  



Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in tourism sector development in jordan

An Independent Mid-Term Review



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PROJECT IDENTIFIERS

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| --- |
| Project Title: Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in tourism sector development in Jordan |
| Region/Country | Arab States/ Jordan | GEF Project ID | 4586 |
| GEF Implementing Agency | UNDP | Agency PIMS ID | 4587  |
| Other Executing Partners | Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA) |
| Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) |
| Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) |
| Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) |
| Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA) |
| GEF Focal Area | Biodiversity | GEF Budget | USD 2,700,000 |
| Submission Date | 2013 | Government Budget | USD 20,067,398 |
| Start Date: | 2014 | UNDP Budget | USD 500,000 |
| End Date: | 2018 | Other | USD 2,142,945 |
| Time Frame | 48 Months | Total Budget | USD 25,410,343 |
| Management Arrangements | NIM | GEF Budget | USD 2,700,000 |

The MTR Time Frame was from 11th October 2016 to be completed no later than 31st December 2016. The MTR team consisted of an Independent Consultant (Professor David Vousden) and the core Project Management Team, primarily Mr. Majed Hasant, the Project Manager.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Mid-Term Reviewer would like to acknowledge the professional level of preparation by the project and all of the stakeholders that has gone into the planning of this Mid-Term Review. This has been an intensive process for a quite complex project and would not have been achievable or the results and conclusions as accurate without this level of input and care.

The MT Reviewer would further like to recognise the outstanding hospitality extended to him by all parties during the in-country mission which made this intensive work process a pleasure and so memorable.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge the assistance and support given by UNDP Country Office staff in Jordan and by all of the Implementing Partners and their staff and colleagues, and especially the Project Administration and Financial Assistant. Ms. Ruba Alnoubani.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASEZ Aqaba Special Economic Zone

ASEZA Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority

APR/PIR Annual Project Review / Project Implementation Report

AWP Annual Work Plan

BIMS Biodiversity Information Management System

CBD Convention on Biological Diversity

EIA Environmental Impact Assessment

GEF Global Environment Facility

GIS Geographic Information System

LAC Local Advisory Committee

LUP Land Use Plan

METT Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool

M&E Monitoring and Evaluation

MSB Migratory Soaring Birds

MTR Mid-Term Review

MoA Ministry of Agriculture

MoEnv Ministry of the Environment

MoTA Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities

MoMA Ministry of Municipal Affairs

MoPIC Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

NBSAP National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

NGOs Non-Government Organizations

PA Protected Area

PAP Petra Archaeological Park

PCG Project Coordination Group

PCU Project Coordination Unit

PDTRA Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority

PEB Project Executive Board

PIF Project Identification Form

RSCN Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature

SEA Strategic Environmental Assessment

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT AT THE MID-TERM

The overall project management, project partnership/implementation and delivery has been of a high calibre and very professional, both by UNDP and the active Implementation Partners. There appears to be a strong sense of ownership and good interaction and trust generally between the partners and one that is growing all the time.

This project and its Partners have used various Adaptive Management approaches to keep the project on course and to achieve a good level of delivery. A strong forward momentum and impetus for the biodiversity-tourism mainstreaming process has been created and this, along with the achievements of the first half of the project, should be maintained in the second half. Furthermore, it would be appropriate then for UNDP and the national partners to aim to build on this momentum and the positive achievements through a further funding/support phase to ensure Sustainability of Biodiversity Conservation and Mainstreaming

If this level of delivery and partnership can be maintained there is every reason to expect that this project will have a high level of successful delivery at the Final Evaluation. The overall rating for the project at Mid-Term is **Satisfactory.**

The Following Ratings Tables represent 1. The standard MTR Rating Table and B. a more detailed Rating Table. Justifications are provided in the main text and the Rating Scores are defined as:

The 1-6 Scale:

6. Highly Satisfactory

5: Satisfactory

4: Marginally Satisfactory

3: Marginally Unsatisfactory

2: Unsatisfactory

1: Highly Unsatisfactory

The 1-4 Scale:

4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability

3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks

2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks

1. Unlikely (U): severe risks

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **MEASURE** | **MTR RATING** | **ACHIEVEMENT DESCRIPTION** |
| Project Strategy | 5 |  |
| Progress Towards Results |
| Objective 1 Rating | 5 | Satisfactory |
| Outcome 1 Rating | 5 | Satisfactory |
| Outcome 2 Rating | 5 | Satisfactory |
| Outcome 3 Rating | 5 | Satisfactory |
| Project Implementation and Adaptive Management | 6 | Highly Satisfactory |
| Sustainability (4 point scale) | 3 | Moderately Likely |

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| **MID-TERM REVIEW RATINGS** |
| **PROJECT DELIVERY** | **RATING** |
| **MONITORING AND EVALUATION (1-6 SCALE)** |
| M&E design at entry | 4 |
| M&E Plan Implementation | 5 |
| Overall quality of M&E | 4 |
| **IA& EA EXECUTION (1-6 SCALE)** |
| Quality of UNDP Implementation | 6 |
| Quality of Execution - Executing Agency  | 5 |
| Overall quality of Implementation / Execution | 6 |
| **ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES, EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY (1-6 SCALE)** |
| Results from Outcomes at Mid-Term Review | 6 |
| Effectiveness | 6 |
| Efficiency  | 6 |
| **SUSTAINABILITY (1-4 SCALE)** |
| Financial resources | 3 |
| Socio-political | 4 |
| Institutional framework and governance: | 3 |
| Environmental  | 4 |
| **OVERALL ASSESSMENT RATINGS** |
| PROJECT DELIVERY RATING AT MID-TERM REVIEW | 5 – Satisfactory |
| PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY RATING AT MID-TERM REVIEW | 3 - Moderately Likely |
| PROJECT RELEVANCE (R- Relevant; NR = Not Relevant | R - Relevant |
| PROJECT IMPACT (1 = Negligible; 2 = minimal; 3 = significant) | 3- Significant |

Summary and Recommendations

Summary of Ratings

The overall **Satisfactory** rating is warranted for a number of reasons. The project has shown significant tenacity and determination in keeping itself on track against some difficult constraints and a complex implementation modality. The problem the project now faces will be to maintain his same level of delivery and achievement in order to maintain this rating at the Final Evaluation. It is unfortunate that the Monitoring and Evaluation component (particularly in design ant entry and particularly related to the Results Framework) prevented the project from achieving the highest score. Of the two target areas under the Indicator Assessment that fell into the Red (not on target) one was related to inappropriate indicators and targets for one outcome and the other was the result of regional political issues driving down tourism numbers and revenue and were completely beyond the project’s control. The Sustainability Rating is **Moderately Likely** and reflect some of the uncertainties of Jordan’s geopolitical position but also recognises the significant efforts made by the project and its stakeholders to address the sustainability issue and their willingness to adopt specific targets and indicators of sustainability in the second half of the project alongside specific activities related to high-level political engagement and support beyond the project lifetime. Clearly the project is very **relevant** to the needs of the country as well as to the aims and objectives of both GEF and UNDP. The aim of the project is to reduce the negative impact that tourism is having on biodiversity in Jordan. In this context, its impact is **significant** in-countryas can be seen from the influence which the project is now having within several Ministries, in amending appropriate legislation and in the creation of new institutional structures such as the TGU (Tourism Green Unit) leading toward mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into land planning and tourism management. At the local level and at the Protected Area sites, there is also a positive impact on cultural attitudes that has strengthened the linkages between biodiversity conservation, tourism and local livelihoods as can be seen at all three demonstration sites. This includes improvements in tourism planning and management along with improved community relations and community involvement in such planning and management. Many of the threats to biodiversity that relate to tourism, as identified in the Project Document (e.g. off-road driving, camping and associated waste problems and cutting of wood, hunting, etc.) are now being brought under control through better land-use planning and protected areas management. At the national level, the National Tourism Strategy is now expected to integrate with and capture biodiversity management needs and concerns. In this respect, the project is addressing the direct and indirect threats of globally significant biodiversity which would otherwise be caused by the current and future growth of tourism.

Inevitably, there are some weaknesses and constraints that need to be addressed and these are discussed further in the section on Conclusions. But, in nearly all cases, the project stakeholders are well-aware of these and have already taken steps to address them.

A number of **Recommendations** (17 in total) are listed in Section 4.2 toward the end of this report (as well as some specific recommendations relating to the site level activities which can be found in Annex 5). The most significant ones for the long-term success and sustainability of the project can be summarised as:

* A ’Sustainability Strategy’ High Level Round-Table in order to agree on way forward for sustainability of project achievements and to review possible next implementation stage for submission to GEF
* Institutionalisation of the SEA process and harmonisation of the EIA process with supportive legislation
* The need to move ahead with Certification and ‘Green Labelling’ in the tourism sector
* Development of a new Concept for a ‘next-phase’ project focusing on Implementing the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Process and Enhancing/Restoring Biodiversity

# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of the Mid-Term Review

In summary, the Mid-Term Review seeks to address the following questions and needs:

1. Has the project (particularly its deliverables and indicators) been constructed effectively in order to address the identified threats and mitigate any impacts?
2. How is the project and its delivery progressing and what are the main challenges it is facing to achieving its objectives?
3. What action now needs to be taken within the project and beyond to overcome any hurdles and challenges and to secure the sustainability of the objectives?

The Mid-Term Review is an opportunity for the project and its stakeholders to review their progress and delivery, make appropriate changes and seek ways to ensure long-term sustainability of the project’s achievements.

## Scope and Methodology

The MTR (Mid-Term Review) aims to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve results. The MTR also reviews 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 aims to cover all activities undertaken in the framework of the project. The MT Reviewer compares planned outputs of the project to actual outputs and assesses the actual results to determine their contribution to the attainment of the project objectives. The Reviewer also reviews and assesses 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 also addresses the underlying causes and issues contributing to targets not adequately achieved. The Reviewer has strived 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 key product expected from the MTR is this Report.

This MTR was undertaken A. as a desk-top assessment of project documents, reports, monitoring assessments and various outputs from consultants, B. through direct interviews and questionnaires with stakeholders (see Annex 2 for list of persons and institutions interviewed) and C. through direct, on-the-ground observation and assessment during a two-week period in Jordan.

## 2.3 Structure of the MTR Report

The MTR Report is structured so as to cover the project description and its aims and objectives first, then to review the original Project Document and its relevance, the problems it is addressing, the stakeholders that will be involved and the expected results. The MTR Report then considers the design and formulation of the project (the Results Framework, assumptions and risks, etc.) before moving on to a discussion of the actual project Implementation process and then the actual review of the project results and achievements and the ratings and actual assessment. There is a specific section that assesses sustainability of the project and beyond and then the main Report finishes with its Conclusions and Recommendations as well as any Lessons. Appropriate Annexes are attached.

# PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND CONTEXT

## Project Start and Duration

## The project commenced in January of 2014 and is a four-year project. It is expected to close in January 2018 although it may require a short, no-cost extension in view of the somewhat optimistic targets set for a four-year period.

## 3.2 Problems that the Project sought to Address

According to the Project Document, the tourism sector poses a major threat to biodiversity and given the planned exponential growth of the sector, this threat is expected to grow significantly. Currently, tourism is concentrated at two levels: (1) in tourism regions/zones such as Petra and Wadi Rum, both of which are ecologically sensitive areas; and (2) in wider areas between these regions/zones and the existing and planned protected areas (e.g. the area surrounding Dibbin PA in Jerash Governorate and the wider territory around Wadi Rum outside the PA). These Tourism regions/zones lie in high biodiversity areas and in the proximity of several protected areas. Although few of Jordan’s current visitor intake are nature tourists *per se*, tourists do visit protected areas around the tourism regions/zones as part of their tour itinerary. The Government is seeking to expand the tourism marketing product—and will market Jordan as a destination for nature-based tourism—wilderness being a key attraction (hiking, camping and other activities). PA visitation is thus expected to grow over time.

Biodiversity is being threatened by mass tourism across the landscape as a whole, within each of the tourism regions/zones, and within protected areas (as well as planned new PA sites). The tourism footprint on biodiversity is expected to grow over time. The threat posed by tourism to biodiversity is documented in protected area management plans.

The prime *direct threats* from tourism activities to biodiversity were listed in the Project Document as the following:

**1. Hotel and tourism infrastructure development:** Development of hotels and other tourism infrastructure in ecologically sensitive areas has been leading to fragmentation and loss of habitat. The loss of connectivity between different habitat blocks poses a significant risk to biodiversity in Jordan as a whole, as well as undermining the utility of PAs as a critical storehouse of biodiversity. PAs should ideally be connected through natural and undisturbed corridors to maintain ecological processes and ensure the free passage of wildlife. Historically, there has been little or no consideration given to the cumulative impact of these development projects.

