**“Mainstreaming Conservation of Migratory Soaring Birds into Key Productive Sectors along the Rift Valley / Red Sea Flyway”**

**UNDP PIMS 1878**

**Mid Term Review**

***Final Draft 16/10/2014***

**August – October 2014**

**Regions: Middle East & Eastern Africa: Djibouti, Egypt, Eretria, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen**

**Operational Programme: BD2 Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Production Landscapes and Sectors**

**Implementing Partner and other partners: Execution Agency/Partner (Regional) BirdLife International, Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (Jordan), UNDP Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, Ministry of Environment Lebanon, Ministry of Environment (Lebanon), Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (Egypt), BirdLife Partners in Egypt and Jordan**

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# **Executive Summary**

**Project Summary Table**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Project Title | Mainstreaming Conservation of Migratory Soaring Birds into Key Productive Sectors along the Rift Valley / Red Sea Flyway | | | |
| GEF PIMS | 1028 |  | At endorsement (million US$) | At midterm (million US$) |
| UNDP Project ID | 1878 | GEF financing | 6,243,244 | 4,070,690 |
| Country | Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon in major project activities and Syria, Eretria, Djibouti, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen | IA/EA Own |  |  |
| Region | Arab States | Government | \* | 289,639 |
| Focal Area | OP 1 Arid & Semi-Arid Ecosystems | Other | \* | 5,002,653 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| FA Objectives (OP/SP) | Strategic Priority BD2, Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Production Landscapes and Sectors | Total co-financing |  |  |
| Executing Agency | UNDP | Total project costs |  |  |
| Other partners involved | RSCN, Jordan/Ministries of Environment in Egypt & Lebanon / BirdLife Partners | Project Document signature | | GEF 01/2008  UNDP 07/2008  Initiated 01/2009 |
|  |  | Operation closing date | Proposed 04/2015 (first tranche) there will be a further 5-year implementation based upon a revised Project Document | Actual: 12/2013 |

\*No figure is provided here due to the collapse of the vehicles intended as the main co-financing mechanisms

**Project Description**

The Mainstreaming Conservation of Migratory Soaring Birds into Key Productive Sectors along the Rift Valley / Red Sea Flyway (MSB) project is intended to mainstream migratory soaring bird considerations into the productive sectors along the north-south flyway that pose the greatest risk to the safe migration of these birds. These are principally hunting, energy, agriculture, and waste management. It also seeks to promote activities in sectors which could benefit from these birds, such as tourism. This was to be achieved by integrating flyway issues into existing national or donor-funded "vehicles" (or projects) of reform or change management in the key sectors through the provision of technical tools, content, services and support. The intended Implementing Agency (IA) is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Jordan and the Executing Agency (EA) is Birdlife International (BI). However, the actual management arrangements are national execution in Egypt, national NGO execution in Jordan and national execution in Lebanon. The Regional Flyway Facility (RFF) is internationally executed by BirdLife International effectively creating four implementing and four executing agencies/partners.

It is a regional, multi-country project involving Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon in major project activities and Syria, Eretria, Djibouti, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen in lesser activities. The project is scheduled in two tranches of GEF funding, this being the first tranche, effectively making the project a two-phase project with the second phase dependent upon the project achieving a number of targets outside the normal project strategic results framework (SRF). The Project Document was signed by all parties on the 18th April 2008. Due a number of delays a no-cost extension has been agreed and the closing dates for the first phase is now the end of April 2015.

**Evaluation Rating Table**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Monitoring & Evaluation | Rating\* | MTR Description |
| M&E design at entry | MS | The project’s monitoring and evaluation design at the start of the project was inadequate. While the arrangements were standard monitoring and evaluation arrangements there were significant deficiencies in the main monitoring and evaluation tool, the LFM/SRF. The inclusion of vehicle specific indicators (which had not materialized) and the absence of any indicators to measure the progress in developing the RFF and its effectiveness were a major shortcoming which was not addressed in the inception phase. The 2013 revision has brought the rating from unsatisfactory to moderately satisfactory |
| M&E Plan Implementation | S | While the LFM/SRF itself has a number of weaknesses these have to some extent been overcome by the diligent and transparent reporting which has contributed to identifying weaknesses through the PIR and other tools. However, when the Project Document was revised in 2013 there should have been more latitude to better align the LFM/SRF. |
| Overall quality of M&E | S | The initial weaknesses in the LFM/SRF prevented this rating from being highly satisfactory |
| IA & EA Execution | Rating | MTR Description |
| Quality of UNDP Implementation | S | The early years of the project were less than satisfactory with poor implementation. However since early 2013 there has been considerable signs of real project assurance measures and the project has recovered remarkably well |
| Quality of Execution - Executing Agency | S | With four executing agencies/partners which is markedly different from those arrangements intended in the initial design this rating reflects the efforts and achievements so far but carries the caveat that international NGO execution where legally possible is critical to the project’s successful outcome and sustainability of its objective. |
| Overall quality of Implementation / Execution | S | The project has recovered well from its earlier problems. The MTR considers these earlier challenges part of the process of mainstreaming and therefore considers the institutional responses by project partners in rating this aspect. However, the current management arrangements will need to be changed to reflect the project’s long term strategy. |
| Assessment of Outcomes | Rating | MTR Description |
| Relevance | R | The project is very relevant to GEF Strategic Priority BD2 Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Production Landscapes and Sectors and is addressing urgent and emerging issues which threaten MSBs |
| Effectiveness | S | The strategy is proving very effective in some instances although this is not uniform across all five production sectors largely due to the nature of the sector itself. However, the mix of the RFF addressing mainstreaming at a highly strategic level and supporting national efforts dealing with enabling environments appears to work well. However, the model for NGO execution and involvement in the governance of the flyway remains largely untested but with many signs it could work (e.g. through partnerships in Egypt or in providing technical advice, etc.). The current arrangements are likely to be less effective in the second half of the project. |
| Efficiency | S | Investment of GEF and partner funds in developing sectoral guidelines, advocacy at different levels within a sector and the delivery of sound technical support suggest that the project has a certain economy and is putting the GEF fund to proper and efficient use, albeit with the caveat given above that the project will need |
| Overall Project Outcome Rating | S | Since 2013 there have been significant increases across almost all the baselines. However, there are no indicators related to the RFF which is a critical component of the project strategy to achieve the objective. Despite this the RFF has made significant progress with some notable results |
| Outcome 1 | S |  |
| Outcome 2 | S |  |
| Outcome 3 | S |  |
| Outcome 4 | S |  |
| Sustainability | Rating | MTR Description |
| Financial resources: | L | It is highly likely that BirdLife International will continue to materially support the RFF after project closure but its effectiveness would be greatly increased if it recognised as a funding priority by the Secretariat and Partnership and funds were raised specifically for the maintenance of the RFF and specific future and emerging mainstreaming issues. |
| Socio-political: | L | In most instances the flyway and MSB conservation issues are being mainstreamed into the existing or proposed national regulatory framework (e.g. EIAs for wind farms, hunting Laws in Lebanon and Jordan, etc.). |
| Institutional framework and governance: | U | In its current state the RFF lacks the executive powers to fully influence the effective use of the entire GEF fund. It can and does exert considerable responsibility in directing the regional component but there are serious limitations regarding the national components. The wise use of this fund in the next five years will largely determine the effectiveness of the RFF in the future. Therefore addressing these weaknesses in the institutional and governance structure are critical to the outcome and objective of the project. Despite the considerable efforts and the promising developments in the RFF in the past few years the MTR considers that in its present form sustainability is unlikely. This rating would ordinarily have reduced the other ratings of sustainability and this will likely be the outcome in the final evaluation if changes are not made to the existing management arrangements to increase the authority of the RFF. |
| Environmental : | L | Mainstreaming the conservation interests of the MSBs and flyway management issues into national policy and regulatory frameworks provides a strong argument for environmental sustainability. |
| Overall likelihood of sustainability: | ML | The purpose of the project is to improve the conservation management of the flyway and improve the conservation status of the MSBs. Coordination of the flyway is critical to this. The project’s strategy clearly states this. However, the current management arrangements undermine the RFF to a large extent. While the financial viability of the RFF is likely to be assured by BirdLife International if its authority and responsibility are diminished or undermined over the remaining part of the project then its ability to coordinate the “development” of the flyway will be, to a large extent, rendered ineffective. |

\* See Annex 6 for description of ratings

**Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons**

The original project design was overly complicated and confusing. While it contained a number of good ideas these were not articulated in a rational manner and in some instances they were not clearly defined (e.g. the issue of vehicles). In particular the management arrangements were particularly vague and ambiguous.

The project design phase was protracted, and apparently painful. At least three versions of the Project Document exist although it is noted that the project is working from a recognised revised (2013) version of the Project Document with which the MTR concurs.

As is common with GEF projects the design of the MSB project underestimated the complexity of the challenges and was overly optimistic in what might be achieved. The MTR assumes that the protracted design phase led to a degree of “project fatigue” before the project had even started.

However, as stated earlier the project’s strategy did provide a number of interesting ideas. The MTR has reconstructed the projects original strategy and identified a number of key points. These are:

The project was intended to be executed by an NGO (NGO Execution Modality)[[1]](#footnote-1). This was not driven by any individual agendas or ideological concerns but because of a number of clear advantages which best served both the execution of the project and coordination of conservation efforts along the flyway and therefore was in the best interest of the thirty-seven targeted species. These are:

* The original intention was to execute the project through an NGO modality. A network of NGOs (specifically the Birdlife Partners) is best able to overcome individual national agendas and interests which may not necessarily be aligned to the interests of the flyway.
* NGO involvement (coordination, management, advocacy, technical capacities, etc.) is a demonstrated model for bird conservation. While this model does not necessarily lend itself to other animal groups, it seems in most instances to work well for birds.
* Birdlife has a structure which can encompass the flyway in its entirety (Birdlife International) and still have representation at the national level (Birdlife Partners).
* Birdlife Partners (with back-stopping from Birdlife International) hold considerable technical expertise.
* The model offers a number of efficiencies in project execution in particular by reducing the management and administration burden on the project which can provide cost-savings.
* The model provides the greatest flexibility for project interventions especially in relation to emerging flyway and individual country flyway issues.
* The model offers the greatest opportunities for post-project sustainability.

It is further noted that the Project Document describes a two tranche project suggesting that the second half of the project is dependent upon achieving a number of additional (to those in the log frame matrix [LFM]) targets which would act as triggers to release the second tranche of project funding. While the project’s LFM is extremely weak, the indicators are poor and it is at times confusing it remains the authoritative tool in a UNDP-GEF project to measure success or failure and thus determine whether a project should be prematurely closed or proceed to its natural conclusion. The project has broadly met these triggers so this is not an issue. However, in the event that it had not, it should be made clear that the MTR would have measured success or failure based upon the LFM indicators no matter how dysfunctional.

The MSB project is addressing a complex array of adaptive and technical challenges related to the conservation management of the Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway. Despite a number of flaws in the Project Document the initial strategy to have a NGO executed project utilizing BirdLife Partners where possible along the flyway was a good strategy. It was good for a number of reasons highlighted in Section 3.1.1 of this report but essentially it offered the greatest opportunity for achieving the outcomes and objective and sustaining the impact of the project after its closure.

However, this mode of project execution was not the one used following the project’s start up. This was due to a number of reasons some avoidable and some unavoidable. In the event, and also due to actions taken by the intended Implementing Agency and the NGO Executing Agency/Partner (at least for the RFF) the project was dragged back on track and has achieved a number of notable successes at the national level. The RFF is establishing very adequate systems and processes that suggest that the facility can and will function for the purposes set out in the Project Document, that of coordinating conservation efforts along the length of the flyway and continuing to engage with flyway countries under extremely difficult (and in many instances dangerous) circumstances.

In many ways the RFF, with its emphasis on mainstreaming, is emerging as a very effective model for translating larger Conventions and regional agreements into conservation actions on the ground to address and reduce the threats to MSBs. The partnership arrangements, if allowed to develop, could provide an interesting and informative model for other, albeit few in number, projects because the flyway has its own specific characteristics and conservation challenges.

Everyone involved should be acutely aware that these successes have largely been down to the tremendous efforts of individuals within the project and at many levels and changes within the institutions and organizations supporting them. These efforts have got the project from a very shaky start to where it is now. However, they remain vulnerable because they are largely down to individual relationships. These need to be formalized and institutionalized in the project’s governance structure and management arrangements, without which the project remains extremely vulnerable.

**Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1:** UNDP Jordan is recognised as the sole Implementing Agency for all aspects of the MSB project.

**Recommendation 2:** Birdlife International is recognised as the sole Executing Agency/Partner for the MSB project.

**Recommendation 3:** Disbursement of the GEF grant is made according to these revised implementing and executing arrangements.

**Recommendation 4:** The disbursement of the GEF grant through the Executing Agency is coordinated by the RFF and arranged by sectors (not countries and vehicles) according to an agreed strategic framework to be developed during the development of the new of the Project Document. In particular the RFF has the authority to withhold GEF funds in the event that funding agreements with Birdlife Partners are not adhered to.

**Recommendation 5:** The authority of Birdlife International as the Executing Agency is clearly articulated and recognised by participating countries. This will require the recognition through agreement of the primacy of RFF MSB flyway policies over national interests and agendas where this relates to the GEF grant.

**Recommendation 6:** National Execution is carried out through Birdlife Partners and according to substantive agreements between them and the RFF.

**Recommendation 7:** In the case of countries in which it is legally impossible (e.g. in Egypt due to the restrictions on national NGOs and CSOs receiving funds from overseas) to work through Birdlife Partners (e.g. solely in Egypt) current national execution arrangements will persist largely unchanged.

**Recommendation 8:** The exercise planned to develop a Project Document for the second half of the project is unusual for a GEF project. However, given the weaknesses in the original it seems to be a good idea to critically review it and develop something more efficient. However, this should not be a full-sized Project Document. It is recommended that UNDP Jordan as the Implementing Agency seeks clarification from the RTA (Bratislava) provides clear instructions for the procedure of developing the document. The document itself should be streamlined, provide a concise strategy for achieving the existing outcomes and objective, a heavily revised LFM/SRF with clearer (and fewer) indicators, precise and binding management arrangements, a budget and work plan. The emphasis should be to “keep it simple”, easy to understand and as short as possible.

**Recommendation 9:** The project has made considerable headway on a number of critical issues such as wind energy in Egypt and hunting in Jordan and Lebanon. Indeed these have emerged as some of the most urgent threats to the MSBs. However, it would be premature to declare at the midpoint of the project that the “mission is accomplished”. The project must remain engaged with these sectors in the second half of the project. Failure to do so will considerably diminish the achievements thus far. This is a contradiction in the Project Document which on one hand recognises that mainstreaming is a long term process while on the other hand appears to assume that some issues of mainstreaming can be “signed off” on just when they appear to be succeeding.

**Recommendation 10:** The RFF already has continued support from BirdLife International which will continue after the closure of the GEF funded project. The Project Document requires a commitment from BirdLife International of cash co-financing amounting to double the GEF grant. This is a considerable commitment upon a project that is now beginning to work well and much of its success can be attributed to BirdLife International’s and the Implementing Agency’s (UNDP Jordan) willingness to try to make it work and commit resources when necessary. Furthermore, the MTR questions the authority of the “triggers” in the Project Document and defers to the indicators provided in the Project Document the majority of which have improved from a very low base to a satisfactory level and continue to improve. If BirdLife International is unable to meet the 1:2 cash co-financing ratio this should not affect the second half of the project. The RFF will continue to receive support of a very high quality from BirdLife International and thus it is recommended that the trigger is either ignored or changed to reflect the actual costs of supporting the RFF rather than an arbitrary co-financing ratio. In recognition of this the RFF will be tasked with developing a Financial Plan to identify sources of funding (BirdLife and other elements) and funding gaps with strategies to address these shortfalls.

**Recommendation 11:** The project develops an exit strategy during the final eight months of the project. Exit strategies are, in evaluations, frequently prescribed but rarely described leaving project managers to try and figure out what an exit strategy looks like. Annex 12 provides a template.

**Lessons Learned**

**Lesson 1: Project governance and management arrangements are critical to the successful outcome of a project. I**n a complex and multi-country project such as the MSB project governance, the management arrangements, are a critical and integral component of the project’s overall strategy and it is the project *strategy* which should take precedence over project *expedience.* In these circumstances the purpose of the management arrangements needs to be clearly understood (and articulated), that these arrangements will dictate where and how critical decisions are made about the course of the project and how the GEF fund is spent and whether this is effective or not.

**Lesson 2: Getting it right is worth the time and resources expended.** The MSB project is working at many different scales, it has a multiplicity of players and stakeholders. Simply put; it is a complex project dealing with a complex and unpredictable system, the flyway and the fate of the MSBs.

Expending resources on governance might be viewed as a waste of resources unless one considers that “*getting it right”* is actually an outcome in itself. Bringing eleven different countries, five production sectors and numerous different institutions and organisations together for a common purpose was never going to be easy. Furthermore, the way the project was set up (and this is true of many projects) meant that in many instances most attention was focused on the *vehicles* because these determined the allocation of material resources within the project. To some extent this will have placed the emphasis on outputs and not outcomes.

Arguably this is a natural phenomenon in any project because they are time-bound and this sets in place a conflict between *product* and *process.* While UNDP-GEF monitoring and evaluation procedures are designed to try to avoid focusing on *products* or outputs *per se*. Quite understandably ensuring targets are met becomes a driving force because these are tangibles which can be easily measured whereas process and the building of coalitions is much less easy to ascertain.

It might at times not have appeared so to those who have been involved in the process but this is a very positive lesson from the project. What is emerging is a means of coordinating the entire flyway. While it is still very much a work in progress there are clear signs that this could work very well.

Whether this process could be made more efficient in the project design is debatable. It is hard to see how a project which invested considerable resources in building the capacities of what is effectively the PMU would be approved. Certainly it would help to remove some of the uncertainties and ambiguities if these, essentially governance issues, were made explicit in the Project Document and the “*means for achieving direction, control, and coordination that determines the effectiveness of management*” were established sometime, at least one year, in advance of the other project activities.

**Lesson 3: Adaptive management and the project cycle should be clearly understood.** The role of the inception phase in GEF projects is often poorly understood. The inception phase is the first opportunity to review the current status of the project and to determine whether circumstances have changed against the assumptions made in the Project Document. The inception phase should have the confidence and authority to significantly challenge the project’s design and not to accept it as a *fait accompli.*

In circumstances such as occurred with the MSB project it might be necessary for the Implementing Agency to immediately notify the RTA (Bratislava) that the project is facing difficulties and substantive technical assistance needs to be provided to review the project’s strategy against the prevailing circumstances and revise and realign it if necessary.

This rarely happens. As was the case in the MSB project the inception phase is used to put in place PMU and, following an Inception Workshop which attempts to introduce the often complex issues as well as the UNDP reporting requirements in just one day, the project proceeds largely unchanged.

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| APR | Annual Progress Report |
| AWP | Annual Work Plan |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CBO | Community-based Organisation |
| CMS | Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| FO | Flyway Officer |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GEF – OFP | Global Environment Facility – Operational Focal Point |
| IA | Implementing Agent / agency |
| ITA | International Technical Advisor |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MSBs | Migratory Soaring Birds |
| NIAs | National Implementing Agents |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organisation |
| PDF-A | Project Development Fund – A |
| PDF-B | Project Development Fund – B |
| PIR | Project Implementation Review |
| PSC | Project Steering Committee |
| RCU | Regional Coordinating Unit |
| RFF | Regional Flyway Facility |
| RSCN | Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature |
| SPNL | Society for the Protection of Nature – Lebanon |
| STAP | Scientific & Technical Advisory Panel |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNDP- CO | United Nations Development Programme Country Office |
| US$ | United States Dollar |

# **1 Introduction**

## 1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

1. The GEF recognises that all their projects by their very nature are addressing complex systems and issues. As a result there is a high level of uncertainty when it comes to predicting the outcomes of interventions. Therefore the GEF works through a process of adaptive management on the understanding that project‘s designs and planning processes are invariably based upon a number of assumptions which may, or may not, hold true. Therefore the MTR, as part of the monitoring and evaluation process, is tasked with elements of audit and adaptive management and will necessarily consider:

* The performance of the Project – is it doing what it said it would do?
* The effectiveness of the interventions – having done what it set out to do, is it working?
* The impact of the Project – what are the outcomes now, and in the future, of the Project’s intervention.

1. Through this process the MTR will identify the strengths and weaknesses within the project, identify critical issues and propose remedial actions or changes in the strategy where necessary. Therefore, the MTR is an integral component of the GEF project cycle management and as such is intended not simply to audit the performance but importantly to ensure the project outcomes remain adaptive and experience and lessons shape future project interventions both within the participating countries and within the global portfolio.

## Scope of the MTR

1. The MTR will consider the contribution of the entire project partners and stakeholders. The ToR will guide the MTR in assessing the projects:
2. Performance; its design and the progress towards results
3. Adaptive management; its work planning, finance and co-financing, monitoring systems, risk management and reporting as well as assessing how much the project has been able to challenge any assumptions made during the design phase based upon experience and understanding and if this has been incorporated into the projects strategy
4. Management arrangements; whether these have been efficient and effective.
5. The MTR will, in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) and in collaboration with the PMU and project partners, analyse the strengths and weaknesses and deliberate on the optimal and most cost-effective strategies for the second part of the project including structural changes to the project’s management, strategic changes to the project’s intervention vulnerabilities and risks and an develop agreed way forwards, including where necessary proposing different management arrangements. In addition to this the MTR will, in conjunction with the PMU develop an appropriate exit strategy for procedural matters in what will be the project’s final year.
6. The Project Document states that the “*project follows a tranched [sic] approach[[2]](#footnote-2)”* with *the second Tranche will commence on the satisfactory achievement of the following triggers[[3]](#footnote-3):*

*Successful execution of at least 4 of the 6 double mainstreaming pilots in Tranche I with at least one success in a country in the Middle East and one in Africa (individual PIRs will be prepared for each pilot double-mainstreaming vehicle, as a means of measuring and reporting progress towards the expected indicators set out in the LogFrame. This will be included in the signed statements from the project vehicle managers on successful partnerships);*

*Commitment of a 1:3 GEF: co-financing ratio for Tranche II that would include altered baseline funding for the reform vehicles and 1:2 cash co-financing for the Flyway Facility (verification - written guarantees of co-financing);*

*At least 5 BirdLife national partners achieving capacity markers that indicate their ability to provide double mainstreaming technical content. BirdLife has conducted a review of the capacity of its project partners to carry out mainstreaming work and what and how this can be built during Tranche I (see Annex 12). Entry into Tranche II will require the project partner to have achieved a score of at least 2 (scores range 0-3) for 9 principal capacity measures identified by the assessment. (verification - through a follow-up partner assessment using the same agreed approach and methodology as adopted at the PDFB stage will be carried out during year 4);*

*BirdLife national partners have identified and negotiated agreements with at least one new reform vehicle that is congruent with the Regional Flyway Facility’s criteria and guidelines. The [Regional Flyway Facility] RFF and national partners will identify and review potential project vehicles throughout the first tranche in consultation with donor agencies and UNDP Country Offices (verification - a written agreement between the project and reform vehicle); and*

*For moves into new target sectors, the establishment of material links between sector activity and bird mortality along the flyway and the establishment of baseline data against which impact indicators can be measured (verification – independent, peer-reviewed research reports showing impact of sector policies and activities on MSBs along the flyway, with further expert input from the technical committees and agreement from the PSC)*

1. The inclusion of these triggers for the second tranche of GEF financing in the Project Document is unusual and arguably the SRF indicators and targets are sufficient for the purpose of assessing whether the project should continue or be closed at the mid-term point. It might even be argued that these triggers undermine the purpose of the SRF and the MTR and it is hard to see where these triggers fit with the Theory of Change which is the approach accepted by the UNDP Evaluation Office. Certainly in the experience of the evaluator these triggers are an extremely high bar and should have been attached to the caveat that *everything would work like a Swiss watch*.
2. The MTR will therefore consider the usefulness of these triggers as a means to measure project performance, project impact and to *trigger* the second half (or tranche) of the project.

