training for four women and four men in Mohamed Gol and Dungonab took place on June 22.
- 1175 Design of a microfinance facility for Dungonab and Mohamed Gol villages, which will provide revolving loans and
- 1176 link groups with specialized banks, has been initiated.
- 1177 Microfinance and small grants activities for Jebel Al Dair National Park and Dinder National Park not started yet.
- 1178 SECS has conducted work to determine the needs, challenges, and aspirations of communities in readiness for the
- 1179 upcoming work.

1180 SUDIA began to explore the viability and potential for starting up an oyster/pearl farming business in Dungonab
1181 Bay which would generate self-employment opportunities for the resident population (particularly women).
1182 Several professional companies in the field were contacted to provide technical support in developing a business
1183 plan.

1184 **Dungonab Bay and Mukkawar Island National Park**

1185 In Dongonab, 90 hectares of mangrove trees (1,500 seedlings) were planted within the Dungonab Marine Park as
1186 part of the project's conservation efforts. However, to ensure the long-term success of these plantation activities,
1187 it is critical that the project management incorporates a comprehensive maintenance plan. This plan should
1188 address the ongoing care, monitoring, and protection of the newly planted mangroves to promote their growth
1189 and resilience. Ensuring long-term maintenance, including community engagement, sustainable resource
1190 allocation, and regular monitoring, is essential to the ecological success of the plantation and the overall health
1191 of the marine ecosystem. Without such measures, the benefits of the mangrove restoration may be at risk.[Support
1192 for diversified livelihoods](#)

1193 **Dinder National Park:**

1194 A low value grant mechanism is not established for small business development for communities within buffer
1195 and transitional zones, the LVG is supposed to be focusing on businesses that reduce impact of resource use on
1196 the resources in and around the park (including, inter alia, solar stoves, supply markets for fresh produce, bee
1197 keeping, fish processing, and similar low impact SMEs).

1198 Selected community members will be given eco-tourism guide training and linked with eco-tourism opportunities
1199 in Dinder.

1200 **Jebel El Dair National Park**

1201 A low value grant mechanism is not established yet for small business development for communities in buffer and
1202 transitional zones of JADNP.

1203 **Dungonab Bay and Mukkawar Island National Park**

1204 SUDIA organisation conceptualised the first nature-based tourism product for Dungonab MPA so called Mukkawar
1205 and Meshairifa weekend get-away. The product was discussed with the community but has not advanced for full
1206 development and operation stages yet.

1207 SUDIA organisation worked with the community of Mohamed Qol village to co-develop the tourism plan for as
1208 well as for the Dungonab villages. The work involved assessment of the community needs and readiness for
1209 tourism and consultation on the key activities. However; this work has not progressed to a fully developed
1210 products and no access to in-kind low value grants in support of community-based tourism activities.

1211 A low value grant mechanism (labelled here as 'eco-tourism grants') is planned to be established through this in
1212 both villages to enhance and diversify income generation, to decrease dependence on land resources (and thus

1213 decrease land degradation. The project team worked with Bank of Sudan to establish low interest rates for the
 1214 community fund but this was then terminated despite initial approval of the bank.

1215 Women’s Savings and Loans Associations (WSLA): the project established two women association in Mohamed
 1216 Qol and Dungonab, where 36 and 24 women enrolled in the first cycle in the two villages respectively. Women
 1217 have been trained on business skills training and how to set up and run a small community-managed micro-finance
 1218 operation, and provided with advices on the community project that the WSLA resources can be used for. The
 1219 total Community Fund contributions as of August 2022 is 110,440 SDG in Dungonab and 114,600 SDG in Mohamed
 1220 Qol.

1221 The indicators under Component 3/Outcome 3 are as follows:

Project Result	Objectively Verifiable Indicators				MTR assessment	MTR rating
	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End-of-Project Target		
Outcome 3: Integrated Natural Resource Management in multi-use landscapes in and around targeted PAs	Indicator 10: Area of land restored in buffer and transitional zones of the three PAs (agricultural land, forest land, grasslands, wetlands) Three key metrics for LDN (land cover change, net primary productivity (NPP), soil organic carbon (SOC)) based on land condition assessments are significantly improved from baseline for buffer zones of the three PAs	0 ha No baseline data established for NPP, SOC and land cover change. At project onset, baseline values established - NPP level (tDM/ha/yr) and SOC stock (tC/ha), and land cover change	10% increase from baseline land condition assessment for NPP, SOC, and positive land cover change in buffer zones	5,560 ha land restored. 20% increase from baseline land condition assessment for NPP, SOC, and positive land cover change in buffer zones; All six pilot sites are land degradation neutral by end of project: 60 ha in total	1,974 ha restored so far. No data available to measure the MTR target (i.e. 10% increase from baseline land condition assessment for NPP, SOC, and positive land cover change in buffer zones).	
	Indicator 11: Areas under sustainable land management increased in all three targeted PAs (through land use planning and	0 ha	-	448,700 ha under improved SLM planning	0 hectare	

Project Result	Objectively Verifiable Indicators				MTR assessment	MTR rating
	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End-of-Project Target		
	rangeland management planning)					
	Indicator 12: Average percentage of household income increase of recipients of low value grant mechanism in project areas (disaggregated for gender)	Baseline to be determined on selection of recipients of grant mechanism	Household income increased by 15% above baseline	Household income increased by 30% above baseline	No data for income increase. No baseline data is available	

1222 **Component 4: Knowledge Management and M&E**

1223 **Outcome 4.1: Lessons learned by the project through gender mainstreaming and participatory M&E are used to**
 1224 **promote community support for conservation practices and the development of PA systems.**

1225 No measurable progress has been achieved in the early stage of the project. A gender strategy was developed
 1226 during Project Preparation Grant (PPG) stage, prioritizing women's participation in all activities. The project was
 1227 meant to update the gender strategy into a more detailed level and set up monitoring framework for gender
 1228 indicators and this has not happened yet.

1229 The project funded a session with the UNESCO Chair of Women, Science, and Technology on awareness of women
 1230 in biosphere reserves, which provided valuable direction for implementing the gender strategy. Implementation
 1231 has been delayed due to the replacement of the former Chair, causing a delay in completing the work plan for the
 1232 M&E and gender strategy. This will be addressed as a priority going forward.

1233 The NGOs SECS and SUDIA, engaged in community training, focus on women's groups, especially in access to
 1234 microfinance. While achieving 50% female participation may be unrealistic in Sudan's conservative and patriarchal
 1235 society, efforts are ongoing to increase women's involvement.

1236 In Dinder National Park, the following workshops were conducted with the noted gender balance:

- 1237 • Workshop on Resource Mapping: 30 participants (4 females, 26 males).
- 1238 • JDNP training on resource mapping: 20 participants (4 females, 16 males).
- 1239 • Fieldwork participation: 33 participants (11 females, 22 males).

1240 • Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) participation: 53 participants (5 females, 48
1241 males).

1242 Women's participation has increased between 13% to 40% in Jabal Eldair activities and 13% in Dinder activities.
1243 Women's participation and awareness will continue to be a focus to enhance their engagement, leadership, and
1244 the project's sustainability. The 50% women participation target is, nonetheless, not achieved and may not be
1245 achieved based on the experience of the first two year.

1246 The project has not established a formal learning and adaptive management system that systematically captures,
1247 disseminates, and utilizes lessons learned. This gap has hindered the effective integration of these insights into
1248 the project's adaptive management strategies, limiting the ability to refine approaches based on experiences and
1249 challenges encountered during implementation.

1250 The indicators under Outcome 4 are as follows:

Project Result	Objectively Verifiable Indicators				MTR assessment	MTR rating
	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End-of-Project Target		
Outcome 4: Knowledge Management and M&E	Indicator 13: Gender strategy developed and implemented throughout project lifetime	Gender strategy and action plan created at PPG, no implementation	Gender strategy implemented	Gender strategy effectively implemented and mainstreamed, women participation and engagement at least equal throughout project.	Gender strategy has not been developed yet, MTR target has not been achieved.	
	Indicator 14: Women participation and direct access to resources and decision-making improved through	Little to no participation	At least 50% of participation in all interventions including	50% participation in all interventions, with at least 60% women beneficiaries in	Women's participation and decision-making ranges between 1-5%, which is less than the 50% MTR target. MTR target has not been achieved.	

	business and training investments		SLM related	business/low value grant mechanism		
--	-----------------------------------	--	-------------	------------------------------------	--	--

1251

1252 **Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective**

1253 Given the limited progress made so far, all key barriers identified in the project document remain valid.

1254 **Barrier1. Weak institutional, policy and legislative environment:** Despite progress in advancing the Protected
 1255 Areas and Wildlife policy, the policy is not finalised yet and no national strategy for the PA system of Sudan
 1256 developed accordingly. Also, the PAs system has not been aligned yet with the IUCN categories (in terms of
 1257 definition of protected areas, by status) and UNESCO MAB guidelines (in terms of fitting into biosphere
 1258 management guidelines and standards).

1259 The boundaries for Dinder, Jebel Al Dair and Dungonab PAs are not yet finalised and agreed, and the development
 1260 of National Tourism Strategy has not progressed substantially.

1261 The future lack of a clear strategy for PA management and expansion hinders their potential and their
 1262 management effectiveness. Lack of a clear tourism plan and financial planning limits the potential for protected
 1263 areas and buffer zones to be sustainable.

1264 **Barrier 2. Ineffective PA system:** PA’s efforts in protecting natural assets are still challenged with limited
 1265 experience with effectively engaging local communities, and PA monitoring and business planning.

1266 Despite progress in setting up baselines studies in three PAs in this project, they still lack effective management
 1267 in terms of ecological monitoring and species management, operations and enforcement systems and financial
 1268 planning and economic sustainability.

1269 **Barrier 3. Threats from outside PAs:** Initial engagements with local communities are happening, but the livelihood
 1270 programme has not been fully activated and yet to see stronger SLM and PA work under a community based-
 1271 approach, and the government has not been in a position to provide much assistance to the most vulnerable
 1272 natural resource-dependent communities.

1273 At the project operation front, the MTR has found the following barriers that could influence the proper
 1274 achievement of the project objectives have been identified throughout the detailed analysis of the documentation
 1275 and interviews with stakeholders:

- **Political unrest and security situation:** The project has been implementing with significant challenges related to instable political environment (including a military coup in 2021), this was followed by an armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) began on 15 April 2023. In addition to the humanitarian cost of the war (sadly 15,550 reported

1280 fatalities and 8.8 million people displaced⁶), the implementation of the project activities by the
1281 Government has become very difficult, if not impossible. In fact, the war has significantly and
1282 negatively impacted and nearly halted the capacity of governmental institutions in Khartoum to
1283 operate, changes in Government priorities and difficulties for project team to move around and access
1284 project sites and communities. This also meant that some project sites, particularly Jebel El Dair
1285 National Park, is not accessible for the project teams. This risk is beyond the project control, and as
1286 staff safety is a priority, all UN Security advices need to be respected.