**2. High visitor numbers:** High visitor numbers in sensitive environments and protected areas lead to disturbance of the habitat and visitors’ activities have exerted extensive pressure on biodiversity from trampling, hunting, plant collection, uncontrolled trekking and climbing, etc. In Petra, which is by far the most visited tourism site in Jordan, habitat degradation has already been recorded and tourism is believed to have an impact on wildlife populations. The disturbance from tourism activities, among others, is responsible for the absence or scarcity of avifauna.

**3. Effluent discharges, litter accumulation and extensive abstraction of water**. Hotels and all tourist accommodation and camp sites as well as picnic areas generate significant wastes which often get dumped in ecologically sensitive areas. This has changed animal behaviour (e.g. waste dumps are scavenged by species such as the Red Fox) and the practice also results in the accumulation of toxic compounds in the ecosystem. A second problem arises as a result of the excessive extraction of ground water and surface water from wadis. The latter is a serious problem, as it threatens the environmental flow and associated biodiversity that supports these small, fragile but important habitats.

**4. Roads and associated development:** Roads are being developed to increase access to tourism areas. The placement of roads around tourism regions/zones is providing easy access to ecologically important areas and increasing the pressure from tourists on these areas. Unless planned to incorporate biodiversity values, this could have the inadvertent effect of increasing other threats (e.g. poaching).

**5. Encroachment by local population:** Local populations encroach on natural resources in sensitive areas and practice intensive resource use to support their livelihood needs. Local populations are using the provisioning and regulating ecosystem services to support their economies. A further increase in agriculture and pastoralist activities is expected as the local population will aim to meet increased demand for food produce from tourism establishments in the tourism regions/zones and this will cause additional pressure on biodiversity from overgrazing, loss of the vegetation cover, wood-cutting, etc. There is a need for tourism establishments to factor these impacts into supply chain management so as to mitigate the pressure on biodiversity, ecosystems and ecosystem services.

The projects achievements in addressing these threats are discussed under ‘Overall Results’ in the section on **Project Results** below

It should also be noted that Jordan has one of the lowest levels of water availability per capita in the world. With the Syrian crisis adding a dramatic population increase, and the population expected to double by 2047, meeting water demand has become even more critical. Climate change and changing precipitation patterns in the region will further aggravate the various problems and threats that have been highlighted.

## 3.3. Project Description and Immediate and Development Objectives

The aim of the project is to reduce the impact of tourism on biodiversity in Jordan by intervening at three levels. At the national level, it will develop a regulatory and enforcement framework to reduce the impact of tourism on biodiversity, centrally (upstream); components will be piloted at the local level, assessed and refined before being adopted nationally and made available for replication and up-scaling. At the regional/landscape level, the project will target public awareness and sensitivity of the value of biodiversity as a tourism drawcard and institutional capacity for planning, monitoring and enforcement so as to manage the impacts of tourism development inside and outside formally protected areas. At the Protected Area site level, the project will work to enhance capacity and management effectiveness of PAs (including revenue generation, tourism planning and management and community relations) so as to reduce impacts on protected biodiversity and benefit from nature-based tourism and ecotourism.

The long-term solution advanced under this project to address the identified threats is to change the course of tourism sector development, so as to reduce the negative externality on development. The solution is brought about through the ‘mainstreaming’ of biodiversity considerations into the process of tourism development and management.

## The project baseline indicators have been established A. within the Results Framework and B. In the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools and C. the Financial Sustainability Scorecards. These are reviewed in the appropriate sections of the Report below to assess and quantify improvements on the baseline during the first half of this project

At the broad Project Objective level, the Project Results Framework list the expected Indicators and targets:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Overall Objectives Indicators** | **Overall Objective Targets** |
| Consideration of biodiversity in plans and policies for tourism development by government, planning authorities and the private sector | At least 80% of known and available plans and policies for tourism development incorporate biodiversity priorities |
| Percentage allocation for biodiversity conservation in tourism development proposals | 100% of proposals for tourism development consider biodiversity conservation seriously |
| Hectares of landscape where impacts on biodiversity are avoided, mitigated or offset | Some 180,000 hectares covered by biodiversity-friendly land-use plans effectively preventing impact on biodiversity |
| Total annual revenue earned from tourism operations in targeted PAs | An increase of 50% or more to the following levels: Dibbin Forest Reserve - US$64,500: Wadi Rum PA - US$1,464,700: Shoubak Proposed PA - at least 50% of its operating costs at least in the beginning (N.B. noting that Shoubak has now been replaced by Petra so this target is no longer applicable) |

The Project Results Framework captures the expected results well Specifically it highlights the Outputs from the project which clearly define what these results would be:

Outcome One Outputs:

1.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for tourism development to inform biodiversity considerations in land-use planning - defining spatial areas where development should be avoided; where it may be permitted subject to management controls, and what mitigation and offset requirements are needed.

1.2 A biodiversity-friendly tourism charter including a set of standards developed tested and adopted for the MoTA certification schemes for hotels, eco-tour operators, eco-lodges and environmental camp sites.

1.3 An effective system of penalties for breaches of permit conditions in the tourism sector developed, adopted and publicized reflecting the new Biodiversity-friendly certification system.

1.4 Biodiversity guidelines for the EIA Process as it applies to tourism developments and operations with particular focus on off-site and cumulative impacts.

1.5 Economic incentives and disincentives to promote adherence by tourism industry to the reformed policies and regulation.

The actual Indicators and expected Targets for Output One are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Output One Indicators** | **Output One Targets** |
| The place of biodiversity in the legal and procedural framework for tourism planning, development and operations | An obvious and meaningful biodiversity element/s in the legal and procedural framework for tourism planning, development and operations |
| Application of the new Biodiversity-friendlyguidelines for the EIA Process | All new developments / hotels / roads/ etc. apply new Biodiversity-friendly guidelines for the EIA Process |
| Percentage of tourism establishments in projectlocalities that are biodiversity-friendly according to the MoTA Certification Scheme | At least 50% |

Outcome Two Outputs:

2.1 Biodiversity Information Management System (BIMS), founded on initial ecological surveys to inform Land-Use Plans, serve as a platform for decision-making, and as a source of up to date knowledge on biodiversity.

2.2 Comprehensive land-use plans based on BIMS and covering Jerash Governorate, PDTRA territory, the Shoubak proposed PA and its buffer zone, and the Greater Wadi Rum Landscapes/Development Zones to set development limits so as to protect biodiversity.

2.3 Biodiversity Monitoring System to update and maintain the BIMS, identify trends and ensure that any changes in biodiversity-important areas remain within acceptable limits; to include remedial measures that will be triggered by the monitoring. Include the use of indicator species as appropriate.

2.4 Improved enforcement of land use development constraints geared to protecting biodiversity.

2.5 Effective interpretation and information facilities at vantage points to inform visitors about the values and vulnerabilities of ecological resources and the consequences (ecological and legal) of not adhering to limits and regulations.

The actual Indicators and expected Targets for Output Two are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Output Two Indicators** | **Output Two Targets** |
| Extent of land area for which integrated land-use plans that deliver biodiversity benefits outside PAs are developed and under implementation | 180,000 hectares covered by integrated land-use plans |
| Capacity development indicator score for mainstreaming biodiversity in Jordan | Overall score: > 60% (over baseline score of 43%) |
| Increase in land area where threats to ecologicallysensitive areas from tourism activities are controlled | Jerash Governorate: Aleppo Pine (Pinus halepensis) Forests 6,200 haPetra Region: Hisheh Forest (Quercus coccifera) 300 haWadi Rum Landscape: Sand Dune vegetation (Haloxylon persicum) type – 8,900 ha |
| Populations of the following indicator species across the landscape (inside and outside PAs) remain stable:Jerash Governorate: Lacerta media; Petra: Vulpes cana; Wadi Rum: Caracal | No decrease over baseline values |
| Level of credibility of licensing and permitting authorities who sanction and regulate tourism developments | Enhanced credibility of licensing and permitting authorities as a result of an improved basis for decision-making arising from sound data and information and effective monitoring system |

Outcome Three Outputs:

3.1 PA Management Advisory Boards for promoting increased involvement of the private sector and local community in PA management.

3.2 Dibbin PA, Shoubak PA and Wadi Rum PA Management Plans revised to reflect the principles espoused in the new Land Use plans and the benefits from new BIMS and Monitoring System.

3.3 Visitor management capabilities (to reduce impact on biodiversity) in Dibbin, Shoubak and Wadi Rum PAs, enhanced through improved visitor facilities, better trained rangers and eco-guides, and improved management capacities, to expand visitor attractions and improve visitor experience while reducing impact on biodiversity in sensitive areas.

3.4 Business plans for Dibbin, Shoubak and Wadi Rum PAs.

The actual Indicators and expected Targets for Output Three are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Output Three Indicators** | **Output Three Targets** |
| METT scores in each of Dibbin, Shoubak and Wadi Rum PAs | Improvements expected in effectiveness in revenue generation, tourism planning and management and community relations, leading to an improvement inMETT scores of around 8-10%. |
| Financial security and sustainability of PAs | Increase the level of financial resources that are generated on site (and not reliant on government budget or development aid) to 50% |

These are discussed and reviewed in more detail in Annex 8: Review of Delivery of the Project at Mid-Term along with some Potential Risks and Additional Needs for Sustainability.

Annex 7 provides details on the three Protected Areas sites which the project is using to demonstrate and mainstream Biodiversity Conservation into Tourism Development.

## 3.4 Project Implementation Arrangements

At the National level, UNDP is the GEF Implementing Agency (IA) for the project which is being be implemented over a period of four years and will have five key Implementation Partners – the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA), the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA), and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA). Other governmental and non-governmental organizations and bodies also play important roles and be important partners as required.

The project has a Project Coordination Unit based in the UNDP Country Office. This consists of a National Project Coordinator who reports to the Project Executive Board (and whose job is to ensure cost-efficient technical and administrative project operations) and a Project Administration and Finance Assistant. The PCU also includes the Local Project Officers (one in RSCN to cover Dibbin, One in PDTRA and one in Wadi Rum)

Project Coordination Group (PCG) represent the management/technical level advice and support to the Project Manager. This meets every month. The PCG membership currently consists of:

* Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA, Amman)
* Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN, Amman)
* Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA, Wadi Musa)
* Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA, Aqaba
* Ministry of Environment
* Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA)
* Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC)

A Project Executive Board (PEB) meets every 6 months with policy-level representation to review project delivery and advise the project on next steps. The PEB is responsible for ensuring that the project remains on course to deliver products of the required quality to meet the outcomes defined in the project document. The PEB’s role will include: (i) overseeing project implementation; (ii) approving all project work plans and budgets, as put forward by the NPC, for submission to the UNDP Regional Centre in Bratislava and the GEF Unit in New York; (iii) approving any major changes in project plans or programmes; (iv) providing technical input and advice; (v) approving major project deliverables; (vi) ensuring commitment of resources to support project implementation; (vii) arbitrating any conflicts within the project and/or negotiating solutions. The PEB Membership currently consists of:

* UNDP\ Country Director
* UNDP\National Project Coordinator
* UNDP\ Environment Programme Portfolio
* Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC)

## 3.5. Main Stakeholders

The primary partners/stakeholders are also the Implementing Partners chosen for this project. These were the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA), the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA), the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA). The project is further coordinated with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (the GEF Focal Point for Jordan) and the Ministry of Environment. Both of these latter Ministries have Project Focal Points and are represented on the Project Executive Board.

The **Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA)** has the objective of activating the role of the tourism industry to highlight Jordan's attractions and to distinguish Jordan as a unique tourism destination, and in appreciation of the role of tourism to national income by generating foreign exchange earnings, and, in recognition of the important role of the private sector in investment and development. MOTA is keen on developing an advanced tourism industry that is capable of utilizing its comparative and competitive advantages as well as enhancing the tourism product and elevating the quality of tourism services to the highest international standards. Jordan has had a National Tourism Strategy from 2004-2010, from 2011-2015, and now this is being revised and updated to run until 2019. The Ministry's mission focuses on accomplishing a number of strategic objectives of the Ministry, which can be summarized as i) Develop an advanced tourism industry capable of utilizing its comparative and competitive advantages through highly developed infrastructure facilities and superstructure services, ii) Develop archaeological and tourism sites and resources to enhance the tourism product, extend tourist length of stay achieve higher, tourism revenues and create new job opportunities, iii) Expand the role of the Private Sector in tourism investment and capital attraction within a framework of mutual cooperation between the public and the private sectors, iv) Upgrade the quality of tourism services to the highest international standards, v) Develop tourism awareness of the Kingdom's culture, heritage, civilizations, and archaeological resources within the framework of sustainable tourism development in harmony with local communities and non-governmental organizations, vi) Strengthen the Institutional setup of the tourism sector by upgrading legislation, laws, by-laws, regulations and human resources' development, vii) Establish and lead marketing and promotion campaigns in international and regional markets, strengthen international cooperation and promote domestic tourism.