## Methodology

1. The process of evaluation began with a study of the considerable project documentation and background literature that is associated with any UNDP-GEF project prior to the field visits by the MTR and a period of interviews and consultations with key project partners and stakeholders during the in-country mission.
2. The in-country mission consisted of focused meetings and discussions (in person and by electronic communications) with UNDP CO in Amman, the RSCN Jordan, the appropriate Ministry personnel in Lebanon and Egypt, PMU, BirdLife Partners and the UNDP/GEF Regional Coordinator, and other stakeholders starting with a briefing of the purpose and the *process* of GEF monitoring and evaluation. The subject of these meetings focused on (but was not limited to) determining a number of key questions, based on the project’s intended outcomes, these were expanded by the MTR as deemed appropriate. These included:

* Assessing overall performance against the project objective and outcomes as set out in the Project Document, project’s Logical Framework Matrix (SLFM or Strategic Results Framework [SRF]) and GEF increment, and other related documents;
* Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the project;
* Analyzing critically the implementation and management arrangements of the project;
* Assessing the progress to date and achievement of the outcomes;
* Reviewing how appropriate the planned strategies and plans for achieving the overall objective of the project within the timeframe were;
* Assessing the sustainability of the project’s interventions;
* Listing and documenting initial lessons concerning project design, implementation and management;
* Assessing the project relevance to national priorities of each participating country (including achieving gender equality goals);
* Identifying if *and* how the project has achieved the triggers necessary for the second tranche of GEF financing and, as discussed above, the utility of these *triggers*;
* Providing recommendations to strengthen the outcomes, ensure sustainability and provide lessons learned from the process of implementing the project. In this case this has placed significant emphasis on *the best scenarios for enhancing management arrangements in the second tranche, and as appropriate and needed propose options for alternative management arrangements for remaining period of the project.*

1. At the end of the country mission the MTR provided feedback to key project partners and a brief *aide memoire* was left with the UNDP CO and PMU outlining the MTRs understanding of the project, the strengths and weaknesses, conclusions, critical issues and recommendations.
2. The principle output of the MTR is this report which provides an account of the project, the key findings of the MTR, the analysis and conclusions, key recommendations and documents the relevant lessons resulting from the project’s experience thus far.
3. GEF project evaluation requires the evaluators to provide ratings for the key components of the project on a six-point rating scale ranging from Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory and the likelihood of the project outcomes being sustainable post GEF funding on a similar rating scale ranging from Highly Likely to Highly Unlikely.

## Structure of the evaluation report

1. This report is structured in three parts:

* **Section 2** provides a description of the project including contextual information which is necessary to understand the key events which have unfolded and have to a large degree shaped the project, its performance and progress and might still effect the overall impact of the project.
* **Section 3** consists of three sub-sections. **Section 3.1** provides the main findings of the evaluation and largely address the architecture of the project; its design, current operational status and management arrangements, etc. **Section 3.2** considers the projects performance, that is, how well it has been implemented and executed, in short, whether it is doing what it said it would do. **Section 3.3** considers whether the project is having an impact, that is, if it is doing what it said it would…..is it working? Is it actually having any effect on the barriers and threats to migratory soaring birds and is it actually improving the conservation status of the Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway.
* **Section 4** provides the main conclusions of the evaluation based upon the evidence, reasonable argument and the professional opinion of the Evaluator. This section identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the project against attaining the project’s stated outcomes and objective and proposes remedial actions where necessary to strengthen the project during the second-half of its implementation.
* **Annex 9** provides a detailed account of the existing management arrangements and the MTR’s reasoning behind any adjustment to project’s governance framework.

1. **Project description and development context**

## 2.1 Project start and duration

1. The MSB project was initiated in March 2002 with the approval of the Project Development Fund-A (PDF-A) and entered into the GEF Pipeline in June 2003. The PDF-B[[4]](#footnote-4) was approved in February 2004 and completed and approved by November 2005. While the “*GEF Council approved funding for this project in November 2005. Due to changes in the GEF format/guidelines, the project team re-produced the Executive Summary and the Project Document, including finalized response to GEF council and GEF secretariat comments, project management arrangements, budgets and work plans, as well as finalizing and attaching agreements between partner organizations and vehicles. NGO capacity assessment was conducted. Also, a new Project Identification Form (PIF) was prepared and submitted to GEF. The government endorsements letters were obtained. The project documents were re-submitted in August 2007 and the project awaiting GEF CEO endorsement*”.[[5]](#footnote-5) The Project Document was finally endorsed by the GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in January 2008 and the subsequently by the UNDP (GEF Implementing Agency) in July 2008. However, the project was not initiated until January 2009.
2. There followed a four-month Inception Phase which was inconclusive[[6]](#footnote-6). During this period there appears to have been considerable disagreements on the modality of execution and the management arrangements leading to the project proceeding with different management arrangements to those envisaged in the Project Document. This culminated in a substantive external technical assistant (TA) with considerable experience on UNDP institutional arrangements being drafted in to review the arrangements in August 2009. While the TA made recommendations on substantial changes in the project’s management arrangements the existing arrangements have remained in place until the MTR although there was some adjustment to the payment modalities to reflect the NGO execution of the Regional Flyway Facility (RFF). The RFF was also intended to be functionally the Project Management Unit (PMU). The RFF/PMU staff resigned, almost in its entirety, by the end of 2009.
3. A new RFF/PMU was appointed in September 2011. The new RFF/PMU, with support of the Implementing Agency (UNDP Jordan and the BirdLife International) subsequently revised the Project Document in line with the original vision of the project’s strategy in 2012. However, it should be noted that the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Adviser (Bratislava) limited any substantive changes to the management arrangements and the project’s log frame matrix (LFM).
4. This revision made a number of important and very reasonable changes to the Project Document:

* Those aspects directly related to the *vehicles* which had failed to materialize were removed from the narrative and the LFM/SRF and in the case of the latter the indicators were replaced by sector-based indicators. While not ideal, they were certainly more relevant.
* Changes were made to reflect the new project cooperation agreement between UNDP Jordan (the Implementing Agency of the regional/RFF component) and BirdLife International because the old agreement had expired and the arrangements needed to be clarified. Therefore a new project cooperation agreement was introduced.
* A number of revised ToR were included reflecting the new emphasis on project governance and the effective working of the PMU/RFF (e.g. a regional Project Steering Committee, the Project Board and the BirdLife Supervisory Committee).
* There was a budget revision to reflect the fact that Djibouti was no longer included in the first tranche of funding.

1. It should be noted that the GEF website still lists BirdLife International (an international non-governmental organization [NGO]) as being the Executing Partner. In fact this is not wholly the case and the existing management arrangements are both complicated with effectively two systems operating: one which is surface level, which is UNDP Jordan is the Implementing Agency and one that is reality, which is UNDP Jordan is Implementing Agency in Jordan and for the RFF but UNDP Lebanon and UNDP Egypt are Implementing Agencies within their respective countries. The MTR considers these arrangements to be effectively, four separate (RFF, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt), albeit UNDP, Implementing Agencies. Execution is, for the national activities, by UNDP Jordan, UNDP Egypt and UNDP Lebanon with International NGO execution for the RFF.
2. The MTR considers that the failure of the Inception Phase to address weaknesses in the project’s design and changes in circumstances caused by the protracted approval process, the complicated and cumbersome management arrangements and the resistance to making substantive changes in management arrangements and the LFM have had a profound effect on the project which will be dealt with in Section 3 of this report.

## Problems that the project sought to address

1. The MSB project seeks to address the threats to secure the conservation management throughout the eleven countries[[7]](#footnote-7) included in the Red Sea/Rift Valley flyway. The flyway itself is the second most important flyway globally with an estimated 1.2 – 1.5 million birds using the flyway in autumn and spring. Of the thirty-seven species using the flyway; five are globally threatened species (including the Critically Endangered[[8]](#footnote-8) northern bald ibis, *Geronticus eremite*), three are Near Threatened. In some instances up to 100 *per cent* of the global populations of some species use the flyway (e.g. Levant sparrow hawk, *Accipiter brevipes*) and substantial (over 50 *per cent*) of a number of other species. The Project Document summarized this in a “problem statement”: “*Populations of many globally threatened and vulnerable migratory soaring birds are threatened by anthropogenic activities during their seasonal migrations along the Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway”[[9]](#footnote-9)*.
2. The project design recognized that the threats to these thirty-seven species could not be overcome through conventional (e.g. protected areas, awareness and education, etc.) project approaches but rather the interests of the MSBs needed to be integrated within the overall economic and development framework through mainstreaming:

*Mainstreaming is the process of embedding biodiversity considerations into policies, strategies and practices of key public and private actors that impact or rely on biodiversity, so that it is conserved and sustainably used both locally and globally. This normally requires interventions in policy, planning, production practice, and financial mechanisms……These have incrementally and often radically mobilized local and national initiatives whereby biodiversity concerns have been embedded in development agendas.* [[10]](#footnote-10).

1. The project’s design took a very reasonable approach in identifying key sectors; hunting, energy, tourism, agriculture and waste management, with which to engage because these five sectors created the greatest threat to the MSBs.
2. In so doing it identified a number of critical barriers to mainstreaming the conservation interests of MSBs, namely:

* Ignorance of flyway concept and value of the birds,
* Difficulty in gaining sector entry,
* Difficulty in addressing change within complex sectors,
* Shortage of technical information on which to base decision-making[[11]](#footnote-11).

1. Interestingly it did not list governance, the means for achieving direction, control, and coordination that determines the effectiveness of management (Eagles 2008), of the flyway in its entirety as being a barrier. However, the project still sought to address the necessary coordination along the entire length of the flyway by creating a Regional Flyway Facility (RFF) recognizing that the flyway was only as secure as the weakest link in its chain. Thus the RFF became critical to the success or failure of the entire project because of the connectivity within the flyway. Without a common vision, supported by policy and regulatory instruments, throughout the entire length of the flyway (no matter how long-term an objective this might be) the successful outcomes and achieving the objective would not be possible.

## Immediate and development objectives of the project

1. The overall project goal is to ensure that globally threatened and significant populations of soaring birds that migrate along the Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway are effectively maintained. The immediate objective is that:

“*Conservation management objectives and actions for MSBs are mainstreamed effectively into the hunting, energy, agriculture, waste management and tourism sectors along the Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway, making this a safer route for soaring birds*”.

## Baseline Indicators established

1. Baselines were established for each sector affecting the flyway and MSBs[[12]](#footnote-12). These presented a reasonable assessment of the start-of-project baseline. Subsequently these were translated into indicators with baselines in the project’s LFM. These will be dealt with in Section 3 and 4 of this report. However, the baselines in the LFM were arranged by outcome and subsequently by sector.
2. However, there is no tangible baseline for the RFF which is striking because the RFF is essential to the project’s success or failure and was a critical component of the overall project’s strategy. But there is no baseline to compare the current (and future) RFF against in either the Project Document’s narrative or the LFM indicators.

## Main stakeholders

1. There is a complex and diverse number of stakeholders due in large part to the geographical scale, the sectoral scope and the participation of non-governmental and civil society players in the project’s activities and the relative importance of the five sectors upon the flyway and MSBs.
2. It would serve little purpose for the MTR to provide a comprehensive list of stakeholders in this report because of the scale, scope and diversity of interest within the project and the flyway *per se.* Within the eleven participating flyway countries; Egypt, Ethiopia, Eretria, Djibouti, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen there are a diversity and abundance of statutory agencies and institutions directly related to the sectors (or vehicles) selected in each country. Importantly, these are not always the statutory agencies tasked with managing biodiversity and environmental issues (e.g. a Ministry of Environment or similar), *per se*. At the regional and international level (as well as the national level) the stakeholder interests can be expanded to include international agencies, international non-governmental organisations and national NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs). Therefore, it is hard to characterise the stakeholders; but within any single country these interests can be as varied as national statutory agencies (e.g. the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency), local government (e.g. waste water management), international investment agencies (e.g. Climate Investment Fund [CIF]), private sector interests (e.g. tourism or wind energy), direct project interests (e.g. GEF and the Implementing Agency[s]), civil society (e.g. hunters groups, national BirdLife Partners), judiciary, Parliament and law enforcement agencies (e.g. hunting laws, creation of regulatory frameworks), international Conventions (e.g. the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals [CMS]) and international NGOs (e.g. BirdLife International). This notwithstanding the remote stakeholders at the southern and northern ends of the flyway. Indeed it clearly demonstrates that conservation is not easy; and mainstreaming conservation interests and agendas further adds many layers of complexity to the task in hand.
3. This brings into sharp focus the purpose of creating, and the *raison d'être* of, the RFF post project. Given this complexity of stakeholders and the clear direction and governance aspects which are currently being built in the RFF it is not unreasonable to surmise that without this (the RFF) the task of stakeholder coordination could be likened to *trying to herd cats.*

## Expected Results

1. According to the revised (2011) Project Document “*the initial phase of the project will have four components to deliver the expected outcomes – development of the Flyway concept to be used for “flyway sensitive” promotion and double mainstreaming; building capacity of national partners and other agencies to effect double mainstreaming; the actual delivery of double mainstreaming to incorporate MSBs*”[[13]](#footnote-13).
2. This was to translate into four outcomes or results:

***Outcome 1: Raised awareness of the flyway and altered social and cultural behaviours among target groups that threaten MSBs in the key sectors, decision-makers and the general public.***

*Multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder partnerships will be developed at regional, national, and local levels to effect long-term changes to the perception, value, and sustainable management of MSBs along the flyway (three Outputs).*

***Outcome 2: Increased national and regional capacity to effect double mainstreaming and application offlyway concept.***

*The second component will target the “agents of change” in seeking to overcome the barrier of bringing about sectoral change. Nationally-based activities will seek to facilitate mainstreaming by strengthening the capacity of key institutions and partners to address MSB issues and through increasing co-operation and coordination between stakeholders (two Outputs).*

***Outcome 3: Content and tools to enhance flyway friendly practice developed, delivered, and mainstreamed effectively into sector processes and programmes***

*Regional and nationally-based activities will provide high quality technical materials to be integrated into existing vehicles of change management (reform processes, institutional and sectoral strengthening processes) to achieve the desired changes (a single Output).*

***Outcome 4: Learning, evaluation and adaptive management increased***

*Management procedures adopted at all levels of the project (three Outputs).*

1. The last Outcome (Outcome 4) might be considered a component of project management *per se,* and not an outcome in itself. This point is important because while the GEF will approve projects with a management component, it is not results based management best practice to include an outcome for such a component in a project log frame. Management actions are activities within the project to steer the project towards its desired goals. However, if management structures have been influenced at national / regional levels as part of the intervention, and these structures are beyond the direct and immediate control of the project (and likely to be sustained post project), this can be considered by the evaluator as a legitimate outcome of the project. In this instance the establishment of the RFF, its governance framework and clear roles and responsibilities post project indicate that Outcome 4 is indeed a valid outcome and an integral component of the project’s overall long-term strategy. Therefore the MTR considers the role of the RFF as pivotal. Further, this role will be examined in detail and in relation to the project execution *and* the post project purpose of the RFF.

**3 Findings**

**3.1 Project Design / Formulation**

1. This section examines the essential architecture of the project, both the operational aspects and the hypothesis underpinning the intervention, that is; the project’s strategy with which it is assumed will bring about a positive change and result in the conservation management of the flyway and MSBs. As the systems we seek to affect are so complex and unpredictable and invariably there is a high degree of uncertainty in any intervention, the MTR examines the project with the benefit of hindsight.

### 3.1.1 Analysis of LFM/Results Framework (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)

1. The Project Document, even in the revised version produced in 2011 which is a considerable improvement upon the (two) earlier versions including the one which was in use at the start of the project, is overly-complicated and at times, confusing. This is hardly surprising given that it was between the initial conceptual phase, the endorsement and project start-up, some ten years in the making. Thus it will have spanned more than: one GEF cycle, UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Adviser (RTA) and other changes in important personnel amongst the key partners, significant changes in participating countries circumstances, etc. All of these will, over a ten-year period, have likely impacted upon the project’s design. The MTR assumes that the protracted design phase led to a degree of “project fatigue” before the project had even started.
2. As sometimes happens with GEF projects, the design of the MSB project underestimated the complexity of the challenges and was overly optimistic in what might be achieved. In particular it overlooked the challenging multi-country aspect of project management arrangements, the projects governance, even though it clearly recognised that coordination, “governance” of the flyway was critical to improving its conservation status.
3. Therefore, in order to evaluate the MSB project it has been necessary to return to the original project design and attempt to reconstruct the project’s strategy. In doing this it becomes apparent that project’s strategy did provide a number of interesting ideas and when the inevitable “fluff”, that accompanies almost every Project Document, is stripped away there is a coherent strategy. The MTR has reconstructed the projects original strategy and identified a number of key points. The most critical was the original intention to execute the project through an NGO modality[[14]](#footnote-14). A network of NGOs (specifically the Birdlife Partners) is best able to overcome individual national agendas and interests which may not necessarily be aligned to the interests of the flyway *per se.* This was not driven by any individual agendas or ideological concerns but because of a number of clear advantages which best served both the execution of the project and coordination of conservation efforts along the flyway and therefore was in the best interest of the thirty-seven targeted species. These are:

* NGO involvement (coordination, management, advocacy, technical capacities, etc.) is a demonstrated model for bird conservation. While this model does not necessarily lend itself to other animal groups, it seems in most instances to work well for birds.
* Birdlife has a structure which can encompass the flyway in its entirety (Birdlife International) and still have representation at the national level (Birdlife Partners).
* Birdlife Partners in many countries along the flyway (with back-stopping from Birdlife International) hold considerable technical expertise.
* The model offers a number of efficiencies in project execution in particular by reducing the management and administration burden on the project which can provide cost-savings.
* The model provides the greatest flexibility for project interventions especially in relation to emerging flyway and individual country flyway issues.
* The model offers the greatest opportunities for post-project sustainability.

1. Much was made of the use of, what the Project Document described as “*double mainstreaming”*. “*Double mainstreaming*”[[15]](#footnote-15) is the process whereby migratory soaring bird conservation objectives are mainstreamed into the relevant threatening sector through a planned or existing reform process or project (the vehicle) targeting a related issue in the same sector[[16]](#footnote-16). In the 2009 Project Document this is further described as differing from other GEF approaches because it is using donor-funded projects as the *vehicles[[17]](#footnote-17).* On several occasions it was pointed out to the MTR that the term “*double mainstreaming”* and the use of planned or existing *vehicles* was nothing unique, indeed it is to a greater or lesser extent what any project intended to mainstream biodiversity might do. The MTR takes the view that there was little to differentiate “*double* mainstreaming” from conventional mainstreaming approaches which should whatever means available to it and notes that emphasis on “*double mainstreaming”*  created a high dependency on other donor-funded projects (including co-financing) but this risk was not identified. The term “*double mainstreaming”* appears to have largely disappeared from the project’s vocabulary. However, the term “*vehicle”* has persisted and is of some utility.
2. It is worth expending some time on the use of *vehicles* to drive the mainstreaming process because in some instances it has proved remarkably successful in isolating a discrete set of actors and a natural, collective focus which has allowed the project (both RFF and national-level) to drive the mainstreaming process. For example with wind energy in Egypt it has enabled the RFF to address larger strategic mainstreaming issues through international investment (e.g. the IFC and German Development Bank [KfW]) and at a national level through the environmental impact assessment regulatory framework and the statutory agency responsible for developing wind energy (the National Renewable Energy Agency [NREA]).
3. However, it has also proved to be a strategic weakness in the project’s design. While this does not undermine its’ (the use of *vehicles*) utility in a project, the risks of combining this approach with project cycle and assurance issues needs to be examined and clearly articulated.
4. The first point to make is that there are two functions of the Project Document and the LFM/SRF. The first function is to provide a framework for monitoring and evaluation, by describing the anticipated results of project interventions and tracking these through defined indicators it is possible to determine whether the project is having an impact, whether the projects assumptions are correct or there is need to re-examine the “hypothesis”. The second is a largely contractual function to ensure that the project does what it set out to do (against the GEF fund) and to ensure that there is not “*mission creep*”[[18]](#footnote-18). This second function is necessary to ensure that project partners use the GEF fund for the purpose it was intended for. Further, these contractual obligations are closely linked to co-financing. Therefore there is a strong incentive to achieve certainty in developing and endorsing the Project Document. The *vehicles* were associated with co-financing and have been used by participating countries since the start-up to leverage project funds thus creating a distorting effect on the project because firstly, many of the vehicles didn’t materialise; secondly and mostly related to the second half of the project, the availability of co-financing in some instances appears to be overriding the relevance to mainstreaming MSBs and the flyway.
5. The problem of attempting to achieve certainty with the *vehicles* during the design phase was that, due to delays, by the time the project started, of the six *vehicles* identified only Jordan remained. The remainder had either finished or had (e.g. in the case of Djibouti) fallen by the wayside and failed to materialize. Thus new *vehicles* had to be rapidly identified, the definition of a *vehicle* became less well-defined and the GEF fund had been allocated to each country depending on the number and size of the original vehicles and was thus, largely set in stone. That this was a significant risk was not recognized in the project’s risk matrix. This point is labored here because it will be necessary to make a number of significant changes (which might only be achieved under NGO execution modality) which are elaborated in Section 4 of this report, if the second half of the project is to build on the achievements thus far and come to a successful outcome.
6. The projects LFM/SRF itself has a number of weaknesses even with the changes made during the 2011 revision to the indicators. There are some larger strategic aspects to the indicators which are worth examining. These are likely due to the difficulties of containing a multi-country project in a single LFM/SRF and also the need to include sector indicators in addition to the overall project performance and strategic impact indicators and to account for these at a country-level as well as a flyway/project level.
7. In most instances the indicators could be simplified and reduced. In their current form they are, certainly at the outcome level, merely re-stating targets and therefore do not provide the strategic view of the project’s impact overall. This is a common issue with GEF LFM/RFSs and is likely a result of the demand for indicators to be SMART[[19]](#footnote-19). For example the “*annual application of GEF BD2 tracking tool shows increased scores throughout life of project*”. The GEF BD2 tracking tool is really a source of verification and not an indicator in itself. “*Increased scores throughout the life of the project*” is really a target, or indeed wishful thinking at the outset of the project. While this might seem to be arguing over angels dancing on the head of a pin[[20]](#footnote-20) in fact it is important because, in the end, the LFM/SRF was not easy to follow, it has too many indicators, makes it hard to correlate or cross-check factors to substantiate an indicator and largely overlooks any measurement (of progress and impact) of a critical aspect of the project’s intervention; the RFF.
8. The RFF is not measured in the objective indicators. It best described in outcome 3 but without any reasonable indicators to reflect its progress; positive or negative and as Section 2.6, para. 32 explains outcome 4 is permissible because of the inclusion of the RFF in the project but the indicators are targets or means of verification. Thus outcomes 3 and 4 might easily have been one outcome reflecting the coordination of the flyway, but, whether aggregated or disaggregated the indicators have little to offer by way of utility.
9. It is further noted that the Project Document describes a two tranche project suggesting that the second half of the project is dependent upon achieving a number of additional (to those in the log frame matrix [LFM]) targets which would act as triggers to release the second tranche of project funding. While the project’s LFM is extremely weak, the indicators are poor and it is at times confusing it remains the authoritative tool in a UNDP-GEF project to measure success or failure and thus determine whether a project should be prematurely closed or proceed to its natural conclusion. The project has met these triggers so this is not an issue. However, in the event that it had not, it should be made clear that the MTR would have measured success or failure based upon the LFM indicators no matter how dysfunctional.
10. The use of proxy indicators is dealt with in the Section 3.1.2 as this issue was identified as a specific risk.