- 1287 - **Political and institutional instability:** Frequent restructuring of government departments, high
1288 turnover of staff in key partner agencies created an environment of rapidly changing priorities and led
1289 to deficiency in institutional memory and commitment, thereby affecting the project engagement
1290 strategy and implementation.
- 1291 - **The full NIM implementation modality has been ineffective:** Being under political and economic
1292 sanctions for a very long time, the existing capacities in the Federal Government of Sudan have been
1293 unable to aid the project with needed services (such as recruitment and procurement). The full NIM
1294 implementation modality meant that no assistance from UNDP on international procurement of
1295 goods and services leading to low delivery and an inability to achieve the intended results. The MTR
1296 team understands that UNDP had requested the change to 'supported NIM' modality, however, this
1297 request has been denied by the GEF. Based on the MTR evidence and given the current circumstances
1298 in Sudan, the MTR assesses the shift to 'support NIM' modality to be reasonable and in fact very much
1299 needed to support project operations.
- 1300 - Stakeholders, including local communities, hold **misconceptions** about the project's role in addressing
1301 the broader economic crisis in the region. This results in dissatisfaction and grievances, causing
1302 disruptions to project support and hindering smooth implementation.
- 1303 - **High economic inflation arising from instable political situation:** As of June 2024, Sudan's inflation rate
1304 remains extremely high. According to the latest available data, the inflation rate in Sudan has been
1305 fluctuating but generally remains elevated due to ongoing economic challenges. The International
1306 Monetary Fund (IMF) reports that the annual inflation rate is still significantly high, reflecting the country's
1307 severe economic instability and the impacts of prolonged conflict and political uncertainty. Widespread
1308 inflation and other economic challenges arising from the current political environment render the
1309 project budget insufficient to achieve the intended outputs, outcomes, and potentially the
1310 overarching development objective. However, the impact of the inflation on the project financial
1311 management needs to be assessed at in light of the devaluation of the Sudanese pound on the other
1312 side. By May 2024, the Sudanese pound had further devalued significantly, with the parallel market
1313 exchange rate reaching around SDG 1750 per USD (from SDG 375 per USD in 2021). The project needs
1314 to assess the impact of inflation and devaluation on the project budget in the remaining years and
1315 review budgeting accordingly.
- 1316 - **Inadequate coordination among implementing agencies:** The project involves complex structure with
1317 multiple agencies having implementation responsibilities which requires effective coordination
1318 mechanisms to be in place to ensure complementarities and coherence. So far, the project board, that
1319 convenes only once annually, has been used as a coordination platform which is deemed to be
1320 inadequate for effective coordination.

⁶ Source of data UN OCHA Sudan. Last update as of 19 June 2024.

- **Limited clarity on the roles and responsibilities among stakeholder:** The project involves complex management arrangements with multiple responsible parties delivering different components, with limited clarity on reporting lines and arrangements, this makes the coordination task particularly challenging and can lead to significant issues in project execution, including misunderstandings, duplicated efforts, missed deadlines, and reduced accountability.
- **Mismanagement of community expectations:** Managing community expectations is critical for the success of projects, especially in case of this project where it will directly impact local communities. The project didn't implement the ESIA as anticipated in the project design and accordingly there was no deep analysis of the communities concerns and risks. The limited understanding of the community concerns combined with the limited engagement in the scoping of activities led to creating different expectations as to what the project is going to offer in terms of services and benefits. Mismanagement in this area led to a range of negative consequences including community protesting demanding additional support, filing complaints against the project which affected not only the project's outcome but also the organization's reputation and relationship with the community for UNDP and government.
- **Two NGOs (SECS and SUDIA) are no longer receiving their funds:** A decision to pause the funding for SECS and SUDIA was undertaken by UNDP due to the ongoing war conditions. This decision was made in April 2023, and still in effect at the time of writing this report. This decision meant that local community engagement activities have been impacted. Both NGOs received only one payment in mid-2022 and subsequently submitted their financial and progress reports in December 2022, along with a request to UNDP for the payment of the second instalment, which has yet to be processed.
- **Limited technical and project management capacities:** Technical and project management capacities play crucial roles in ensuring successful project outcomes. The lack of these capacities can have significant negative impacts on the project. The project is being delivered by different teams that have varied level of technical and project management capacities and are getting limited technical guidance and backstopping. Particularly, the absence of the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) role is evidently creating a vacuum in the project management and technical mailabilities available specifically to provide strategic guidance and help in assuring the quality of project products and impacts. UNDP was not able to recruit the CTA due to constraints posed by the NIM implementation modality.
- **Inadequate overall financial resources for project activities:** as explained earlier in this report, the project is significantly under resourced for what it sets to deliver. Financial resources are the lifeblood of any project, enabling the procurement of necessary materials, hiring of skilled personnel, and implementation of essential processes. For this project, the inadequacy of the financial resources had negative impacts that are profound and multifaceted, affecting not only the project performance but also the implementing partners and stakeholders.
- **The limited attainment of co-financing:** This is attributed to political and economic conditions, has negative impact on the project's ability to meet co-financing targets.
- **Persistent delays in finalizing the necessary safeguards assessments and management plans** lead to the project's non-compliance with UNDP's SES Policy or its inability to effectively prevent or address safeguards risks. This situation may also lead to the filing of grievances against the project. There has been limited support provided by the SES specialist in UNDP regional office. The project should resume the process of safeguards recommended actions after post PIR (see recommended action).
- **Accessibility and remoteness of project's sites:** The project is being implemented in 3 PAs across different regions in the country, and these areas are geographically dispersed across the country. The

remoteness of these PAs meant that accessibility has been challenging for the project team and also meant that the travel cost is exceptionally expensive and budget-consuming.

- **Delays in transferring budget:** Under the NIM modality, UNDP transfers budget on quarterly basis to Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR), SUDIA and SECS. HCNER in its turn transfer financial resources to other Governmental agencies involved in the project. However, these budget transfers have often been delayed primarily because the IPs have not been able to consume at least 80% of the previous instalment, which is the threshold required to transfer a new instalment as per UNDP role. This has been a limiting factor for driving real progress in on time, particularly for field surveys which needed to be done in certain season, and because of the fund transfer delays, these surveys were not done on time, which also had affected the quality of the products.
- **COVID:** COVID-related disruptions have led to delay start of the project in 2021 and contributed (along with other reasons) to enlarge the gap between PPG which was finalised in 2019 and actual project start – May 2021. However, by the time the project started, COVID-related restrictions on mobility have been lifted and this was no longer an impediment.
- **Staff turnover in government counterparts:** The project has experienced considerable staff turnover within both the PMU and among government counterparts. This turnover has led to a slowdown in progress, as significant time and resources were needed to onboard new staff and familiarize them with the project’s goals, processes, and activities. The frequent changes in personnel have disrupted continuity and posed challenges to maintaining momentum in project implementation.

3.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Assessment element	Rating
Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)

Management Arrangements

The project has been implemented following UNDP’s NIM execution modality, where UNDP is the GEF Implementing Agency for the project and as such remains the ultimate responsible party towards the GEF Secretariat and Council with regard to the use of GEF financial resources – and of any cash co-financing passing through UNDP accounts. The Implementing Partner for this project is the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR) of the Government of Sudan. The Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the Government of Sudan (GoS), and the Country Programme was applied as the basis of the agreement.

Responsible Party Agreements have been signed between UNDP and both SUDIA and SECS. Funds are channelled from UNDP to each Responsible Party (RP) directly upon agreement of the Project Board. Terms of reference and outcomes expected from each RP provided in the agreements based on the details provided in the ProDOC. The roles for SUDIA and SECS are focused on community level engagement, facilitation of a number of activities under Component 3 and additional facilitation of the provision of low value grant mechanisms. SUDIA is focused, due to skills, experience and network on marine interventions in the Dungenab Bay area with fund of USD 316,750 over the Project lifetime, whilst SECS for the same reasons on terrestrial (Jebel Al Dair and Dinder landscapes) with fund of USD 322,000.

1401 A Letter of Agreement for Support Services was signed between UNDP and HCENR to authorise UNDP to designate
1402 SUDIA and SECS as responsible parties and assign the agreed budgets (TBWP Budget Line and Note 3.3) to them.
1403 The Letter of Agreement specifies main services to engage with the two NGOs (SECS, SUDIA) and advance their
1404 financial resources as stipulated in the prodoc. It didn't, however, cover procurement and recruitment services
1405 that may be provided by UNDP, i.e. Full NIM.

1406 HCENR, in its turn, agrees with other government institutions involved in the project on the terms of reference
1407 and transfer the funds accordingly. These include Agricultural Research Corporation (ARC), Forest National
1408 Corporation (FNC), Range and Pasture General Directorate (RPGD), Wildlife Conservation General Administration
1409 (WCGA), and Wildlife Research Centre (WRC).

1410 The MTR team found that there are major deficiencies in the management arrangement as follows:

- 1411 - The MTR's view on the **full NIM implementation** aligns with the perspectives expressed in the 2023 PIR by
1412 both HCENR and UNDP. The expectations for effectively implementing a project of this scale under a full
1413 NIM modality were unrealistic from the start, given HCENR's limited capacity to manage the project's
1414 procurement and recruitment needs.
- 1415 - The current **management arrangements confuse governance settings**—decision-making and strategic
1416 guidance—**with coordination mechanisms** among stakeholders involved in the project implementation.
1417 Currently, both functions are assigned to a project board comprising over 16 stakeholders, which is
1418 convened only once per year. This setup has led to inadequate coordination and an impractical decision-
1419 making process with too many stakeholders involved. To address this, the functions need to be separated
1420 and strengthened by:
 - 1421 ○ Restructure the Board: Focus the board on decision-making and strategic guidance, including
1422 representatives from UNDP, HCENR, and a beneficiary representative (e.g., Ministry of Finance).
1423 Given the scale of issues faced by the project, the board should convene twice per year.
 - 1424 ○ Establish a Coordination Platform: Create a 'Project Coordination Group (GCP)' chaired by HCENR,
1425 involving six government agencies involved in implementation, two NGOs (SUDIA and SECS), and
1426 UNDP. The GCP should meet at least quarterly to ensure coherence among project components
1427 and consistent delivery under one vision. In addition, coordination needs to be established based
1428 on regular 1:1 engagement between the PMU and each RPs to proactively identify issues and
1429 solutions.
- 1430 - **Limited clarity on roles, responsibilities and reporting** lines which has negatively impacted the project in
1431 the past few years. Despite recent improvements, roles, responsibilities and reporting requirements need
1432 to be further clarified and clearly communicated including consistent reporting protocol.

1433 **Quality of UNDP implementation/oversight:** As NIM project, UNDP Sudan role has been limited to the overall
1434 supervision and monitoring of the project, the UNDP CO has been providing project assurance through the country
1435 office and the UNDP-GEF and through active participation in the project board. UNDP has provided direct project
1436 services to lead the MTR.

1437 UNDP CO has been supporting the project with monitoring the financial transactions by the project in terms of
1438 delivery, meeting targets and expenditure. The MTR was informed that UNDP has undertaken only one audit
1439 during project implementation so far falling short on the annual audit requirement. UNDP facilitated and
1440 supported the Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), and MTR. However, the PMU and NGOs noted that there

1441 has been delays in transferring the budget which affected delivery of the project activities. UNDP team attributed
1442 these delays to complications with the new ERC system that UNDP uses and so called 'Quantum'.

1443 **Quality of Implementing Partner Execution:** The Sudanese Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources
1444 (HCENR) is the main implementing partner for this project, and is responsible and accountable for managing this
1445 project, including the monitoring of project interventions, achieving project outcomes, and for the effective use
1446 of UNDP and GEF resources. The Project Management Unit (PMU) is hosted by HCENR and responsible for running
1447 the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Implementing Partner and under guidance of the project board.

1448 Despite demonstrating ownership, the HCENR has been facing challenges in implementing the project, mainly
1449 related to the limited project management and coordination capacities combined with unclear roles and
1450 responsibilities with other government and non-government organizations involved in this project. Challenges
1451 also included limited capacities to support procurement and recruitment under the full NIM modality, particularly
1452 when it comes to contracting international services and goods suppliers (e.g. consultants).