The **Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA)** supervises all activities related to the local administrative issues of the municipal councils in terms of providing services and all regulatory issues, as well as the implementation of local development projects, and the coordination of the activities and plans of these councils, to be in line with developmental issues in the entire Kingdom. The Ministry also functions as the technical, financial and administrative advisor for all the municipal councils, and supervises, through its apparatus and teams, the action of the councils and the local organizations to make sure that their actions are in line with the current laws and regulations. The major duties of the Ministry can be summarized as i) Establishing, supporting and developing local councils, ii) Preparing urban studies within the framework of regional planning in order to realize the desired organizational, housing, services, and developmental situation, iii) Preparing the organizational structural plans for cities, villages and housing areas, and assisting in the preparation of detailed plans or their amendment for all cities and villages in the Kingdom, as well as conducting the necessary surveys and field studies, iv) Finally, the Ministry is considered a link between the Cabinet, the ministries and the other institutions on one hand and the local councils on the other hand. MoMA has an important role in the project as it is responsible for adopting Land Use Plans as well as enforcing them.

The **Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA)** is a legal, financial and administrative independent Authority, founded in 2009 and aims to develop the regions tourism, economy, social and cultural aspects and identity and to contribute to local community development. The Authority is managed by a board of commissioners that consists of five members including the president and vice president with a member who is authorized to manage the Petra Reserve. The members are appointed by the Prime Ministry and approved by His Majesty King Abdullah. The Main PDTRA objectives include to i) administrate and supervise the Petra Region, ii) Manage and develop the tourism industry in Petra and coordinate with national and international entities that are related to the economic sector, iii) Provide a desirable investment environment to engage in various economic activities, iv)Contribute to the development of comprehensive strategies for the protection, maintenance and restoration of archaeological sites, in coordination with the Department of Antiquities, v) Identify the areas and sites of heritage value in the region, which can be used for tourism purposes, vi) Enhance the social status for the local committee and private institutions, and provide support to the traditional crafts projects and the tourism industry, vii) Protect the environment in the region, including water resources, natural resources and biodiversity, by setting the standards, rules and regulations, viii) Develop plans for human resource development. PDTRA is responsible for managing the Petra Archaeological Park as well as the newly-created Protected Area and its Buffer Zone.

**RSCN (Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature)** was established in 1966 as an NGO under royal charter. One of its primary missions was to establish a network of protected areas. It has approximately 300 staff and 90% of its funding comes from outside of government (tourism, protected areas fees, handicrafts, etc. and a Trust Fund). RSCN manages nine protected areas within Jordan (all PAs except Wadi Rum although this PA was originally established by RSCN but now falls under the jurisdiction of ASEZA) and have developed effective capacity and expertise for this function over the decades. They maintain a good relationship with MoEnv with the latter being the ‘policy’ body for biodiversity and environment and RSCN providing advice and expertise in these areas. RSCN also maintains a good working relationship with MoTA and was one of the pioneers of the overall eco-tourism concept in Jordan. This was reflected through a very early GEF-funded project which supported Jordan and RSCN in the development of the Dana protected area. One of the sites being addressed by this current mainstreaming biodiversity project (Dibben) was also established by RSCN through GEF support and funding. Within the context of project delivery, RSCN is responsible for the Dibbin pilot site and for developing and hosting the BIMS (Biodiversity Information Management System).

The **Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA)** is the financially and administratively autonomous institution responsible for the management, regulation, and the development of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ). It was inaugurated in 2001 as an initiative by the government of Jordan to ensure that Aqaba’s commercial and cultural prominence develops to be a regional hub for trade, tourism, and culture. Six ministerial- level commissioners, each responsible for a major area of regulatory or operational activity, govern the ASEZ. ASEZA is a service -oriented organization offering one-stop assistance covering all investment needs. In 2002, ASEZA adopted a comprehensive Master Plan that encompasses development activities in the Zone for the promotion of portal, urban, tourist, commercial, academic and other investment sectors. Developed planning covers five special areas: Aqaba Town, the Port Areas, the Coral Coastal Zone, the Southern Industrial Zone and the Airport Industrial Zone. The Master Plan aims at preserving natural resources within the construction frame. It comprises several zones and reserves for the protection of Aqaba’s cultural, archaeological, historical and natural heritage and diversity. Areas include: Five environmental zones, coral reserves, archaeological reserves, natural area reserves and a Beach Protection Zone> ASEZA oversees the management of the Wadi Rum World Heritage Site and Protected Area.

The **Ministry of Environment** has a wide responsibility but a limited availability of manpower. It deals with the Convention on Biodiversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, and Water Resources Management. MoEnv has a Memorandum of Understanding with RSCN for the management of protected areas in Jordan and receives monthly reports on this subject. MoEnv was not originally identified in the Project Document as an Implementing Partner and was not directly involved in the design of the Project. However, MoEnv is now a fully engaged stakeholder, sits on the Project Executive Board (PEB) and the Project Coordination Group (PCG).

The **Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC)** is responsible for the planning and coordination of all internationally funded and supported projects in Jordan. It aims to promote a culture of excellence and good governance within Jordan, along with sustainable development and improvement in accordance with best practices.

One gap in the stakeholder involvement was noted by existing active stakeholders and that was the absence of direct involvement by and with the Ministry of Agriculture. This Ministry would be able to represent livestock owners and help to address both the over-grazing issue as well as wood-cutting concerns. It was also noted that there should be more involvement in the project activities and objectives from the private sector.

# FINDINGS

## Project Strategy

## Project Design

**Country Ownership**

Most stakeholders interviewed agreed that there was strong country ownership but only up to a certain level within government and that there was now a need for a concerted effort to raise more awareness and ‘buy-in’ at the higher policy level. At the management level, it was felt that there is now good coordination across the various Ministries and across the Implementing Partners and that much of this was a direct result of the presence of the project. It would also help to raise awareness among communities and the general population. In this context, some form of briefing process for the media should be considered.

One problem that arose in relation to the Land Use Planning process was the lack of access by the consultants to land ownership information and related GIS mapping. Clearly, this information is crucial to the LUP process and this has delayed and constrained this process. However, when this was discussed with MoMA it became clear that this was a restriction imposed on MoMA by the Land Department in giving them details of land ownership. MoMA had to sign a formal Agreement stating that they would NOT share this information with any third party. GEF expects co-financing contributions from the country in a project of this nature and, where these cannot be actual funding by way of cash contributions, they should be by way of in-kind contributions and assistance. In fact, MoMA had made no commitment to co-financing for the project which, in itself, is a concern in view of the pivotal role in Land Use Planning (and many other aspects of the project) and the fact that the LUPS will be of direct use and value to MoMA. This contribution by way of information and satellite data would have been both welcome and appropriate and raises concerns about ownership within one of the main Implementing Partners. In fairness, there does seem to have been less than an effective interaction both ways between the consultants and MoMA and it should be recalled that MoMA is the government body responsible for Land Use Planning and, as such, should be fully involved in any such processes, regardless of whether they are being undertaken ‘outside’ of government.

That having been said, during the life of the project, stakeholders have noted a growing improvement in interaction between the various ministries and Departments. In the past, the EIA process has been very inadequate with no-one screening tourism proposals effectively for the environmental impacts or requiring them to seek approval from MoEnv. Now an EIA review committee meets when needed (and includes a representative from MoTA as well as RSCN). Furthermore, there now appears to be a much stronger interaction between the Biodiversity Conservation Unit in MoEnv and the SEA and TGU development initiatives.

One valuable step now would be to strengthen the coordination between the high-level management and leadership at the various sites (e.g. Petra, Wadi Rum, Aqaba) as part of the land-use planning process so that more rational, joint planning could take place. This has been discussed by the PEB (Project Executive Board) and agreed as an objective that would be worth pursuing. Furthermore, the project Management Committee as well as the Project Executive Board have both proven to be of significant value in coordinating efforts and in bringing the main stakeholders and partners together. It would be valuable to try and find a way of ‘institutionalising’ these bodies and this could be considered as a possible function that the TGU could maintain.

it is clear from all of the stakeholders that the project is viewed in a very positive light and that the project management is seen to be very supportive. It was noted several times that the project has contributed significantly to ‘team-building’ between the various partners and has instilled a sense of sharing and trust.

Jordan has had a National Tourism Strategy from 2004-2010, from 2011-2015, and now this is being revised and updated to run until 2019. While the Government recognizes that tourism development can have an adverse impact on biodiversity, it is also cognizant of the opportunity which Ecotourism and NBT can provide as an incentive for biodiversity conservation (in particular by providing an economic incentive to maintain and restore natural habitats and generating financing). Through this project, the Government is seeking to reduce the negative impact of tourism on biodiversity and optimize the biodiversity ‘dividend’. In doing so, it intends to meet its national development priorities as well as its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The project is in-line with the conservation goals outlined in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan prepared in 2003 and contributes to all four cross-cutting priorities specified under the Plan, namely, 1) The need for well-documented biodiversity data; 2) The need for an integrated land-use planning mechanism; 3) Capacity development and technical training; and, 4) Public awareness initiatives. The project is also a clear response to the key priority recommendations of Jordan’s 4th National Report on the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity which was submitted to the CBD in 2009 and which indicated the need *“to integrate biodiversity in the strategies and development plans of the different productive sectors…in order to ensure coherence and unity of the targets and the planned actions…*” for conservation. The NBSAP has identified the need for a move towards ecotourism and for environmental standards and guidelines for tourism projects. It recognized the threat of tourist developments to sustainability and biodiversity and proposed a number of actions. According to the NBSAP, environmental standards have not been widely introduced into Jordan’s tourism industry and, where they exist, they are not rigorously applied. The standards that are of most concern to biodiversity are the location of buildings and infrastructure, wastewater treatment and general site operations (the project will address these through land use planning and capacity building for compliance and enforcement).

Mainstreaming

According to the UNDP Country Programme Action Plan for 2013-2017, the UNDAF focuses on four main outcomes, these being Systemic Reform, Social Equity, Youth and Environment. MTRS and evaluations need to assess how projects are successfully mainstreaming other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and women's empowerment. Gender equality is a high priority.

There is evidence that the project is having positive effects at the community and tribal level in the context of income generation, improved awareness of biodiversity values (especially in relation to sustainable tourism). Meeting with Community Advisory Boards demonstrated strong support for the Project Objectives and a strong understanding of the biodiversity/ecosystem values that relate to protected areas and how this links into sustainable tourism revenues. This has led to support from the local communities and tribes-people in their involvement in natural resource management. The concept of the need for buffer zones around the protected areas if firmly established at the local level and understood and supported.

In terms of Biodiversity conservation as a practice, the entire project focuses on mainstreaming of biodiversity into tourism and tourism planning. The project does not realistically aim to contribute in any way to disaster preparedness

Gender mainstreaming, however, has not been a focus or a successful activity. UNDP considers gender equality and the empowerment of women to be at the heart of its development mandate. Gender equality is a matter of human rights and UNDP also considers it to be a driver of development progress. The project Document does address gender equality in its design and notes that, because activities that bring them in direct contact with tourists are regarded as inappropriate, many women said that the production of handicraft and other self-made products would be the most suitable income generating activity for them. Even women with high education levels are struggling to find adequate jobs within the region. A major part of the population in all communities shows a desire to be involved in tourism and to either attract tourists to their communities or at least to find reasonably well-paid employment opportunities in tourism enterprises. Women see opportunities for themselves in selling their handicraft products (jewellery, souvenirs, woollen clothing, carpets, etc.) to tourists or their agricultural products (grain, meat, milk products, fruit and vegetables, etc.) to hotels and restaurants. However, currently both of these market opportunities are not well organized yet and therefore bring only very limited benefit to the local population.

According to the Project Document, this project will focus on engendering the active participation of women in these efforts through collaboration with community-based women’s associations, aiming to reduce the rates of women’s unemployment in the tourism regions/zones to reach at least the national standard of 25% (the unemployment rate of women in the Petra region is 60%). The Project is not currently addressing gender issues directly and gender empowerment and engagement is sometimes difficult to measure in a project. However, it was well-noted by the Reviewer that nearly 50% of the membership of the Project Management Committee are female and the Reviewer noted a similar percentage balance when attending training and briefing sessions. Furthermore, many of the stakeholder representatives that the Reviewer met were female and were very supportive and passionate about the project and its objectives. However, according to the PIR, no actual gender or social assessment has been carried out up until the MTR. Yet, the project maintains that, although it is not directly addressing gender related issues, gender issues are greatly integrated into all of the project’s activities.