### 3.1.2 Assumptions and Risks

1. The risks and assumptions as presented in the Project Document[[21]](#footnote-21) could, and indeed should, have been more clearly articulated. As is common with many GEF projects designed around the time there is no connection between *risk* and *hazard*, where the risk is the probability of an event happening and the hazard is the consequences of it happening. While the risk of an event taking place might be quite low the impact upon the project can be catastrophic and therefore, no matter how unlikely, it is important to have a “Plan B”.
2. Given the complexity of this project and the obvious delays in getting started the probability of the vehicles identified in the earlier versions of the Project Document either not materializing or even having finished by the project’s startup must have been quite high. As was the associated risk of government co-financing because this was closely linked to specific vehicles in each country. But this was never identified and remains a significant risk for the second half of the project if the GEF fund is assigned by vehicles and countries again.
3. Other risks identified in the Project Document are poorly developed and, in the opinion of the MTR relate to the management arrangements, project governance and the role of the RFF. The critical importance of the regional or, better-stated, flyway coordination was not specifically identified. However, there was always considerable opportunity for the project to fragment into individual country initiatives. Given the multi-country aspect and the somewhat haphazard management arrangements, that the project would hold together was not so much an *assumption* but rather a *leap of faith*. This could have, and should have, been foreseen and mitigated by specific instructions for the inception phase, providing a longer period for the inception phase and ensuring that the RFF was established before moving to the countries and the vehicles, thus establishing the primacy of the RFF in coordinating the project’s country specific interventions.
4. Lastly the risk of biological indicators not being able to detect changes resulting from project interventions was not a risk. It was a certainty and should have been addressed more clearly in the LFM/SRF rather than within the risk matrix. This is well-known with project interventions as they are short in duration and time bound whereas change at the ecosystem-level is much more complex and operates over much longer timeframes. Indeed the currently applied (by the UNDP Evaluation Office) Theory of Change describes this of processes but it much greater in GEF projects because of the ecological timeframes and complexity of these (e.g. the flyway) systems. While the project was correct to opt for proxy indicators there is a specific GEF tool[[22]](#footnote-22) which has some utility because it combines the process of understanding threats and threat reduction with a means to monitor the impact of interventions, furthermore it can be used at different scales and will combine a number of specific threats (which might be used as indicators) into an index figure thus simplifying the LFM/SRF and providing a proxy indicator derived from a clear methodology. Use of this tool might be considered in the second half of the project.

### 3.1.3 Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project design

1. It is hard to gauge to what extent lessons from other relevant projects were incorporated into the MSB project’s design. Mainstreaming projects were at the time of design, to a large extent on-going with few examples of best practice available. Furthermore, the MSB project is different in the sense that it is a multi-country project dealing with a very specific issue (e.g. MSBs) and a variety of different sectors (e.g. agriculture, energy, etc.). Certainly what few lessons were available were incorporated to some extent, or at least recognized if not actually addressed adequately in the design, for instance:

* An unusually long, ten-year, timeframe was allowed for the project recognizing that mainstreaming is a time-consuming process.
* The lack of capacity, or differing degrees of capacities, across the participating countries resulted in a two-tranche approach, which makes good sense although this appears to have been included in the triggers creating uncertainty over the second half of the project.
* Clearly the importance of the RFF was recognized and a response to lessons from other countries as a means to address the differing participating country capacities (mentioned above), the lack of empirical data and assumptions about soaring bird migration and the differing levels of participation which could be expected from participating countries. But this was not translated into the project cycle and largely ignored in establishing the management arrangements. So the lessons were noted, the mechanism was there to address the issues but it was not fully thought through. It is important that this issue is kept in context. It is a serious issue but one which is reoccurring in GEF projects with such a strategic and multi-country/stakeholder nature, therefore the MSB project should not be singled out for criticism in this respect, particularly as mechanisms have been put in place to address this weakness and continue to be addressed by the Implementing and Executing Partners.

### 3.1.4 Planned stakeholder participation

1. The stakeholder involvement plan has not been changed in the revised 2011 Project Document[[23]](#footnote-23). In common with many GEF project designs much was made in the Project Document of the PDF stages. In reality, at this scale (e.g. eleven countries and five sectors) the costs of having effective stakeholder participation are prohibitive and it is unlikely that the workshops carried out during the planning phase provide for anything other than a brief (and in all likelihood confusing) introduction of the project’s objectives. It would be very easy to see how at the national level thoughts would become focused on the *vehicles* and the difficult to grasp concepts of mainstreaming could easily be “lost in translation”.
2. What is clear is that whatever stakeholder participation arrangements were in place and any processes that had taken place during the design phase were of little utility once the project began and the role of the RFF, the principle *vehicle* for multi-stakeholder participation in the project, was critically diminished.
3. However, by late 2011 with the input of the Implementing Agency (UNDP Jordan), BirdLife International (the RFF Executing Agency) and the new PMU/RFF the role of the RFF in establishing effective participation is greatly enhanced. This is achieved through, *inter alia,* developing a coherent vision for the RFF and the flyway *per se*, “team building” with the various partners and countries, establishing an effective communications programme, providing relevant and targeted technical advice and generally giving direction to the project by revisiting the Project Document, extracting the good ideas and putting them into a coherent strategy. Arguably something that should have taken place during the inception phase. The MTR notes that much of this enhanced participation is attributable to individuals within these key partners (as such it is still very vulnerable) and will still have to be institutionalized through revised management arrangements and improved project/RFF governance.

### 3.1.5 Replication approach

1. This section examines to what degree project initiatives are taken up and transferred beyond the direct sphere of influence of the project its self. The very nature of mainstreaming requires that any intervention should be replicable at a much greater scale than the project intervention. It is clear that the MSB project recognizes this and also understands that a multi-faceted approach is critical to the success or failure of mainstreaming. This once again demonstrates the importance of the RFF (also the PMU during the project) supporting the country partners and why (despite some of the earlier difficulties) there is considerable merit in the project’s approach. Admittedly this has worked best through a vehicle (the case being Egypt and the wind-energy sector) where the project partner (in this instance the Nature Conservation Sector and the BirdLife Partner, the NCE) addressing MSB issues directly with Egypt’s NREA and the RFF addressing similar issues at a very strategic level through the IFC and KfW.
2. The two tranche approach will bring more countries into the project and expand the lessons from the first half (or tranche) of the project to these countries thus expanding the impact of the project. While this will create many challenges to the project, it is establishing the RFF and this will be nested within BirdLife International and the BirdLife Partners (where possible) there is considerable scope for replication. This is evident from the requests for technical advice from the RFF and the use of the website to disseminate guidelines (as they are developed) for the various sectors.
3. Already there are examples of the importance of an approach which addresses the flyway in its entirety and it can work. This expands beyond the length of the flyway to the northern breeding ranges of the MSBs. Following requests from the BirdLife Partner in Bulgaria which is establishing a Flyaway Action Plan (FAP) for the Balkan, Caucasian and Central Asian breeding populations of Egyptian vultures, *Neophron percnopterus*, the Sudanese Government installed insulated cables on a stretch of power line which had been identified as a major cause of vulture mortality following approaches from the RFF and, critically, the Sudanese project partner identified as a candidate BirdLife Partner.

### 3.1.6 UNDP comparative advantage

1. UNDP’s comparative advantage must be viewed through the complex nature of the MSB project and the difficulties it has encountered particularly related to the management arrangements and the original intention that this project should be executed through an international NGO.
2. On the one hand UNDPs country offices have been able to step in and support the national initiatives when the project foundered and in the case of Egypt, when the intended arrangements were simply not possible due to legal restrictions. This needs to be recognize and has been important in some instances where BirdLife Partners are either weak or none-existent.
3. However, this strong national identity and degree of autonomy may also have contributed to fragmenting the project (into discrete country initiatives) during the first half of its execution and diminishing the development of the RFF and the flyway scale interventions. While there are a number of other contributing factors to the challenges the RFF has faced this has undoubtedly contributed, albeit inadvertently, to undermining the RFF and resulted in some project-funded activities which might be domestically important but have little significance to the flyway and project objective *per se*.
4. What is clear is that UNDP also has considerable strengths, particularly with regards to monitoring and evaluation and its project assurance role. These have been evident in the way that UNDP Jordan as the intended Implementing Agency has continued to work closely with BirdLife International, brought in a substantive TA to examine the weaknesses in the management arrangements and appointed a strong PMU to take on the role of running the RFF, indeed this role is reflected in the ToR for the MTR which specifically require the management arrangements to be critically examined.

### 3.1.7 Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector

1. The Project Document links the MSB project to a number of other projects which have some relevance. But most of these had either ended by the time the MSB project started or offered little by way of mainstreaming MSB. Perhaps if the RFF had been established in advance of the specific country activities it might have had an opportunity to integrate more into these past and few current GEF initiatives but in the event this did not happen.
2. Interestingly an earlier version of the Project Document[[24]](#footnote-24) posted on the GEF website provides an example of the difficulties of developing these projects. Edits are provided marked in red and appear to show a desperate effort to link the MSB project with a UNEP-GEF project focusing on Siberian Cranes, wetlands and Asian flyways. One can only surmise that these attempts to meet criteria of a GEF Project Document might have distracted from some of the more important aspects of developing the management arrangements. The MTR has considerable sympathy with the project developers in this aspect and some of the unedited comments in the Project Document on the GEF website appear to indicate a degree of exasperation in trying to match the MSB with other projects.

### 3.1.8 Management arrangements

1. The current arrangements are largely the result of ambiguities in the original project design (the Project Document) and *ad hoc* arrangements in the different countries for a number of reasons dealt with elsewhere in this report but also, in part, to deal with the weaknesses in the Project Document arrangements. To some extent these arrangements have worked and were in all instances necessary and the best decision given the chaotic circumstances in the first two years of project execution.
2. However, these arrangements have resulted in inefficiencies as well as undermining one of the key outcomes of the MSB project, that is; the establishment of a MSB RFF. In summary, while the current arrangements have been useful in getting the project through a difficult period they do not best serve the overall project objective and the best interests of the flyway and MSBs *per se*.
3. Before further discussing the current management arrangements it is important to recognize that they have been entered into in good faith by all parties as a response to the original ambiguities and weaknesses in the Project Document and the misunderstanding over the “high risk” finding of the Capacity Assessment of BirdLife Middle East as the executing partner. Had this been applied to BirdLife International, the named executing agency or partner in the Project Document then there would have been a “low risk” rating because BirdLife International has in place its own systems and has a demonstrated track record as a GEF executing agency or partner.
4. While this has served a purpose and arguably at critical times it has “kept the project alive” and in many ways reflects the inevitable challenge of a multi-country project; they are far from ideal if the MSB project is to successfully achieve its outcomes and objective. Indeed, the MTR argues that, there are effectively two systems operating: one which is surface level, which is UNDP Jordan is the Implementing Agency and one that is reality, which is UNDP Jordan is Implementing Agency in Jordan and for the RFF but UNDP Lebanon and UNDP Egypt are Implementing Agencies within their respective countries. The MTR considers these arrangements to be unlike any it has encountered previously. The current management arrangements are characterised thus:

* **Project Implementation:** In theory UNDP Jordan is the Implementing Agency and is ultimately responsible for the GEF fund. In practice UNDP Egypt and UNDP Lebanon are acting *de facto* and likely *de jure* as the Implementing Agents for the MSB project in their respective countries. They report directly to the UNDP-GEF Regional Office (Bratislava) and not through UNDP Jordan. Therefore the *de facto* arrangements are:
  + UNDP Jordan has responsibility as an Implementing Agency for the Jordanian component, which is the national activities and, importantly, for the RFF.
  + UNDP Lebanon has responsibility as an Implementing Agency for the Lebanese component, which is the national activities.
  + UNDP Egypt has responsibility as an Implementing Agency for the Egyptian component, which is the national activities.

However, there is only one PIR produced for the project, by the RFF. BirdLife (through the RFF) is responsible for bringing this together, relying in part on the contribution from the country components. In fact it could be argued that BirdLife is accountable for the delivery of the whole project to UNDP-GEF, but has in effect responsibility for executing only part of it. In the febrile world of project implementation and execution this is indeed a risky situation for BirdLife leaving the organisation very vulnerable.

* **Project Execution:** There are two aspects to the projects execution; firstly with the execution of the RFF and secondly with the execution of the national activities (e.g. the vehicles):
  + **The RFF** and regional coordination component is through NGO execution, namely through Birdlife International with the RFF acting as the PMU for the entire project (except that it is not). The RFF/PMU has a Steering Committee comprised of UNDP Jordan, Ministry of Environment (Jordan), a representative from the African Birdlife Partnership, a representative from the Birdlife Middle east Partnership, senior programme manager-Flyways at Birdlife International, Raptor MoU Agreement Representative and the RFF Coordinator and Secretary. The RFF/PMU and Birdlife International report and account directly to the Implementing Agency (UNDP Jordan).
  + **Jordan** has national NGO execution through the national Birdlife Partner, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). There is a national Steering Committee consisting of UNDP Jordan, RFF Coordinator, national Project Manager, and national Birdlife Partner (RSCN), representative from the Ministry of Environment, representative from the Ministry of Agriculture, a representative from the Universities, representative from the Royal Rangers, representative from the Jordan Valley Authority (Under the Ministry of Water and Irrigation) and a representative from the Arab Army of Jordan. However, the national partner (RSCN) reports directly to UNDP Jordan and not to the PMU/RFF[[25]](#footnote-25). In this instance RSCN has been largely responsible for the national activities.
  + **Egypt** has national execution through the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) with a national PMU nested in the Nature Conservation Sector (NCS) which reports and accounts directly to UNDP Egypt. In this instance the PMU has been largely responsible for the national activities and has formed a strong and effective partnership with the national Birdlife Partner, the Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE). The RFF Coordinator has a position on the national Steering Committee which is composed of UNDP Egypt, national Project Manager, Birdlife Partner (NCE), three representatives from the EEAA, National Renewable Energy Authority (NREA) and the Tourism Development Authority (TDA). However, the PMU reports and accounts directly to UNDP Egypt. It is noted that these arrangements are perhaps the only arrangements because of the restrictions on Egyptian NGOs and in the event the collaboration between the PMU and the national Birdlife Partner are exemplary.
  + **Lebanon** has national execution through the Ministry of Environment with a PMU based in the Ministry. The PMU reports directly to UNDP Lebanon and there is a national Steering Committee comprised of UNDP Lebanon, national Project Manager, Ministry of Environment, Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and RFF Coordinator. Notably the Birdlife Partner, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL), is not included in the Steering Committee. A waiver has been signed to allow the national Birdlife Partner (SPNL) to provide certain technical services to the project without the need for a competitive tendering process. The national Birdlife Partner has largely been responsible for providing the technical expertise to the PMU (as reflected in the PIRs).

1. Under the current arrangements there are a number of weaknesses and inefficiencies. These can be characterised as:

* Effectively four projects operating within one project.
* Additional reporting and accounting requirements within the project.
* Undermining the role and function of the RFF.
* Reduced likelihood of post project sustainability.
* Capture of project resources for purposes weakly related to the projects focus (e.g. the MSBs).
* National interests can override the larger strategic interests of the flyway *per se.* Inevitably this results in some activities having little impact on the flyway.

1. Paradoxically, in Egypt where NGO execution is almost impossible due to legal restrictions these arrangements have worked well. By way of example the national project manager in Egypt and the RFF has provided strategic mainstreaming through the Climate Investment Fund (CIF) and in particular with KfW (German Development Bank). The project has entered into a partnership with the Birdlife Partner, the Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE) mainstreaming within civil society and the PMU and Birdlife Partner have affected mainstreaming on many levels with the National Renewable Energy Agency (NREA) to effect mainstreaming of MSBs in the rapidly emerging wind-energy sector and Birdlife International has provided critical technical backstopping and mentoring to the PMU and Birdlife Partner. All of this has been ably supported by UNDP Egypt and facilitated by considerable trust between the partners which has allowed the rules to be used to their fullest positive effect to achieve the projects purpose.
2. However, in Lebanon the execution was through the Ministry of Environment (ME) and the national BirdLife Partner was subcontracted to carry out various technical tasks. These arrangements were entered into at the start of the project because the national *vehicles* were no longer available and it was not possible to reach an agreement between UNDP, the GEF Operational Focal Point, the BirdLife Partner (SPNL), and the RFF. To be clear, the project intervention in Lebanon has been important and innovative. Engaging with hunters, developing a regulatory framework for responsible hunting is certainly within the remit of a mainstreaming intervention and has direct linkages to the MSBs. Furthermore, in the opinion of the MTR, it is a reasonable approach combining elements of sustainable use with prohibition of use of species whose ecology cannot support it. This is likely to have the greatest impact upon MSBs, although it is a long and time consuming process and will present many challenges in the future, it is still mainstreaming.
3. The MTR expresses concerns, however, over the sustainability of the mainstreaming effort. The PMU currently nested in the ME is very different from the BirdLife Partner nested in the larger BirdLife Partnership envisaged in the Project Document. As such the MTRs concerns are related to the post project sustainability because the development of responsible hunting systems is likely to extend beyond the life of the project whereas the current PMU will likely end with the closure of the MSB project in five years’ time.
4. In Jordan, as described above, another set of project management arrangements exists. In this instance the BirdLife Partner reports directly to the UNDP Jordan. While the RFF has some influence over activities it still weakens its authority and does not fully support the vision of a RFF coordinating the flyway in its entirety and supported by the global BirdLife International framework. Under these conditions much is left to *goodwill.* *Goodwill* is a prerequisite of any project execution but it is unlikely to have much currency when there is an over-riding national or partner interest. In this instance it may well manifest itself in the second half of the project if the BirdLife Partner’s interests lie in developing an ecotourism *vehicle* whereas there is a pressing case to use the GEF funds to mainstream MSBs into the emerging wind-energy sector.

**3.2 Project Implementation**

### 3.2.1 Adaptive management

1. In order to understand the adaptive management processes which have taken place within the project in a meaningful way it is necessary to consider the project in three phases. The first phase being the initial, approximately, two years, the second phase starts from the engagement of the external TA to review management arrangements and installing the new PMU in the RFF. The third phase is one which is about to begin and will follow on from the MTR and the Management Response to the recommendations contained in Section 4 of this report.
2. Further, a number of factors, related to the way the project was set up, have constrained the projects adaptive management and it is necessary to examine these in some detail in order that they are not repeated in the second half.
3. There are a number of critical points in any project cycle when radical adaptive adjustments can be made. The first of these is the inception phase. Section 2 of this report has already touched on the issue of the inception phase, however, it is important to reiterate that it failed to provide the substantive and critical analysis necessary to really challenge the project. Furthermore, it appears to have lacked the confidence and authority to address the challenges facing the project at the time (e.g. the changes in circumstances relating to vehicles, the original implementation and execution arrangements and the primacy of the RFF in coordinating the project and the flyway *per se*).
4. The resulting arrangements lends more to project *expedience* than to adaptive management with the fragmented implementation and execution arrangements. While the MTR has stressed that these were entered into with the best intentions of keeping the project going, they were further compounded by the financing arrangements which allocated the GEF fund to countries based upon the vehicles identified in the Project Document even though, in all but one instance, these vehicles no longer existed and one of the countries, Djibouti, was no longer in the first tranche of the project. An example of this lack of adaptive management can be seen in the project’s LFM/SRF which retained indicators specific to non-existent vehicles right up until the new PMU revised the Project Document in early 2012[[26]](#footnote-26). All these factors have had a profound effect upon the project causing it to drift in the initial years. While it might have appeared from the national perspectives to be going well, the reality was that it was not achieving the strategic objective.
5. However, in August 2009 the first signs of the Implementing Agency asserting its project assurance role appear with the review of the project’s management arrangements and the financing arrangements to the regional execution. But by the time this is carried out the PMU has mostly resigned and it is not until September 2011 (some thirty-three months after starting) that a new and substantive PMU is engaged to drive the project’s governance. This last point is critical because a multi-country, multi-stakeholder, complex and highly strategic project such as the MSB project has to have an effective leadership and governance structure. It is clearly recognized that each country has a degree of autonomy and that the participating countries will have different priorities and interests in the flyway and this has to be respected. However, if these interests differ significantly from the project’s objectives; then they cannot be financed with the GEF fund.
6. Therefore it is imperative that the RFF has in place broadly agreed flyway policies, common flyway/MSB priorities, broad representation of the members and an effective executive which can take decisions with some form of oversight (during the project’s lifetime this would be the regional SC and Project Board [PB]).
7. In late 2011 signs of such a structure begin to appear largely driven by the projects overall Implementing Agency and the regional Executing Agency. However, with the current arrangements there are four identifiable executives (points at which far-reaching decisions can be made affecting the project’s outcomes) within the project.
8. Therefore, the MTR could conclude that, despite the extraordinary progress the project has made in recent years, these arrangements rely too heavily upon goodwill and create a significant vulnerability. So much so that it puts in question the second half of the project under existing management conditions.
9. This brings us to the third phase of adaptive management which is scheduled to take part following the MTR. This phase will need to reinstate the RFF nested within the institutional structure of BirdLife International[[27]](#footnote-27) as the primary coordinating body, provide it with effective executive powers and authority over the GEF fund and adapt the manner in which the GEF fund is distributed according to an agreed RFF strategy. To be clear, while BirdLife essentially provides a safe home for the RFF because of the organizations specific governance structure the RFF still “belongs” to the flyway member countries.
10. Having delivered this difficult message it is also important for the MTR to recognize that at the country level there have been some interesting instances of adaptive management taking place, or if not adaptive management then seizing opportunities as they have arisen. Both Jordan and Lebanon have engaged with the issue of hunting adapting their approaches and taking advantage of opportunities as they have arisen and dealing with a complex and challenging issue, particularly so for bird conservation. Egypt provides a very interesting example with the wind energy sector, methodically working through problems to achieve an optimal solution and the RFF has taken advantage of emerging opportunities in a number of countries (an example already provided in this report is in Sudan relating to the insulation of power lines).