1453 On a positive side, a key factor contributing to ownership has been the robust integration of the PMU within the
1454 HCENR, fostering a strong sense of ownership within HCENR. The PMU, being embedded in the HCENR, has been
1455 able to use the existing government structures to reach out to federal and local authorities.

1456 **Work planning**

1457 The project document was signed on May 24, 2021, but the project witnessed a slight delay in recruitment of
1458 project management unit, resulting in slight delay in implementation of project activities. The project manager
1459 was recruited in August 2021, after the inception workshop took place on July 15, 2021. There has been also delays
1460 in recruiting the rest of the team, in fact, until now some positions in the PMU are vacant.

1461 The PMU has been attempting to coordinate planning among various organizations involved in the project, this
1462 involved developing annual work plan early on each year and request project partners to present their proposed
1463 technical and financial plans for the year at the activity level, which then are reviewed by the PMU. The joint
1464 planning process didn't seem to have been following a result-based system, mostly focused on activities and
1465 expenditures and lacking for alignment and coherence among partners.

1466 A project at this scale with complex management arrangements need to undertake a results-based planning
1467 process that is focused on the end results rather than the activities or outputs alone, thereby enhancing
1468 accountability of partners, transparency, and overall effectiveness. The project needed to move beyond just doing
1469 activities and start focusing on what the project is actually achieving with those activities. To enhance this line of
1470 thinking, UNDP is recommended to convene RBM training for PMU and key project personnel who are involved in
1471 project implementation.

1472 The Project work-planning processes didn't apply effectively the Project's Results Framework/ log-frame as a
1473 management tool, the results framework was not kept up to date with data all partners continuously. As discussed
1474 in section 3.1, the way the indicators are presented in the project design has been confusing for the PMU and
1475 partners and didn't provide enough utility for PMU to guide planning process. The MTR team has discussed this

1476 matter at length with the PMU. Further, there is a need to establish a mechanism to review and validate data
1477 coming from local level to ensure credibility and accuracy.

1478 The MTR team doesn't expect that the project can be operationally closed as planned (i.e May 24, 2026), and
1479 therefore it foresees the need for project extension, this assessment is based on progress in achieving targets, the
1480 financial delivery status and budget available for project administration and activities. However, the project
1481 extension needs to be assessed by the project board 1 year ahead of the closure date based on the needs and
1482 budget availabilities, the MTR expects a minimum of 12 months extension would be needed to complete the
1483 project activities and achieve targets assuming that improvements suggested by this MTR are implemented and
1484 paid off.

1485 **Finance and co-finance**

1486 The Project had a total planned project cost of USD \$23,608,913. Planned GEF financing is USD 4,100,913 and
1487 planned co-financing of USD \$ 19,508,000, of which \$500,000 cash contribution from UNDP and the rest
1488 \$19,008,000 is Government in-kind and parallel contributions.

1489 As discussed earlier in this report, the project is significantly under resourced for what it sets to deliver. The
1490 inadequacy of the financial resources had negative impacts that are profound and multifaceted, affecting not only
1491 the project performance but also the implementing partners and stakeholders.

1492 Also, the current political and economic conditions in Sudan have negative impacts on the project's ability to meet
1493 co-financing targets leading to limited attainment of co-financing targets.

1494 The project financing strategy has also been largely impacted by the significant market inflation that Sudan has
1495 been going through particular since the conflict has started. According to recent press release of the country's
1496 Central Bureau of Statistics, Sudan's inflation rate reached 136.67 percent in the first half of 2024 jumping from
1497 63.3% in 2023, such major inflation has been having significant impact on project resources and financial
1498 capabilities to procure services and goods as planned. Also, the Sudanese pound's (SDG) decline against foreign
1499 currencies continues, since the war between the army and Rapid Support Forces erupted in April 2023, the pound
1500 has lost more than half its value. Back then, a dollar was worth approximately 560 pounds, now it is estimated at
1501 1,050 pounds in the formal sector and over 1,300 pounds in the parallel market.

1502 As a result, the project will likely continue to face budget limitations in order to achieving its targets, and it requires
1503 additional resource mobilisations and further improvement on securing and tracking co-financing. The project has
1504 not assessed the financial resources in light of the inflation and didn't determine the funding gap.

1505 In terms of the project financial management, the PMU reviews the expenditures of all partners and closely
1506 monitor their expenditures according to their plans. However, there has been no formal financial audit performed
1507 so far despite that an annual audit has been planned and budgeted in the project design.

1508 Regarding financial delivery, the project accounts show a low financial delivery rate of 23% up to mid-2024. This
1509 includes a notably high administrative cost, with 93% of the project management budget already consumed,
1510 raising concerns about the availability of funds for the PMU and administration in the remaining years.

1511 The project's financial delivery started slowly in the first year, picked up in the second year, but then dropped
 1512 again in the third and fourth years, likely due to the challenging war conditions in the country.

1513 Table 5: Financial delivery

Outcome	Budget (from ProDoc)	Actual Expenditures by year				Total Disbursed	Total remaining	Financial Delivery %
		2021	2022	2023	2024			
Component 1	550,000	0	81,425	0	6,000	87,425	462,575	16%
Component 2	1,267,000	0	304,225	0	0	304,225	962,775	24%
Component 3	1,873,000	2,561	331,130	24,271	0	357,962	1,515,038	19%
Component 4	215,632	0	31,710	0	0	31,710	183,922	15%
Project Management	195,281	14,031	157,674	10,538	0	182,244	13,037	93%
Total (Actual)	4,100,913	16,593	906,164	34,809	6,000	963,566	3,137,347	23%

1514

1515 **Co-finance**

1516 The project has set a co-financing target of USD 19,508,000, with the majority of this amount anticipated to come
 1517 from parallel funding provided by the participating agencies. However, the specifics of how these figures were
 1518 calculated and what they were intended to represent are not clearly defined, raising concerns about their accuracy
 1519 and validity. This is particularly true for the USD 5 million attributed to the Ministry of Finance, which appear to
 1520 be allocated towards the annual budgets of the participating agencies. If this interpretation is accurate, there is a
 1521 risk of double-counting parallel funding. In other words, the same financial resources may be reported both as
 1522 part of the Ministry of Finance's contribution and as part of the budgets of individual agencies. This overlap would
 1523 inflate the reported co-financing figures, potentially leading to a misrepresentation of the actual financial
 1524 commitment to the project. Therefore, a thorough review and clarification of the co-financing calculations are
 1525 necessary to ensure transparency and accuracy in reporting.

1526 With exception to US\$ 70,000 documented contribution from the Ministry of Finance, the MTR team found that
 1527 there is a complete lack of available co-financing data, making it impossible to properly assess the actual
 1528 contributions made by the participating agencies. Additionally, there is no specific system in place for tracking and
 1529 documenting co-financing contributions, leading to a situation where co-financing amounts have often been
 1530 roughly estimated rather than accurately recorded.

1531 This lack of a systematic approach not only undermines the reliability of the reported co-financing figures but also
 1532 hinders effective financial management and accountability within the project. To address this issue, it is essential
 1533 to establish a more robust and transparent system for tracking and documenting co-financing contributions. Such
 1534 a system should include clear guidelines and procedures for reporting co-financing, ensuring that all contributions
 1535 are accurately captured and verified. This improvement will enhance the integrity of financial reporting and
 1536 provide a clearer picture of the actual resources mobilized in support of the project.

1537 **Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems**

1538 **M&E design**

1539 The M&E Framework was described in detail in Section 5 of the Project Document. It comprises standard M&E
1540 items for UNDP-GEF project such as the Inception Workshop (IW), meetings of the project board/Project Steering
1541 Committee, annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), audit, Mid-Term Review (MTR), Terminal Evaluation
1542 (TE), UNDP / GEF Tracking Tools and the final report. It also defines key roles and responsibilities related to the
1543 M&E. however, there is no detailed Monitoring Plan that defines data collection process for the defined indicators
1544 in the PRF including data collection methods, frequency, means of verification, assumptions and responsibility for
1545 data collection.

1546 The M&E section makes no mention of the exit strategy/sustainability plan, although it is not a standard UNDP-
1547 GEF requirement, it is however, greatly needed to demonstrate continuity between projects ending and the post
1548 project period, especially to formally confirm post project arrangements with GoS to continue delivering on the
1549 project outcomes and future investment in existing and new PAs.

1550 Nonetheless, the overall design of M&E framework meets the standard M&E template for projects of this size and
1551 complexity. Overall, the MTR team found the M&E design adequate for monitoring the project results and tracking
1552 the progress toward achieving the objectives. The M&E design is backed with adequate resources (a total of US\$
1553 135,632 including \$ 70,632 for evaluations) and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. It also includes \$220,000
1554 co-finance for monitoring of indicators in project results framework and environmental and social risks.

1555 **M&E implementation**

1556 The project board/steering committee was activated in 2021, it met for the first time in August 2021, and since
1557 then, it has been regularly held once per year except for the year 2023. In total, the board met 3 times (2021,2022,
1558 and 2024). In 2023, because of the war conditions, there were no board meetings done, though the board
1559 guidance in such circumstances would have been critical.

1560 As pointed earlier in this report, the board role is confused between coordination and governance, and the board
1561 structure is inclusive of so many stakeholders more than what is needed for decision making. Nonetheless, the
1562 board has been discussing work plans and implementation issues such as NIM modality and UNDP support. The
1563 frequency of board meetings has proven insufficient, a fact acknowledged by the board itself. In its 2022 meeting,
1564 the board recommended increasing the frequency to three meetings per year. Despite this recognition, the
1565 recommendation has yet to be implemented, leaving the board's oversight and decision-making processes less
1566 effective than intended.

1567 An inception workshop was conducted on July 15, 2021 with 63 participants (41% females), and report organized
1568 and communicated with relevant stakeholders and key stakeholders familiarized with the detailed project
1569 strategy. However, the inception phase was underutilized, serving merely as a project launch without conducting
1570 a substantive review of emerging circumstances or recognizing design flaws. Key aspects, such as the review of
1571 indicators and targets, were overlooked, resulting in missed opportunities to address potential issues early on and
1572 to refine the project's framework for more effective implementation and monitoring.

1573 Efforts to monitor on-ground implementation have been inconsistent among various stakeholders. As a result, the
1574 data on key indicators have not been systematically updated. In many cases, these indicators have been roughly
1575 estimated and reported without adequate data collection to support the monitoring process. This lack of
1576 coordination and rigor in data collection has led to gaps and inaccuracies in the reporting, undermining the
1577 reliability of the monitoring efforts and the overall evaluation of the implementation's effectiveness.

1578 The MTR team has had access to all reports presented thus far. However, the format in which the data and
1579 information are documented indicates issues with clarity and convenience. The presentation of progress and
1580 related data lacks consistency and coherence, making it difficult to accurately assess and monitor the project's
1581 advancement.

1582 A comprehensive record of project beneficiaries and their access to project-related benefits is not adequately
1583 maintained. This lack of detailed documentation hinders the ability to accurately track the distribution of benefits
1584 and assess the project's impact on its intended recipients.

1585 It is also worth noting that the M&E officer role has been vacant for most of the time and the project has been
1586 unable to backfill this position, this has been a contributing factor in the M&E shortcomings.

1587 **Stakeholder engagement**

1588 During the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) stage, the project conducted extensive and inclusive consultations
1589 with all stakeholders, culminating in a validation workshop in April 2019 for final approval of the project document
1590 by key stakeholders and implementing partners. The project document lists relevant government agencies, NGOs,
1591 private sector entities, communities, and international organizations, outlining their roles and mandates.
1592 However, the engagement strategy provided is generic, detailing only general actions such as regular meetings
1593 and distribution of knowledge products, without specifying how coordination among stakeholders will occur or
1594 what platforms will be established for systematic engagement, especially given the involvement of eight
1595 responsible agencies from both government and non-government sectors. Additionally, while the document
1596 acknowledges the importance of local community engagement for the project's success, it lacks a specific strategy
1597 for engaging these communities effectively.