Some of the positive aspects of the project in relation to gender issues include:

* The project is witnessing more and more direct involvement of Woman, this can be evidence by the fact that more than 50% of the project consultants and project assignment leaders are women.
* The SEA team leader is woman
* The LUP team leader for Rum site is a woman
* LUP team leader for Dibbin site is a woman
* LUP consultant for Petra site is women;
* The PCG is headed now by a woman (MoMA focal point) and three out of five members of PCG are women.

The project is working with other UNDP projects in order to involve Petra local women association in order to empower them and be able to produce some product that highly demanded by tourism sector in Petra area.

**Relevance of Project and Objectives/Deliverables = RELEVANT**

The NBSAP 2020 has adopted a set of strategic goals to achieve its vision. These include:

**On good governance and mainstreaming**. Enhance the national governance of biodiversity as a main mechanism for national mainstreaming.

**On the response to human-induced pressures**: Reduce the impacts of pressures on biodiversity including habitat destruction, political conflicts, and tourism.

**On protected areas, priority species and genetic resources**: Conserve and protect priority ecosystems, species and genetic resources of Jordan at the in-situ and ex-situ levels.

**On ecosystems services and climate change:** Enhance the national understanding of dryland ecosystem benefits to national resilience, economic sustainability and local livelihoods.

**On knowledge management and monitoring**: Develop biodiversity knowledge as the main tool for cultural reform, informing policy and decision making support.

The overall project Objective and the activities and deliveries within each Outcome relate directly to these goals. The NBSAP also recognises the need for a Sustainable Tourism Strategy to be adopted at the earliest opportunity which should recognise the need for biodiversity conservation articles to be adopted for tourism master-planning and development along with regulations for ecotourism development being adopted at all levels

The National Tourism Strategy (currently under revision) does not currently make any reference to biodiversity or even protected areas. It only mentions Petra but it does not mention Wadi Rum or Dibbin, despite the fact that the former is also a World Heritage Site. This seems to be a massive oversight on behalf of MoTA in view A. the need to try and revive a struggling tourism industry in Jordan and B. the tourism potential that can be linked into these protected areas and biodiversity in general and which could increase revenues and keep tourists in the country for extra days while improving their overall experience. However, it is noteworthy that the UNDP GEF Bits Project has created a consultancy for a ‘Strategic Environmental Assessment for Jordan Tourism Strategy 2015-2019’ which will run between 2016 and 2017 for 12 months and will also provide technical support, mentoring and on-job training to the newly established Tourism Green Unit (TGU) within the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA). The SAE being undertaken by the BITS Project will aim to feed into and become an integral part of the next 5-year National Tourism Strategy.

The project objectives and deliverables are no doubt relevant to both country needs and the aims of UNDP and GEF. The project outcomes are contributing to the national development priorities and plans. The objectives and expected outputs are all practicable and feasible within the project lifetime. One of the constraints which is discussed further in this MT Review is the fact that much of the enabling legislation was not in place when the project started and the project itself has had to make plans to try and promote and encourage the development of such legislation or modification to existing legislation. This still remains somewhat of a risk to sustainability and is, to some considerable extent, beyond the project’s control. For the project to achieve the necessary level of sustainability it will depend on this legislative support being in place with appropriate institutional capacities. On the other hand, the project is well-aware of this constraint and the need to address this as a matter of urgency and the creation of the Tourism Green Unit is one important adaptive response by the project in dealing with this situation. In this context the project can be considered to be **Relevant**.

**Lessons from other Relevant Projects in the same Focal Area (have they been incorporated into the project design?)**

The Project Document makes reference to ‘drawing upon lessons and good practices already identified to inform the development of policy, legal and other tools for mainstreaming biodiversity in the tourism sector’. This was particularly in relation to the World Bank/GEF Project on “Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Jordan Rift Valley”. The Independent Evaluation Group review of this project did list some lessons

A. Integrated Ecosystem Management can be an effective way of conserving ecosystems and biodiversity. The project’s holistic approach to land use, combining ecological, social and economic actions, was largely effective in creating the Protected Areas and Special Conservation Areas

B. Land tenure and land rights issues should be identified and resolved as early as possible in choosing and preparing for a protected area site

Whether these lessons were deliberately incorporated into the UNDP GEF BITS project is not clear but certainly this current project is using both of these approaches.

The stakeholders assured the MT Reviewer that lessons from previous projects of a similar nature were incorporated into the Project Design but, in the absence of GEF Evaluation Reports (other than the one mentioned above) on other projects (see discussion below under Linkages Between Project and Other Interventions) which would contain such lessons, it is not possible to confirm this.

**Planned Stakeholder Participation**

The Project Stakeholder Analysis in the original Project Document lists the important stakeholders along with the expected type of partnership they would share with the Project. This includes the Ministry of Environment. It seems that there was almost no involvement of the Ministry of Environment in the project formulation and design, which is surprising in view of MoEnv’s role and focal nature in relation to biodiversity. However, this has since been rectified by the Project Coordinator and the Project Management Committee and MoEnv does now play a full and active role in project activities and delivery. Otherwise, the Stakeholder listing and the clear description of stakeholder roles and participation appears to be adequate for the Project Document. The Project Document notes that the draft Stakeholder Plan would be reviewed and strengthened by the project team and, based on this review, MoEnv was then added to the Project Coordination Group

**Assumptions and Risks**

The project strategy is based on the assumption that mainstreaming will lead to a long-term solution to the impact of tourism on biodiversity in Jordan. The Project Document makes the assumption that, for this to happen, mainstreaming will require the following:

1. Effective policy and procedural framework: focus of one of the project outcomes

2. Capacity to implement and manage the process:

3. Awareness, sensitivity and understanding

The first two are reasonable assumption as they are the basis of project interventions (Outcomes 1 and 2). The third is not quite so strongly or precisely addressed as an Outcome but it is still covered within the Outputs of Outcome 2 (Effective interpretation and information facilities at vantage points to inform visitors about the values and vulnerabilities of ecological resources and the consequences

(ecological and legal) of not adhering to limits and regulations) and Outcome 3 (Visitor management capabilities (to reduce impact on biodiversity) in Dibbin, Shoubak and Wadi Rum PAs, enhanced through improved visitor facilities, better trained rangers and eco-guides, and improved management capacities, to expand visitor attractions and improve visitor experience while reducing impact on biodiversity in sensitive areas).

The Project Document provides a comprehensive and realistic list of potential risks and the proposed impacts and predicted livelihoods all appear to be equally realistic and appropriate. The Table under **Section 4 – Findings** provides a Review of Risks From Inception To Mid-Term Review.

**Replication Approach**

The Project Document notes that ‘At the national level, it will develop a regulatory and enforcement framework to reduce the impact of tourism on biodiversity, centrally (upstream); components will be piloted at the local level, assessed and refined before being adopted nationally and made available for replication and up-scaling’. It also briefly discusses the replication of site level experiences and notes that ‘Replication will be achieved through the direct replication of selected project elements and practices and methods, as well as the scaling up of experiences. Each project output will include the documentation of lessons learnt from implementation of activities under the output, and a collation of the tools and templates (and any other materials) developed during implementation. The Project Coordinator will ensure the collation of all the project experiences and information. This knowledge will then be made accessible to different stakeholder groups to be emulated beyond the project “boundaries”, replicated, and lead to better support for decision-making processes in biodiversity-important areas’. This may well be happening but the original Project Design does not include any specific ‘replication’ activities that would ensure this is the case and, therefore, there are no specific targets or indicators for this in the Results Framework. The Reviewer recommends that the project should convene a Lessons Learned and Best Practices workshop for the purpose of capturing the valuable results from the three sites and making them available to other Protected Areas and Buffer Zones as well as for MoMA to use in other Land Use Planning activities.

**UNDP Comparative Advantage**

The presence of the UNDP Country Office has been an important factor in the effective management and deliver and of the project activities. The presence of 5 Implementing Partners has required the PCU to be located within an ‘impartial’ institution and the UNDP Country Office has provided this facility.

UNDP has also been able to provide useful UNDP and UN-related reports to the project and the stakeholders on green tourism and sustainable tourism which the consultants developing the Biodiversity/Tourism Charter have found to be very useful.

All the stakeholders interviewed during this Evaluation were highly complementary about the level of input and the effectiveness of the management from the Implementing Agency toward this project.

**Linkages between Project and other Interventions within the Sector**

There was general agreement among the stakeholders that coordination between the various funding and implementing agencies and bodies in Jordan was poor and that a lot of duplication was taking place between various projects either running in parallel or in sequence. One example here would be the USAID project on developing a Sustainable Tourism Strategy and the current UNDP GEF Project. It would appear that, despite the value of certain activities under the UNDP GEF project (e.g. SEA, EIA strengthening, Land Use Planning), these were not originally being captured in the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and the UNDP GEF Project and its management and consultants have had to work hard to create stronger coordination and interaction with USAID and between the two projects. This should be addressed and is correctly the responsibility of the Government to ensure proper and effective coordination between these projects as the beneficiary of the funds and the support. It would not be appropriate for any one funding or implementing body to take the lead in such coordination activities.

Jordan is one of the most ‘water-poor’ countries in the world and the growing demand on water resources along with poor wastewater management impacting on aquifers is affecting the long-term sustainability of biodiversity in the country. USAID programs in Jordan originally focused on infrastructure, expanding and rehabilitating water supply systems (wells, cisterns, springs, irrigation canals), and training hundreds of water experts. In later decades, USAID built and renovated several water networks and wastewater treatment plants, and supported a desalination plant near the Dead Sea to provide additional drinking water to over one million of Amman’s residents. Today, USAID’s assistance helps Jordan improve water infrastructure, reduce water losses, conserve Jordan’s precious water resources, and use them as efficiently as possible. Since 2000, USAID’s support to the water sector in Jordan has totalled more than $700 million. A Water Reuse and Environmental Conservation Project (WRECP) that has now finished worked with communities and partner organizations to find comprehensive solutions to a number of these wide-ranging challenges. Major undertakings included wastewater treatment plants, agricultural training programs, and water sector regulatory reform. Current USAID projects in Jordan focusing on water and wastewater management include upgrading of wastewater treatment, a hydroponic green farming initiative and a further water and wastewater infrastructure project.

USAID has supported a number of Jordanian tourism development projects since 2005 and currently has a five-year $36 million project in Jordan focusing on Building Economic Sustainability through Tourism. It has also invested over $170 million into the development of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone and has been involved in the Petra Region since the founding of the Archaeological Park in 1968. Although there were originally no physical linkages or mechanisms built into either the USAID Projects or the UNDP GEF Project, the latter does make reference to the need for such coordination and this has slowly been resolved leading to improved contact between these related projects. However, this clearly still needs strengthening and it should be the responsibility of the appropriate Ministries to orchestrate and ensure such coordination, sharing of lessons and best practices and general interaction between these donor-funded projects.

Jordan has also recently completed formal negotiations with the World Bank for a $250 million loan to reform the water and energy sectors. Furthermore, the World Bank has undertaken a GEF project for 12.7 million between 2007 and 2013 on ‘Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Jordan Rift Valley’. The project’s objectives were to assist Jordan in: (i) implementing generally accepted principles of integrated ecosystem management pertaining to land use in the Jordan Rift Valley (which was rated as being ‘Substantial’ in its achievement at closure); and (ii) establishing a network of integrated ecosystem management for protected areas and special conservation areas in the Jordan Rift Valley (which was rated as being ‘Modest’ in its achievement at closure). Two of its substantial ‘lessons learned’ are reflected in the activities of the UNDP GEF BITS Project.

The UNDP/GEF Project on “Mainstreaming Conservation of Migratory Soaring Birds (MSB) into Key Productive Sectors Along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway” ran from 2008 through to 2012 and has now been completed. This project funding of a little under $12 million ($6.24 million from GEF) and was executed by Birdlife International. The Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway is the second most important flyway for migratory soaring birds in the world and the most important route of the Africa-Eurasia flyway system. The overall project goal was 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 was that conservation management objectives and actions for migratory soaring birds were mainstreamed effectively into the hunting, energy, agriculture, waste management and tourism sectors along the Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway, thereby making this a safer route for soaring birds. The initial phase of the project had three areas of focus, i) development of the Flyway as a concept to increase awareness and promote ownership of MSBs, ii) building capacity of key stakeholders to effect double mainstreaming; and iii) the actual delivery of double mainstreaming to incorporate MSB issues into targeted sectoral programmes. Unfortunately, there is no record on the GEF website of any evaluation so it is not possible to see how effective this project was or how it could then link in with some of the obvious complementary activities of the current biodiversity mainstreaming project. A follow-up project has recently been submitted to GEF by UNDP and Birdlife International to be funded for a further $14 million ($3.5 million from GEF) but, again, there are no documents available for this on the GEF website. The MT Reviewer would strongly recommend coordination between these two UNDP GEF projects however and, once the GEF endorsement is given, the projects should meet to discuss how they can best collaborate to deliver biodiversity mainstreaming in tourism and other possible sectors.