### 3.2.2 Partnership arrangements (with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region)

1. Given that the original project design envisaged a project (and a flyway) coordinated through the BirdLife Partners across eleven countries the partnership arrangements were, and remain, critical to the successful outcome of the project. It has already been established that these were considerably undermined during the first three years of the project but they are being re-established to some extent under the new arrangements.
2. However the MTR considers the project in its current state to be forging effective partnership arrangements. Much of this is due to individuals presently across the project taking a coalition-building attitude and forging these linkages which has become a notable feature of the MSB project and shows promise for the remaining half of the project and beyond. With a project as far reaching and complex as the MSB project it is not possible to list all of these arrangements, but they involve non-governmental organizations, civil society, statutory agencies and institutions and the private sector and para-statal organizations. These partnerships are time-consuming, they require considerable efforts on behalf of individuals within the project, they can be costly to establish (in terms of meetings, workshops, materials, etc.) but they remain a *bona fide* activity of the project.
3. Section 3.1.8 has already examined the importance of these partnership arrangements to the longer term goals of the project in particular the importance of the BirdLife International Partners. There is a clear rationale in developing this flyway-wide network through the project and using the GEF fund with clear linkages to Global Environmental Benefits. However, it is also important to recognize that there are a number of vulnerabilities. Some of these vulnerabilities are already recognized in the project’s design (e.g. the varying capacities of BirdLife Partners) and there are strategies to address them.
4. Of greater concern to the MTR is the considerable autonomy which BirdLife Partners have from the larger BirdLife International. While BirdLife Partners can, and should be, free to pursue national priorities and agendas, unless these are aligned with the priorities of the flyway and MSBs (that is the RFF strategic policy) and there are clear beneficial linkages to MSB conservation status, GEF funds should not be used. Therefore the RFF will have to have considerable powers to withhold project funding and, given that there is a limited time to spend the GEF fund, reallocate these funds if necessary.

### 3.2.3 Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management

1. There are a number of monitoring and evaluation activities which have provided feedback although arguably the greatest challenge to the project, the management arrangements, was glaringly obvious.
2. The first of these was the inception phase which failed to pick up these issues and translate them into anything resembling adaptive management. The project’s LFM/SRF would also have been of little utility in the first years because it contained indicators related to specific vehicles. Furthermore, the critical issue of the RFF (its development progress and effectiveness) is not represented by any indicators but it must be noted that it triggered a management response to review the management arrangements in August 2009. However, the Project Implementation Reports (PIR) do provide a reliable account of the projects performance against the indicators (despite their weaknesses). Once again, in the first three years they are of little value but with the new PMU installed in the RFF there is a noticeable improvement with appropriate management responses. An interesting feature of the MSB project has been its use of the PIRs to record activities, progress and failures but importantly there has been a depth of analysis and appropriate management response which has been coordinated between Implementing Agency, regional Executing Agency and the PMU/RFF and where necessary the national execution partners.
3. However, it remains that all three countries prepare PIRs separately which are reported back to the RFF. The RFF using the Review Meeting process and considerable one-to-one discussions then prepares one PIR that is officially submitted on behalf of the project. In fact, this process was one of the few opportunities for this project to act again as one. However, it is not clear exactly what would take place if a national response differed from an RFF response to a specific issue, so far this has not happened. This situation is likely to become more complicated with the inclusion of additional countries in the second half of the project.

### 3.2.4 Project Finance

#### 3.2.4.1 Project Budget

1. The project has reported on financial matters and accounted for funds and these are reported in Table 1. This provides a reasonable account of the projects financing. It shows a variation on the predicted spending of - 35 per cent. However, these figures are up to the first quarter of 2014 and not until the completion of the first half of the project and therefore can be considered to be on reasonably on track.

### Table 1: Project financing

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | **project Document** | **MTR** | **% of total** | **Variation** | **2008** | **2009** | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** |
| **1** | **1,501,952** | **1,396,241** | **93.0%** | **-7%** | **17,006** | **176,922** | **112,459** | **230,385** | **461,636** | **343,850** | **53,981** |
| **2** | **1,172,070** | **567,291** | **48.4%** | **-52%** | **18,485** | **38,737** | **1,950** | **34,316** | **223,730** | **248,548** | **1,521** |
| **3** | **2,615,669** | **1,342,125** | **51.3%** | **-49%** | **2,181** | **69,997** | **155,359** | **351,627** | **377,862** | **324,546** | **60,551** |
| **4** | **953,552** | **765,032** | **80.2%** | **-20%** | **12,312** | **34,768** | **1,740** | **241,477** | **217,891** | **213,748** | **43,094** |
| **TOTALS** | **6,243,243** | **4,070,690** | **65.2%** | **-35%** | **49,984** | **320,426** | **271,510** | **857,805** | **1,281,120** | **1,130,692** | **159,149** |

1. However when this is disaggregated by country there are considerable variations in budget execution by outcome. Admittedly under the current management arrangements this would be hard to detect because each country was reporting individually, at most it would have been a laborious task which would have been masked by the aggregated budget reporting. In the event this has not adversely affected the project however, this would need to be addressed in the second half of the project through a single budget report with countries reporting directly to the Implementing Agency through the Executing Agency. The MTR reports on the entire project, where there is an acceptable under-spend, but if it were to report on the countries individually then there is considerable variance across the four outcomes.

#### 3.2.4.2 Co-financing

1. The co-financing as expressed in the original Project Document was largely linked to the *vehicles* and the proposed Executing Agency (BirdLife International). However, most of these vehicles did not materialize. There is no mention of co-financing in the Inception Report except in the LFM/SRF. Because the GEF fund was linked to *vehicles* and these *vehicles* were country specific, the GEF allocation remained the same for each country despite the lack of any tangible co-financing.
2. The original (2009) Project Document[[28]](#footnote-28) is confusing and states:

*“In response to the STAP Expert review an additional table is provided to demonstrate the project’s benefits and summarise costs. The baseline is being funded by the double mainstreaming vehicles. However, when working in collaboration with the Soaring Birds project some of the actions of the double mainstreaming vehicles will result in support for global benefits. These are termed “shared benefits” and represent realigned baseline. In this regard, they are included as co-financing.*

*The project has used a very conservative estimation of incremental costs and co-financing. It could be argued that the entire cost of the double mainstreaming vehicles could be included as co-financing because under the double mainstreaming approach these vehicles are essential to the achievement of the GEF objective. However, only the realigned baseline components of the vehicles have been included as co-financing. Similarly, not all of the shared benefits have been counted as incremental costs. Only $3,065,739 of the $4,845,204 has been counted. This is because the remaining $1,779,465 shared benefits would accrue regardless of whether the GEF funding happens or not*”.

1. The table (mentioned above) is not reproduced here because it only adds to the confusion created by the text. By any measure in the first year of the project the co-financing was a serious issue with only Jordan retaining its original co-financing, the majority of which came from the BirdLife Partner and national Executing Agency. The total project budget, as expressed in the Project Document is US$ 10,733,475 of which US$ 6, 243,475 was the GEF fund and US$ 4, 490, 232 was to be co-financed.
2. Despite this shortfall in co-financing at the project’s start the project has been able to rally and at the midterm of the project has leveraged a larger amount (US$ 5, 292, 292) of co-financing than was included in the original budget.

#### Table 1 Co-financing

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Country | Amount (US$) | Remarks |
| RFF | 1,951,301 | Considerable funds from the BirdLife Secretariat  Also includes US$ 12,942 for capacity building of Egyptian BirdLife Partner (NCE) in Egypt |
| Egypt | 1,596,853 | Mostly from NREA |
| Jordan | 960,074 | Mostly from national BirdLife Partner (RSCN) |
| Lebanon | 784,064 | Largest contribution from national BirdLife Partner (SPNL) and secondly Ministry of Environment |
| Total | 5,292,292 |  |

1. However, the MTR has some very real concerns over the future of the project and the distorting effect which co-financing might create during the second half. Firstly, the project design describes a two tranche project. The co-financing for the second tranche has yet to be secured and is dependent upon the project producing a second Project Document complete with co-financing commitments. By any measure this is an onerous task on any project. This project has had some significant challenges and it has made it through and is now progressing well. What is not clear to the MTR is whether the original co-financing amount (which was largely illusory given the non-performance of most of the vehicles) has to be matched in the second half of the project. If this is the case and co-financing and co-financing is again associated with vehicles then this will seriously affect the impact of the project.
2. The MTR argues that the project should not be viewed as a two tranche project. Rather it is one project with a secured budget. While the initial co-financing commitments have poorly performed this has been more than matched by the projects ability to leverage additional co-financing. Therefore it has demonstrated its ability to attract additional finance. Therefore, for the purpose of creating the greatest impact in mainstreaming MSBs into the five sectors the GEF fund should be assigned by sector and not matched to specific vehicles in countries. This would make the project more dynamic in its response to emerging threats and enable the RFF greater coordinating powers over the whole flyway.
3. The RFF itself is not just supported by the BirdLife International as the international Executing Agency/Partner, it is institutionally a part of BirdLife International which is an international organisation with the interests of the MSBs at the very heart of its decision-making process, and it can effectively transcend national boundaries, is transparent in its motivation and can be held accountable. BirdLife International has already commitment considerable resources to the RFF. Furthermore, BirdLife has provided a reasonable assurance that it will continue to support the RFF post project, indeed it is part of the organisational mandate. Therefore this amounts to considerable financial commitment already.
4. To have to go out and identify new sources of co-financing with agreements in hand before commencing the second phase at a critical stage of a project which already has a budget allocation from GEF, has a demonstrated track record of leveraging co-financing, already has assured commitments for the core costs of the RFF and above all else appears to be succeeding could prove a very real distraction, indeed it might easily weaken the project.
5. Currently, according to the triggers set out in the Project Document[[29]](#footnote-29) the BirdLife International must meet a cash co-financing commitment of 1:2 against the GEF fund.
6. The MTR argues that the project is working, it is developing a very interesting model, and the Implementing and Execution partners are challenging both the project and themselves and developing something which actually works. There is, as much as can be in this uncertain world, a guarantee of financial support from the international Executing Agency/Partner to the RFF both within the project and beyond its closure. Demanding such an onerous cash commitment at this delicate point in the projects cycle in order to continue something which is clearly succeeding seems particularly harsh and risky. The MTR would argue that the cash commitment should be lessened and balanced by in-kind contributions in recognition that BirdLife International will continue supporting the RFF post project.

### 3.2.4 Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation

1. The project’s monitoring and evaluation design at the start of the project was inadequate. While the arrangements were standard monitoring and evaluation arrangements[[30]](#footnote-30) there were significant deficiencies in the main monitoring and evaluation tool, the LFM/SRF. The inclusion of vehicle specific indicators (which had not materialized) and the absence of any indicators to measure the progress in developing the RFF and its effectiveness were a major shortcoming which was not addressed in the inception phase.
2. The adjustments made during the revision of the Project Document in 2013 have significantly improved the project’s LFM/SRF however, the RFF is still not adequately reflected in it.
3. Based upon the 2009 LFM/SRF this would be considered unsatisfactory however, considering the adjustments made in 2013 it is reasonable to state that the arrangements are **Moderately Satisfactory.**

### 3.2.5 UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation / execution coordination, and operational issues

1. These issues have already been dealt with at length throughout the body of this report because they have had such a profound impact upon the project. However, it is not simply a task of discriminating between satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Quite clearly the early years of the project were less than satisfactory, indeed they deviated considerably from the organizational and operational arrangements envisaged in the Project Document and brought the project close to a point of collapse, as reflected in the earlier PIRs in 2010 - 2011. Neither should these issues be dismissed as mere weaknesses in the project’s implementation, execution, coordination and operation because they have considerable significance for the project’s outcomes and objective; not just because they adversely affected the vehicle[[31]](#footnote-31) for the projects outcomes and objective. These issues, establishing coordination along the flyway, developing a common vision for the flyway’s future, solving problems as they arise, addressing an adaptive challenge (see Annex 8), over-riding national, institutional and organizational interests and priorities for the sake of the flyway are a crucial component of this project alongside the delivery of technical solutions to MSB threats. They are an integral part of the problem the project seeks to resolve.
2. Therefore the MTR must consider the entire period of the project lifetime thus far. It must consider the manner in which the individual players have responded to these challenges and made changes to the project’s organizational and operational structure. When viewed from this perspective it is possible to consider the early review of the project’s management arrangements, changes to the means of financial disbursement, engagement of an effective PMU to staff the RFF and this current (as set out in the MTR ToR) challenging of the *status quo*. All of which indicates that the implementation, execution, coordination and operation of the project is becoming more effective and efficient and crucially, is addressing the challenge of getting eleven components of the flyway to work together to improve the conservation status of the MSBs.
3. On this basis the MTR state with a high degree of confidence that, despite the earlier unsatisfactory circumstances these arrangements are now (based upon the direction they are moving in) **Satisfactory** and represent a tremendous effort by the project partners with regards to project assurance.
4. However, this assessment comes with an important caveat. The organizational arrangements of the MSB have a significant bearing on the sustainability of the outcomes and objective post-project due to the strategic importance of the RFF. The position of the RFF is still far from secure. Elements of the project still indicate that the strategic mainstreaming approach of the RFF and its coordinating role is not clearly understood by all project partners and there is a real risk that at a national level activities could default to “project mode”. That is a number of “good things” could be achieved but the linkages to MSBs and in particular mainstreaming would be tenuous. If this were the case there is a real risk that the project could complete the second half as “discrete country projects” and the Final Evaluator would note that it had achieved a lot of “good things” but that these would not add up to a coherent strategy to safeguard the conservation status of the MSBs and the flyway in its entirety.

**3.3 Project Results**

### 3.3.1 Overall results (attainment of objectives)

1. Despite the earlier difficulties faced by the project it is now back on track and largely producing tangible results which are clearly mainstreaming the conservation of MSBs and the overall management of the flyway into national policy and regulatory frameworks, regional policy, the private sector and civil society in the five sectors identified as creating the principle threats to MSBs, agriculture, energy, hunting, tourism and waste management (albeit with differing degrees of success across the different sectors). In some instances these are exemplary as is the brief case study provided in Section 3.1.8 of this report.
2. The project has produced a large number of relevant outputs (e.g. policies, Laws, amendments to laws, MoUs and other agreements, etc.) and the capacities of local agencies and BirdLife Partners to drive the mainstreaming of MSBs has been developed (albeit to varying degrees but this was always recognized a part of the challenge).
3. The area of the flyway posing a threat to MSBs has been affected positively. While it is not clear whether it has been reduced because new threats maybe emerging and new areas (e.g. wind farms are being developed) but what is clear is that interventions to protect MSBs are being rolled out over significant areas.
4. Engaging with civil society on issues such as hunting represents a significant step and one most likely to achieve lasting results because it integrates MSBs with hunters long term interests although it should be noted that the project’s achievements thus far represent the first few positive steps on what will be a very long journey.
5. In many instances the project is developing an effective mix of advocacy and high quality technical guidance (e.g. guidelines to support environmental impact assessments, etc.).
6. In almost every instances there have been significant increases over the baselines as measured by the LFM/SRF indicators and targets (see Annex 6).
7. Therefore the progress towards results is considered a very good **Satisfactory** and the MTR can predict with some confidence that if corrections are made to the project prior to the second half taking place these might easily be highly satisfactory in the final evaluation. However, it is worth sounding a word of caution. The factors which have made this possible are still heavily dependent upon individuals and the individual relationships throughout the project. It is vital to the successful outcome of the project in approximately five years’ time that these informal factors are institutionalized within the project’s organizational structure. Section 4 of this report provides a number of recommendations in order to achieve this.

### 3.3.2 Relevance

1. The project’s objective was, and remains, highly **Relevant**. The Project Document develops a strong argument for a GEF intervention. The project is addressing a very specific and critical threat to thirty-seven species of high conservation value and supporting conservation efforts in the northern and southern ends of the flyway. The approach and objectives of the project are clearly aligned with the GEF Strategic Priority BD2 *Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Production Landscapes and Sectors.* Furthermore it is engaging with a number of issues, most notably, energy, agriculture, tourism and waste management that are having a growing impact on biodiversity in the region as a whole and not just along the flyway.

### 3.3.3 Effectiveness & Efficiency

1. The MSB project is certainly proving very effective. While this effectiveness is not equally spread across all five sectors with which it is engaging with it is still effective. These disparities are not necessarily due to project effort or allocation of resources but rather reflect the ease with which a sector responds to mainstreaming. For instance the energy sector appears to lend itself to mainstreaming (not to take away from the tremendous efforts of the project). The sector is an emerging and dynamic one, it is relatively contained, wind energy is in itself marketed as environmentally friendly and thus perhaps more open to conservation arguments, the impact upon the birds is very pronounced and visual and there are available technical solutions in many instances and if these are built into the development the costs are relatively low and to a large extent conservation measures can be built into the pricing structure and paid for through energy production. Furthermore, pressure from investors, in many instances international donors or financiers with their own environmental policies can be a driving force. This needs to be contrasted with, for instance, waste management where remedial measures might have to be financed from scarce public funds or agricultural development where the consumers are much removed from the source of production and the motivation is to keep production high and costs low.
2. Each sector requires slightly different and nuanced approaches but so far the project is proving to be effective.
3. The NGO execution modality has only been partly tested. At the flyway level there is clear evidence that it is effective (support to RFF, high quality technical assistance, a network of national partners and a strong indication that this will be more sustainable post project project). However, the MTR has a number of reservations, related to the effectiveness of the BirdLife Partners and, to be fair, these might also apply in the case of countries without BirdLife Partners (e.g. tranche II countries) that their own priorities may over-ride the larger flyway (RFF) priorities.
4. Due to the present management arrangements this remains, to some extent, untested. The MTR cautiously concludes that this approach is effective but much will depend upon what reforms are put in place *vis-a-vis* the project management arrangements and GEF fund disbursement.
5. However, overall the MTR concludes that this has been satisfactory and the project is **effective** and rated **Satisfactory.**
6. The efficiency of the project relates to A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results. Section 3.1.8 has already discussed the implementation and execution arrangements and the inefficiencies inherent in having these complicated arrangements where there is not necessarily a pressing case to do so (e.g. as in the case of Egypt where the arrangements are the only ones legally possible). However, it has also been discussed in the same section that these arrangements were entered into with the best interests of the project at the time, but when it comes to efficiency, the MTR cannot ignore issues such as occur in Lebanon where a national PMU is in place and subcontracting to the BirdLife Partner many of the technical aspects of the project even though this may have been necessary at the time.
7. However, it remains that since late 2011 the project has been achieving good results, in all three principle countries and across the flyway *per se.* Investment of GEF and partner funds in developing sectoral guidelines, advocacy at different levels within a sector and the delivery of sound technical support suggest that the project has a certain economy and is putting the GEF fund to proper and efficient use. On this basis and not disregarding the shortcomings the project can be judged to have been **efficient** and rated **Satisfactory**.However, this view would unlikely be shared by the final evaluator if the opportunity to improve the efficiency of the project presented by the management response to the MTR does not address the issues raised by the evaluation with particular regard to the management arrangements.

### 3.3.4 Country ownership

1. There is clearly country ownership of the project. This was demonstrated by the willingness of the three primary countries to take control of their own execution arrangements. While this has in some ways supported the project it has also distracted from the overall objectives. Mainstreaming MSB conservation and the future of the flyway itself is only as strong as the weakest link in the chain of eleven countries. The project’s strategy clearly articulated a non-governmental network along the flyway and coordinated by the RFF, this was, and remains, very clearly a project which transcends national interests. Unless we completely disagree with the project’s strategy this must be the first purpose of the GEF funded project. If we disagree with the strategy in its entirety then project closure following the MTR would be the best policy.
2. It maybe that be that this has been at the heart of the earlier problems that beset the project and it is why the MTR has mostly evaluated the project on where it is now and focused less on the problems which affected the project in the early years. The first half of the project may have been spent in overcoming the immediate national ownership issues and what is emerging now is a project which, in time, translate into a flyway-MSB focused group of eleven countries coordinated through the RFF. Country ownership in this instance is of less importance than ownership of the RFF.

### 3.3.5 Mainstreaming

1. Mainstreaming of MSBs and the flyway conservation needs is taking place. In some instances (e.g. with hunting and agriculture) it is likely to be a slow and ongoing process requiring continued engagement during the life of the project and most likely beyond. In other sectors (e.g. wind energy) it can move very quickly. Much of this is due to the nature of the sector (as discussed in Section 3.3.3) with some sectors such as energy lending themselves to the mainstreaming process very well, while others require much longer timeframes (a point noted in the Project Document and the rationale for a ten-year project timescale).
2. Since the end of 2011 the RFF has set out to define project (and flyway) policies and to develop a common understanding within the flyway partners of what exactly is meant by mainstreaming. This is important and once again highlights the pivotal role of the RFF and the BirdLife International Partner in developing these capacities and a common purpose to the project and its post-project coordination.
3. This last point is very important because the MTR is not convinced, as is common with many GEF projects, that the process of mainstreaming is fully understood at all levels within the project. Wind energy and ecotourism provide the best example of this. In Egypt MSBs appear to have been mainstreamed into the sector so thoroughly that the first thing an investor does when considering a new wind farm is to reach for the MSB sensitivity map and immediately think two years ahead due to the EIA requirements. Therefore flyway considerations are factored into the planning process from the very outset and can (although the mitigation costs from the planning phase are not high) even be factored into tariff setting. Understanding the sector is critical, as has been shown in Jordan where mitigation costs are of less concern to the sector; but the time required to carry out sufficient surveillance and monitoring have serious implications on investment and are a major concern to developers.
4. Of the vehicles being developed for the second half of the project, not all provide a convincing case for mainstreaming MSBs. The choice of eco-tourism, while it has elements of mainstreaming through sustainable use, might appear to be avoiding more pressing issues such as hunting and wind energy or even mass tourism itself. The project is finding that mainstreaming is not easy. It requires a broad consensus across multiple stakeholders, making hard choices and trade-offs between immediate development imperatives and longer term sustainability in the broadest sense.
5. This only serves to highlight the importance of the RFF in mainstreaming and its emerging function as a resource for the country initiatives and a supporting *interlocutor* at a more strategic level with international investment vehicles and regional policy initiatives.

### 3.3.6 Sustainability

1. The midterm review considers sustainability from three aspects as well as the overall likelihood of the project’s outcomes being sustainable. As with most aspects of this project the MTR has had to consider the confusing period up until the end of 2011, the “trajectory” of the project since these important changes were made (e.g. financial arrangements to BirdLife International, recruiting the new PMU, etc.) and what the project intends to next in the immediate and distant future (e.g. drafting a substantially revised Project Document, bringing more countries on board as full partners, etc.). To be clear, sustainability relates to the likelihood of the project’s outcomes and objectives continuing to have an impact upon the conservation status of the flyway and the thirty-seven species of MSBs once the GEF project has closed in approximately five years’ time.