1598 SUDIA and SECS are well experienced in engaging communities, and have been deploying their long experience in
1599 engaging communities into the project activities, however engagement with the local communities started well-
1600 before the detailed ESIA is completed which creates a concern over the considerations of the environmental and
1601 social risks identified in the SESP.

1602 Engaging communities requires careful management of expectations and clear communication about the project's
1603 purpose and the benefits it can provide. Without the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) guidance
1604 on identifying and addressing social concerns, combined with the absence of a unified communication strategy,
1605 communities have developed unrealistic expectations to address the broader economic crisis in the region, which
1606 do not align with the project's actual deliverables. These unmet expectations have led to community objections
1607 and, in some cases, protests against the project's activities and benefit distribution.

1608 As pointed out earlier in this report, coordination among the RPs involved in the project have witnessed some
1609 weaknesses where some partners were only engaged during the annual project board meetings despite having
1610 essential implementation role in the project. This led to delays in taking decisions related to pending activities.
1611 The project can not afford waiting for a full year to bring stakeholders around one table and discuss key issues,
1612 those interactions need to be more often.

1613 Stakeholders engaged in this MTR have emphasized the necessity of strengthening coordination among all parties.
1614 They advocate for breaking down silos and adopting a visionary approach that delivers the project as one
1615 integrated program rather than a collection of individual small projects. This unified strategy is essential for
1616 maximizing the project's impact and ensuring cohesive progress towards shared goals.

1617 **Reporting**

1618 The project submitted 3 PIRs to date, the first one was in 2022, and the second in 2023, and is currently in the
1619 process of developing its third for 2023/24. For some indicators, the PIRs had presented appropriate level of
1620 details on what has been achieved and the scope of key deliverables and their impacts, other parts of the PIRs
1621 were generally fairly detailed to monitor the performance of the project, with gender disaggregated data available
1622 for beneficiaries-count indicators.

1623 An inception report was developed after the inception workshop was conducted. The inception report was limited
1624 to report on the workshop rather than the entire inception phase.

1625 The existing reporting systems in place don't cover two important elements of the project 1) the status of the risks
1626 identified in the SESP, and 2) the status of the actions identified in the gender action plan. Although these were
1627 planned appropriately, but the status of risks and actions identified have not been tracked and reported.

1628 There is a critical need to strengthen M&E capacities both at the project level and local (PA) level. Enhancing these
1629 capacities will ensure the credibility and accuracy of the data collected, which is essential for effective project
1630 monitoring, assessment, and decision-making. Improving local M&E capabilities will also promote more reliable
1631 reporting and a better understanding of the project's impact on the ground.

1632 **Adaptive management:** GEF evaluations assess adaptive management in terms of the ability to direct the project
1633 design and implementation to adapt to changing political, regulatory, environmental, and other conditions outside
1634 of the control of the project implementing teams. The adaptive approach involves exploring alternative ways to
1635 navigate the projects towards meeting the planned objectives using one or more of these alternatives.

1636 The project management regime has demonstrated limited agility, particularly during critical challenges. The
1637 Project Management Unit (PMU), UNDP, and the project board needed to be more responsive and adaptable in
1638 addressing issues when existing strategies proved ineffective. This lack of flexibility has hindered the project's
1639 ability to navigate and overcome obstacles efficiently, ultimately affecting its overall progress and success. For
1640 example, the inception phase is a golden opportunity to address flaws in the project design. However, the project
1641 treated this phase in a very limited context, focusing solely on launching the project rather than conducting a
1642 substantial validation of the scope and adapting to emerging circumstances. This oversight resulted in missed
1643 opportunities to refine the project's framework and ensure it was better aligned with current needs and

1644 challenges. Also, ineffective management arrangements needed to be addressed in a more agile manner. A more
 1645 flexible and responsive approach would have allowed for timely adjustments and improvements, ensuring that
 1646 the project could better navigate challenges and achieve its objectives more efficiently.

1647 **Communications**

1648 **Internal project communication with stakeholders:** The MTR team found that that communication between
 1649 partners involved in the project has been inadequate. Project partners are not fully aware of all ongoing
 1650 developments. The absence of regular and systematic communication platforms among partners and with the
 1651 Project Management Unit (PMU) has resulted in significant delays in identifying and addressing issues faced by
 1652 the partners. This lack of effective communication has hindered timely problem-solving and coordination,
 1653 ultimately impacting the project's progress and efficiency.

1654 Stakeholders engaged in the MTR process have expressed limited satisfaction with the internal communication
 1655 among project partners. They believe that silos exist within the project structure, which need to be dismantled to
 1656 enhance partnerships and communication. Breaking down these silos is essential to ensure project coherence and
 1657 to foster a more collaborative and integrated approach among all parties involved. This will lead to better
 1658 alignment of efforts and more effective achievement of project objectives.

1659 **External project communication with communities and the public:** There has been limited communication done
 1660 by the project directed to the participating communities and general public. The absence of clearly defined and
 1661 targeted communication strategy has been essential factor in creating misconceptions about the project and its
 1662 benefits for the communities surrounding the PAs. And as explained earlier, the unreasonable expectations have
 1663 then led to community objections on the project activities and distribution of benefits.

1664 **3.4 Sustainability**

Assessment element	Rating
Financial	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
Institutional Framework and governance	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
Socio-political	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
Environmental	Moderately Likely (ML)
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	Moderately Unlikely (MU)

1665 Sustainability of the project is judged by the commitment of the project benefits to continue and replicate beyond
 1666 the project completion date. The evaluation identifies key risks to sustainability and explains how these risks may
 1667 affect continuation of the project benefits after the project closes. The MTR team believes that it premature to
 1668 assess sustainability at this point in time in light of the limited delivery of outputs and immaturity of outcomes,
 1669 however, below assessment covers the key risks identified to date.

1670 **Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability**

1671 The policy outcomes of the project, particularly in defining policy direction and targets for Protected Areas (PAs)
 1672 and wildlife in Sudan, as well as declaring new PAs, have not shown signs of sustainability due to their premature
 1673 status. These outcomes lack the necessary maturity and foundation to ensure long-term viability and
 1674 effectiveness. Without further development and refinement, the need to strengthen these policy outcomes,

1675 ensuring they are robust and well-integrated into the broader environmental and governance frameworks of
1676 Sudan remains a gap. The lack of a clear strategy for PA management and expansion hinders their potential and
1677 their management effectiveness.

1678 An important element of the institutional sustainability of the project's outcomes is the capacity of institutions to
1679 support the effective management of PAs and to mainstream biodiversity conservation principles in surrounding
1680 landscapes. While there have been some improvements due to training activities and project implementation,
1681 these capacities remain limited and pose significant barriers to achieving the project's long-term goals. To
1682 overcome these challenges, there is a need for increased investment in both institutional and individual capacity
1683 development. Strengthening these capacities will enable institutions to manage PAs more effectively, integrate
1684 biodiversity conservation into broader land-use planning, and ensure that conservation efforts are sustainable
1685 and impactful.

1686 Another aspect of institutional sustainability involves establishing, encouraging, and facilitating collaboration and
1687 cooperation among key stakeholders. Despite efforts made to sign Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)
1688 between the PMU and some partners, the broader institutional settings for PAs management in Sudan remain
1689 challenging. There is a need for more enhanced coordination mechanisms among key partners to ensure effective
1690 collaboration. These challenges highlight the necessity for a more cohesive strategy to unite stakeholders under
1691 a shared vision and operational framework, which can lead to more efficient management and protection of PAs
1692 in Sudan. Enhanced collaboration will foster a more resilient institutional structure, ensuring that conservation
1693 efforts are sustainable and aligned with national and international goals.

1694 Bringing the project back on track and accelerating its progress requires strong and committed leadership and
1695 ownership from the implementing agencies, particularly HCENR. Without such commitment, the effectiveness and
1696 impact of the recommendations provided will likely be limited, hindering the project's ability to achieve its
1697 intended outcomes. Strong leadership is crucial to drive the necessary changes, ensure alignment among
1698 stakeholders, and sustain momentum towards project goals.

1699 Based on the combination of factors mentioned above, the MTR rate the institutional sustainability as Moderately
1700 Unlikely (MU).

1701 **Financial risks to sustainability**

1702 No progress has been made so far in enhancing the financial sustainability of the PAs in Sudan. There has been
1703 limited progress on developing a national tourism strategy, which is expected to be an essential element in
1704 advancing the financial sustainability of these areas. The lack of a comprehensive strategy hampers efforts to
1705 generate revenue through tourism, which could provide much-needed funding for conservation and management
1706 activities. Also limited progress in tapping into other revenue generating potential of PAs and surrounding areas
1707 through business plan development and implementation in the target PAs, the project will demonstrate
1708 alternative sources of financing for PAs.

1709 There is no progress on advancing a national protected areas sustainable financing strategy for PAs in Sudan.
1710 Currently, the public funding available for WCGA for the three PAs under this project's focus is approximately

1711 \$72,000 USD, with 95% allocated to salaries, leaving insufficient funds for operational costs. Additional resource
1712 mobilization and financing mechanisms are expected to be addressed primarily during the development of the
1713 tourism strategy. The Government funding for PAs may also be subject to decrease in light of the ongoing conflict
1714 in Sudan.

1715 The project has not been able to catalyse interest from the donor community in Sudan, particularly those focused
1716 on poverty reduction, governance and rule of law, and natural resource management. This challenge is
1717 exacerbated by the ongoing conflict in Sudan, which has shifted donor priorities toward addressing immediate
1718 humanitarian needs. As a result, attracting funding for long-term development projects like this one has become
1719 increasingly difficult. To overcome this obstacle, the project may need to explore innovative funding strategies,
1720 such as aligning project goals with humanitarian objectives, to appeal to donors and demonstrate the broader
1721 benefits of investing in sustainable development and natural resource management.

1722 The likelihood of replication and upscaling of project outcomes is very limited in light of the limited funding
1723 environment that is seen at the moment.

1724 Based on this, the MTR rating of the financial sustainability is Moderately Unlikely (MU).

1725 **Socio-political risks to sustainability**

1726 The ongoing conflict in Sudan poses a significant risk to the governance and institutional ownership of the project.
1727 This conflict introduces dynamically changing priorities for government organizations participating in the project,
1728 which could result in a shift of focus away from the project's scope. In such circumstances, where basic
1729 humanitarian needs take precedence, prioritizing the environmental agenda and nature conservation becomes
1730 challenging. The instability and resource constraints caused by the conflict have led to, and will continue to cause,
1731 delays in project implementation and a lack of commitment to the project's objectives, ultimately affecting its
1732 success and sustainability.

1733 The project didn't implement the ESIA as anticipated in the project design and accordingly there was no deep
1734 analysis of the communities concerns and risks. The limited understanding of the community concerns combined
1735 with the limited engagement in the scoping of activities led to creating different expectations as to what the
1736 project is going to offer in terms of services and benefits. Mismanagement in this area led to a range of negative
1737 consequences including community protesting demanding additional support, filing complaints against the project
1738 which affected not only the project's outcome but also the organization's reputation and relationship with the
1739 community for UNDP and government.