UNDP has also implemented another GEF Project entitled “Mainstreaming Marine Biodiversity Conservation into Coastal Zone Management in Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ)”. This was approved for implementation in 2011 and is listed as having closed on 30th June 2014 according to the GEF website. There are no documents available on the GEF website, but the MT Reviewer understands that the Terminal Evaluation was undertaken in 2015. This was funded for $8.3 million (GEF Medium Sized Grant of $950,000). Unfortunately, there are no documents available on the GEF website which can provide information in the context of any Evaluations or Reviews. However, the UNDP website did provide an update on this now-completed project. Its four main components included 1. Development and improvement of knowledge-management systems for coastal and marine biodiversity, 2. Promotion of biodiversity friendly investment and development, 3. Improving institutional capacity for integrated coastal zone management, and 4. Biodiversity conservation and coral reef protection.

Clearly, there was some potential for complementarity and linkages between this ‘Mainstreaming Marine Biodiversity into CZM’ project and the current’ Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Tourism Sector Development’ and these are discussed in the Project Document. All of the activities and accomplishments from the Marine Biodiversity Mainstreaming project will impact positively within the tourism sector but particularly valuable ones are i) The development of an Ecotourism Plan for Aqaba to assist in taking pressure off the coastline and ii) building the capacity of more than 200 staff in the field of integrated Coastal Zone Management.

IFAD has implemented another GEF project that has focused on “Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Silvo-pastoral and Rangeland Landscapes in Pockets of Poverty in Jordan.” This project started implementation in 2011 and closed earlier this year in 2016. The full funding allocated was $4.38 million with GEF covering $1 million as a Medium-Sized Project. The primary objective of this project was to mainstream biodiversity conservation in silvo-pastoral and rangelands in the pockets of poverty in Jordan through the promotion of an enabling environment (policies, capacity, knowledge, and market incentives) that will be beneficial to local livelihoods and yield global environmental benefits. The project also aimed to promote innovative pilots for PES and investment support to biodiversity conservation. Unfortunately, there is no record on the GEF website of either an MTR or a Final Evaluation, but as this project has just closed it would still be of value for the current UNDP GEF BITS project to approach IFAD and discuss any overlaps or complementary/mutual lessons and best practices.

The World Bank has implemented a GEF project focusing on supporting sustainable livelihoods and enhance ecosystem services through participatory approaches in selected areas of the Jordan Badia ecosystem. The Jordan Badia is a desert ecosystem which spans across 80 percent of the country’s area. This ‘Badia Ecosystem and Livelihoods Project (BELP)’ was designed to enhance the sustainability of the Badia ecosystem as a whole and its communities’ livelihoods by capitalizing on the Badia’s natural and cultural assets where they are most prevalent. This project has been funded for a total of $14.7 million with GEF contributing $3.3 million. Implementation began in 2012 and the Project will run until mid-2017. This means there is still an opportunity for the UNDP GEF BITS to communicate and coordinate with this project where appropriate.

THE MTR strongly recommends that the UNDP GEF BITS project seeks out relevant ‘sister’ projects that are focusing on related issues of biodiversity or environmental flow, etc. and shares lessons and best practices as well as strategizing with them for future work and shared activities.

Some of the current stakeholders were involved in the original design and were able and willing to discuss with the MT Reviewer regarding the original design of the project and whether it was still ‘fit-for-purpose’. It is notable that MoEnv was absent from the design phase and from inclusion as a partner in the original Project Document which would seem to be an unfortunate oversight in the design phase. They are, however, full-engaged stakeholders at the time of the MTR. One of the original sites selected, and identified in the Project Document (Shoubak) was removed as a Protected Areas demonstration site at the time of Project Inception and with the full agreement of the Project Management Board, and replaced by the Petra Protected Areas site. The Mid Term Reviewer understands from the Project Management and from discussions with other stakeholders that this was because there were delays and designation issues with the Shoubak PA site and the community in the area were not ready to support such a designation, whereas Petra, as a PA and Buffer Zone , was about to be put forward for designation and therefore constituted a more realistic site for the demonstration of the Project’s objectives and for the intended Outcome 3 addressing improved management effectiveness. This has since been proven to be a wise decision as the designation of Petra PA and Buffer Zone has now (at the time of the MTR) been formally approved by MoEnv and is just waiting final approval by the Prime Minister. During the MTR, most stakeholders agreed that the sites currently being addressed by the project are appropriate.

## **Analysis of Results Framework/LogFrame**

The Results Framework was reviewed for its logic and to ensure that the indicators selected fit under the SMART criteria:

Specific: The Indicators themselves may not be specific but most of the targets have some specific figures or percentages

Measurable: Where figures are provided then most of the targets are measurable. Some are neither Measurable or Specific (see below)

Achievable: Yes, in nearly all cases they are achievable except to the Indicators and Targets related to tourism revenues (see below)

Result-orientated: Most Indicators and Targets are result-orientated except for those related to Output 3 – Tourism Revenues which are not directly related to biodiversity mainstreaming and could have been made more specific and appropriate

Time-bound: Although the targets and indicators are time-bound, all relate to End-of-Project which does not allow for effective review of delivery at the Mid-Term (See comments below)

The following specific conclusions and recommendations were reached by the MT Reviewer regarding the Results Framework:

GENERAL

The only time-bound Indicators or targets in this RF are the ‘End-of-Project’ Targets. Project Results Frameworks such as these would be much more valuable as a monitoring tool if they included both Mid Term and End-of-Project Targets and Indicators

Some of the **End-of-Project Targets** are not effectively Measurable or Specific i.e**. *100% of proposals for tourism development consider biodiversity conservation seriously***and ***An obvious and meaningful biodiversity element/s in the legal and procedural framework for tourism planning, etc***. Both of these examples are highly subjective and more specific and measurable criteria should have been included.

UNDER THE PROJECT OBJECTIVE

As mentioned above, it is very difficult to measure an abstract like ‘seriously’ as a percentage. This is highly subjective to individual opinion and more specific target(s) would have helped such as “100% of tourism development proposals include biodiversity conservation as an EIA criteria and include at least 5% of funding costs in support of biodiversity sustainable management and monitoring”.

Under the Indicator **on Total annual revenue earned from tourism operations in targeted PAs**, A target increase of 50% or more for each PA is not, in itself, a valuable indicator of biodiversity mainstreaming within the tourism sector. It could, in fact, be creating a greater impact/threat to biodiversity at the PA if, for example, visitor numbers exceed carrying capacity. Again, more specific wording would have helped along the lines of “percentage of revenues from tourism at PA that is being directly used to support biodiversity conservation [with examples] increases by....”

UNDER OUTCOME 1

With reference to the **Indicator** noting **Application of the new biodiversity-friendly guidelines for the EIA process** - the **Target** would have been more effective if it were more specific in identifying the existing problem (which is too many EIA approaches and structures within government and various sectors which need harmonising) and included more precise wording for a development of a **Single EIA Structure/Criteria agreed by MoEnv to be used by all parties.**

UNDER OUTCOME 2

Some of the **Indicators** are inappropriate and others could be more valuable. The Three-lined Lizard (*Lacerta media)* is not an effective monitoring species as it is very difficult to locate/identify and its habitat type is more important than the species. The Persian Squirrel (*Sciurus anomalus*) would be a more appropriate and easily monitored indicator species. It may also be more appropriate to consider habitat type (e.g. Pinus forest) by extent and by actual biodiversity of species as a better indicator, especially if the BIMS is now effectively populated with data and will be the subject of regular monitoring. **No Decrease in Biodiversity status over Baseline Values as defined in BIMS** may be a more appropriate target then.

The **Target** of **Ecological surveys that will be carried out at the beginning of the project and updated at least twice in the life of the project** would seem to be optimistic in view of the time and effort involved in the collection of baseline data for BIMS. It would be more appropriate to refine this statement to read **Ecological surveys that will be carried out at the beginning of the project with clearly scheduled monitoring plans and programmes based on appropriate indicators.**

UNDER OUTCOME 3

The use of **Increase the level of financial resources that are generated on site (and not reliant on government budget or development aid) to 50%** may represent a difficult target to meet as was noted at the last meeting of the Project Coordination Group. Since this target was set, tourism in Jordan has fallen significantly as a result of political tensions in the region. Indeed, this was identified in the original Project Document as a High Risk. Consequently, even in the presence of positive improvements in the biodiversity mainstreaming and conservation process, this indicator will almost certainly show a negative response since the start of the project unless tourism unexpectedly picks up again. The recommendation to remove this Indicator was made by the Project Coordination Board. However, as UNDP always aims to avoid changing Indicators and/or Targets during project implementation this should be clearly minuted by the Project Executive Board so that it is brought to the attention of the Final Evaluation.

All of the actual **Outputs** listed in the Results Framework for each Outcome are Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Results-Orientated. In short, they are well-chosen. It is unfortunate that one or two of the original Indicators may have been poorly chosen or are now no longer appropriate. This has resulted in the score of **MS 4 as a Rating**

## Progress Towards Results

Shortly after the project was formally signed in January 2014, the UNDP CO established a project inception team comprising the Program Analyst of the Environment and Climate Change Portfolio and the National Project Coordinator to jointly lead and execute the required activities for the inception phase. The team was supported by the Program Associate and later on by the Project Administrative and Finance Assistant. The key activities during the inception phase are summarised in the table below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No  | Activity  | Conclusion date |
| 1. | Signing of the project document by the government of Jordan represented by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the United Nations Development Program. | January 13th 2014 |
| 2. | Recruitment of the Project National Coordinator (PNC). | February 16th 2014 |
| 3. | Operationalization of the Project Coordination Unit. | March 1st 2014 |
| 4. | Conduction of project partners inception meetings and discussion. | April 15th 2014 |
| 5. | Organization of the Project Inception Workshop at the national level (stakeholder workshop).  | April 22nd 2014 |
| 6. | Organization of the UNDP internal inception mission by the Regional Technical Advisor | May 1st 2014 |
| 7. | Establishment of the Project Coordination Group. | April 21st 2014 |
| 8. | Conduction of the second round of project partners inception meetings. | May 15th 2014 |
| 9. | Development of the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for executing partners for key activities. | May 15th 2014 |
| 10. | Preparation of the inception phase report and securing its adoption by all partners. | June 1st 2014 |

One important set of activities carried out during the inception phase was the project start up meetings with the five national project implementing partners, MoMA, MoTA, ASEZA, PDTRA, and RSCN. In addition, the project team met MOPIC and MoEnv in their national respective capacities.

## The GEF Tracking Tools

The project completed METTs (Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools) under Objective 1: Catalysing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems - SECTION II: Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool for Protected Areas and Objective 2: Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation in Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors. (This included specific Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool for Protected Areas – Three specific PAs in total). These were then updated prior to the MTR and the Reviewer has compared them as a process of monitoring and evaluation of any changes.

**REVIEW OF THE BIODIVERSITY AND MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS TRACKING TOOL**

|  |
| --- |
| **Objective 1: Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems – Section I** |
| CATEGORIES | BASELINEMETT | REVISED METT AT MTR | COMMENTS |
| General Data | SAME | No Changes |
| Total Extent in hectares of protected areas targeted by the project by biome type | 82, 769 Ha. | 91,229 Ha. | Increase of 8,460 Ha. specifically of Mediterranean forests, woodlands, and scrub or Sclerophyll forests (temperate warm, semi-humid to semi-arid with winter rainfall) |

This Section of the Tracking Tool shows an increase of 10% extent within the actual Protected Areas themselves of some 8,460 hectares. The actual impact of the project is much greater than this though as can be seen from the figures below for the Indirect Project Landscape Coverage increases which has gone from 87,600 hectares to hectares 8,934,200. Also, the Figures under this Objectives 1 assessment do not take into account the relatively new Buffer Zones added to each Protected Area which are significant both in size and in additional protective capacity.

|  |
| --- |
| **Objective 1: Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems****Section II: Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool for Protected Areas** |
| PROTECTED AREA | BASELINE METT | REVISED METT AT MTR | COMMENTS |
| Objective 1. METT for DIBBIN | 58 | 80 | Significant Improvement in Management Effectiveness at this PA |
| Objective 1. METT for PETRA | N/A | 76 | No original METT from Inception for comparison |
| Objective 1. METT for WADI RUM | 67 | 74 | Notable Improvement in Management Effectiveness at this PA. |

The Total Score Possible that would relate to ideal management effectiveness for sustainability within the Protected Area is 102.