#### 3.3.6.1 Financial resources

1. The mainstreaming process is to some extent designed to internalize the costs and benefits of conserving MSBs within each sector thus suggesting a degree of financial sustainability in the outcomes. For instance in the tourism sector there are reasonable arguments to support market-based approaches utilizing a “*flyway friendly”* branding scheme; in the energy sector the requirements of investors will in most instances drive the requirements to mitigate project developments against harmful impacts upon the flyway and in the hunting sector, although this is a very distant goal, it is ultimately in the best interests of hunters to organize themselves and manage the resources wisely, if not for the long term interests of the MSBs then as a defense against a rising anti-hunting lobby. Therefore within these sectors financial sustainability is likely. However, waste management and agriculture present more problematic cases and are it is harder to finance the necessary reforms and internalize these.
2. It is also unlikely that these reforms will have fully taken effect by the end of the current project. But this is not a problem if, according to the *Theory of Change[[32]](#footnote-32)* which the UNDP Evaluation Office applies to a project, we consider that the project has reached an *Intermediate State* and the impacts will likely be realized fully long after the project has ended.
3. However, this analysis falls down if we consider that the flyway *per se* is at the heart of conserving the MSBs. This requires a larger *supranational* coordinating body which the project’s strategy has identified for a number of good reasons as the RFF.
4. Therefore the financial viability of the RFF becomes critical and cross-cutting amongst our measures of sustainability. One of the key aspects of the Project Document was to develop a quasi-commercial model for the RFF:

*“Sustainability of Flyway Facility – The Regional Flyway Facility will become a body for branding and if appropriate the certification of “flyway sensitive” services and products. It will be institutionalised within BirdLife International, based at BirdLife International’s Middle East Regional Office in Amman, and is expected to become self-sustaining upon termination of the project financially through charges for services to the private sector and government and donor-driven projects, as well as being part of BirdLife International”[[33]](#footnote-33).*

1. It is this “*self-sustaining”* through “*charges to the private sector and government*” which raise concern. Clearly it must be self-sustaining once the project ends but its sources of income need to be determined in the next half of the project through developing its fund-raising capacities and any notion of charging for services, given the current and dire state of the regional economy should be removed from the project’s strategy.
2. However, it is highly likely that BirdLife International will continue to materially support the RFF after project closure but its effectiveness would be greatly increased if it were capable of sourcing its own funds from various sources (other than on a quasi-commercial basis) therefore at the mid-term point of the project financial sustainability is considered as **Likely**.

#### 3.3.6.2 Socio-political sustainability

1. The socio-political sustainability of the project as outlined in the Project document names local and national participation, empowering local communities and building political will as the three factors contributing to the projects sustainability in this sphere. These are very reasonable arguments even though the flyway presents a challenging political environment.
2. In some instances civil society and nongovernmental organizations are not well-developed and recognized which is a weakness in the flyway network but one which can be overcome because the project does have a strategy in place to address this.
3. The very subject matter, migratory soaring birds, does help. They create a visual impact, many of the threats (as in the case of wind farms) are very visual and they can easily capture the public and political imagination. Furthermore, in most instances the flyway and MSB conservation issues are being mainstreamed into the existing or proposed national regulatory framework (e.g. EIAs for wind farms, hunting Laws in Lebanon, etc.). Therefore socio-political sustainability is considered **Likely**.

#### 3.3.6.3 Institutional framework and governance

1. The Project Document lists: Government commitment, Use of existing structures, Implementation by NGOs and CBOs, Increased capacity of stakeholders, Benefits of double mainstreaming, Sustainability of Flyway Facility, Continuing local community involvement and Knowledge management as contributing to the institutional framework and governance of the project and its outcomes after project closure.
2. All of these present a convincing argument but it is the current institutional and governance framework of the project and the RFF which is of most concern to the MTR. In its current state the RFF lacks the executive powers to influence the effective use of the GEF fund. The wise use of this fund in the next five years will largely determine the effectiveness of the RFF in the future. Therefore addressing these weaknesses in the institutional and governance structure are critical to the outcome and objective of the project. Despite the considerable efforts and the promising developments in the RFF in the past few years the MTR considers that in its present form sustainability is **Unlikely**.

#### 3.3.6.4 Environmental sustainability

1. Mainstreaming the conservation interests of the MSBs and flyway management issues into national policy and regulatory frameworks provides a strong argument for environmental sustainability. Furthermore, many of the effects of mainstreaming, if successful, such as waste management, reduction in pesticides use, reduction in environmental harm from tourism etc., have wider social and environmental benefits.
2. The project’s approach to hunting might be regarded in some quarters with suspicion because it is engaging with the hunting sector and arguably promoting hunting, albeit responsible hunting. The MTR does not share this view and would argue that the project’s approach is a pragmatic and sustainable one. Therefore the environmental sustainability of the project’s outcomes are considered **Likely**.

#### 3.3.6.5 Overall likelihood of sustainability

1. When it comes to sustainability the MTR is reporting on the current situation. Quite clearly the months following the MTR will be critical to the project because these will be used to develop a management response to the recommendations contained in this report and to drastically revise or even to rewrite the Project Document.
2. It has been repeatedly mentioned that the project has achieved a number of good things and that the developments with the RFF over the last (approximately) three years have been remarkable and there are some very promising examples of mainstreaming emanating from the project (e.g. renewable energy in Egypt). But these are all at risk if the project goes ahead with its present management arrangements unchanged. The role of the RFF will be diminished, many of the national activities will have only a small effect on mainstreaming MSBs and an opportunity to use the GEF fund (as it was intended) to establish flyway-wide coordination will have been reduced or indeed missed. On this basis alone the MTR considers that the overall likelihood of sustaining the outcomes and objective of the project are only **Moderately Likely** under the current management arrangements.

### 3.3.7 Impact

1. At the risk of repeating earlier statements the project is now having a significant impact upon mainstreaming MSB and flyway conservation issues into the five sectors identified as posing the greatest threats.
2. While the impact is not uniform across all the sectors this was to be expected and reflects differences in the sectors rather than effort by the project.

**4 Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons**

1. The MSB project is addressing a complex array of adaptive and technical challenges related to the conservation management of the Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway. Despite a number of flaws in the Project Document the initial strategy to have a NGO executed project utilizing BirdLife Partners where possible along the flyway was a good strategy. It was good for a number of reasons highlighted in Section 3.1.1 of this report but essentially it offered the greatest opportunity for achieving the outcomes and objective and sustaining the impact of the project after its closure.
2. However, this mode of project execution was not the one used following the project’s start up. This was due to a number of reasons some avoidable and some unavoidable. In the event, and also due to actions taken by the intended Implementing Agency and the NGO Executing Agency/Partner (at least for the RFF) the project was dragged back on track and has achieved a number of notable successes at the national level. The RFF is establishing very adequate systems and processes that suggest that the facility can and will function for the purposes set out in the Project Document, that of coordinating conservation efforts along the length of the flyway.
3. In many ways the RFF, with its emphasis on mainstreaming, is emerging as a very effective model for translating larger Conventions and regional agreements into conservation actions on the ground to address and reduce the threats to MSBs. The partnership arrangements, if allowed to develop, could provide an interesting and informative model for other, albeit few in number, projects because the flyway has its own specific characteristics and conservation challenges.
4. Everyone involved should be acutely aware that these successes have largely been down to the tremendous efforts of individuals within the project and at many levels and changes within the institutions and organizations supporting them. These efforts have got the project from a very shaky start to where it is now. However, they remain vulnerable because they are largely down to individual relationships. These need to be formalized and institutionalized in the project’s governance structure and management arrangements, without which the project remains extremely vulnerable.
5. Particular mention should be made of the RFF which has maintained contact and support with countries throughout the flyway regardless of their current security status. This is a very important aspect of the RFF and has not been without risk to personal safety on some occasions. This is not to suggest that the RFF is reckless in its approach but rather to acknowledge that the flyway straddles some very troubled countries and ordinary operational activities often take place under very difficult security, political and logistical conditions.
6. Egypt has had some notable successes. Although Egypt has not been able to achieve the intended full NGO national execution it has very effectively ensured that the this element of the project’s strategy has not been lost from the project by establishing an excellent partnership between statutory agencies, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector with UNDP providing effective project assurance.
7. This has been most effective in the renewable energy sector which is providing a “text-book” example of mainstreaming. Some considerable challenges lay ahead for Egypt in engaging with other sectors which don’t lend themselves so readily to mainstreaming such as waste management and the tourism sector but the project shows every indication of being able to rise to these challenges. To be clear, the project’s engagement with the wind energy sector is far from over. Wind energy is emerging as a very real threat to MSBs and it will require continued engagement of the project in order to fully mainstream MSBs into the sector.
8. Jordan received the smallest proportion of the GEF grant. While the national execution in Jordan is through the BirdLife Partner (the RSCN) it is reporting directly to UNDP Jordan and not BirdLife International. Jordan has made good progress with reforms to the hunting sector and enforcement of hunting regulations through a mix or regulatory mechanisms and civil society participation. In the second half of the project Jordan is proposing to focus on mainstreaming MSBs in the tourism sector, principally through the development of ecotourism.
9. The MTR has reservations about ecotourism and mainstreaming. While the arguments for sustainable use (e.g. MSB watching during the autumn and spring migrations) improving the conservation status of these birds are very sound there are more pressing threats to the flyway and MSBs from emerging issues such as wind energy and even the tourism sector *per se*.
10. Given these emerging threats it would seem that the best use of the GEF funds should be targeted as much as possible at the most urgent threat which is likely to have the greatest impact on the flyway.
11. Project execution in Lebanon has been through Support to National Implementation which means the project has been executed through UNDP[[34]](#footnote-34). There have been some notable successes with the Law regarding hunting. Hunting is clearly the most pressing threat in Lebanon and it is very proper that this should have been the focus of GEF funds.
12. However, the task is far from over. Establishing responsible or sustainable hunting systems is a long term goal. Certainly it should be a goal of the MSB project but it requires the continued support of the project. To move the focus of the MSB project from the issue of hunting at this early stage would likely result in the loss of any gains thus far.
13. The new Law and the establishment of the Higher Hunting Council will need support. It is likely that the Law will have many consequences (intended and unintended) such is the nature of legislation. Unless there is a mechanism or organization which can engage with the various parties to allow them to work though the issues of tenure and pricing, costs and benefits and authority and responsibility as they relate to the management of hunting resources in Lebanon then it is likely to have little effect. This should not distract from the good work done thus far, but recognizes the long term commitment to reform in this area.
14. This was never a project which could be micro-managed, therefore the MTR, in making recommendations according to the ToR has focused on these larger and strategic issues, trusting that the project has the intellectual capacities and commitment to make things work once these structural weaknesses are resolved.

### 4.1 Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** UNDP Jordan is recognised as the sole Implementing Agency for all aspects of the MSB project.

**Recommendation 2:** Birdlife International is recognised as the sole Executing Agency/Partner for the MSB project.

**Recommendation 3:** Disbursement of the GEF grant is made according to these revised implementing and executing arrangements.

**Recommendation 4:** The disbursement of the GEF grant through the Executing Agency is coordinated by the RFF and arranged by sectors (not countries and vehicles) according to an agreed strategic framework to be developed during the development of the new of the Project Document. In particular the RFF has the authority to withhold GEF funds in the event that funding agreements with Birdlife Partners are not adhered to.

**Recommendation 5:** The authority of Birdlife International as the Executing Agency is clearly articulated and recognised by participating countries. This will require the recognition through agreement of the primacy of RFF MSB flyway policies over national interests and agendas where this relates to the GEF grant.

**Recommendation 6:** National Execution is carried out through Birdlife Partners and according to substantive agreements between them and the RFF.

**Recommendation 7:** In the case of countries in which it is legally impossible to work through Birdlife Partners (e.g. solely in Egypt due to restrictions on NGOs and CSOs receiving funds from abroad) current national execution arrangements will persist largely unchanged.

**Recommendation 8:** The exercise planned to develop a Project Document for the second half of the project is unusual for a GEF project. However, given the weaknesses in the original it seems to be a good idea to critically review it and develop something more efficient. This should not be a full-sized Project Document. It is recommended that UNDP Jordan as the Implementing Agency seeks clarification from the RTA (Bratislava) and provides clear instructions for the procedure of developing the document. The document itself should be streamlined, provide a concise strategy for achieving the existing outcomes and objective, a heavily revised LFM/SRF with clearer (and fewer) indicators, precise and binding management arrangements, a budget and work plan. The emphasis should be to “keep it simple”, easy to understand and as short as possible. The project is succeeding and with a number of revisions which are critical will likely reach a satisfactory or even highly satisfactory conclusion by the close of the project. These revisions are essential to the financing and management arrangements and the LFM/SRF. They do not change the project objective and outcomes except for outcome 4 which needs to reflect the RFF to a greater extent (essentially these will be keeping the intention of the fourth outcome but reflecting the role of the RFF to a greater extent). The project already has secure GEF funding for a period of ten years (plus any extension) and any adaptations or revisions recommended by the MTR amount to no more than a substantial Management Response to an mid-term evaluation. Developing a second Project Document will prove to be an onerous task and will distract from the project’s operation and progress.

Rather than produce another Project Document (the project already has three according to the GEF website) this process should be downgraded to a substantial project planning exercise led by the RFF to restate the strategy and address the inefficiencies in the original design or as a result of the confusion during the first three years of the project.

**Recommendation 9:** The project has made considerable headway on a number of critical issues such as wind energy in Egypt and hunting in Jordan and Lebanon. Indeed these have emerged as some of the most urgent threats to the MSBs. However, it would be premature to declare at the midpoint of the project that the “mission is accomplished”. In Lebanon and Jordan the project has made a number of significant steps towards developing a sustainable and responsible hunting system. In Egypt the project has made inroads into an industry which is emerging as a major threat to the flyway along its length. These are notable successes and they need to be reinforced, the project needs to “stay with” the process and see how far it can get. To ensure that there is accountability, the measure of how far the project can get in these two sectors can be further defined in a revised or realigned LFM but it must stay with the process and engaged with the sectors. This is a contradiction in the Project Document which on one hand recognises that mainstreaming is a long term process while on the other hand appears to assume that some issues of mainstreaming can be “signed off” on just when they appear to be succeeding.

**Recommendation 10:** The RFF already has continued support from BirdLife International which will continue after the closure of the GEF funded project. The Project Document requires a commitment from BirdLife International of cash co-financing amounting to double the GEF grant. This is a considerable commitment upon a project that is now beginning to work well and much of its success can be attributed to BirdLife International’s and the Implementing Agency’s (UNDP Jordan) willingness to try to make it work and commit resources when necessary. Furthermore, the MTR questions the authority of the “triggers” in the Project Document and defers to the indicators provided in the LFM/SRF the majority of which have improved from a very low base to a satisfactory level and continue to improve. If BirdLife International is unable to meet the 1:2 cash co-financing ratio this should not affect the second half of the project. The RFF will continue to receive support of a very high quality from BirdLife International and thus it is recommended that the trigger is either ignored or changed to reflect the actual costs of supporting the RFF rather than an arbitrary co-financing ratio.

Rather than setting the Executing Agency or Partner the onerous task of trying to demonstrate co-financing commitments at this midpoint of what is essentially a succeeding project which BirdLife has quite clearly demonstrated that it will be responsible for the financing (of the RFF); the project should be tasked with developing a financial plan which will identify BirdLife International financing and other elements of financial support and funding gaps for which strategies can be developed. After all the RFF will be needed well into the future to coordinate MSB interests along the flyway and not just for the lifetime of the project.

**Recommendation 11:** The project develops an exit strategy during the final eight months of the project. Exit strategies are, in evaluations, frequently prescribed but rarely described leaving project managers to try and figure out what an exit strategy looks like. Fortunately a UNDP-GEF-GTZ project has developed a very useful exit strategy and is reproduced here as Annex 11 and can be modified with the UNDP-GEF-GTZ Multi-country Capacity Building Project[[35]](#footnote-35) project’s kind permission.

### 4.2 Lessons learned

1. The MSB project has generated some interesting experience the most important of which are captured here:

**Lesson 1: Project governance and management arrangements are critical to the successful outcome of a project.** Much of the confusion surrounding the management arrangements in the MSB appear to have stemmed from imprecise instructions in the Project Document (although the essence of NGO execution is clearly there) and a financial risk assessment applied to the BirdLife Regional office (Amman, Jordan) and not BirdLife International. Quite clearly the regional office would not have passed this assessment for a number of reasons (none of which reflect badly on the fiduciary[[36]](#footnote-36) capacities of the regional office), just that it was too small and indeed never intended to be the Executing Agency/Partner. Had the risk analysis been carried out on BirdLife International then it would, without doubt, have passed.

The RFF was quite clearly intended to provide a framework for the governance of the flyway. Governance in this instance being the means for achieving direction, control, and coordination that determines the effectiveness of management (Eagles 2008).

What is confusing it that the Implementing Agency, presumably with the agreement of the RTA (Bratislava) moved immediately to the default position which was the hybrid of national (NEX) execution that resulted. Perhaps this was a weakness in the inception phase, this much is not clear.

Therefore, the lesson from this must surely be that; in a complex and multi-country project such as the MSB project governance, the management arrangements, are a critical and integral component of the project’s overall strategy and it is the project *strategy* which should take precedence over project *expedience.* In these circumstances the purpose of the management arrangements needs to be clearly understood (and articulated), that these arrangements will dictate where and how critical decisions are made about the course of the project and how the GEF fund is spent and whether this is effective or not.

Once in place and supported by the key institutional partners the project has begun to work very effectively.

**Lesson 2: Getting it right is worth the time and resources expended.** This leads on from the first lesson. The MSB project is working at many different scales, it has a multiplicity of players and stakeholders. Simply put; it is a complex project dealing with a complex and unpredictable system, the flyway and the fate of the MSBs.

Quite clearly in the initial stages of the project the Implementing Agency “*got it wrong*”. However, and this is the most important part, the key partners stayed with the process and have worked hard to “*get it right*”.

This might be viewed as a waste of resources unless one considers that “*getting it right”* is actually an outcome in itself. Bringing eleven different countries, five production sectors and numerous different institutions and organisations together for a common purpose was never going to be easy. Furthermore, the way the project was set up (and this is true of many projects) meant that in many instances most attention was focused on the *vehicles* because these determined the allocation of material resources within the project. To some extent this will have placed the emphasis on outputs and not outcomes.

Arguably this is a natural phenomenon in any project because they are time-bound and this sets in place a conflict between *product* and *process.* While UNDP-GEF monitoring and evaluation procedures are designed to try to avoid focusing on *products* or outputs *per se*. Quite understandably ensuring targets are met becomes a driving force because these are tangibles which can be easily measured whereas process and the building of coalitions is much less easy to ascertain.

It might at times not have appeared so to those who have been involved in the process but this is a very positive lesson from the project. What is emerging is a means of coordinating the entire flyway. While it is still very much a work in progress there are clear signs that this could work very well.

Whether this process could be made more efficient in the project design is debatable. It is hard to see how a project which invested considerable resources in building the capacities of what is effectively the PMU would be approved. Certainly it would help to remove some of the uncertainties and ambiguities if these, essentially governance issues, were made explicit in the Project Document and the “*means for achieving direction, control, and coordination that determines the effectiveness of management*” were established sometime, at least one year, in advance of the other project activities.

**Lesson 3: Adaptive management and the project cycle should be clearly understood.** The role of the inception phase in GEF projects is often poorly understood. The inception phase is the first opportunity to review the current status of the project and to determine whether circumstances have changed against the assumptions made in the Project Document. The inception phase should have the confidence and authority to significantly challenge the project’s design and not to accept it as a *fait accompli.*

In circumstances such as occurred with the MSB project it might be necessary for the Implementing Agency to immediately notify the RTA (Bratislava) that the project is facing difficulties and substantive technical assistance needs to be provided to review the project’s strategy against the prevailing circumstances and revise and realign it if necessary.

This rarely happens. As was the case in the MSB project the inception phase is used to put in place PMU and, following an Inception Workshop which attempts to introduce the often complex issues as well as the UNDP reporting requirements in just one day, the project proceeds largely unchanged.

1. **Annexes**

**Annex 1 Terms of Reference**

**PROJECT GOAL, OBJECTIVES and OUTCOMES:**

The Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway is the second most important flyway for migratory soaring birds (raptors, storks, pelicans and some ibis) in the world, with over 1.5 million birds of 37 species, including five globally threatened species, using this corridor between their breeding grounds in Europe and West Asia and wintering areas in Africa each year. The aim of the Migratory Soaring Birds Project is to mainstream migratory soaring bird considerations into the productive sectors along the flyway that pose the greatest risk to the safe migration of these birds – principally hunting, energy, agriculture and waste management – while promoting activities in sectors which could benefit from these birds, such as ecotourism. The project seeks to integrate flyway issues into existing national or donor-funded "vehicles" of reform or change management in the key sectors through the provision of technical tools, content, services and support.

Project outcomes:

Outcome 1: Raised awareness of the flyway and altered social and cultural behaviors among target groups that threaten MSBs in the key sectors, decision-makers and the general public

Outcome 2: Increased national and regional capacity to effect double mainstreaming and application of flyway concept

Outcome 3: Content and tools to enhance flyway friendly practice developed, delivered, and mainstreamed effectively into sector processes and programmes

Outcome 4: Learning, evaluation and adaptive management increased

**Scope of work**

UNDP seeks the recruitment of an international and independent consultant to undertake a project Mid-term review (MTR). The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document (ProDoc), and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve results. The MTR will also review the project’s strategy, its risks to sustainability and the project’s preparation of a strategy for when UNDP-GEF project support ends.

The scope of the MTR will cover all activities undertaken in the framework of the project. The MTR consultant will compare planned outputs of the project to actual outputs and assess the actual results to determine their contribution to the attainment of the project objectives. He/she will also to evaluate the efficiency of project management, including the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness and cost efficiency as well as features related to the process involved in achieving those outputs and the impacts of the project. The MTR will also address the underlying causes and issues contributing to targets not adequately achieved.

The key product expected from the Mid-term review is a comprehensive analytical report in English that should, at least, follow the requirements as indicated in Annex E.

The Mid-term Review report will be a stand-alone document that substantiates its recommendations and conclusions. The report will have to provide convincing evidence to support its findings/ratings.

The report together with its annexes shall be presented in electronic form in MS Word format.

The consultant is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring engagement with the project team, project partners and key stakeholders in the region covered by the project.

The consultant is expected to use project data, third-party data and interviews as a means of collecting data on the performance and success of the project. Questionnaires prepared by the consultant can be distributed to national project partners, facilitated by participating implementing agencies.

The consultant will assess the following three categories of project progress. For each category, the review team is required to rate overall progress using a six-point rating scale outlined in Annex C:

**Progress towards Results**

Project design:

* Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project. Identify new assumptions.
* Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards results.
* Review how the project addresses country priorities.
* Review the baseline data included in the project results framework and GEF Tracking tool and suggest revisions as necessary.

Progress:

* Assess the outputs and progress toward outcomes achieve so far and the contribution to attaining the overall objective of the project.
* Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future lead to, 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.
* Examine whether progress so far has led to, or could in the future lead to, potentially adverse environmental and/or social impacts/risks that could threaten the sustainability of the project outcomes. Are these risks being managed, mitigated, minimized or offset? Suggest mitigation measures as needed.
* Review the extent to which the implementation of the project has been inclusive of relevant stakeholders and to which it has been able to create collaboration between different partners. Identify opportunities for stronger substantive partnerships.