1740 The project faces the risk of having inadvertent inequitable impacts due to the lack of engagement with all
1741 community groups. The limited funding available means that only some villages and community groups
1742 surrounding the PAs receive project support. This selective support has already led to community objections and
1743 negative reactions to the project activities and may continue to do so. This situation highlights the need for a more
1744 inclusive approach to community engagement, ensuring that all groups have the opportunity to participate in and
1745 benefit from the project.

1746 The land use planning activities have not progressed yet. Once implemented, the project must consider
1747 empowering communities by recognizing and respecting their customary rights. It is also essential to ensure that
1748 land use plans do not lead to the economic displacement of communities. Instead, these plans should be
1749 developed in a way that supports community livelihoods and promotes sustainable development. By actively
1750 involving communities in the planning process and prioritizing their needs and rights, the project can create more
1751 inclusive and equitable land use strategies that benefit both the environment and the people who depend on it.

1752 The socio-political sustainability is rated Unlikely (MU).

1753 **Environmental risks to sustainability**

1754 The project will enhance the likelihood of environmental sustainability through achievement of its overall
1755 objective which has a specific focus on mainstreaming environmental sustainability. The overall environmental
1756 impact of this project is expected to be positive, particularly through (a) strengthening the protection and
1757 conservation of critical ecosystems in Sudan, and (b) through supporting improved and sustainable ecosystem
1758 management in degraded areas around these critical ecosystems.

1759 The improved management effectiveness of protected areas will decrease unsustainable use of natural resources,
1760 pastoralists trespassing, overgrazing, levels of poaching (mid-term impact), and ultimately, lead to the recovery of
1761 wildlife populations and restoration of wildlife habitats and agro-biodiversity. Project interventions such as
1762 community forest, range reserves, fish farms, developing sustainable small businesses by local communities based
1763 on CBNRM principles and management of natural resources, among others, would ensure alternative sources of
1764 income to local communities, economic development (long-term impact) improving sustainable livelihoods to
1765 ensure that use of natural resources is sustainable.

1766 The project made efforts to ensure that the replanting and reseeded activities don't introduce alien invasive
1767 species. Species selection has been done based on well-informed research on the best plant species to be used in
1768 replanting and reseeded. The project also implemented invasive species control process through controlled
1769 burning and extraction practices, especially of Nile Hyacinth.

1770 The environmental sustainability is rated Likely (L).

1771

4. Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons

4.1 Main Findings & conclusions

Project design

1. The MTR Team recognizes the relevance and appropriateness of the project's conceptual design but identifies significant concerns regarding its detailed execution. The project's ambitious targets and outcomes, which include managing existing PAs, expanding conservation efforts beyond their boundaries, and establishing new PAs, are not matched by the available financial and time resources. The assumption that \$4 million in funding, supplemented by co-financing, would be sufficient to achieve these broad and complex objectives is overly optimistic. Key activities, such as socio-economic baseline studies and training initiatives, are underfunded or entirely unbudgeted, which jeopardizes the overall success of the project.
2. However, despite these challenges, the project design demonstrates a strong understanding of the critical barriers to strengthening Sudan's PAs system and enhancing biodiversity conservation. The detailed project documentation provides clear guidance to the PMU, ensuring a well-structured implementation process.
3. The Theory of Change (ToC) identifies key threats and barriers related to the project, however, it lacks clarity in illustrating how these barriers will be addressed, failing to connect the identified challenges to the necessary changes and the anticipated Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs), and missing a narrative explanation of the change process.
4. The project design acknowledges gender disparities in Sudan, particularly in natural resource management within conflict-affected areas, where women face limited access to resources and decision-making. It incorporates a gender strategy aimed at enhancing women's participation, including mechanisms to involve them in small-business development. The project targets 50% participation with a goal of at least 60% women beneficiaries in business and grant activities. However, achieving these gender equality goals may be challenging due to Sudan's conservative and patriarchal society, which limits women's opportunities in public and economic life.
5. The Project's Performance Results Framework (PRF) generally adheres to the "SMART" criteria, but some indicators have notable deficiencies. These include a focus on output-based rather than outcome-based indicators, difficulties in measuring and regularly reporting on impact-level indicators like species status and soil quality, and the lack of baselines and targets for certain indicators.
6. The project is highly relevant to the needs of its target groups, particularly the local communities surrounding the PAs in Sudan. Beneficiaries have expressed a strong desire for continued assistance in addressing these critical needs. However, due to the worsening economic situation in Sudan, there is growing expectation among the communities for more direct financial support to alleviate their economic hardships. The project is also aligned with the Sudan's strategic frameworks particularly Sudan's National Vision and NBSAP.

1807 **Progress towards Results**

- 1808 7. Overall, the project falls significantly behind its MTR targets with a very limited progress towards outputs,
1809 outcomes and objectives so far. There are multiple reasons for these drawbacks including, mainly, war-
1810 related conditions; limited project management and technical capacities; weak coordination mechanisms;
1811 ineffective management arrangements; and political and institutional instabilities. As a result, the MTR
1812 team assessed the project to be off track towards achieving its objectives. As far as objective-level targets,
1813 there are no additional area of land and marine habitat under protection, and very limited number of
1814 beneficiaries (594 of which 353 women) comparing to its MTR target of 5,000 beneficiaries.
- 1815 8. Under Component 1, progress in enhancing the institutional and technical capacities of the HCENR and
1816 WCGA has been limited. Despite efforts like on-the-job training, technical meetings, and a study tour in
1817 Jordan, the project has not succeeded in securing training partnerships with African institutes. While some
1818 advancements have been made in developing PAs and Wildlife policy, including a draft policy in Arabic, it
1819 lacks specific targets and assessments for new PAs, and alignment with IUCN and UNESCO standards is
1820 still ongoing.
- 1821 9. No new PAs have been formally declared, though preparations for PA expansion are underway, including
1822 baseline studies for the proposed Suakin/Talla Talla MPA and Toker marine site. Additionally, there has
1823 been no progress in developing a national sustainable financing strategy for PAs, with public funding
1824 remaining inadequate, covering mainly salaries and minimal operational costs. The establishment of an
1825 information management unit at WCGA has also not advanced.
- 1826 10. Under Component 2, progress in improving the management effectiveness of targeted PAs in Sudan has
1827 been limited. In Jebel Al Dair National Park, a baseline survey has been conducted to update the wildlife
1828 status, particularly for key species like the Greater kudu, laying the groundwork for future monitoring.
1829 However, crucial activities such as developing a fire management system, securing wildlife corridors, and
1830 expanding the biosphere transition zone have not progressed, with no consultations initiated.
- 1831 11. In Dinder National Park, efforts are underway to rehabilitate the maya wetland by enhancing its water-
1832 holding capacity and managing invasive species, particularly the Nile Hyacinth, through controlled burning
1833 and extraction. A fire management plan has been completed, and assessments of lions, Roan antelope,
1834 and kudu were conducted in May 2024. At Dungonab MPA, the project has made progress in rehabilitating
1835 the park HQ building, securing an MPA patrol boat, and beginning work on a marine research building and
1836 mangrove management. A baseline survey for key species has also been conducted. However, essential
1837 infrastructure, including VHF radio communications, solar power systems, ranger outposts, and seasonal
1838 fly camps, has not yet been installed in the three parks.
- 1839 12. Under Component 3, some progress has been made in land restoration efforts, particularly in Dinder
1840 National Park, where 450 hectares of invasive species were cleared and 168 hectares were seeded with
1841 palatable species. Additionally, a 10-hectare community range reserve was established in DNP, and tree
1842 nurseries were established in Sennar and Gedarif states. In Jebel Al Dair, community forests were planted,

1843 and water harvesting techniques were implemented, although the full development of demonstration
1844 farms remains incomplete. In Dungonab, 90 hectares of mangrove trees were planted, and efforts to
1845 promote community-based tourism and microfinance initiatives have begun, but monitoring and
1846 evaluation capacity for land management also remains undeveloped.

1847 13. Under Component 4, no significant progress has been made. Although a gender strategy was developed
1848 during the Project Preparation Grant stage, it has not been updated or detailed, and a monitoring
1849 framework for gender indicators is still lacking. NGOs SECS and SUDIA are focusing on increasing women's
1850 participation in microfinance and training activities, but achieving the target of 50% female participation
1851 remains challenging in Sudan's conservative society. Women's participation has ranged between 13% and
1852 40% in various project activities, falling short of the target, though efforts to enhance women's
1853 engagement and leadership continue.

1854 14. Given the limited progress made so far, all key barriers identified in the project document remain valid in
1855 terms of weak institutional, policy and legislative environment, ineffective PA system and threats from
1856 outside PAs. Additionally, the MTR identified several significant barriers impacting the project's ability to
1857 achieve its objectives. Key challenges include the unstable political environment in Sudan, marked by the
1858 2021 military coup and the ongoing conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid
1859 Support Forces (RSF), which has severely disrupted government operations and project activities. Political
1860 and institutional instability, frequent staff turnover, and high inflation have further compounded these
1861 difficulties, leading to deficiencies in project management and budgetary constraints.

1862 15. The full NIM implementation modality has proven ineffective, with insufficient support for procurement
1863 and recruitment, while inadequate coordination among implementing agencies and unclear roles have
1864 hindered progress. Mismanagement of community expectations and unresolved complaints led to the
1865 suspension of activities by key NGOs, affecting local engagement. Additionally, the project faces
1866 challenges due to limited technical and management capacities, delays in budget transfers, and the
1867 remote and inaccessible locations of project sites. Persistent delays in finalizing safeguards assessments
1868 and the limited attainment of co-financing further exacerbate these issues, all contributing to significant
1869 obstacles in meeting the project's goals.

1870 **Project management**

1871 16. The MTR team identified significant deficiencies in the project's management arrangements, particularly
1872 related to the full NIM implementation modality and governance structure. The full NIM approach, which
1873 placed substantial responsibilities on HCENR for procurement and recruitment, was deemed unrealistic
1874 from the start due to HCENR's limited capacity, a view echoed in the 2023 PIR by both HCENR and UNDP.

1875 17. The current management setup, where a single project board handles both strategic decision-making and
1876 stakeholder coordination, has proven inadequate. With over 16 stakeholders and only annual meetings,
1877 this arrangement has led to poor coordination and an impractical decision-making process. Also, there is

- 1878 a need for further clarification and communication of roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines to prevent
1879 the confusion that has negatively impacted the project.
- 1880 18. HCENR has faced challenges due to limited project management and coordination capacities, unclear
1881 roles, and difficulties with procurement and recruitment under the full NIM modality, especially for
1882 international contracts.
- 1883 19. The PMU has been coordinating annual planning among the various organizations involved in the project
1884 by developing work plans and reviewing partners' technical and financial proposals. However, this process
1885 has lacked a results-based focus, concentrating more on activities and expenditures rather than on
1886 achieving specific outcomes. This approach has led to a lack of alignment and coherence among partners,
1887 reducing the project's overall effectiveness.
- 1888 20. The project is significantly under-resourced for its objectives and inflation has drastically reduced the
1889 project's purchasing power, and the ongoing conflict has caused the Sudanese pound to lose more than
1890 half its value, exacerbating budgetary constraints.
- 1891 21. The financial delivery rate is low, with only 23% of the budget spent by mid-2024, and administrative costs
1892 have consumed 93% of the project management budget, raising concerns about funding availability for
1893 the remaining years.
- 1894 22. The MTR team also found a complete lack of available co-financing data, making it impossible to assess
1895 the actual contributions from participating agencies. Without a specific system for tracking and
1896 documenting these contributions, co-financing amounts have often been roughly estimated rather than
1897 accurately recorded. This undermines the reliability of financial reporting and hampers effective financial
1898 management and accountability.
- 1899 23. Monitoring efforts have been inconsistent, resulting in key indicators being roughly estimated rather than
1900 systematically updated, which undermines the reliability of monitoring and evaluation. Reports have been
1901 poorly structured, lacking clarity and consistency, making it challenging to assess project progress
1902 accurately. Additionally, there is inadequate documentation of project beneficiaries, hindering the ability
1903 to track benefit distribution and assess impact. The long-vacant M&E officer position has further
1904 contributed to these shortcomings, highlighting the need for improved monitoring and evaluation
1905 capacity within the project.
- 1906 24. While NGOs like SUDIA and SECS have substantial experience in community engagement, their efforts
1907 began before the completion of a detailed Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), raising
1908 concerns about addressing environmental and social risks.
- 1909 25. The absence of a unified communication strategy has led to unrealistic expectations among communities,
1910 particularly regarding the project's ability to address the broader economic crisis. These unmet
1911 expectations have resulted in community objections, protests, and the suspension of SUDIA and SECS's
1912 work by the HCENR, further hindering project progress.