The METT for Wadi Rum shows that the main improvements in management effectiveness relate to improved survey and research work related to the PA and its habitats and species; better management of resources in the context of active management of critical; habitats and species as well as ecological processes; improved knowledge and awareness of staff through training; and improved land and water use to better take into account the needs of the PA.

In reviewing the METT for Dibbin shows improvements at many levels but primarily in the areas of enforcement; research and monitoring of habitat, species and ecosystem processes; better control of access and resources use; improvements in local community partnership and involvement in the management process; general improvements in staff levels, equipment and visitor facilities; high levels of training and educational awareness; and improved land use planning for the PA and surrounding buffer zone.

Unfortunately, as with the review of the Financial Sustainability Scorecards (below), It was not possible to do a comparison across the Implementation status and MTR status for Petra as a result of the change in site following Inception, meaning that there was no original METT for Petra (only for Shoubak). This comparison will now have to wait until the Final Evaluation to identify improvements in management effectiveness at the Petra PA.

The other elements required by the M&E Workplan have been followed *vis a vis* the quarterly reporting, the periodic site visits and the current MTR.

It is unfortunate that the METTs for Petra were not completed when it was decided to change to this site from Shoubak as this would have allowed a much more accurate assessment of Management Effectiveness throughout the lifetime of the Project. However, the existing METTs and the other M&E process are otherwise in good order and the overall implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation are seen to be **Satisfactory**.

|  |
| --- |
| **Objective 2: Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation in Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors** |
| CATEGORIES | BASELINEMETT | REVISED METT AT MTR | COMMENTS |
| General Data | SAME | No Changes |
| Project Landscape Coverage | Direct: 265,451Indirect87,600 | Direct264,541Indirect8,934,200 | Directly: This figure includes the entire area of the Jerash Governorate (40,980 ha), the Greater Wadi Rum Landscape (Wadi Rum PA and buffer zone - 133, 180 ha), the Petra Development and Tourism Region (79,641 ha), the Shoubak Proposed PA (7,740 ha) and its buffer zone (3,000 ha).Indirectly: The project will develop biodiversity-friendly certification for hotels, eco-lodges and campsites as well as biodiversity guidelines for EIA process for all new tourism developments and operations. The project will also develop an effective system of penalties for breaches of permit conditions and will capacitate the enforcement of these penalties. Both the certification and new EIA process will targeted towards biodiversity-important and ecological-sensitive areas. As the existing PA system qualifies, it is assumed that these standards will be enforced in these areas. The hectarage figure includes the Dana PA (29,100 ha), Azraz PA (1,200 ha), Shumari PA (2,000 ha), Mujib PA (21,300 ha), Aljun PA (700 ha), Yarmouk PA (2,000 ha), Qatar PA (7,300 ha) and Fifa PA (2,700 ha). |
| Management Practices Applied | Biodiversity Land-use plans are an objective to support management practices | Biodiversity-friendly land-use plans covering 209,900 ha (target localities excluding the area covered by PAs) effectively preventing impact on biodiversity | Land-Use Planning has gone ahead for all PAs with a strong focus on mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into all aspects of land-use (including tourism |
| Market Transformation | Aiming to develop more biodiversity-friendly tourism by exploring possibilities of certification | Requirements for Tourism Sector: Biodiversity friendly certification of hotels, eco-lodges and campsites now well underway  | Certification processes have been developed and are supported by local communities. Now need to become part of policy and be fully adopted by private sector. Broader regional/global tourism industry now requires this. |
| Policy and Regulatory Frameworks | All category 1 | All category 1 | For tourism, these are all confirmed positive |
| Private Sector Engagement | N/A | N/A | No change from Baseline according to Tracking Tool but, in effect, tourism industry is taking on-board voluntary measures through certification, etc. |
| Invasive Alien Species | N/A | N/A | No scores given at Baseline entry or at MTR |

As noted above and according to the MTR revision of this Objective, there has been a substantial increase in the indirect project ‘impact’ area as noted under comments. This now extends ‘geographically’ through its footprint in the tourism industry operating within and alongside the PAs and Buffer Zones.

**Scorecard for Assessing Progress on Developing Capacities for Mainstreaming**

This scorecard has been designed specifically for this project, as a tool to measure success in terms of developing national capacity to mainstream biodiversity conservation considerations into land use planning. While, the tool is conceptually based on the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard, it is different in its substantive focus and the indicators. This is because the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard is meant to assess the development of capacities vis-à-vis the management of protected areas, whereas this project is mainly concerned with the mainstreaming of biodiversity, but including some protected area management aspects.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Strategic Area of Support**  | **Total Possible Score**  | **Project Score at Baseline Entry** | **% at Baseline Entry** | **Project Score at MTR** | **% at MTR** |
| **1. Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programmes**  | **12**  | **5**  | **42%**  | **9** | **75%** |
| **2. Capacity to monitor compliance and enforce land use plans**  | **33**  | **16**  | **48%**  | **21** | **64%** |
| **3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders**  | **9**  | **3**  | **33%**  | **6** | **67%** |
| **4. Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge**  | **6**  | **3**  | **50%**  | **4** | **67%** |
| **5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn**  | **12**  | **4**  | **33%**  | **8** | **67%** |
|  | **72**  | **31**  | **43%**  | **48** | **67%** |

The scores for each category have increased and the overall score for progress on developing capacities for mainstreaming has risen from, 43% at Project inception to 67% at the MTR. Strategic Area 1 has shown the greatest improvement in strengthening the capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programmes. RSCN, MoENV, MoTA, PDTRA and Rum -ASEZA (as Implementing Partners) are driving the concept forward. Biodiversity is now mentioned in many strategies of the governmental institutions that have impacts upon biodiversity on the ground. new environmental laws are integrating biodiversity conservation into LU legislations. The land-use planners are now becoming fairly skilled, and the planning process now considers public participation.

Under the Capacity to Monitor and Enforce Land-Use Plans Strategy, there is now a clear coordination and collaboration framework for enforcement which avoids overlap and inconsistency between different government institutions; a good market demand for the new skills required for professional LUP,: national experts are now becoming very proficient through more exposure at both the national and regional level and the associated demand for these skills provides a good incentive; results of the LUP process are now being mainstreamed into the universities and strengthening the capacities of future developers and planners.

Under the Capacity to Engage and Build Consensus, Jordan is now signatory to most international treaties related to Biodiversity. The Jordanian Government has recognized the importance of BD and established a national PA system; there is fair political commitment to integrate biodiversity conservation into LU management, this is evidenced by the formulation and inclusion of the natural/environmental aspects and concerns formally as one of the important structures and requirements at the national level of land-use planning.

The Capacity to Mobilize Information and Knowledge has also improved and ASEZA and RSCN have clear biodiversity expertise within the various planning departments. Access to the needed information on biodiversity is systematic and available (BIMS).

Under the Capacity to Monitor, Evaluate, Report and Inform, there is reasonable formal inclusive participatory framework in place. A new MoU has been signed between RSCN and MoMA in order to include biodiversity conservation aspect within the national laws and bi-laws and there are new mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning in the field of land-use planning.

**Financial Sustainability Scorecard**

Comments are provided on the review of the Financial Sustainability Score Cards supplied by the project for Petra, Rum and Dibbin Protected Areas (see below). Three Components were being measured here:

Component 1: Institutional Frameworks

Component 2: Business Planning and Tools for Cost-effective Management

Component 3: Tools for Revenue Generation

**REVIEW OF FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY SCORECARDS**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SITE** | **COMPONENT** | **INCEPTION** | **MID-TERM** | **COMMENT** |
| DIBBIN | 1 | 33.0% | 56.0% | Significant improvement since Inception |
| 2 | 20.5% | 41.0% | Significant improvement since Inception |
| 3 | 21.5% | 29.5% | Slight improvement since Inception |
| **Combined** | **24.0%** | **39.0%** | **Overall Notable Improvement - 60% higher** |
|   |
| PETRA | 1 | N/A | 77.8% | Cannot compare at this stage. No available scorecard at Inception due to change from Shoubak to Petra. However, scores at MTR are in line with scores for the other PAs |
| 2 | N/A | 56.5% |
| 3 | N/A | 49.0% |
| **Combined** | **N/A** | **58.0%** |
|   |
| WADI RUM | 1 | 29.6% | 70.0% | Significant improvement since Inception |
| 2 | 48.7% | 72.0% | Notable improvement since Inception |
| 3 | 21.5% | 49.0% | Significant Improvement since Inception |
| **Combined** | **32.5%** | **61.5%** | **Overall Significant Improvement - Percentage score almost doubled** |
|   |

The MT Reviewer has reviewed the Score Cards and is in agreement with the assessments and scores. Both Dibbin and Wadi Rum show good improvement in their Financial Sustainability based on the changes since Inception. The positive changes in percentage show that Institutional Frameworks have improved significantly with both notable and significant improvements in Business Planning and Tools for Cost-effective Management. Tools for Revenue Generation at Wadi Rum have also shown a significant improvement while this has been less notable but still positive at Dibbin.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare scores at Petra as the original score card was for Shoubak and the PA site was later changed to Petra. Any comparison of change in financial sustainability at Petra will have to wait until the Final Evaluation. However, the percentage figures for Petra at MTR seem to be reasonably well aligned with the other two sites and suggest that Institutional Frameworks are well-established, Business Planning and associated tools are developing and that Tools for Revenue Generation are also well-established.

The results from the Financial Sustainability Scorecards at MTR would indicate that financial sustainability is being addressed successful and that there is every expectation that this will continue to secure such sustainability up to closure of the project. The Final Evaluation will need to determine whether this financial sustainability will continue post-project but the MTR makes recommendations for a Sustainability Strategy developed at a high-level and this should help to ensure such post-project sustainability.

**Effectiveness of the Project (MTR Rating = 6)**

The Land Use Plans (LUPs) for the various sites are well underway and progressing but have different constraints in the different areas which relate mainly to the responsible bodies and their wider agendas. The Master Land Use Plan for Jordan was adopted in 2007 and is now under review so the timing is good for the project activities. In the context of enforcement of the LUPs, MoMA has a Higher Council, with representation from each Ministry. The Higher Council approves Land Use Plans and then they can be enforced at the Municipal level. The Higher Council has the ultimate powers of change and enforcement.

These LUPs are focused on the three different sites and aim to demonstrate different approaches and potential management mechanisms for Land Use Planning in Jordan. The Dibbin/Jerash area Draft Land Use Plan has been submitted to the various stakeholders for review but not everyone in the community is aware of it. This LUP not only includes the Protected Area and its Buffer Zone but some considerable additional square kilometres also. Three scenarios are being presented in this LUP including a business-as-Usual ‘status quo’ scenario, a “Balanced Approach’ scenario and a Full Conservation scenario. See **Annex 5: Reviewer’s Notes on The Three Protected Area Sites Visited During the Mid-Term Review** for more details.

In Wadi Rum, the LUP is currently under development, but is a little more complicated than at Dibbin as it is part of a much larger context (Rum and Aqaba) under ASEZA. In Rum, the community is felt to be more involved and attuned to tourism than in Dibbin as they receive more benefits from tourism activities. What is currently missing from Rum is an agreed Management Plan. One very positive aspect of the Dibben/Jerash LUP is the presence of RSCN overseeing the Protected Area. They are often better positioned to resist pressures for development (such as mining and other natural resource exploitation) than government bodies are.

The Land Use Plan for Petra is now close to completion although it still has a few gaps. It also includes guidelines on how to implement the LUP. This package now needs to be submitted to the various Commissions of the PDTRA and also shared with UNESCO as such an LUP could not go ahead without UNESCO WHS approval.

Nationally, Land Use Planning comes under the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA). But existing LUPs are proving difficult to enforce. In principle, there are master plans for every municipality in Jordan but these are not always comprehensive and, again, enforcement and monitoring is poor and there is little leverage to ensure compliance other than the denial of access to public utilities. There is expertise in the country on Environmental Law that works with the project but the problem remains on the enforcement side as, despite the presence of any legislation, there are no effective mechanisms for monitoring, compliance and enforcement. The activities supported by the project represent the first time that biodiversity is being built into such planning processes and the consensus seems to be that this process would not have been pursued without the presence of the project and its support and activities.

The development of the SEA alongside the National Tourism Strategy will, if properly legislated and implemented. Go a long way to ensuring long-term mainstreaming of biodiversity and environmental interest generally into tourism planning and strategies throughout the country. Similarly, if the project can work with MoEnv to integrate and harmonise a single EIA process that MoEnv can enforce then this will also have been a very effective output from the project.