**Adaptive management**

Work Planning

1. Are work planning processes result-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results.
2. Examine the use of the project document logical/results framework as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start. Ensure any revisions meet UNDP-GEF requirements and assess the impact of the revised approach on project management?

Finance and co-finance:

1. Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
2. Complete the co-financing monitoring table (see table below).
3. Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.

Monitoring Systems.

1. Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required?
2. Ensure that the monitoring system, including performance indicators, meet GEF minimum requirements. Apply SMART indicators as necessary.
3. Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop SMART indicators, including disaggregated gender indicators as necessary;
4. Review the mid-term GEF Tracking Tool (s) as appropriate and comment on progress made, quality of the submission, and overall value of the GEF Tracking Tool.
5. Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to M&E? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

Risk Management

1. Validate whether the risks identified in the project document, APR/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate. If not, explain why?
2. Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted.

Reporting

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

Recommendations for Tranche II

1. Consider and make any recommendations for any adjustments that are needed in relation to the sectors that need to be addressed by the project and in each country during tranche II.
2. Consider and make any recommendations for any adjustments that are needed to the project framework, including outcomes and outputs, for tranche II
3. Make any other recommendations for adjustments to the project that should be taken into account in the preparation of a new project document for tranche II of the project

**Management arrangements**

1. 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.
2. Review the quality of execution of the project Implementing Partners and recommend areas for improvement.
3. Review the quality of support provided by UNDP and recommend areas for improvement.
4. Analyse the best scenarios for enhancing management arrangements in Tranche II, and as appropriate and needed propose options for alternative management arrangements for Tranche two of this project , (as an separate standalone report).

**METHODOLOGY**

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

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

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

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Ratings:** | | | |
| **1. Monitoring and Evaluation** | ***rating*** | **2. IA& EA Execution** | ***rating*** |
| M&E design at entry |  | Quality of UNDP Implementation |  |
| M&E Plan Implementation |  | Quality of Execution - Executing Agency |  |
| Overall quality of M&E |  | Overall quality of Implementation / Execution |  |
| **3. Assessment of Outcomes** | **rating** | **4. Sustainability** | **rating** |
| Relevance |  | Financial resources: |  |
| Effectiveness |  | Socio-political: |  |
| Efficiency |  | Institutional framework and governance: |  |
| Overall Project Outcome Rating |  | Environmental : |  |
|  |  | Overall likelihood of sustainability: |  |

**Project finance / co-finance**

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator(s) will receive assistance from the Country Office (CO) and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Co-financing  (type/source) | UNDP own financing (mill. US$) | | Government  (mill. US$) | | Partner Agency  (mill. US$) | | Total  (mill. US$) | |
| Planned | Actual | Planned | Actual | Planned | Actual | Actual | Actual |
| Grants |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Loans/Concessions |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * In-kind support |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Other |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Totals |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Impact**

The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts.

**Conclusions, recommendations and lessons**

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions**, **recommendations** and **lessons**.

**Implementation arrangements**

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP Jordan CO. UNDP Jordan will issue and manage the contract. The Project Team and Country Office will be responsible for liaising with the MTR consultant to set up stakeholder interviews, coordinate with the partners, etc.

*Although the Consultant should feel free to discuss with the authorities concerned all matters relevant to his/her assignment, he/she is not authorized to make any commitment or statement on behalf of UNDP, the GEF or the project management.*

**Evaluator ethics**

The MTR consultant will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex D) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the [UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'](http://www.unevaluation.org/ethicalguidelines).

**DELIVERABLES**

Below are the required activities and expected outputs (deliverables), based on the objectives and scope of work stated above, respective timelines/deadlines and number of working days:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Output** | **Timeline** |
| 1. Work plan and agenda of meetings and report submission time-plans | 7 days after signing the contract and dis with Project’s management team for initial sources of information |
| 1. Debriefing meeting on MTR results with Project stakeholders, and delivery of an inception report | After first mission completed |
| 1. A first draft of the MTR report | 30 days after signing the contract |
| 1. Final MTR report responding to all comments from Project stakeholders, with a response matrix that outlines how all comments were handled. | 40 days after signing the contract |
| 1. Report shows suggested options for management arrangements in Tranche II of this Project | 45 days after signing the contract |

**DURATION OF MISSION**

The expected duration of this assignment is up to two months max., expected to consist of approximately 26 working days out of which 14 working days in the region to conduct necessary meetings and finalize the evaluation report.

**Annex 2 Agenda and persons interviewed**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sunday 10 August** | Travel to Jordan |
| **Jordan** |  |  |  |
| **Monday 11 August** |  |  |  |
|  |  | Osama Alnouri | Meeting with Project Manager |
|  |  | Mohammad Alatoom | Meeting with UNDP Jordan |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Tuesday 12August** |  |  |  |
|  |  | Ibrahim Khader | Meeting with Birdlife Regional Director – Middle East |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Travel to Egypt | | |
| **Egypt** |  |  |  |
| Wednesday 13 August | 09:00 – 1:30 | Osama El-Gebaly – Basem Rabie (PMU) | Meeting with MSB Project team (Manager and the fly way officer) at the project office. |
|  | 1:30 – 3:30 | Noor A. Noor | Meeting with Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE) at project office. |
|  | 4:00 – 6:00 | Combined meeting between Project and NCE. | Osama – Noor |
| Thursday 14 August | 09:30 – 10:15 | Dr. eng. Mohammed Al-Khayat | Meeting with Director of technical affairs sector of New and Renewable Energy Authority (NREA). At NREA building. |
|  | 10:15 – 11:00 | Eng. Omnia Sabry | Meeting with vice president of NREA and Dr. Mohammed Al-Khayat. At NREA |
|  | 12:00 – 1:45 | Ms. Amany Nakhla | Meeting with UNDP. At UNDP office. |
|  | 2:45 – 3:15 | Eng. Waheed Salama | Meeting with director of central department of Biodiversity at Nature Conservation Sector/ EEAA. At NCS office. |
|  | 3:20 – 4:20 | Osama Gebaly | MSB Project manager. |
| **Friday 15 August** | Travel to Lebanon | | |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Lebanon** |  |  |  |
| Saturday 16 August | 10:00 – 18:00 | Osama Al Nouri / RFF Coordinator |  |
| Sunday 17 August | 09:00 – 18.00 | Osama Al Nouri / RFF Coordinator |  |
| Monday 18 August | 09:30 – 10:30 | Lara Samaha / Head, Department of Eco-systems at the Ministry of Environment | Project Office |
|  | 10:30 – 12:00 | Jihan Seoud  UNDP Lebanon | UNDP Office |
|  | 12:00 – 13:30 | Bassima Khatib – Assistant Director General - SPNL | In the presence of the project national team at Project Office |
|  | 13:30 – 17:30 | Saleem Hamadeh & Nour Zouhairy  National Project Management Team | Project Office |
| Tuesday 19 August | 09:00 – 11:00 | Asa’ad Serhal / Director General SPNL & Bassima Khatib – Assistant Director General - SPNL | SPNL Office |
|  | 11:30 – 16:30 | Sallem Hamadeh & Nour Zouhairy project team in addition to one hour with Lara Samaha, Head, Department of Ecosystems, Ministry of Environment | Project Office |
| **Jordan** |  |  |  |
| Wednesday 20 August | 11:30 – 17:00 | Abdel Razzaq Al Hmoud – National Project Manager & Mohammad Zarour – Strategic Development Manager at RSCN | Including a short meeting with Yehya Khaled, CEO of RSCN at RSCN |
| Thursday 21 August | 08:30 – 09:30 | Ibrahim Khader, Regional Director, Middle East Division at BirdLife International | RFF Office |
|  | 09:30 – 10:30 | Julien Jreissati , Hussien Kisswani & Osama Al Nouri (RFF Team) |  |
|  | 11:00 – 15:30 | Abdel Razzaq Al Hmoud – National Project Manager | RSCN Office |
|  | 16:00 – 17:30 | Mohammad Al Atoom, UNDP Jordan | UNDP Office |
| Friday 22 August | 09:00 – 13:00 | Osama Al Nouri / RFF Coordinator | RFF Office |
|  | 13:00 – 14:30 | Richard Grimmett, Director of Conservation, BirdLife International | Over Skype from RFF Office |
|  | 16:00 – 18:00 | Osama Al Nouri / RFF Coordinator | RFF Office |
| Saturday 23 August | 10:00 – 13:00 | Julien Jreissati , Hussien Kisswani & Osama Al Nouri (RFF Team) | RFF Office |
|  | 15:00 – 19:00 | Osama Al Nouri / RFF Coordinator | RFF Office |
| Sunday 24 August | Travel to home base | | |

**Annex 3 List of documents reviewed**

UNDAF

CPAP

Project Document (two from GEF website and 2013 copy)

Inception workshop report

PIR 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

Project Board meeting minutes

Studies completed by the project

UNDPGEF 2012 Evaluation Guidelines

**Annex 4 Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form**



**Annex 5 Description of ratings**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution*** | ***Sustainability ratings:*** | ***Relevance ratings*** |
| 6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings  5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings  4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)  3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings  2. Unsatisfactory (U): major problems  1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems | 4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability | 2. Relevant (R) |
| 3. Moderately Likely (ML):moderate risks | 1.. Not relevant (NR) |
| 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks  1. Unlikely (U): severe risks | ***Impact Ratings:***  3. Significant (S)  2. Minimal (M)  1. Negligible (N) |
| *Additional ratings where relevant:*  Not Applicable (N/A)  Unable to Assess (U/A | | |