1913 26. Coordination among the responsible parties (RPs) has also been weak, with some partners only engaged
1914 during annual board meetings, causing delays in decision-making and implementation. Stakeholders have
1915 emphasized the need for stronger coordination and a unified approach that treats the project as an
1916 integrated program rather than a collection of individual efforts.

1917 **Sustainability**

1918 27. Institutional sustainability: There is a critical need for strong and committed leadership and ownership
1919 from the implementing agencies, particularly HCENR. Without such commitment, the effectiveness and
1920 impact of the recommendations provided will likely be limited, hindering the project's ability to achieve
1921 its intended outcomes.

1922 28. Institutional sustainability is impacted by the limited capacities in managing PAs and mainstreaming
1923 biodiversity conservation in surrounding landscapes. Also, institutional sustainability requires better
1924 collaboration and cooperation among key stakeholders. Although some MoUs have been signed, the
1925 overall institutional framework for PAs management in Sudan remains challenging.

1926 29. The policy outcomes of the project, particularly in defining policy direction and targets for Protected Areas
1927 (PAs) and wildlife in Sudan, as well as declaring new PAs, have not shown signs of sustainability due to
1928 their premature status.

1929 30. Financial sustainability: No progress has been made in enhancing the financial sustainability of Protected
1930 Areas (PAs) in Sudan. The development of a national tourism strategy, crucial for generating revenue and
1931 supporting conservation, has delayed, as has the exploration of other revenue-generating opportunities.
1932 The absence of a national sustainable financing strategy for PAs further hampers efforts, with current
1933 public funding inadequate to cover operational costs.

1934 31. Socio-political risks to sustainability: The ongoing conflict in Sudan poses a significant risk to the
1935 governance and institutional ownership of the project, shifting government priorities away from
1936 environmental conservation toward urgent humanitarian needs. Additionally, the project's failure to
1937 implement the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) as planned led to a limited
1938 understanding of community concerns, resulting in unmet expectations, community protests, and damage
1939 to the project's reputation.

1940 32. The project also risks creating inequitable impacts due to its selective support of certain villages and
1941 community groups, which has already sparked objections. To address these issues, a more inclusive
1942 approach to community engagement is needed, ensuring broad participation and equitable distribution
1943 of benefits.

1944 33. Environmental sustainability: The project is expected to enhance environmental sustainability by focusing
1945 on the conservation of critical ecosystems in Sudan and promoting sustainable ecosystem management
1946 in degraded areas. Additionally, interventions such as community forests, range reserves, fish farms, and

- 1947 sustainable small businesses will provide alternative income sources for local communities, fostering
1948 sustainable livelihoods.
- 1949 34. Efforts have been made to ensure that replanting and reseeded activities do not introduce invasive
1950 species, with species selection based on thorough research. The project has also implemented invasive
1951 species control measures, particularly targeting Nile Hyacinth, through controlled burning and extraction.
1952 These actions collectively contribute to the project's positive long-term environmental impact.
- 1953 35. It should be noted that during the MTR process, stakeholder engagement revealed that the baseline data
1954 for the capacity scorecards and METTs were not collected through adequate consultations with relevant
1955 agencies and PAs, and the baseline values were considered inaccurate. Consequently, the slight increases
1956 in the scores of the capacity scorecards and METTs, based on this unreliable baseline, do not necessarily
1957 reflect genuine improvements in agency capacities or PA effectiveness. In fact, given the limited progress
1958 in project activities and the overall war conditions in Sudan, it is reasonable to assume that agency
1959 capacities and PA effectiveness may not have improved significantly and could have potentially weakened.
1960 Therefore, the scorecard and METT numbers in this report should be interpreted with this context in mind.
1961

1962 **4.2 Recommendations and Lessons Learned**

1963 Below are recommendations that consider the depth and breadth of issues facing this project and provide a
 1964 framework for improvements in delivery. It is important to note that some external factors, such as the ongoing
 1965 conflict in Sudan, are beyond the project's control but require adaptive strategies to mitigate their impact.

1966 Bringing the project back on track and accelerating its progress requires strong and committed leadership and
 1967 ownership from the implementing agencies, particularly HCENR. Without such commitment, the effectiveness and
 1968 impact of the recommendations provided will likely be limited, hindering the project's ability to achieve its
 1969 intended outcomes. Strong leadership is crucial to drive the necessary changes, ensure alignment among
 1970 stakeholders, and sustain momentum towards project goals.

1971 Accordingly, the following recommendations are focused on corrective actions in the remaining time:

#	TE Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Timeframe
1	1. Change the implementation modality from a full National Implementation Modality (NIM) to a 'Supported NIM' approach, where UNDP assumes a greater support role, particularly in the procurement of international consultant services. This adjustment is justified by the limited project management capacities currently available within the government to effectively support the project. The situation is further complicated by ongoing conflicts that have disrupted government operations and shifted priorities. By adopting the 'Supported NIM' modality, UNDP can provide more substantial assistance in key areas, ensuring that the project remains on track and that critical services are delivered efficiently despite the challenging circumstances.	UNDP and HCENR	ASAP
2	2. To reform and strengthen project governance and coordination structures by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Restructuring the Board: Refocus the board’s role on decision-making and providing strategic guidance. The board should include representatives from UNDP, the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR), and a beneficiary representative, such as the Ministry of Finance. Given the scale and complexity of the issues faced by the project, the board should convene at least twice per year to ensure effective oversight and timely decision-making. f. Establishing a Coordination Platform: Create a 'Project Coordination Group (PCG)' chaired by HCENR, with participation from six government agencies involved in implementation, two NGOs (SUDIA and SECS), and UNDP. The PCG should meet at least quarterly to foster coherence 	HCENR /UNDP	October 2024

	<p>and learning among the various project components, ensure that all activities align with the project's overall vision, and address any emerging challenges in a coordinated manner. This should include developing a clear term of reference for the group define its role and composition. The PCG operation should also involve establishing a learning approach for enhancing project flexibility, resilience, and long-term success, this involves capturing, disseminating and utilizing lessons learned to enhance adaptive management.</p> <p>g. Increasing the frequency of board meetings from once to at least twice per year. This will provide the board with more opportunities to review progress, address strategic challenges, and make informed decisions in a timely manner.</p> <p>h. Establish regular one-on-one engagements between the PMU and each Responsible Party (RP). These regular interactions will help to proactively identify issues, develop solutions, and ensure that all parties are aligned in their efforts to achieve the project's objectives.</p>		
3	<p>3. Develop a RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) matrix at the activity level, in collaboration with all responsible parties. This matrix will provide a clear and detailed framework for understanding roles and responsibilities within the project. By defining who is responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed for each specific activity, the RACI matrix will help to eliminate any ambiguities, enhance coordination, and ensure that all stakeholders understand their specific duties and contributions to the project. This clarity will support more efficient project execution and improve overall accountability.</p>	HCENR and PMU	October 2024
4	<p>4. Reactivate the roles of the two NGOs, SECS and SUDIA, within the project and resume their funding to ensure they resume their duties as outlined in the project document and the signed agreements. This reactivation should be accompanied by close oversight from the project board, particularly focusing on the community engagement component. The board should monitor the NGOs' activities to ensure that the distribution of benefits among community groups is equitable and aligns with the project's objectives. By restoring these NGOs to their intended roles and maintaining strict oversight, the project can enhance community engagement and ensure that all community groups receive fair and balanced benefits.</p>	UNDP	ASAP
5	<p>5. Immediately recruit an International Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) through UNDP to provide essential technical backstopping for the project. The CTA will be responsible for leading the implementation of technical activities, ensuring that they are executed to the highest</p>	UNDP & HCENR	ASAP

	standard. Additionally, the CTA will oversee and quality-assure other project activities, guaranteeing that all outputs meet the required quality benchmarks. This role is crucial to maintaining the technical integrity of the project and ensuring the successful delivery of all project components.		
6	6. Immediately conduct a comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) to evaluate the environmental and social risks and impacts of the project activities, particularly in light of recent developments such as the economic impacts of the ongoing conflict, including development of clear grievance mechanism. This assessment is essential to ensure that the project complies with the requirements of UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards Procedure (SESP). The ESIA will help identify potential risks, propose mitigation measures, and ensure that the project activities are environmentally sustainable and socially equitable, thereby safeguarding the well-being of affected communities and ecosystems.	PMU	ASAP
7	7. Update the project results framework particularly the indicators as suggested in table 3 of this report.	UNDP	2025
8	8. Recruit Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) personnel within the Project Management Unit (PMU) to establish and implement effective data monitoring systems. These systems will be critical for tracking project indicators, assessing risks, and measuring progress against the project's objectives. By having dedicated M&E staff, the project will be better equipped to ensure that it remains on course, responds proactively to emerging challenges, and achieves its intended outcomes. This will also enhance accountability and provide valuable insights for continuous improvement throughout the project lifecycle.	PMU/ HCENR	ASAP
9	9. Develop a joint planning system that ensures consistency among all responsible parties and alignment with the overall project plan. This system should include the creation of a results-based planning template and budgeting framework to be used uniformly by all partners. Additionally, establish a clear process for refining and approving the plans submitted by each responsible party, ensuring they are fully integrated with the project's objectives. To maintain accountability and track progress, implement a regular assessment process to review delivery, with evaluations conducted on a bi-monthly basis, or quarterly at the latest. This approach will enhance coordination, ensure consistency in implementation, and keep the project on track to achieve its goals.	PMU and CTA	Before the end of 2024
10	10. Establish and operate an ongoing monitoring process of the SESP and gender action plan. The existing reporting systems in place don't cover	PMU	2024

	<p>two important elements of the project 1) the status of the risks identified in the SESP, and 2) the status of the actions identified in the gender action plan. By implementing a dedicated monitoring process, the project can systematically track and report on these elements, ensuring that identified risks are actively managed and that gender-related actions are being implemented effectively. This will not only enhance compliance with UNDP's standards but also contribute to more inclusive and socially responsible project outcomes.</p>		
11	<p>11. Assess the impact of inflation and currency devaluation on the project financial resources. This involves analysing how these economic factors affect current expenditures and funding capabilities, establish a comprehensive understanding of future budget needs and potential deficits and develop strategic responses. This should include creating a new detailed multi-year budget that accounts for inflation, currency devaluation, and projected funding needs.</p>	PMU	Before budgeting for 2025
12	<p>12. Develop and implement a resource mobilization plan to overcome the limited funding availability and make up deficits caused by the market inflation, and more importantly to secure additional resources for the PMU operation given 93% is already consumed. The plan should involve engagement with bilateral and multi-lateral donor agencies and exploring innovative funding opportunities. This involves identifying potential donors whose priorities align with the project's objectives and preparing tailored proposals that highlight the project's impact, the need for additional resources, and the strategic importance of continued investment. Building strong relationships with these agencies and maintaining regular communication will be essential for successful engagement.</p>	UNDP	ASAP
13	<p>13. Develop and implement project communication strategy to ensure effective collaboration among stakeholders, clear information dissemination, and the alignment of project goals with community expectations. This may require recruiting a national or international consultant to lead the strategy development and implementation. The strategy should be followed by all partners and monitored by the PMU to ensure consistency in messages to stakeholder, participating communities and the public. The communication strategy should prioritize actions specifically designed to manage the community expectations to communicate what the project can and cannot achieve and set realistic expectations from the outset. This also should involve developing a clear and consistent messaging about the project's objectives, scope, benefits, and limitations,</p>	PMU	To be included in 2025 plan