Community engagement is key to the protected areas and land use planning process. It is one of the reasons why the Aljoun Reserve management planning process has been seen to be so successful. Development projects in this area support the local community and they, in turn, are very supportive of the Reserve. This is also critically important to the three project sites and community involvement and community benefits needed to be highlighted along with ‘marketing’ of the value of these Reserve areas and land use plans along with a good programme of public awareness.

One of the strong points of the project in the context of ‘buy-in’ and ownership is the fact that it has been seen to deliver ‘concrete’ infrastructure to the tourism sector and in support of biodiversity conservation. This is always an important consideration as all-too-often projects of this nature focus on institutional and legislative reforms and strategies that, although important and necessary, are often too esoteric in their nature and do not deliver a sense of achievement and pride. Examples include business and management plans as well as supporting actual on-the-ground improvements (e.g. planning and management of improvements in Dibben PA).

The development of the BIMS (Biodiversity Information Management System) is also seen as a very ‘concrete’ and valuable contribution. RSCN was contracted by the project to develop the BIMS. Detailed baseline surveys were undertaken and RSCN has a monitoring programme established to ensure that BIMS is updated. BIMS will be used to advise the various Land Use Plans under development and to identify any major impacts that need to be addressed. What Is still required is a response and management strategy and mechanism that can address any changes and impacts that the monitoring system should pick up. RSCN now hosts the Biodiversity Information Unit (with two permanent staff plus a number of accessible experts within the NGO) at its headquarters. One of the Reviewer’s initial concerns was that RSCN had done most of the survey and baseline work yet they can only really be responsible for the Protected Areas. It was not clear who would follow-up with repeated surveys (e.g. every 5 years) and with indicator monitoring. However, the PCU has informed the MT Reviewer that the BITS project is working now to assist in the development of an MoU between RSCN and PDTRA and also with ASEZA in this regards. For long-term monitoring to be effective it will need the cooperation of all parties. This includes diverse groups such as the Forestry Department and even Civil Defence for fire-fighting planning and for informing BIMS of areas that have experienced fires. It is therefore gratifying to see the Project, once again, taking and Adaptive Management lead in assisting in the negotiation of such partnerships for biodiversity mainstreaming.

Most of the information for the BIMS has been collected and the main components of the BIMS are completed and being ‘populated’ with appropriate data. However, there is still some work to do on the website and BIMS is still not currently accessible for use at this stage. Also, some of the indicators for the project and within BIMS need to be reviewed. Some are unrealistic in terms of monitoring whereas others are missing. Certain charismatic species should definitely be included (e.g. Ibex, Oryx, Persian Squirrel) but the indicators should also include actual habitat types that support biodiversity (such as the *Pinus* habitat – extent and condition).

In some areas (e.g. the Buffer Zone around the PAP and around Masouda/Wadi Araba/Shoubak) consultants were hired by the project to fill in some of the assessment gaps on species distribution and presence. In these areas, a zoning plan was developed along with joint management proposals. However, PDTRA still maintains responsibility for management of the actual World Heritage Site.

This infrastructural and institutional support has clearly strengthened the support from various stakeholders for the project and what it stands for.

Several of the stakeholders noted that one of the strong points of this project is the stakeholder engagement, much of which is a direct result of the presence of the project, which has created a lot of trust and interaction. The Government has been described as being ‘very enthusiastic’ toward the project but they cannot always respond and move at the speed that the project management would wish. This has created some frustrations both within the project and within some of the other stakeholders.

The project has also been praised by the stakeholders for its major contribution to capacity development, mainly through training exercises and workshops. This has strengthened knowledge and skill sets throughout the various Implementing Partners as well as other stakeholders in the communities and the private sector.

Outreach and awareness has been somewhat limited in the first half of the project. However, there is information related to biodiversity and its relationship with tourism at the visitor’s centres at Petra and Wadi Rum and further plans for awareness and outreach in the second half of the project.

Annex 8 list the objectives and outputs as set out in the Project Document and in the Results Framework and discusses the achievements to date as well as the attendant risks. Clearly the project has already achieved much at the Mid-Term and adapted itself well to the associated risks by altering strategy and adding necessary activities. Nearly all of the assumptions made at the beginning of the project were correct. The Project Document even identified the potential risks to the project objectives from political tensions and strife in the region which, sadly, have now been realised. At the Mid-Term, it must be said that the project has achieved a **Highly Satisfactory** level of effectiveness.

**Efficiency of the Project MTR Rating – 6**

Management of the project by UNDP and by the Project Manager has, in the opinion of all the stakeholders interviewed (and by virtue of the delivery so far), been satisfactory to date and sets an example for all projects of this nature. A good balance has been achieved between the flexibility of adaptive management and a firm commitment to deliver and to ‘push’ project activities ahead.

A Project Coordination Group has been created (as a project steering committee) within the project and the Reviewer sat through one of their meetings and was impressed with the enthusiasm and passion displayed. The Reviewer also reviewed minutes from previous meetings which showed a sound and logical discussion and interaction within this group with the focus on project efficiency. Likewise, a Project Executive Board has been established at the senior policy level with representation by Secretaries-General and this is headed by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. This board meets approximately every 6-9 months which is also quite impressive for a project of this nature.

There have been delays in start-up on some of the deliverables including the Biodiversity/Tourism Charter (as discussed elsewhere in the report) and in the SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment), both of which are major ‘indicators’ of project delivery in the results framework. This is not uncommon in the first half of such a project as all the stakeholders have to settle in and feel comfortable with their understanding of their roles. SEA is not a formal requirement within Jordan and needed to be explained and ‘sold’ to the appropriate government bodies before progress could be made in this context. This also applies to the Land Use Planning process into which the SEA would naturally link. These are not legislated requirements and hence there is no responsibility mandated to any one body. However, when the Reviewer made further enquiries it transpired that, in fact, the delay with the SEA was deliberate and reflects the delays in the development and revision of the National Tourism Strategy and the difficulties experienced by the project and the relevant consultants in interacting across into this initiative. The National Tourism Strategy needs to be approved, at least as a draft, by MoTA before the SEA can capture its content and objectives. The Ministry is intent on getting the NTS correct and acceptable (along with an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism) and this may well account for what would then be justifiable and reasonable delays in order to develop a concrete strategy that is workable. A common concern expressed by a number of stakeholders was whether the SEA would be effectively ’institutionalised’ within the government (Ministry of Environment?) and if it would be captured in appropriate legislation within the Ministry (without which its objectives would be unsustainable). One of the expected functions of the TGU will be to promote and oversee that SEA once it has been adopted but the SEA needs to have a basis in both policy and law. The next problem then arising in this context is the actual human resources and capacity which are needed to effectively implement the SEA requirements. If the main responsibility for the SEA process is to sit under the MoEnv then they will need more resources and training in order to make this process sustainable, and that will also be true of the evolving TGU in the MoTA. The training that is required to support the TGU also needs to focus down to the local area level and not only the national/ministry level. In this context, MoTA is planning to assign a focal person within each Governorate.

One important consideration is how much of the activities and responsibilities of these project-related groups can be maintained and institutionalised (either formally or informally) beyond the project lifetime for sustainability of coordination as well as technical support.

One area that could be strengthened during the second half of the project (and which was raised by Project Management) was the value of training and capacity building for the Project Field officers on-site. These individuals will need to stay engaged in sustainable tourism activities, ideally at the sites they currently oversee, if the outcomes and objectives are to remain sustainable. They also need to become trainers and mentors themselves and it would serve the long-term, post-project sustainability well if their skills and expertise were strengthened in this manner.

Annex 6 provides details of the various training and workshops that the project has delivered to date. These include the following topics and areas:

**Training Topics**

1 Management plans development and implementation

2 Protected Area Regulations and Legislation Enforcement

3 Biodiversity conservation and Sustainable Tourism

4 General principles of Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Areas

5 How to use BIMS System

6 Tourism and the environment and how to enhance the sustainability of tourism sector?

7 Transition of Tourism into Green Economy

8 Environmental Impact Assessment and Tourism

9 Integrating Biodiversity into the Tourism Sector

10 Environmental Planning in Tourism

11 LAC’s first training programme and exchange tour visit

12 LAC’s Second training programme

Workshops

1 SEA Working Group (WG) workshop

2 A national consultation process on the development and maintenance of the BIMS including all key stakeholders with emphasis on the project localities

3 National BIMS lunching workshop

4 PAP nomination file workshops

5 Rum Business plan workshop

6 Certifications workshop

7 Rum land use plan workshops

8 Dibbin land use plan workshops

This is quite an impressive list of capacity building and training efforts by the project and this is one area that the project has also been praised on by its stakeholders.

It is also clear that the Results Framework has been used as a day-to-day tool by the project management for guiding activities and for assessing delivery and achievement. This RF does now need some minor amendments. All of the risk rating that were covered in the project document are the appropriate ones. The section on Sustainability and Risk (below) reviews the Risk Ratings at Inception and at MTR and these have hardly altered except for one reduction from Medium to Low. The Outcomes as highlighted in the Project Document still represent the best strategy for delivering on the overall objective of this project. The project deserves to be rated as **Highly Satisfactory** in terms of Efficiency at the Mid-Term.

## Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis

The MTR is expected to provide ratings on the project’s progress towards its objective and each outcome. The assessment of progress is based on data provided in the PIRs, supplemented by data provided in the GEF Tracking Tools and the findings of the MTR mission.

The following table shows the **Progress Towards Results Matrix** while Annex 6 captures an overall review of delivery at the time of this Mid Term Review along with some comments about possible risks to end-of-project sustainability and some additional needs. In summarising the findings overall from the Review process, it is the Reviewers opinion that the project is on course to attain its objectives, is fully aware of the constraints and challenges, and is already taking the appropriate measures to address these. Few projects manage to achieve the level of delivery by Outcome and Output at Mid-Term as have been achieved here and much of this success is a reflection of good partnerships and flexible adaptive management. **Progress Towards Results Matrix** shows a significant number of Satisfactory and highly Satisfactory ratings with just two unfortunate ‘below-standard’ ratings. These were related to the indicators for Total annual revenue earned from tourism operations in targeted PAs and the species population indicators. In the first case, it was unwise to choose a revenue-based indicator for tourism in an area of political instability and this is what has cause the failure in this target and this should be addressed before the Final Evaluation or this will skew the results in terms of showing good delivery or otherwise. Similarly, if species being used as an indicator are no longer present at all or are close to impossible to measure then replacing these should also be a consideration. Because of these two challenges, the overall results for the project delivery at MTR remains at **5 Satisfactory** instead of what could have been 6 Highly Satisfactory.