**Annex 6 Objective and outcomes, indicators and ratings**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objective & outcome | Indicator | Results (June 2014) | MTR rating |
| **Objective:** Conservation management objectives and actions for MSBs are mainstreamed effectively into the hunting, energy, agriculture, waste management and tourism sectors along the Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway, making this a safer route for soaring birds | Number of new and revised country sector policies (hunting, energy, agriculture, waste management and tourism) incorporating MSB issues approved by national governments | **Total 10 policies with 13 in progress**  **Egypt**: 3 new policies + 1 = 4 policies and 1 in progress  1. Raptor MoU signed by the government on September 2013 in Abu Dhabi city.  2. Energy: NREA; The EIA guidelines and monitoring protocol was adopted and EEAA send it officially to NREA for their adoption for assessment of new wind farm projects.  Waste Management: Ministry of Environment and South Sinai Governorate signed MoU on the 11th of June 2014 which will enforce a policy to protect MSBs at waste management sites at Sharm EL-Sheikh city. This is a bottleneck Important Bird Area for Migratory Soaring Birds (MSBs).  ***In progress:***  *3. Tourism: Agreement between EEAAA, and Ministry of Tourism agreeing that all renewable energy with be sustainable and protect MSBs and used to \ providing power for tourism outlets in the Red Sea*  **Jordan:** 2 new policies and 3 in progress  1. Hunting: Royal Rangers National Strategy has been developed in collaboration with Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN); finalized ( following a consultation workshop with stakeholders ) and adopted and is now in the process of being implemented. This strategy will lead to increased monitoring and enforcement of hunting laws within key areas that are presently subject to illegal killing of MSBs. Checkpoints will be established at key bottleneck sites.  2. Tourism: The Ministry of Tourism has endorsed the bird watching tourism training programme which delivers standards and guidelines for local tour operators and tour guides with particular emphasis on MSBs. The project is collaborating with a private sector company (Baraka) in this process.  ***In Progress:***  *1 Energy: RSCN has provided revised national guidelines for wind energy development and submitted them to the Ministry of Environment (MOE). Although these are not yet officially endorsed, it is understood any new wind development project is being asked to abide by these guidelines at the request of the MOE.*  *2. Hunting: Revised Agricultural Law which will update violations on hunting to protect MSBs (in both Appendices 1 and 2) has been approved by Jordanian Members of Parliament and is awaiting final approval from senators.*  *3. Signature of Raptor MoU*  **Lebanon**: 3 policies and 5 in progress  Hunting:  1. There are now 10 separate Implementation decrees and decisions in place dealing with all aspects of the hunting sector  2. Further progress has been made with the “Ministry of Defence” armed weapon new license issue which now makes a declaration on the licence stating that the weapon must not be used for hunting. The new hunting insurance policy has been approved by the cabinet of ministers. This is an essential prerequisite to enable the adoption of the hunting Law.  Education  3. Although not a target sector policy in Education the official Lebanese educational curriculum (for primary and secondary education) has added chapters regarding bird identification, migration and the importance of bird conservation. In addition, the World Migratory Bird day has been added on the schools “important environmental days’ calendar”.  ***In progress***  *1. Raptor MOU signature in progress*  *2.Tourism: Ecotourism national strategy in progress( being studied by 3 concerned ministries)*  *3. National Physical Land Use Plan (NPLP). Updates are now available to include all IBAs, bottlenecks and protected areas as an extra GIS layer of the NPLP highlighting these areas in the development planning process.*  *4. Energy: National Strategic Environmental Assessment is commencing for all renewable energy projects in the Country. Society for Protection of Nature in Lebanon SPNL (Project partner) is a member of the wind energy committee for this SEA and will thus ensure that MSB considerations and mitigation measures are included in conditions of SEA. In addition, it has been officially stated that any proposal for wind farm development in Lebanon has to go through an EIA which will have to assess appropriately the potential impact upon MSBs as a requirement of proceeding with the application. (Annex 13 of bidding document)*  *5. Hunting: Responsible Hunting Areas (RHAs) (referred to as Public Hunting Areas in previous Project implementation Reviews): Following establishment of the criteria for these areas they are now being reviewed by the Ministry Of Environment’. 14 potential Lebanese RHA sites are proposed.*  **Regional**: 1 new policy and 4 in progress  **Syria:** 1 policy and 1 in progress  1. Hunting: National Sustainable Hunting Management Plan adopted by the Syrian Ministry of Agriculture & Agrarian Reform. The plan was developed by the Syrian Society for the Conservation of Wildlife (SSCW) with support of the MSB project. The plan takes in considerations the full protection of MSB species.  ***In progress:***  *Signature of Raptor MoU*  ***Saudi Arabia:*** *1 policy in progress*  *Signature of Raptor MoU*  ***Sudan:*** *2 policy in progress*  *The Sudanese government is currently drafting a Wildlife protection policy. The MSB project is working towards mainstreaming MSB considerations into this policy*  *Energy: UNDP Log frame for National Wind farm strategy in Sudan has included reference to the need to appropriately assess Migratory Soaring Birds and follow MSB guidance in assessment of proposed sites for wind farms* | **Satisfactory** |
|  | Number of new private sector projects and schemes incorporating MSB concerns in each target sector | **Cumulative Total: 7+4 =** 11 projects and 8 in progress  **Egypt:** 5+1 **=** 6 projects  Tourism: Fekra cultural centre private eco-lodge: The project cooperated with Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE) and the Fekra Eco-lodge to restore and transform a tower owned by the eco-lodge into a bird watching tower.  Energy: At Gebel al Zait; delays were encountered in the application of the agreed shutdown on demand mitigation strategy: MSB project were pivotal in discussions and funded spring post construction monitoring of newly constructed wind farm assessing spring migration. Turbines were not operational during spring but extensive observations on MSB migration and a detailed report has been produced to inform the shut-down on demand process and provide key factual information on migration movements through the site.  **Jordan**: 2+2 = 4 projects and 5 in progress  Tourism  3. RSCN Signed an MOU with Baraka company to develop bird watching training course that fully incorporate MSB species. This course has been delivered to Jordanian tour guides.  4. RSCN signed a MoU with the Movenpick hotel in Aqaba that enables tourist guests to get special rates and transport provided to observe MSBs and other wildlife at the Aqaba Bird Observatory (ABO).  In progress:  Energy  RSCN has been approached and consulted with 3 environmental consultancies (ENGICON, ECO CONSULT, ARRAWABI) which requested the MSB project guidance for use in their EIA evaluation process.  RSCN has been approached by EDAMA initiative to discuss the environmental implication of a potential solar project in the Ma’an area. The MSB solar guidance was shared with EDAMA.  The MSB project has been approached by ECO CONSULT to discuss the environmental implication of a potential solar project in the Ma’an area. The MSB solar guidance were shared with ECO CONSULT  **Lebanon:** 1 project & 1 in progress  **Hunting**  1 A partnership has been established between the privately owned West Bekaa’ country club and the project - through SPNL - to establish the Middle East responsible Sustainable Hunting Centre within their premises. The main objective of this centre is to promote sustainable hunting practices at the regional level. In addition several activities related to responsible and sustainable hunting are ongoing at the club  ***In progress:***  *1. Al Mawared Bank has agreed a cooperation with the project to issue of loans or a credit card programme specifically aimed at hunters who successfully pass hunting exams and obtain the official license. This program will also help in providing the project with a database of responsible hunters in Lebanon and will help in spreading awareness through marketing campaigns.*  ***Regional 2 in progress***  ***Ethiopia:***  *In progress*  *Energy*  *Détente and the Biodiversity Consultancy (TBC) request BirdLife and MSB involvement in a risk assessment project evaluating proposed wind energy development in Ethiopia. The RFF participated in the initial strategy development meetings with TBC. The project is sourcing funding. A strong partnership basis has been established.*  *Agriculture*  *Agriculture:*  *CropLife International has approached RFF for advice on inclusion of MSBs considerations into their Spray Service Provider Programme. The advice has since been provided and follow-ups are to be made.* |  |
|  | Annual application of GEF BD2 tracking tool shows increased scores throughout life of project |  | Satisfactory and the MTR agrees with project’s assessment |
|  | Land managed for hunting, energy, agriculture and waste management under ‘flyway sensitive’ practices at selected sites (bottlenecks) along flyway | **Cumulative Total:** 187,939.4 ha  **Egypt**: 76,451 ha  1- 38500 ha at Gabel Al Zeit wind farm project is subjected to post construction monitoring in spring 2014 for non-operational wind turbines to assess the collision risk of wind turbines on MSBs.  2- Italgen wind farm project total area of 37 900 ha. MSB Assessment of this area identified a red area (highly sensitive) with 11 900 ha where development would cause too great an impact on MSBs and is thus not permitted. The second section is 26 000 ha which will be established with appropriate mitigation measures; including “shutdown on Demand”. The MSB project reviewed the EIA and contributed to the mitigation strategy which comprises of setting a maximum turbine height and disposition, imposing bird monitoring programme etc…  3- 51 ha: The sewage ponds at Sharm El-Sheikh (bottle neck) which attract thousands of MSBs and has been implicated in the mortality of some individuals are to be subjected to a rehabilitation program according to the signed MoU between Ministry of Environment and South Sinai Governorate. The rehabilitation programme will relocate the pond which is located in a high risk location particularly for white storks.  **Lebanon:** 29,688.4 ha  3900 ha Following a series of MSB workshop with Environment for Life (EFL) the decision was taken to ban hunting in the Niha region  329 Ha Kfarzabad is now being managed to control hunting following MSB project initiatives  219.4 ha. Following meetings with the municipal board of Ebel Saki village this hima protected area and IBA now has a centre equipped for birdwatching and the project has help enforce a hunting ban.  Total approximate area (requiring confirmation) = 25,240 ha Discussions has been held with the municipal of further 8 villages in bottleneck sites ( QAROUN, Al Maabour Al Abyad, KHERBET ANAFAR, MENJEZ, ANDAKET, AIN ZEBDE, Qaytouli and Room) which led to the adoption of the criteria for responsible hunting areas under a hima model.  **Jordan**: 60,200ha + 15,100ha + 6500ha = 81,800ha  15100 ha: The project contributed in provided training to the Royal Ranger patrols, ensured collaboration with local hunters visiting these areas to avoid hunting incidents within these newly established reserves:  Faifa reserve: 3300 ha  Yarmouk Special Conservation Area: 2700 ha  Wadi bin Hammad Special Conservation Area: 1800 ha  Humret Maen : 7300 ha  6500 ha for 2 wind energy projects in Tafila area (1. Fujeij project 2. Gharandal project) following flyway sensitive assessment and mitigation practices.  Fujaij project is presently under review, its area will be between. 2000- 3000 Ha depending on the final operational design, and Gharandal project is approximately 3500ha.  At Gharandal site, more detailed ornithological assessments were undertaken to address concerns about MSBs. Turbine locations were changed to reduce potential impacts on MSBs that were raised through the EIA assessment process. In mitigation, a vulture restaurant has been established at Dana to draw birds away from the wind farm area, and post-construction monitoring is proposed at the site.  At Fujeij, the assessment has highlighted the importance of this site for MSBs and the project is currently under review. |  |
|  | Number of sites with ‘flyway sensitive’ practices along flyway | **Cumulative Total**: 16 sites + 1 in progress  **Egypt**: 2 sites no change but 1 in progress (within the same bottle neck site)  Ain Sukhna and Sharm el Sheikh  Based on the previously signed MoU, the Jaz hotel chain is taking steps to be flyway friendly. These include: Non use of pesticides, use of native plants, recycling of solid waste, and training of hotel staff. After finalising the Best practices for flyway friendly hotels, the MSB project will visit JAZ hotels to apply the recommendations of the document.  In progress (within the same bottleneck):  Sharm el Sheikh  Sharm el Sheikh and Ras Mohamad national park: the project has participated to a scoping mission with United Nations World Tourism Organisation to develop a pilot project to address conservation of MSBs in this key tourism location in this area.  **Jordan**: New total is 8: 4 new bottleneck sites: Sweimeh – Fifa, Wadi Ibn Hammad and Yarmouk: RSCN is ensuring that newly established protected areas under its mandate are managed allowing “flyway-friendly" practices in it.  **Lebanon**: 6 sites  1. Shouf Cedar Biosphere Reserve: a joint initiative undertaken between shouf natural reserve and Niha municipality to ban hunting on all lands of this village. This initiative was generated by a series of MSB workshops with Environment for Life (EFL).  2. Ebel Es-Saqi: Following meetings with the municipal board of Ebel Saki village this Hima protected area and IBA now has a centre equipped for birdwatching and the project has help enforce a hunting ban.  3Lake Qaroun + Upper mountains of Akkar Dounnieh +Ammiq + Jezzine in addition discussion has been held with the municipal of further 8 villages from four bottleneck sites which led to the adoption of the criteria for responsible hunting areas under a Hima model. These villages are Andket, Mengez,Al-Maabour Al-Abyad all from the bottleneck of Upper Mountains of Akkar-Dounnieh. Ain Zebdeh, Kherbet Anafar from the bottleneck of Ammiq wetlands. Qaroun from Lake Qaroun bottleneck and also Qarou and Qaytouli and Roum from Jezzine.    Regional : 1 in progress  **Yemen**:  In Progress:  Bab el Mandeb: An environmental sensitive bird observation infrastructure will be built with the support of the project and inaugurated during a World Migratory Bird Day event later in 2014. |  |
| **Outcome 1:**  Raised awareness of the flyway and altered social and cultural behaviours among target groups that threaten MSBs in the key sectors, decision-makers and the general public (Tranche I) | Increase in number of articles in national newspapers highlighting MSBs and flyway importance in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt and Ethiopia | **59 new articles during the reporting period**  **Jordan**: 25 new articles been published on daily newspapers and websites  **Lebanon**:  10 new articles (newspaper and online) published in addition to TV and radio interviews (LBC, Future, Manar, Voice of Lebanon…)  A documentary film is being prepared regarding MSBS in the three countries ( Lebanon, Syria and Jordan)  **Egypt**:  15 articles – 1 radio meeting – 2 TV shows  **Palestine**: 6 new articles in national newspaper  **Ethiopia**: 3 new articles in national newspaper | **Satisfactory** |
|  | Increase in number of hunters and tour guides able to identify specific soaring birds and name activities that threaten them operating at selected bottleneck sites | **Lebanon**: hunting groups remain at 6  Increase in percentage remains at 100%  75 additional hunters fully trained on bird identification and sustainable hunting at workshops (by EFL) in September 2013 and April 2014 in addition to the hunting clubs  Comes to 325 hunters since the start of the project 10 signed responsible hunting charter in December 2013  **Syria**:  A workshop on MSBs identification and bird watching is set to take place in September 2014 in Syria. This workshop will involve the major tour operators in the country  **Jordan:**  800 new hunters from Jul 2013 to Jun. 2014 have acquired hunting licences. Total: 1800 + 800 = 2600  22 tour guides were trained in Mujib, and other bottleneck sites through the Baraka training program on birdwatching tourism. |  |
|  | Number of government and private sector requests to project for ‘flyway sensitive’ guidelines, best practice, and related materials | **Cumulative total**: 50  **New request**: 24 (all of which have been responded to by the project)  **Egypt**: 4 new requests  1. NREA have approached the project to provide shutdown on demand criteria as developed in late 2013.  2 .EEAA, Nature Conservation Sector, sent a request to the project to review the EIA and develop a methodology for post construction monitoring for Italgen company project at Gabel Al-Zeit wind farm.  3.EEAA request the national sensitivity atlas for birds which is currently under preparation  4.Eco-Conserve ( Private company) requested a copy of the EIA guidelines and monitoring protocols  **Lebanon**: 2 new requests  1. Ecotourism strategy requested by 3 ministers is finalized and guidance is now being studied by 3 ministries environment, tourism and agriculture to review and adopt. MSBs are a major part of this strategy.  2. The project has been asked to be represented in inter-ministerial committee formed to oversee bidding process for wind farms. It has been agreed that all EIAs have to consider MSBs in their evaluation and assessment procedures as a condition.  **Jordan**: 5 new requests  1. The Ministry of Environment requested updated wind energy flyway friendly guidelines which have been shared. Although not yet adopted, the project is aware that wind energy developers are being asked to follow this guidance  2. Three private companies,( ENGICON, ECO- CONSULT, and AL RAWABI) requested wind energy guidelines from RSCN and one private initiative asked about solar energy guidelines, ( EDAMA initiative)  **Regional Component**: 13 new requests  IFC: Following a meeting the International Finance Corporation informed the project that they are distributing the Soaring Bird Soaring bird Sensitivity Tool Mapping Tool to all clients and ensuring its use in all sponsored EIA project in the region.  The following organisations have contacted the project to request guidance material for the energy sector:  Cube engineering  Eco-consult  ECODIT  Fujeij project  IRENA  EBRD  MKA Ecology  The Biodiversity consultancy  Nexant Asia Limited  The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Sudan has sent a request to the project to review EIA for proposed wind farm Dongola  UNDP Sudan requested the result of the Soaring Bird Sensitivity Mapping Tool analysis of the Dongola site.  UNDP in Sudan also requested project participation in a scoping mission to review the logframe and strategy for windfarm development in Sudan and issues raised over the assessment of the proposed wind farm at Dongola for MSBs |  |
|  | Increase in membership of national bird conservation NGOs in selected target countries | **Jordan**: RSCN new members around 105, new friends: 14,446  Total ordinary members: 2327 + 105 = 2432  Total friends membership: 12,297 + 14,446 = 26,743  **Lebanon:** 30 new members. Total = 230 members  **Ethiopia**: EWNHS 70 members (Official justification for decrease in membership since baseline provided by EWNHS)  **Egypt:** NCE 70 members  **Palestine:** PWLS 120 members | Consider removing this indicator |
|  | Number of requests for ‘flyway sensitive ’ branding scheme from hunting, energy, agricultural and waste management sector institutions | This indicator is not applicable during Tranche I | Consider removing this indicator |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Outcome 2:**  Increased national and regional capacity to effect double mainstreaming and application of Flyway concept (Tranche I and II) | Capacity of national partners to apply double mainstreaming as indicated by BirdLife-UNDP capacity assessment score | In accordance with the roadmaps resulting from the capacity development workshop held in August 2013, Capacity support was delivered with national workshops for Lebanon, Djibouti, and Syria. All partners have been supported and guided in their capacity development. Their ability to deliver double mainstreaming has been improved and reviewed this year  Two partners: NCE and RSCN currently meet the required level of organisational capacity. Five partners EWNHS, PWS, SPNL, SSCW and SWS fall short of the requirements in just two or three key areas. Follow-up actions have been agreed to develop these areas and the NGOs are confidently predicted to meet at least the minimum requirements by December 2014. Finally, one organization (ADN) is deficient in five areas. However, actions have been agreed to overcome these deficiencies and there is an expectation that they can meet the requirements by December 2014. Overall, based on this assessment the project is on target to ensure seven of the ten NGOs meet score. However the work with partners not only aimed at how they can meet the minimum requirements but also how they could work towards the higher score with a view to enhance organizational and double-mainstreaming capacity.  Plans are underway to conduct a training workshop on “Mainstreaming” drawing participation from MSB project countries in September this year. | **Satisfactory** |
|  | Increase in number of joint national project partner-government and project partner-private sector partnerships established in key sectors during project period to achieve mainstreaming of MSB concerns | **Cumulative total: 20**  **New partnerships: 14**  **Egypt:** 2005 + 2 + 2  1. MoU signed between the Ministry of Environment and South Sinai Governorate to rehabilitate a sewage ponds at Sharm El-Sheikh city.  2. Partnership between the projects, NCE and FIKRA cultural centre at Aswan to enhance bird watching tourism**.**  ***In progress:***  *MoU between ministry of tourism ( Tourism Development Authority(TAD) and EEAA is still in discussion*  *MoU between the project and KFW has yet to come to fruition but is still being pursued*.  **Jordan**: 2005 + 1 + 3  1. Joint Baraka company- RSCN partnership to develop eco- guide training and curriculum.  2. Joint RSCN-Aqaba Special Economic Zone Area partnership to manage Aqaba Bird Observatory a key site for MSBs.  3.Joint RSCN- Jordanian hunting society partnership to adopt code of best practices for responsible hunting and ensure the full protection of MSBs  **Lebanon**: 2005 + 3 + 6  1. Ministry of interior and municipalities and internal security forces (ISF): A new training initiative has been launched on the 5th of June 2014 to engage municipality police and forest rangers in the control of illegal hunting, by giving them all the needed tools to issue violation tickets.  2. Ministries of Tourism, Agriculture and Environment are studying the ecotourism strategy that was created as a result of the ecotourism workshop undertaken by the project and held in October 2013. This partnership will jointly advance the development of national eco-tourism  3. Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Environment are collaborating with a team of experts on a national SEA for renewable energy in Lebanon ensuring MSBs considerations and mitigation measures are taken into account (wind energy sector). SPNL is representing the project on this committee.  4.The project is collaborating with the Lebanese environmental forum (LEF) (a national coalition of 48 local NGOs) though SPNL to organise an upcoming workshop to highlight the concept of responsible hunting areas in villages , in addition to starting a “pilot” responsible hunting area in Jezzine.  5. A partnership has been established between the privately owned West Bekaa’ country club and the project –through SPNL, - to establish the Middle East responsible Sustainable Hunting Centre within their premises. The main objective of this centre is to promote sustainable hunting practices at the regional level, in addition several activities related to responsible and sustainable hunting are ongoing at the club  6.Partnership with AL Mawared Bank for the issuing of hunters’ special rate credit card conditional to having an official hunting license.  **Palestine**: 2005 + 3  The Palestine Wildlife Society is implementing 3 projects to support the ecotourism aspects of the Abraham Path Initiative (including MSBs) and run surveys at protected areas with training to rangers & guides.  These are in partnership with:   1. Abraham Path Initiative funded by the World Bank 2. Abraham Path Initiative funded by the French government 3. Hanns Seidel Foundation funded by the European Union   Ethiopia: 2005 + 0 |  |
| **Outcome 3:**  Content and tools to enhance flyway friendly practice developed, delivered and mainstreamed effectively into sector processes and programmes (Trenches I and II) | Number of existing and planned mainstreaming “vehicles” into which flyway content and tools are mainstreamed in each country | 6 programmes with MSB issues integrated into project  Jordan:  The relationship with the energy sector approved project developed into an official MoU signed between RSCN & the Jordan Wind Project Company – JWPC that is developing Al Tafila wind farm project. The MoU included many activities including additional bird survey, pre/post construction monitoring & other socio-economic aspects. | **Satisfactory** |
| **Indicators per sector with mainstreaming projects** | | | |
| **Hunting** | Number of hunted MSBs recorded for sale (live and dead) at specific markets in Beirut including Sunday flea market, and Jordan | **Lebanon**:  A market study of the 5 biggest markets of Lebanon over a period of 4 months, recorded 37 individuals of 12 MSBs .extrapolating this for the year would be 111 birds a reduction of 68%  **Jordan**:  No MSBs were found in market surveys, however one case for two kestrels and three buzzards were recorded through the internet. | **Satisfactory**  (note indicator only relevant for Lebanon and Jordan) |
|  | Number of hunting groups along flyway endorsing responsible hunting practices | **Cumulative Total:** 9 groups  **Jordan**: 2 + 1 = 3 groups  RSCN has signed a MoU with the Society for Sustainable Hunting ensuring that they adopt the code of best practices for responsible hunting developed by the project.  **Lebanon:** 6 groups  No change |  |
|  | Number of ammunition and gun suppliers in Lebanon, endorsing responsible hunting | In progress:  Workshop with ammunition traders in which Lebanese ammunitions and gun traders will be signing a declaration of conduct set to take place on 12th of August 2014. At least 20 ammunition traders are expect to sign and endorse responsible hunting out of a total of 25 in the country (expected percentage: 80%)  Letter sent from Minister of Environment to minister of economy in addition to several meetings between Director General of Ministry of Economy regarding the adding of an awareness label on ammunition boxes, this initiative is in progress. |  |
| Energy | Planners take account of bottlenecks in national and local energy planning | **Total:** 4 countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Sudan)  **Lebanon**:  1. Ministry of environment requires applicants for wind farm projects in Lebanon to assess potential impact on MSBs in their proposal.  In progress:  Final updates for the NPLP were delivered by GIS expert and ornithologist, where new bottlenecks sites were added and awaiting review with Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR).  **Jordan**:  1. The Ministry of Environment is directing all new wind development projects to follow wind energy guidelines developed by RSCN, although these guidelines are not presently officially endorsed.  In process:  Plan for a Strategic Environmental Assessment for Jordan is being considered and would be subject top a stakeholder committee of different environmental Organizations including RSCN  **Regional**  **1 country**  **Sudan:**  Mission with UNDP and national energy authority agreed to consider potential impact on MSBs of all wind farm developments with particular concern for sites near Red Sea. Agreement in place to use Soaring Bird Sensitivity Mapping Tool.  **: Development banks and global sector organisations are using the Soaring Bird Sensitivity Mapping tool as a resource to identify potential impacts of sites upon Soaring Birds. International Finance Corporation (IIFC) are distributing tool to its clients in the region.**  European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) are committed to using the tool in the scoping and screening of projects. European Investment Bank Have been presented with the tool and The World wind Energy Association have publicised the tool in members newsletter. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) sent a briefing of the tool and the MSB guidance in its newsletter to transmission operator network groups |  |
|  | New energy projects adopt best practice in avoidance and mitigation of MSB risks | **Cumulative Total**: 7  **Egypt**: 2 +1 = 3  The Italgen wind farm project has excluded 11500 ha from its development footprint in recognition of its importance to MSBs and other areas are subject to very stringent mitigation measures including applying shutdown on demand system and leave access corridors between lines of turbines.  .Update: The 200 MW wind farm project at Gabel Al-Zeit has confirmed it will apply the shutdown on demand system for spring and post construction monitoring for Autumn in consultation with the MSB project which also undertook Post construction monitoring survey across the site with non-operational turbines in spring 2014.  **Jordan**: 1 + 2 = 3  There are now 2 wind farm projects in Tafila region which are considerate of the need to assess MSBs and mitigate for their presence in this sensitive region. The previously reported Gharandal project and in addition Fujeij project. Both are following assessment and guidance for MSBs. At Gharandal site, more detailed ornithological assessments were undertaken to address concerns about MSBs, furthermore, turbine locations were changed to reduce potential impacts on MSB that were raised in the assessment process. In mitigation, a vulture restaurant has been established at Dana to draw birds away from the wind farm area, and post-construction monitoring is proposed at the site.  At Fujeij, the assessment has highlighted the importance of this site for MSBs and the project is currently under review.  New solar energy project in Maan consulted the project and EIA has suggested mitigation measures including use of bird deflectors based on MSB guidance.  **Regional**  **Sudan** 1 project:  Dongola Wind farm  Concerns with respects to MSB safeguards were raised about the EIA assessment at Dongola site In Sudan and the Project was consequently invited to accompany a UNDP and Sudanese energy ministry mission to the site where the opportunity was taken to address these concerns and find a mutually beneficial path forward which ensures that the potential impact on MSBs will be appropriately assessed in accordance with the value of the site For MSBS. |  |
|  | Collaborative monitoring schemes in place at existing and new energy projects to assess mortality rate | **Egypt**: 1 new and 1 in progress  A post construction monitoring (PCM) program at Gabel-Al-Zeit was undertaken in spring 2014 at this site through collaboration between MSB project, NREA and EEAA. The report will be used to inform future shutdown on demand procedures at this site. A further monitoring process is expected to take place in Autumn 2014.  PCM work at Zafararana wind farm has been placed on hold in light of the greater requirement for the resources of the project to be directed at Gabel EL Zeit the results of which will have be influential for a number of contiguous projects planned in the vicinity |  |
|  | Mitigation of any high-levels of mortality at existing sites that may be identified during the project | **Cumulative total:** 2 sites  The PCM survey in Spring 2014 at Gebel el Zeit wind farm in Egypt was undertaken with the newly constructed turbines being non-operational. Mortality rates for species observed at the site have been estimated based on the numbers and flight paths of MSBs passing through the site. The subsequent report tis being used to inform the “Shutdown on Demand “and future mitigation at this sites and will also be of value to contiguous planned sites in the area.  The Port Sudan Killer line was removed and replaced by an insulated one. The decision to decommission and replace the “killer line” followed a MSB-funded presentation to senior government and power company representatives by the Sudanese Wildlife Society. The 31-km long power line is estimated to have killed hundreds and perhaps thousands of Egyptian Vultures (Neophron percnopterus) since it was constructed in the 1950s. |  |
| Tourism | Number of tourism operators labeled ‘flyway sensitive’ in target countries | In progress:  A tour operator labelling schemes will launched in November 2014 in one pilot country. |  |
|  | Number of locations with demonstration of benefits to tourism sector from MSB activities | **Egypt**: 3 + 1 = 4 locations  Fekra cultural centre private eco-lodge: The project cooperated with Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE) and the Fekra Eco-lodge to restore and transform a tower owned by the eco-lodge into a bird watching tower.  **Palestine:** 4  PWLS contributed to the management plan of 4 IBA’s site and through funding from the French government they led the establishment of bird monitoring station for birdwatching activities  There are three main Bird watching sites : 1- Rashaida 2- Auja 3- bani neim 4- Jericho  PWLS are now in the process of delivering ornithological training to site support groups.  **Yemen:** 1 in progress  In Progress:  Bab el Mandeb: An environmental sensitive bird observation infrastructure will be built with the support of the project and inaugurated during a World Migratory Bird Day event later in 2014. This is expected to increase number of visiting tourists to this location and benefits.  **Jordan**  1 location and 1 in progress  In progress:  The MSB project is planning to provide support to the dead sea panorama and/or the ABO to realise its potential as a birdwatching location and add to the visitor experience at these sites.  **Lebanon:** 2  1. Shouf cedar reserve ecotourism program includes several activities one of them is bird watching which is mentioned on their website and brochures. Following support from the MSB project a programme has been developed The reserve is equipped with all needed material for this activity ( Binoculars, telescopes…) in addition to having 3 different height locations where visitors can bird watch.  2. Hima Anjar was announced “Hima” or protected area in 2008 due to its rich fauna especially birds, but now after several development projects this area has a full ecotourism program for visitors. Birds and otter watching is one of the activities that can be done in the protected forest of the Hima, cost of this activity is included in the entrance fee |  |
| Waste management | Number of EIAs for new waste management projects that address MSB concerns in project area and along Red Sea coast of Egypt | **Cumulative Total**: 2  **Egypt**:  The two previous EIAs are for waste management landfill (United Company) and the sewage pond for Zeitc company. After reviewing the EIAs the main recommendation was the recommendation to develop bird migration study for the location. |  |
|  | Number of existing waste management sites where ‘flyway friendly’ best practice measures have been adopted | **Cumulative Total:** 2 sites  **Egypt**: 1 new site  Sharm El-Sheikh sewage pond: A MoU was signed between Ministry of Environment and South Sinai governorate. It is anticipated that this will include a statement to implement flyway friendly best practices measure in one of the most important place in the flyway especially for white Storks. |  |
| Agriculture | Number of agriculture development plans incorporating MSB conservation considerations | The MSB project is finalising the guidance materials on agrochemical poisoning.  The project has entered into contractual agreements with Sudanese Wildlife Society (SWS) and The Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society (EWNHS) to mainstream the guidance on agriculture and promote incorporation of MSB conservation considerations into national agricultural development plans in their respective countries  The Palestine Wildife Society is planning to advocate the endorsement of the guidelines by the ministry of Agriculture.  The Scientific Council of Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) has endorsed the global guidelines on migratory birds poisoning which borrowed heavily on the agrochemical guidance developed by the project. All project countries are party states except Palestine and Sudan who are range states. |  |
|  | Number of agricultural projects incorporating MSB conservation considerations | SWS, EWNHS and PWS through the signed contracts will be working towards the mainstreaming of the agrochemical guidelines into agricultural projects in their respective countries. |  |
| **Outcome 4:**  Learning, evaluation and adaptive management increased (Tranche I and II) | Lessons learned from demonstration activities applied to other sites along the flyway | **Cumulative Total:** 3 sites  **Egypt**: o sites , many in progress  In spring 2014 a monitoring program for MSBs in non-operational wind farm project (200 MW) at Gabel-Al-Zeit bottle neck was undertaken assessing a collision risk based on flight paths for MSBs. The turbines were non-operational turbines. This data is used to assess the risk and gain a first impression of the applicability of the draft shut-down criteria. This wind farm project is a pilot project not only for Egypt but also will be for the region.  **Lebanon**: 1 site and 2 in progress  1. Empowering municipality police and forest rangers in the role of hunting management and control in Kfarzabd reflected positive results and a big cooperation from all parties, this was repeated in Niha where it also showed an efficient result.  In progress:  In the tourism sector, after positive results of Anjar Hima and Shouf Cedar reserve through MSB related tourism activities and their full conviction of the financial profit behind it, the MSB project is now in contact with other important Lebanese reserves considered in hot spots in terms of birds and is helping them come out with MSB related programs for tourism.  The stakeholders based framework pioneered through the Higher Hunting Council (HHC) has proved itself to be instrumental in taking the hunting issue forward, and led to the prompt issue of hunting decrees in Lebanon. A framework has been created whereby the necessary decrees to support the changes in the law can be easily delivered. The HHC framework will now be replicated with a similar inter-ministerial committee for the ecotourism national strategy.  **Syria:** 1  In December 2013, the Syrian Ministry of Agriculture endorsed a national management hunting plan prepared by BirdLife national Partner. The plan is a summary of all lessons learned in neighbouring Lebanon & Jordan & was prepared by close coordination with RFF.  In progress 2  BirdLife partner in Syria will hold the World Migratory Birds Day in September 2014 to suggest a national ecotourim plan that is based on the concepts of the Lebanese plan under adoption.  BirdLife partner is Syria is already requested by the government to suggest the guidelines of the Responsible Hunting Areas to be endorsed based on the current experience results in Lebanon. | **Satisfactory** |
|  | Positive monitoring and evaluation reports, both internal and external | The Midterm Review process will take place from July to August 2014 |  |
|  | Targets for project and partner entry into Tranche II verified | 1. All project vehicle in tranche 1 are moving towards successful completion.  2. The project has some provisional funds agreed and is approaching donors to secure the required co-financing for tranche 2.  3. The project designed a vehicle questionnaire to identify all potential tranche 2 vehicles. Project partners are responding enabling a review process to identify the best opportunities for tranche 2.  4. Point 4 on the left is an inaccurate interpretation of the triggers for Tranche 2.If the 5 sectors had no impact upon MSB’s then there would have been no basis for the project’s conception. This statement is taken from the project document but is a reference to a scenario whereby the project would want to mainstream with an alternative sector. Please see the Project document; paragraph 42, P23 which states “For moves into new target sectors, the establishment of material links between sector activity and bird mortality along the flyway and the establishment of baseline data against which impact indicators can be measured (verification – independent, peer-reviewed research reports showing impact of sector policies and activities on MSBs along the flyway, with further expert input from the technical committees and agreement from the PSC”  As the project does not see the need to mainstream with a different sector in Tranche 2, this indicator is not relevant to present or foreseeable activities. |  |