14	14. Conduct specialized training on conflict management and resolution for project staff from all Responsible Parties (RPs) who interact directly with local communities to enhance the project's effectiveness in community engagement. This training will equip staff with the skills and knowledge to navigate complex social dynamics, proactively address conflicts, and foster positive relationships with community members. By understanding the local context and utilizing strategies in mediation, negotiation, and active listening, staff will be better prepared to de-escalate tensions, manage expectations, and build trust within the communities, ultimately leading to smoother project implementation and more sustainable outcomes.	PMU	2025
15	15. Convene RBM training targeting PMU and key project personnel who are involved in project implementation to strengthen RBM planning and implementation capacities. This training will equip them with the skills needed to focus on achieving measurable results, effectively track progress, and make informed decisions to improve project outcomes.	UNDP	2025
16	16. Conduct annual audit as per UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules and applicable audit policies on NIM implemented projects to ensure transparency and accountability. There has been no formal financial audit performed so far despite that an annual audit has been planned and budgeted in the project design.	UNDP	Annually
17	17. Establish an appropriate system for identifying and tracking co-financing, which should include regular quarterly meetings with co-financing agencies. These meetings will serve to help agencies identify co-financing opportunities and assess their financial contributions. Additionally, organize the exchange of official letters between the agencies and the Project Management Unit (PMU) to formally document and validate co-financing commitments and contributions. This system will ensure transparency, accurate tracking, and effective management of co-financing throughout the project's duration.	PMU	ASAP
18	18. Develop a detailed operational procurement plan with key steps, timelines and responsibilities in support of the AWP, which will enable work to be carried out according to schedule. The PMU should consult with the procurement team and develop all ToRs/required documents in advance at the start of the year and sign off from relevant RPs authorities and if needed, secure approval by IP and Project Board. When develop the ToRs, the PMU should consolidate the consultancies and activities wherever possible and sensible to deliver clusters of related outputs, to reduce the administrative burden and time required for multiple, individual procurements.	PMU	Oct-Dec 2024

19	19. Conduct quarterly oversight meetings, involving the PMU, UNDP CO, RTA, the RPA and RBAS COST desk officer to monitor progress and assist with trouble-shooting, until implementation performance reaches satisfactory condition.	UNDP	Quarterly
20	20. Ensure timely transfer of the budget from UNDP to implementing partners as soon as the 80% consumption threshold is met as per UNDP rules and procedures.	UNDP	Ongoing
21	21. As the project activities are currently on hold in Jebel Al Dair PA due to ongoing conflict, it is recommended that the project board continues to assess the situation there and reactivate the project in this particular PA when circumstances allow and when it is safe to do so.	Project board	Ongoing

1972

1973 **Lessons learned.**

1974

1975

1976

1977

1978

1979

1980

1981

1982

1983

1984

1985

1986

1987

1988

1989

1990

1991

1992

1993

1994

1995

1996

1997

1998

1999

2000

2001

2002

- **Aiming for 'too big too soon' makes the project design appear attractive, sometimes at the expense of feasibility.** Experience from this project shows the importance of setting realistic project targets at the level of the project objective in terms of what a GEF project can actually achieve during the typical relatively short implementation period and very limited financial resources. The project is struggling in reporting on the 'too ambitious' targets including working on strengthening the management of 3 existing PAs, establishing 2 new PAs, apply landscape management practices outside the PAs, policy support, etc. In no way these can be achieved with available resources. 'Aiming for too big too soon' makes the project design appears attractive but in fact not realistic and not applicable. Realistic project design makes everybody's life easier during the implementation and after.
- **Importance of managing community expectations in project scope and benefits:** In the context of project management, especially those projects with significant community involvement or impact, like this project, we can learn that managing community expectations regarding project scope and benefits is crucial for success. This involves clearly communicating the objectives, limitations, and potential outcomes of the project to all stakeholders, including community members, to avoid misunderstandings and build trust. When expectations are managed effectively, communities are more likely to support the project, understand its realistic outcomes, and engage constructively in its processes. Failure to manage expectations can lead to dissatisfaction, resistance, or even opposition, as community members may feel misled or disappointed by unmet expectations. Therefore, transparent communication, ongoing engagement, and setting realistic goals are essential practices in managing community expectations.
- **Agile and adaptive project management as a key to success:** In today's rapidly changing environments, and particularly in the context of ongoing conflict in the country, implementing agile and adaptive project management methodologies is crucial for successful project execution and delivery. Agile project management focuses on flexibility, continuous improvement, and responsiveness to change, allowing teams to adapt to new challenges and requirements throughout the project lifecycle. Adaptive management further emphasizes the importance of modifying strategies based on real-time feedback and evolving circumstances. By adopting agile and adaptive approaches, projects can better align with stakeholders' needs, improve team collaboration, and enhance the ability to deliver value incrementally. This approach contrasts with traditional project management methods, which may struggle to accommodate changes and uncertainties. Agile methodologies facilitate frequent reassessment of project priorities and foster a culture of innovation and problem-solving.

Implementing agile and adaptive management practices is essential for projects to remain on track while responsive in dynamic environments.

- **Ineffective management arrangements and poor coordination among project teams can severely impact project delivery**, leading to delays, budget overruns, and suboptimal outcomes. Ineffective management often stems from unclear roles and responsibilities, lack of communication, and inadequate leadership. Coordination challenges arise when there is a lack of alignment between teams, insufficient resource allocation, and poor integration of project activities. These issues can lead to misunderstandings, duplicated efforts, and missed deadlines, ultimately compromising the project's success. Proper management and coordination are critical to ensuring that all project components work harmoniously towards common goals, fostering efficient resource utilization, and maintaining project momentum. Effective management involves clear communication channels, well-defined roles and responsibilities, regular progress reviews, and adaptive leadership to address challenges proactively. Coordination ensures that all teams are aligned, resources are allocated appropriately, and project activities are synchronized for optimal delivery.
- **Enhancing Project Success through Results-Based Management (RBM)**: RBM is a strategic approach that focuses on achieving specific outcomes and impacts through meticulous planning, execution, and reporting in project management. Implementing RBM planning and reporting processes enables project teams to set clear objectives, define measurable indicators, and continuously monitor progress towards desired results. Unlike traditional management approaches that emphasize inputs and activities, RBM prioritizes results, thereby aligning project activities with strategic goals and stakeholder expectations. Adopting RBM practices improves project performance by providing a structured approach to assess and report on project impacts, identify challenges, and implement timely corrective actions. This approach fosters a culture of continuous improvement, where lessons learned are integrated into future planning to optimize resource utilization and achieve greater impact.

2026

-

2027

2 Annexes

2028

2.1 Annex 1: MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)

2029

Provided separately

2030

2.2 Annex 2: List of documents reviewed.

2031

List of documents that have been reviewed includes, but not limited to:

2032

1. Project Identification Form (PIF)

2033

2. Final UNDP-GEF Project Document with all annexes

2034

3. CEO Endorsement Request

2035

4. UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)

2036

5. Inception Workshop Report

2037

6. All Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)

2038

7. Minutes of Project Steering Committee Meetings

2039

8. Annual Work Plans

2040

9. Project data base (indicators data);

2041

10. Project technical deliverables;

2042

11. Action plans;

2043

12. METTs

2044

13. Capacity Scorecards

2045

14. Core indicators updates

2046

15. Project budgets and expenditures;

2047

16. Project partnership documents (MoUs, etc);

2048

17. The training/workshop reports;

2049

18. The project governance structure (for example a ToR of a steering committee);

2050

19. Project expenditures reports; and

2051

20. Related policies and strategies.

2052

2053
2054
2055
2056
2057
2058
2059
2060

2.3 Annex 3: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation matrix is important to identifying the key evaluation questions and how they will be answered through the selected methods. The evaluation matrix is a tool that evaluators create as a map and reference in planning and conducting an evaluation. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer, data sources, data collection and analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated.

Table 6: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources	Methodology
1. Project strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design? Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of alignment of project's activities with relevant stakeholders' plans Stakeholders' perceptions on the relevance of project's activities to their needs Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of beneficiaries and stakeholders in project design and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project documents national policies or strategies, websites Project stakeholders feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Stakeholders' interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document. Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree of coherence of the project design in terms of theory of change, components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources, etc. Level of coherence between programme design and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project documents national policies or strategies, websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Stakeholders' interviews

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources	Methodology
<p>could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?</p> <p>Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects for further guidelines.</p> <p>Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women’s groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?</p>	<p>project implementation approach</p> <p>Identification of the problem and its causes in the project being addressed?</p> <p>Assessment of gender integration into the project design</p>	<p>Project stakeholders feedback</p>	
<p>Undertake a critical analysis of the project’s logframe indicators and targets, assess how “SMART” the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.</p> <p>Are the project’s objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?</p> <p>Examine if progress so far has led to or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women’s empowerment, improved governance etc..) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.</p>	<p>SMARTness testing of indicators (Suitability assessment of the defined indicators/measures to demonstrate impacts)</p> <p>Indicators inclusion of gender aspects</p>	<p>project documents</p> <p>national policies or strategies, websites</p> <p>Project stakeholders feedback</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Stakeholders’ interviews</p>

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources	Methodology
<p>Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.</p>			
<p>Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?</p>			
<p>Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets; populate the Progress Towards Results Matrix, as described in the Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects; colour code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for the project objective and each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "not on target to be achieved" (red).</p> <p>Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool/Core Indicators at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.</p> <p>Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.</p> <p>By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.</p>	<p>Analysis of progress towards logframe indicators</p> <p>Analysis of the GEF Core Indicators</p>	<p>project documents (PIRs)</p> <p>Progress reports</p> <p>Project deliverables</p> <p>Project stakeholders feedback</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Stakeholders' interviews</p>

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources	Methodology
<p>Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation? To what extent has progress been made in the implementation of social and environmental management measures? Have there been changes to the overall project risk rating and/or the identified types of risks as outlined at the CEO Endorsement stage?</p>			
<p>Management Arrangements</p> <p>Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.</p> <p>Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.</p> <p>Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.</p> <p>Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?</p> <p>What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?</p> <p>What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?</p>	<p>Stakeholders' perspective on project management effectiveness</p> <p>Suitability of project management structure including gender balance</p> <p>Adequacy and timeliness of UNDP support services</p> <p>Inclusion of gender into project operations</p>	<p>project documents</p> <p>risk/issue register</p> <p>Project stakeholders feedback</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Stakeholders' interviews</p>

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources	Methodology
<p><u>Work Planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved. - Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results? - Examine the use of the project's results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timeliness of activities delivery - Alignment of defined plans with the logframe - Coherence of project planning process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project documentations - risk/issue register - Project stakeholders feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Stakeholders' interviews
<p><u>Finance and co-finance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions. - Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions. - Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds? - Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost in view of results achieved compared to costs of similar projects from other organizations - Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures - Planned vs. actual funds leveraged - Co-financing data and evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project documentations - risk/issue register - Project stakeholders feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Stakeholders' interviews

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources	Methodology
<p>financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans? Please make sure that evidentiary documents of the actual co-financing that was realized are available, including report on the results of co-financed activities that were carried out by the co-financers or project partners.</p>			
<p><u>Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive? Make sure that evidentiary documents about the reported results of the co-financed and subsumed baseline activities as well as of the incremental activities are available for the review. - Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively? - Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were incorporated in monitoring systems. - Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existence, quality and use of M&E, feedback and dissemination mechanism to share findings, lessons learned and recommendation - Review of progress reports and financial reports - Data disaggregation by gender - Alignment of M&E to the GEF, UNDP and national needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project documentations - risk/issue register - Project stakeholders feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Stakeholders' interviews

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources	Methodology
reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly rated PIRs, if applicable?)			
<p><u>Stakeholder Engagement</u></p> <p>Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?</p> <p>Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?</p> <p>Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?</p> <p>How does the project engage women and girls? Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls and boys? Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women's participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained - Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized - Coherence of the established partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project documentations - risk/issue register - Project stakeholders feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Stakeholders' interviews
<p><u>Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of SESP - Compliance with SESP requirements - SESP update and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project documentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Stakeholders' interviews

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources	Methodology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Validate the risks identified in the project’s most current SESP, and those risks’ ratings; are any revisions needed? - Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project’s overall safeguards risk categorization. - The identified types of risks (in the SESP). - The individual risk ratings (in the SESP). - Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project’s social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - risk/issue register - Project stakeholders feedback 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board. - Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Occurrence of change in project design/ implementation approach when needed to improve project efficiency - Lesson learned documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project documentations - risk/issue register - Project stakeholders feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Stakeholders’ interviews
<p><u>Communications & Knowledge Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of the communication plan - Communication coverage 		

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources	Methodology
<p>stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?</p> <p>- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)</p> <p>- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.</p> <p>- List knowledge activities/products developed (based on knowledge management approach approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication material produced so far - Number and nature of knowledge products produced so far 		
<p>Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?</p>			
<p><u>Financial risks to sustainability:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level and source of future financial support to be provided to relevant activities globally and at the country level - Evidence of commitments from government or other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project documents - risk/issue register 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Stakeholders' interviews

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources	Methodology
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stakeholder to financially support relevant sectors of activities after project end - Level of recurrent costs after completion of project and funding sources for those recurrent costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project stakeholders feedback 	
<p><u>Socio-economic risks to sustainability:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future? <p><u>Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence/Quality of sustainability strategy - Evidence/Quality of steps taken to address sustainability - Degree to which project activities and results have been taken over by local counterparts - Elements in place in those different management functions, at appropriate levels (globally and at country level) in terms of adequate structures, strategies, systems, skills, incentives and interrelationships with other key actors - Exit strategy in place and actively operationalisation - level of capacities at the country level to continue effective PA management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project documents - risk/issue register - Project stakeholders feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Stakeholders' interviews

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources	Methodology
transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to support the development of relevant policies at the country level Evidence of commitment by the targeted countries to pursue the supported activities 		
<p><u>Environmental risks to sustainability:</u></p> <p>Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome of the EIAs for project on the ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project documents Project stakeholders feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Stakeholders' interviews

2061

2062 **2.4 Annex 4: Interview questions**

2063 Thanks for taking the time to speak with us today. The UNDP is conducting a Mid-term Review of UNDP/GEF
 2064 'Strengthened Protected Areas System and Integrated Ecosystem Management in Sudan' Project (PIMS 5630).

2065 The MTR aims to assess the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved and draw
 2066 lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement
 2067 of UNDP programming.

2068 As part of the evaluation, we are talking to stakeholders to hear a range of perspectives on the work done so far
 2069 and future priorities. We've booked in one hour for this interview, but it may not take the full hour.

2070 Participation in this consultation is voluntary and confidential. You can decline to participate or end the interview
 2071 at any time. No comments will be attributed to any individual in discussions or reports, unless we request your
 2072 express permission.

2073 Do you have any questions before we start?

2074 **Interview questions**

It should be noted that below interview questions are presented as a guide to be used in the interviews, however, each individual interview is unique, and questions will be tailored to the

interviewees' roles and perspectives. In addition, follow up questions will be asked based on the responses to obtain full story from each response.

2075 **Questions**

2076 **Introductory question**

2077 Could you please introduce yourself and explain your involvement and the role of your organization/agency in the
2078 project?

2079 **Effectiveness**

2080 1) In your opinion, what has been the greatest achievement in the project to date? And why?

2081 2) What were the challenges in delivering project? How could we overcome these challenges?

2082 3) What factors have contributed to achieving intended outputs and outcomes?

2083 4) What worked so well and what didn't work so well? and why?

2084 **Impacts**

2085 5) What sort of impacts did the project have on its stakeholders?

2086 6) What trends do you foresee in the PA measures in Sudan?

2087 **Relevance**

2088 7) In your opinion, to what degree the project activities are aligned to the needs of the participating
2089 stakeholders?

2090 8) In your opinion, to what degree the project activities are aligned with the strategic plans and strategies of
2091 the participating stakeholders?

2092 **Efficiency**

2093 9) In your opinion, has the project been delivered on time and on budget? Has there been anything
2094 underachieved or overachieved within the agreed framework of the project, and what are the
2095 reasons/explanation for it?

2096 10) In what ways has the project been adaptive to emerging issues and opportunities? Examples?

2097 **Sustainability**

2098 11) Do you foresee any social, financial or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of the project
2099 outputs and outcomes?

2100 12) What would happen to the project output and benefits when the GEF funding finishes?

2101 13) Going forward, how do you see the capacity of participating stakeholders to pursue delivering on related
2102 outcomes?

2103 14) What lessons have been learnt for the project in achieving outcomes?

2104 **Closing**

- 2105 • In what ways gender has been mainstreamed in the project? Do you have any gender-related concerns?
2106 • Anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered?

2107

2108 Thank you for your kind participation!

2109 **2.5 Annex 5: MTR Rating scales**

2110 **Evaluation criteria and ratings:** The standard evaluation criteria according to UNDP/GEF evaluation policy are
 2111 Relevance, Impact, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability. The different scales for rating various criteria are
 2112 shown in the tables below.

2113 **Table 7: MTR Rating Scales & Evaluation Ratings Table**

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

2114

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.

5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

2115

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

2116

2117 **2.6 Annex 6: list of persons consulted**

2118 Stakeholders and beneficiaries engaged:

2119 **(I) The Wildlife Conservation Forces (WCFs) - formerly known as Wildlife Conservation General**

2120 **Administration (WCGA):**

- 2121 1. General (Police), Adil M. Abdalla, Deputy General Director, Director of the Protected Areas
- 2122 2. Colonel (Police), Mohamed E. Mohamed, Director, Financial Administration
- 2123 3. Lieutenant Colonel (Police), Imad B. Mohamed, Director, Red Sea state WCGA

- 2124 4. Major (Police), Mustafa M. Omer, Director of the Marine Parks
- 2125 5. Major (Police), Omer A. Mohamed, Director, Sanganeb National Park
- 2126 6. Captain (Police), Hamad A. A. Ali, Executive Office
- 2127 **(II) Range and Pasture General Directorate (RPGD), Ministry of Animal Resources:**
- 2128 7. Dr. Abdelmouneim Osman Hassan, General Director
- 2129 **(III) Forest Research Centre (Agricultural Research Corporation)**
- 2130 8. Dr. Ismail Mirghani Ismail
- 2131 **(IV) Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry:**
- 2132 9. Ustaz Mohamed E. Y. Ahmed
- 2133 **(V) Wildlife Research Centre:**
- 2134 10. Dr. Lubna Mohammed, General Director
- 2135 **(VI) PAs Project Management Unit:**
- 2136 11. Mr. Abdelhafiz O. Eljack
- 2137 12. Dr. Ameer Awad
- 2138 **(VII) Gedarif state community (representatives of the 10 villages inside the Park):**
- 2139 13. Mr. Mohammed Elsilaik I. Ali (Ain Elgamal village), the High Committee Chairperson
- 2140 14. Mr. Ali Hussein (El Khairat village, High Committee member
- 2141 **(VIII) Blue Nile state Community (representative of the Kadaluu villages):**
- 2142 15. Mr. Eltayib Abu Gamila E. Idris, Chairperson of the People Committee for the Development
- 2143 of Kadaluu Area
- 2144 **(IX) Sudanese Development Initiative (SUDIA):**
- 2145 16. Dr. Abdelrahman El-Mahdi, Executive Manager
- 2146 **(X) Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (SECS):**

- 2147 17. Ms. Eilaf T. E. A. Basheer, APs focal person
- 2148 **(XI) Forests National Corporation (FNC):**
- 2149 18. Dr. Yahia A. Abdalla, Director Planning and Policy Administration
- 2150 19. Eng. Essam A. Mohammed, FNC Director, Gedarif state (ex FNC Director, Sennar state)
- 2151

2152 **2.7 Annex 7: Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form**

2153 Independence entails the ability to evaluate without undue influence or pressure by any party (including the
2154 hiring unit) and providing evaluators with free access to information on the evaluation subject. Independence
2155 provides legitimacy to and ensures an objective perspective on evaluations. An independent evaluation reduces
2156 the potential for conflicts of interest which might arise with self-reported ratings by those involved in the
2157 management of the project being evaluated. Independence is one of ten general principles for evaluations
2158 (together with internationally agreed principles, goals, and targets: utility, credibility, impartiality, ethics,
2159 transparency, human rights and gender equality, national evaluation capacities, and professionalism).

2160

<p>Evaluators/Consultants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings, and recommendations.7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained, and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated and did not carry out the project's Mid-Term Review. <p>Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form</p> <p>Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:</p> <p>Name of Evaluator: _____ Mohammad Alatoom _____</p> <p>Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____</p> <p>I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.</p> <p>Signed at ___Sep 2024_____ (Place) on _____ (Date)</p> <p>Signature: _____ Mohammad Alatoom _____</p>

2171 **2.8 Annex 8: Signed MTR Report Clearance form**

Midterm Review Report for UNDP/GEF 'Strengthened Protected Areas System and Integrated Ecosystem Management in Sudan' Project (PIMS 5741). Reviewed and Cleared By:

Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point)

Name: Hanan Mutwakil

Signature: 08-Oct-2024 Date: _____
hanan.mutwakil@undp.org

Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

2172

2173

2174 **2.9 Annex 9: Co-Financing for The Project by Name and By Type**

2175 CONFIRMED SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY NAME AND BY TYPE

2176 PLEASE COMPLETE FOR ALL PROJECTS AT MTR AND TE STAGES

2177 Please include evidence for co-financing for the project with this form (please add rows as necessary)

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Cofinancing	Investment Mobilized	Amount (\$)
	Ministry of Finance and National Economy			70,000
	Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources			0
	Wildlife Conservation Forces			0
	Range and Pasture General Directorate (RPGD)			0
	Agriculture Research Corporation (ARC)			0
	Wildlife Research Centre			0
	Sudanese Development Initiative (SUDIA)			0
	Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (SECS)			0
	UNESCO ISESCO Chair for Women in Science/Tech.			0
	UNESCO Khartoum Office			0
Total Co-financing				70,000

2178 **2.10 Annex 10: MTR Audit Trail (in a separate file)**