**Annex 9 Comments on first draft and MTR response**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Person commenting & reference in document** | **Comment** | **MTR response** |
| **Para 33 Lebanon** | I think the practice of integrating management into an outcome on learning and evaluation used to be a practice in GEF, at least at the time this project was designed because I have worked on several older GEF projects that were designed this way | The MTR agrees that this was the practice but believes that it was no longer in use before the final Project Document was produced. The MTR does not argue that this outcome should not be included but states that in a project such as this it is relevant. However, it could be used to track the performance, effectiveness and impact of the RFF much more than it does at present. |
| **Para 61 Lebanon** | I do not agree and I actually feel that the birdlife national partners themselves have strong national identities and autonomy and that has led to possible fragmentation. | The MTR agrees to some extent with this statement although it has not been demonstrated in Lebanon because the BL Partner was not executing the project there are reasonable grounds to assume that this (fragmentation) would be the case under the BL Partner. The fact remains that the project did become fragmented. Further it has been noted in other multi-country UNDP-GEF projects (<http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/gef_prj_docs/GEFProjectDocuments/MandE/EO_TEs_FY13/UNDP_TEs_APR2013/3231_UNDP_TE_CACILM_Final_Evaluation_Report.pdf>)  Therefore, regardless of national execution modalities it is essential that the RFF has the powers to adequately and effectively co-ordinate the national initiatives in the second half of the project if this is to be avoided in the future. |
| **Para 71 Lebanon** | And the GEF Operational Focal Point as well | **Now reads:**  However, in Lebanon the execution was through the Ministry of Environment (ME) and the national BirdLife Partner was subcontracted to carry out various technical tasks. These arrangements were entered into at the start of the project because the national *vehicles* were no longer available and it was not possible to reach an agreement between UNDP, ***and the GEF Operational Focal Point***, the BirdLife Partner (SPNL), and the RFF. |
| **Para 72 Lebanon** | However this exact concern cannot be made sustainable without the Ministry of Environment which is the national entity legally responsible for hunting systems and given the national birdlife partner’s current relationship with the Ministry and their capacity, I doubt that the management of responsible hunting within other management arrangements. This is touched upon in clause 87 (next section) | **There appear to be two issues at stake here:**   1. The capacity of SPNL. The MTR is of the understanding that the SPNL has considerable capacities as a BL Partner, indeed they would appear to have addressed, as sub-contractors, most of the technical issues thrown up by the project in the first half and also contributed considerable co-financing. Therefore their technical and financial ability to execute the project is not in question. However, the MTR also shares the concerns that SPNL might act autonomously which is discussed in para 87 and the MTR has provided Recommendation No. 4 2. The purpose of the project is to improve the management of the flyway and the conservation status of MSBs. Considerable funds are being invested in this process at both ends of the flyway and by the member states of the flyway. In addition to this there are global funds (e.g. the GEF) which are also being invested. However, there are only 5 years to get this system (coordinated by the RFF) up and running after which it will either collapse or be largely supported by BLI. Uncontrolled hunting in Lebanon is a major threat to what is ostensibly a multi-country good (the 37 species which cannot sustain high levels, indeed any level of hunting). It is surely pursuant upon the parties to resolve these differences for the greater good of conserving the MSBs. If this is not possible then the RFF can protect the GEF grant using the mechanism developed under recommendation No. 4. What the project has to achieve in 5 years can be done but only by targeting the resources where they can be effectively utilized. |
| **Para 154 Lebanon** | Unnecessary. What should be assessed is the quality and effective of the support provide by the RFF | The MTR has assessed the quality and effectiveness of the support of the RFF and found it to be of unusually high quality. The RFF operates without the benefits of any diplomatic status or protection and in the course of its duties has to visit countries and areas of countries where there is considerable personal risk. It is not unusual for a UNDP-GEF evaluation to acknowledge that a PMU (which is what the FRR effectively is) has worked under difficult conditions and has continued to provide support to countries where it is dangerous to travel to. |
| **Para 160 Lebanon** | No it is has been through Support to National Implementation which means the project has been executed through UNDP | The execution and implementation arrangements of the MSB are extremely confusing. The paragraph is now corrected to read:  “*Project execution in Lebanon has been through Support to National Implementation which means the project has been executed through UNDP*” |
| **Section 4.1 recommendation 4:** | How would the funds be transferred to the countries? From the RFF to UNDP or from the RFF to the birdlife partners directly? | From BLI directly to the BL Partner or from the RFF directly to the BL Partner |
| **Section 4.1 recommendation 6** | Again what would the role of UNDP be – just financial pass through? | The original Project Document provided for International NGO Execution with UNDP Jordan being the accredited GEF Implementing Agency. There were a number of reasons for deviating from this arrangement during the start-up of the project which the MTR has noted and some of those reasons are provided in the report. However, at this midpoint the MTR makes it clear that the project will not achieve its overall objective under the current management arrangements because it undermines the notion of sustainability. The use of CSOs and NGOs as a means to provide high quality conservation for birds is a model that has been proven in a number of different socio-political and ecological settings and we might surmise that it was a critical factor in the GEF agreeing to finance the project. BLI has clearly stated its intentions to continue to finance the RFF and provide high quality material and technical support to the BL Partners post project. |

**Annex 10 Technical and adaptive challenges**

**Technical challenges:**

* A technical challenge is a challenge that can be addressed with existing expertise, protocols and operations.
* Implementing solutions to technical challenges often falls to someone with the authority to address them.
* Technical training (*i.e.* using a manual and new equipment) can resolve the problem.

**Adaptive challenges:**

* Encounter situations for which solutions lie outside the current way of operation, and possibly, thinking.
* Applying existing procedures and understanding does not provide the solution needed.
* Stakeholders must be involved in developing and implementing solutions.
* Solutions lie not in the application of expertise, but rather from a process of learning and adapting.
* Addressing adaptive challenges requires trying solutions that are new and maybe quite different.
* Inherent in addressing adaptive challenges are the need to become comfortable with not knowing what the next move might be, dealing with uncertainty.
* It is necessary to think (institutionally, individually, collectively…) what we should continue to do, what we should start to do and, critically, what we might need to stop doing…
* Addressing adaptive challenges may require the transfer of *power* (the ability to make decisions and to influence future events) from one party to another.
* Normally require *expert thinking*, which is the ability to solve non-rule-based problems.
* Addressing adaptive challenges requires solutions that are new and maybe quite different.
* Inherent in adaptive work is the need to become comfortable with not knowing what the next move might be.
* Adaptive challenges require time for adaptive solutions to have an effect and stakeholders cannot expect to react too quickly because of the discomfort that comes with not knowing.

*Adapted from: Heifetz, Ronald A.; Leadership Without Easy Answers (Belknap/Harvard University Press, 1994)*

**Annex 11 Management Arrangements**

**Introduction**

The MSB project is both an extensive and complex project. It is currently performing well and having a considerable impact on the conservation status of MSBs. However, it has been broadly recognised that the existing management arrangements are both complicated and cumbersome and in some instances, although useful for project purposes, they are unlikely to provide the sort of structure necessary to ensure that the RFF survives the closure of the UNDP-GEF project in five years times. As the RFF is, as articulated in the project’s strategy (the Project Document), fundamental to the successful outcomes and achieving the objective of the project; a failure to establish a sustainable RFF will result in the project finally closing and having done a number of good things. However, these “good things” will not amount to the project’s stated objective and thus it could easily be judged to have failed.

The MTR is specifically tasked with examining the current management arrangements and determining the optimum arrangements based upon the best interests of the project (its objective and outcomes) and obviously the interests of the flyway and migratory soaring birds. Based on the conclusions of this analysis alternative arrangements for the effective implementation and execution of the second half of the project are proposed.

**Current management arrangements**

The current arrangements are largely the result of ambiguities in the original project design (the Project Document) and *ad hoc* arrangements in the different countries for a number of reasons dealt with elsewhere in the MTR report but also, in part, to deal with the weaknesses in the Project Document arrangements. To some extent these arrangements have worked and were in all instances necessary and the best decision given the chaotic circumstances in the first two years of project execution.

However, these arrangements have resulted in inefficiencies as well as undermining one of the key outcomes of the MSB project, that is; the establishment of a MSB RFF. In summary, while the current arrangements have been useful in getting the project through a difficult period they do not best serve the overall project objective and the best interests of the flyway and MSBs *per se.*

Before further discussing the current management arrangements it is important to recognise that they have been entered into in good faith by all parties as a response to the original ambiguities and weaknesses in the Project Document. While this has served a purpose and arguably at critical times it has “kept the project alive” and in many ways reflects the inevitable challenge of a multi-country project; they are far from ideal if the MSB project is to successfully achieve its outcomes and objective. Indeed, the MTR argues that, there are effectively two systems operating: one which is surface level, which is UNDP Jordan is the Implementing Agency and one that is reality, which is UNDP Jordan is Implementing Agency in Jordan and for the RFF but UNDP Lebanon and UNDP Egypt are Implementing Agencies within their respective countries. The MTR considers these arrangements to be unlike any it has encountered previously. The current management arrangements are characterised thus:

* **Project Implementation:** In theory UNDP Jordan is the Implementing Agency and is ultimately responsible for the GEF fund. In practice UNDP Egypt and UNDP Lebanon are acting *de facto* and likely *de jure* as the Implementing Agents for the MSB project in their respective countries. They report directly to the UNDP-GEF Regional Office (Bratislava) and not through UNDP Jordan. Therefore the *de facto* arrangements are:
  + UNDP Jordan has responsibility as an Implementing Agency for the Jordanian component, which is the national activities and, importantly, for the RFF.
  + UNDP Lebanon has responsibility as an Implementing Agency for the Lebanese component, which is the national activities.
  + UNDP Egypt has responsibility as an Implementing Agency for the Egyptian component, which is the national activities.
* **Project Execution:** There are two aspects to the projects execution; firstly with the execution of the RFF and secondly with the execution of the national activities (e.g. the vehicles):
  + **The RFF** and regional coordination component is through NGO execution, namely through Birdlife International with the RFF acting as the PMU for the entire project (except that it is not). The RFF/PMU has a Steering Committee comprised of UNDP Jordan, Ministry of Environment (Jordan), a representative from the African Birdlife Partnership, a representative from the Birdlife Middle east Partnership, senior programme manager-Flyways at Birdlife International, Raptor MoU Agreement Representative and the RFF Coordinator and Secretary. The RFF/PMU and Birdlife International report and account directly to the Implementing Agency (UNDP Jordan).
  + **Jordan** has national NGO execution through the national Birdlife Partner, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). There is a national Steering Committee consisting of UNDP Jordan, RFF Coordinator, national Project Manager, and national Birdlife Partner (RSCN), representative from the Ministry of Environment, representative from the Ministry of Agriculture, a representative from the Universities, representative from the Royal Rangers, representative from the Jordan Valley Authority (Under the Ministry of Water and Irrigation) and a representative from the Arab Army of Jordan. However, the national partner (RSCN) reports directly to UNDP Jordan and not to the PMU/RFF[[37]](#footnote-37). In this instance RSCN has been largely responsible for the national activities.
  + **Egypt** has national execution through the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) with a national PMU nested in the Nature Conservation Sector (NCS) which reports and accounts directly to UNDP Egypt. In this instance the PMU has been largely responsible for the national activities and has formed a strong and effective partnership with the national Birdlife Partner, the Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE). The RFF Coordinator has a position on the national Steering Committee which is composed of UNDP Egypt, national Project Manager, BirdLife Partner (NCE), three representatives from the EEAA, National Renewable Energy Authority (NREA) and the Tourism Development Authority (TDA). However, the PMU reports and accounts directly to UNDP Egypt. It is noted that these arrangements are perhaps the only arrangements because of the restrictions on Egyptian NGOs and in the event the collaboration between the PMU and the national Birdlife Partner are exemplary.
  + **Lebanon** has national execution through the Ministry of Environment with a PMU based in the Ministry. The PMU reports directly to UNDP Lebanon and there is a national Steering Committee comprised of UNDP Lebanon, national Project manager, Ministry of Environment, Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and RFF Coordinator. Notably the Birdlife Partner, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL), is not included in the Steering Committee. A waiver has been signed to allow the national Birdlife Partner (SPNL) to provide certain technical services to the project without the need for a competitive tendering process. The national Birdlife Partner has largely been responsible for providing the technical expertise to the PMU (as reflected in the PIRs).

**Original project strategy.**

In order to understand the current and future optimal project management arrangements the MTR has to revert to the Project Document and the original project strategy, that is the plan as set out in the document in order to achieve the project outcomes and objective. The original Project Document is at times confusing and overly complicated. In particular it is vague when it comes to the project management arrangements and indeed sometimes it is hard to trace the logic behind the project’s strategy. However, it is possible to reconstruct this strategy which intended to improve the conservation status of the MSBs and provide for the coordinated conservation management of the Rift Valley-Red Sea flyway. In doing this it becomes clear that there are a number of key aspects to the plan and the MTR considers that these were logical and sound and remain so today. The most important of these in relation to the management arrangements was the mode of project execution.

The project was intended to be executed by an NGO (NGO Execution Modality)[[38]](#footnote-38). This was not driven by any individual agendas or ideological concerns but because of a number of clear advantages which best served both the execution of the project and coordination of conservation efforts along the flyway and therefore was in the best interest of the thirty-seven targeted species. These are:

* A network of NGOs (specifically the Birdlife Partners) is best able to overcome individual national agendas and interests which may not necessarily be aligned to the interests of the flyway.
* NGO involvement (coordination, management, advocacy, technical capacities, etc.) is a demonstrated model for bird conservation. While this model does not necessarily lend itself to other animal groups, it seems in most instances to work well for birds.
* Birdlife has a structure which can encompass the flyway in its entirety (Birdlife International) and still have representation at the national level (Birdlife Partners).
* Birdlife Partners (with back-stopping from Birdlife International) hold considerable technical expertise.
* The model offers a number of efficiencies in project execution in particular by reducing the management and administration burden on the project which can provide cost-savings.
* The model provides the greatest flexibility for project interventions especially in relation to emerging flyway and individual country flyway issues.
* The model offers the greatest opportunities for post-project sustainability.

**Weaknesses in the current management arrangements.**

Under the current arrangements there are a number of weaknesses and inefficiencies. These can be characterised as:

* Effectively four projects operating within one project.
* Additional reporting and accounting requirements within the project.
* Undermining the role and function of the RFF.
* Reduced likelihood of post project sustainability.
* Capture of project resources for purposes weakly related to the projects focus (e.g. the MSBs).
* National interests can override the larger strategic interests of the flyway *per se.*

**Proposed revised management arrangements**

The MTR recognises that thus far the various players within the project have acted in good faith and with a view to keeping the project operational, often under very challenging conditions and that these arrangements have served the project well given that there were considerable ambiguities in the Project Document and the project was brought close to failing at an early point in its implementation.

However, circumstances have changed, the project finds itself in a much more favourable situation and it is necessary to consider the longer term objectives of the project rather than project expedience. While the project has achieved a very high standard at the mid-term it is important to stress that these gains are extremely vulnerable and indeed achieving the objective under the current arrangements is highly unlikely.

Therefore the MTR proposes the following management arrangements for the remaining half of the project based upon the projects strategy for achieving the outcomes and objectives in most efficient and effective way:

* **Project Implementation:** UNDP Jordan is the sole Implementing Agency for the project.
* **Project Execution:** Project execution is through International NGO modality (Birdlife International). Birdlife International is responsible for the RFF and national level activities are carried out through Birdlife Partners (based upon capacity assessments and agreed by national governments) where these have sufficient capacities or directly through the RFF where no such arrangements exist. The relationship between the RFF and the Birdlife Partners as well as any other entities carrying out national activities is governed by a substantive agreement to be signed by both parties. Key points:
  + The allocation of GEF funds to Birdlife Partners and other entities carrying out national activities will be at the discretion of the RFF (and UNDP Jordan as the Implementing Agency) and according to agreed criteria related to the projects outcomes and objectives.
  + The RFF will be responsible for flyway policy formulation, coordination of flyway interventions.
  + Birdlife Partners strategic plans must reflect the flyway needs as articulated through the RFF.
* **Project Execution exceptions:** Egypt represents an exception to the overall arrangements due to the current circumstances relating to non-governmental organisations and their ability to receive funds from international sources. It is the considered opinion of UNDP Jordan and Egypt, the RFF, PMU (Egypt) and national Birdlife Partner that the current arrangements must remain in place and largely unchanged for reasons beyond the control of the project. The MTR shares this view and considers that the current arrangements are the most effective and efficient way of supporting project activities in Egypt. It should be noted that these arrangements may also be necessary in a small number of flyway countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Djibouti).

**Role of the RFF**

The current role of the RFF is one which is rapidly evolving. While it was not clearly articulated in the Project Document through practice it has begun to define its roles, responsibilities and critically its importance in the flyway.

Currently most stakeholders at country level would consider two benefits from the RFF, namely:

* It provides a vehicle for funding country activities, and;
* It provides a source of qualified technical expertise.

However, the RFF has a third, and strategically more important function which is less well-appreciated or understood at this point in time and requires us to consider the flyway as a discrete system comprising of *inter alia,* the thirty-seven species, eleven countries and the relevant sectors. This third function is:

* Governance, the RFF provides a governance structure for the entire flyway. In this instance the term *governance* is used to describe the means for achieving direction, control, and coordination that determines the effectiveness of management (Eagles 2008). The purpose of the RFF is therefore to ensure that the system in its entirety is resilient (as measured by the conservation status of the thirty-seven species). Under this analysis we might consider that “resilience is determined not only by a systems ability to buffer or absorb shocks, but also by its capacity for learning and self-organisation to adapt to change” (Gunderson and Holling 2002).

Thus, despite the difficulties encountered by the project so far, there is an interesting governance model emerging which although remarkably fragile at the present time, provides a basis for determining the direction of the flyway in the future. Something which was not present at the start of the project, is not provided for in existing Conventions such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and was present but poorly articulated in the project’s design.

While this conservation gain (or global environmental benefit [GEB] in GEF-speak) is still in its infancy, remarkably fragile and heavily dependent upon the personal strengths of key individuals throughout the flyway, it does offer a beacon of hope and strengthening the RFF, ironing out the inefficiencies and inequalities, ensuring its sustainability post project are all *bona fide* project activities leading to an outcome.

**Project financing**

Country activities financed by the GEF grant will be entirely channelled through the RFF according to an agreed strategy and flyway specific needs. The GEF fund for vehicles will be assigned for the duration of the project based upon the perceived sector needs across the entire flyway and not according to the number of vehicles declared by each participating country.

The original project design envisaged the RFF attaining financial sustainability through a quasi-commercial business model. Under this model the RFF services would be chargeable and issues such as “flyway friendly” certification and accreditation of sectors would provide a source of income for the FRR.

The MTR considers that this model does not stand up to scrutiny. The reasoning behind this is detailed in section 3.3.6.1 of the main report.

Therefore the RFF will need to use some of the project resources during the remaining project lifetime to ensure its own financial sustainability using a variety of financing instruments of which certifications and charging for services can be a component but within the grounds of what is realistically possible. See Recommendation 10.



**Annex 12 Exit strategy template**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **i.) Project Products which will have been developed by the end of the project but which need follow-up for sustainability** | | | | | | | | | |
| **No** | **Planned activity** | **Description of expected results by end of project** | **Necessary follow-up in order to assure sustainability of the project intervention** | **estimation of necessary resources for implementation of the needed follow-up** | | | **Description of options for handover and transfer to third parties (projects, state partners...)** | **Additionally needed activities in order to realize handover scenario** | Status of implementation as of …..date |
| time (in months) | human resources | minimum financial resources |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ii.) Project activities which have been started but will not be finished until the end of the project** | | | | | | | | | |
| **No** | **Planned activity** | **Description of expected state of implementation by end of project** | **Necessary follow-up in order to finalize and to assure sustainability of the project intervention\*** | **estimation of necessary resources for implementation of the needed follow-up** | | | **Description of options for handover and transfer to third parties (projects, state partners...)** | **Additionally needed activities in order to realize finalization and handover scenario** | Status of implementation as of ……date |
| time (in months) | human resources | minimum financial resources |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

\* If the recommendation is to stop the implementation of individual activities, a justification for this should be given here

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **iii.) Project activities which have not been started and should no longer be started as they would not be finished until the end of the project** | | | | | |
| **No** | **Planned activity** | **Justification for no longer to implementing this activity in the frame of the project** | **Description of possibilities to recommend the implementation of this activity to third parties** | **Additionally needed activities in order to realize the takeup of proposals for implementation of the activity by third parties.** | Status of implementation as of …….date |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **iv.) Estimation of risks of recurrence of original problems tackled by the project** | | | |
| **No** | **Original problem** | **Risk of recurrence after end of project lifetime** | **Options for action to avoid recurrence after end of the project** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Status:** | |  |  |
| **Prepared by:** | |  |  |
| **Approved by:** | |  |  |

1. A report produced in 2009 for the project “Recommended Modification of Implementation Modality and Steps in Change Management Process” supports this view. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Project Document p.22, para. 41 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Project Document p.22, para. 42 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Full Project Document development. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Source: http://www.thegef.org/gef/project\_detail?projID=1028 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “This inception report will be considered as a “pre-inception report,” due to the lack of information available from the partner and vehicle assessments”. (MSB Project Inception Report April 2009, p. 5) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. There are actually twelve countries involved in the flyway (the area of migration where the birds are essentially *on passage*). Israel is not included in this project, essentially a political and expedient decision. However all twelve countries are involved in the flyway through wider global forums. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. According to their Red Data Book listing [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Revised Project Document, 2011, p. 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Source, adapted from the GEF <http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/10011> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Revised Project Document, 2011, p. 17 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Revised Project Document, 2011, Section 1.3, p. 13 - 16 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Revised Project Document, 2011, p. 25 - 28 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. A report produced in 2009 for the project “Recommended Modification of Implementation Modality and Steps in Change Management Process” supports this view. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. It is worth noting that the term ‘*double mainstreaming’* caused considerable and unnecessary confusion. Project participants had difficulty in determining how to mainstream and double mainstreaming appeared to be something new and even more difficult. In the last Mainstreaming workshop held by the project 8-10th September 2014, and after long discussions with experts it was agreed that double mainstreaming was just one of a number of options in the basket of mainstreaming and all partners agreed to drop it except where there is a very clear “vehicle”. The MTR has considerable sympathy with this view. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Revised Project Document, 2011, p. 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Project Document, 2009, p. 9, point 5 response to STAP Review [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The expansion of a project beyond its original goals and not necessarily related to the original objective. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. SMART is an acronym meaning (most commonly): Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. It owes more to objectives or targets unless indicators are very specific and introduces a number of challenges when projects are very strategic in nature and addressing an adaptive, rather than a technical, challenge. While the MSB is addressing technical challenges (e.g. radar shut-down on demand in wind farms) these are at a very detailed level of the project’s overall mainstreaming objectives. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Arguing over how many angels can dance on the head of a pin is a metaphor for wasting time debating issues of no practical value. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Revised Project Document, 2011, Section 2.4, p. 29 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Is Our Project Succeeding? A Guide to Threat Reduction Assessment for Conservation. Richard Margoluis and Nick Salafsky, Biodiversity Support Programme, Washington DC. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Revised Project Document, 2011, p. 136 and Original Project Document, 2009, p. 121 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. 9-29-05 1878 RAB Birds Prodoc 28 Sep 05 (1), p. 26 - 28 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. It should be noted that the RFF and national partner have good relations and therefore the RFF is able to play a role in the national execution. However, this arrangement is too informal in the opinion of the MTR and thus represents a considerable vulnerability and risk to the project. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. In 2011 the indicators were changed to reflect sectors and not specific, named, *vehicles.* [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. The RFF cannot ever be an organisation unless it is nested in an existing entity. BirdLife International, with its national Partners, provides such an entity; an existing governance structure, flyway country representation (in many of the countries through the BirdLife Partners), a means to finances the facility and a level of accountability, but above all, it has the best interests of the thirty-seven species using the flyway at the very heart of its decision-making. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The text remains the same in the revised Project Document, 2013, p. 61 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Revised Project Document, 2013, Section 4.1, p. 22 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Revised Project Document, 2013, Section 4.5, p. 54 - 55 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The term is used here to describe the means by which the outcomes and objective would be delivered. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/ch7-2.html [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Revised Project Document, 2013, p. 36 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. UNDP Lebanon, comments on First Draft of MTR report [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. UNDP-GEF project “CACILM: Multi-country Capacity Building Project” PIMS 3231 SLM FSP [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. The legal or ethical relationship of trust between two or more parties. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. It should be noted that the RFF and national partner have good relations and therefore the RFF is able to play a role in the national execution. However, this arrangement is too informal in the opinion of the MTR and thus represents a considerable vulnerability and risk to the project. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. A report produced in 2009 for the project “Recommended Modification of Implementation Modality and Steps in Change Management Process” supports this view. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)