**PROGRESS TOWARDS RESULTS MATRIX (ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTCOMES AGAINST END-OF-PROJECT TARGETS)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Strategy** | **Indicator** | **Baseline Level** | **Level at 1st PIR** | **End-of-Project Target** | **Mid-Term Level and Assessment** | **Achievement Rating** | **Justification for Rating** |
| **Objective** | Consideration of biodiversity in plans and policies for tourism development by government, planning authorities and the private sector | No explicit reflection ofbiodiversity priorities | 20% achieved At this point, biodiversity is not clearly depicted in the tourism policies and plans. However, MoTA incorporates general environmental protection and eco-friendly practices with focus on lowering water and energy consumption and using renewable energy resources.  | At least 80% of known and available plans and policies for tourism development incorporate biodiversity priorities | 50% achieved. At this point, the mainstreaming of biodiversity is witnessing significant progress with active partnership of and effective engagement with MoTA.  | **S** | The established Tourism Green Unit (TGU) has witnessed excellent progress in terms of developing its governance system and by commencing several initiatives and activities including: working on developing Jordan "Tourism and Biodiversity" Information Management System at MoTA, initiating a strategic environmental assessment for the tourism sector in Jordan, etc. |
| Percentage allocation for biodiversity conservation in tourism development proposals | While energy and water feature inenvironmentalconsiderations atpresent, biodiversitydoes not | To date 5% of the new proposals for tourism development considers biodiversity explicitly. In preparation to achieving this target | 100% of proposals for tourism development consider biodiversity conservation seriously | To date 30% of the new proposals for tourism development considers biodiversity explicitly. | **S** | Project has established the Tourism Green Unit (TGU) at MoTA (according to MoTA data). The project also extends its effort to mainstream biodiversity in EIA regulation so the revisions of existing EIA regulations under ASEZA law and the Environment Protection Law have been completed and draft modifications have been suggested to the Ministry of Environment, |
| Hectares of landscape where impacts on biodiversity are avoided, mitigated or offset | No planning provisionsfor the protection ofbiodiversity outsideformal PAs | 91,659 hectares (>50%) | Some 180,000 hectares covered by biodiversity-friendly land-use plans effectively preventing impact on biodiversity | 209,900 hectares. | **HS** | Target has been surpassed. Expanded areas now include: Total of 44,541 hectares in Petra Landscape. Wadi Rum site; total area of 60,000 hectares is covered by the protected area buffer zone plan. In the Dibbin Area: A total area of 13,700 is covered by the second phase of the land use plan |
| Total annual revenue earned from tourism operations in targeted PAs | Dibbin Forest Reserve: US$ 43,000Wadi Rum PA: US$976,467Shoubak replaced by Petra - Proposed PA not yet established | Dibbin Forest Reserve: $37,100; Wadi Rum PA: $564,200; Petra PA: $3,920,400 will serve as a base line level for Petra PA, an increase of 50% or more to this level during the next reporting period. | An increase of 50% or more to the following levels: Dibbin Forest Reserve - US$64,500: Wadi Rum PA - US$1,464,700: Shoubak has now been replaced by Petra so this target is no longer applicable) | Overall decrease in Revenue due to political situation and this is expected to continue. Total Annual Revenue is NO LONGER a viable indicator. Nor is a target increase of 50%  | **U** | Dibeen Forest Reserve generates $30,305 (53% decrease in the total revenue from the revenue baseline). Wadi Rum PA: a total amount of $442,666 generated during the reporting period, this represent 70% decrease from the revenue baseline. Petra PA: a total amount of 4,018,059 with a slight increase (2%) from the last reporting period, |
| **Outcome 1** | The place of biodiversity in the legal and procedural framework for tourism planning, development and operations | Biodiversityconsiderations arecurrently absent from the framework | currently there is poor reference to issue of protecting the natural heritage and biodiversity in the tourism related legal framework under the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. | An obvious and meaningful biodiversity element/s in the legal and procedural framework for tourism planning, development and operations | Moving successfully. Need to collate and integrate several different EIA proposals. Single approach/strategy can then be captured and legislated in the new MoE Environmental Law.  | S | Project is working with MoE on some environmental guidelines that can be informally applied in the interim. Also, MoE has a formal Agreement with MoTA for any new developments to be referred to MoE for environmental approvalExpect an endorsed EIA document by end of 2017 |
| Application of the new Biodiversity-friendlyguidelines for the EIA Process | No such guidelinesexist | a certification schemes for Hotel, eco-tour, eco-lodge and environmental camp sites will be developed, tested, and adopted by MoTA. The project has also succeeded in creating a "Green unit" within MoTA for the first time, Green unit will be a key player in mainstreaming biodiversity and environmental issues within MoTA, and will effectively contributed to enhance the environmental culture within MoTA employees and among decision makers | All new developments / hotels / roads/ etc. apply new Biodiversity-friendly guidelines for the EIA Process | 5-10% progress | **S** | Project has succeeded in the revision of existing EIA regulations under ASEZA law and the Environment Protection Law have been completed and draft modifications have been suggested to the Ministry of Environment. The draft modification is also discussed with Jordan 17th Parliament, and the discussions will be continued with the next Parliament |
| Percentage of tourism establishments in projectlocalities that are biodiversity-friendly according to the MoTA Certification Scheme | 0% | 0% | At least 50% | At least 5% - 10% so far  | **S** | According to data provided by MoTA and based on the comprehensive review of the available international certifications and eco-labels and a review of such schemes available and adopted in Jordan. However, certification is well underway and Community Advisory Boards are full supportive. As is MoTA and the Green Unit |
| **Outcome 2** | Extent of land area for which integrated land-use plans that deliver biodiversity benefits outside PAs are developed and under implementation | Current land area covered by biodiversity-sensitive LUPs is nil | 91,659 hectares.  | 180,000 hectares covered by integrated land-use plans | 209,900 hectares. | **HS** | The target has been surpassed. See explanation above under ‘Objective’ |
| Capacity development indicator score for mainstreaming biodiversity in Jordan | Overall score: 43% | A percentage will be given at the Midterm Evaluation phase.  | Overall score: > 60% (over baseline score of 43%) | Score at Mid-Term: 67% | **HS** | The Capacity Development Scorecard shows a significant improvement (from 43 – 67% and has reached it end-of-project target of > 60% |
| Increase in land area where threats to ecologicallysensitive areas from tourism activities are controlled | 0 ha | 830 hectares in Aleppo pine forest. Figures for Petra region and Wadi Rum not confirmed at this stage and still waiting for final PAs and Buffer zone designations  | Jerash Governorate: Aleppo Pine (Pinus halepensis) Forests 6,200 haPetra Region: Hisheh Forest (Quercus coccifera) 300 haWadi Rum Landscape: Sand Dune vegetation (Haloxylon persicum) type – 8,900 ha | Already at 73,700 hectare increase with more to be confirmed. The new buffer zones provide considerable additional protection and mainstreaming of biodiversity now extends well beyond the PAs and Buffer Zones | **HS** | 13.700 hectares in Aleppo pine forest.60,000 hectares as a buffer zone for Wadi Rum PA and sand dune vegetationCurrent land use plan for Petra suggests will be comfortably on target |
| Populations of the following indicator species across the landscape (inside and outside PAs) remain stable:Jerash Governorate: Lacerta media; Petra: Vulpes cana; Wadi Rum: Caracal caracal | Baseline populations | The project started with extensive fauna and flora surveys in the three sites, the surveys aim produce up to date eco-values zonation maps in association with social values and geological values for the three sites. And to assess the current situation of these key species. The project will develop a monitoring program for the key species in each site. The project has significantly contributed to achieve this target through the establishment of the GIS/Web-based data base/ information management system | No decrease over baseline values | These indicator species may not be the appropriate ones as discussed in the main text. Lacerta is very difficult to assess in terms of numbers per area; Caracal have not been seen in nearly 20 years so unlikely to be a valuable indicator | **MS** | Lacerta media Eight specimens were recorded in the baseline survey in Dibbin Protected Area but unfortunately none were recorded outside the PA. Vulpes cana; the project and through extensive field surveys in Petra site found that the presence of Vulpes cana was confirmed in two methods (trapping and spoor routes) to be 9 individuals. Caracal caracal; the project and through extensive field surveys in Rum site found that this animal was neither trapped nor seen during the survey period. The last record for the species in Rum was from the research team in Jebel Khazali in 1998 where a footprint of a Caracal was documented, other than that no recent records for the species were documented |
| Level of credibility of licensing and permitting authorities who sanction and regulate tourism developments | Survey to confirm and document credibility level in the eyes of stakeholders (primarily the tourism sector) | No significant progress in credibility | Enhanced credibility of licensing and permitting authorities as a result of an improved basis for decision-making arising from sound data and information and effective monitoring system | Considerable improvement since 2015 PIR | **S** | The project has finalized a biodiversity information management system (BIMS) which is GIS-web- based system. The BIMS is meant to establish sound data and information and effective monitoring system at the regional level, it will also serve the land use planning purposes by offering reliable data and information for NHS layers, and ultimately for licensing and permitting procedures. |
| **Outcome 3** | METT scores in each of Dibbin, Shoubak and Wadi Rum PAs | Scores obtained during PPG are: Dibbin 58% Wadi Rum 67% PAP to be determined | This indicator will be measured at the Midterm Evaluation phase. However, this score enhanced through project intervention within the three sites, | Improvements expected in effectiveness in revenue generation, tourism planning and management and community relations, leading to an improvement inMETT scores of around 8-10%. | Significant successDibbin and Wadi Rum already achieved target figure. It can be assumed that a score of 76 out of 102 at MTR for Petra is also significantly higher than it would have been at baseline although it was not measured then | **HS** | At MTR scores were:Dibbin = 80Wadi Rum = 74Petra = 76 |
| Financial security and sustainability of PAs | The three PAs (less so with Wadi Rum) currently rely almost entirely on government grants and/or development aid as sources of finance | No substantial progress.  | Increase the level of financial resources that are generated on site (and not reliant on government budget or development aid) to 50% | Progress at MTR not measurable in terms of % ge but the new business plans are designed to address this process directly so can expect a substantial increase. 50% may be optimistic in view of the political situation and fall in tourism | **S** | The new management plans and the new business plans do focus on enhancing financial sustainability. The new business plans aim to diversify and increase sources of income. The political unrest in the region represents causes a dramatic decline in tourism sector |

## Remaining Barriers to Achieving the Project Objective

The Project Document lists the prime direct threats from tourist activities as being Hotel and tourism infrastructure development; high visitor numbers; effluent discharges; Roads development; and encroachment by the local population. In the context of these five direct threats to biodiversity, the project has achieved the following:

**Hotel and tourism infrastructure development:**

The project is now working closely with MoTA to develop a Strategic Environmental Assessment and with MoEnv to strengthen and harmonise a single EIA approach. The project has also been instrumental in bringing these two Ministries closer together under more formal Agreements. The development and adoption of a **Tourism Green Unit** is an enormously significant step forward for MoTA. This, along with the certification and Star Award harmonisation should help to significantly reduce the threat from such development on biodiversity and the Protected Areas.

**High visitor numbers:**

The National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan for Jordan (2016-2019) refers to the fact that tourism is having an increasing trend of impacts on biodiversity, especially in areas where weak governance and lack of law enforcement are highest. This includes the impacts on ecologically sensitive areas outside protected areas as well as areas where tourism pressure increases with increased global recognition. The NBSAP explicitly refers to the Wadi Rum World Heritage Site as an example of this problem. Visitor numbers then are naturally lower at the moment. What the project aims to do is to enhance and encourage more of an ecosystem/environment experience for tourists while continuing to protect and conserve biodiversity for that very purpose. This will hopefully reduce the impacts from visitor numbers on the more sensitive regions while using their presence to raise more revenue directly for biodiversity conservation.

**Effluent discharges:**

In this context, the SEA and EIA processes that the project is successfully supporting and strengthening will serve to control poorly managed effluent and ensure better treatment processes. Also, the certification process that will be adopted by the TGU and MoTA will require certain standards to be met which will significantly reduce this impact.

**Roads development:**

Again, with the adoption of the SEA process into tourism planning and the EAI process being adopted into MoEnv legislation this impact will be noticeably reduced at a national level. At a local level, Land Use Planning associated with Protected Areas and Buffer Zones will also serve to mitigate such impacts in those specific localities.

**Encroachment by local population:**

This is difficult to control but, once more, Land Use Planning along with local community involvement in such planning and in the management of Protected Areas and Buffer Zones should definitely serve to mitigate the worst impacts from this area

The project has succeeded in promoting the overall concept of mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector and has started developing and working alongside two important and closely linked tools to consolidate this process, these being 1. The Land Use Planning process and 2. The Strategic Environmental Assessment. Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation within the tourism sector is now a common language among the various stakeholders. The project has also acted as a catalyst for cooperation and collaboration, particularly between the Government bodies responsible for tourism and for environment.

In the context of the overarching question, “will the project achieve its aims and objectives?”, the collective response given to the MT Reviewer by all of the stakeholders was a positive one that it would indeed deliver what it was designed to deliver, but with the qualification that there does need to be stronger ownership and commitment from the Implementing Partners, especially at the Government level. This was also the conclusion that the MT Reviewer arrived at. There is still a need to identify the gaps and constraints institutionally and in the context of legislation, both where these may be absent or where they may be duplicated and potentially conflicting in terms of mandate and responsibility. Furthermore, the need for stronger and more comprehensive capacity building remains a very real risk to the long-term sustainability of the project and its primary objective. There are plans for study tours which will take one national representative from the Implementing Partners as well as the Project Manager to Serbia and this will overlap with a Conference on Biodiversity and Tourism in Serbia in late November. Beyond this there is a need to focus further on capacity building and training across the project and especially in some areas of government where the understanding of biodiversity mainstreaming may be weak. It would be advisable for the project to develop a Capacity Building and Training Programme with the stakeholders and Implementing Partners and to identify the priorities that could be addressed within the current project (with a view to possibly identifying funding for more CB&T under a future project). In speaking with the Local Management Committee at Wadi Rum, they expressed their support for the interactive exchanges between the various Protected Areas and the opportunity given by the project to share their experiences through field trips. They would like to receive more training in tourism techniques at their community level.

Formal policy and legislative adoption of some of the project’s delivery is now an important consideration if the objectives are to be truly sustainable. This includes formal adoption of a more rigorous EIA requirement for all development as well as formal adoption of the Strategic Environmental Assessment approach to the broader tourism development strategy as well as adoption and implementation of the various Land Use Plans. All of these will also require a commitment from the responsible parties toward rigorous and regular monitoring and compliance.

## 4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

## Management Arrangements

While project activities at the upstream level are the responsibility of the PCU to organize and of MoTA to lead (in coordination with the aforementioned bodies), implementation and management of project activities at each of the project localities (Dibbin, Petra and Wadi Rum) has been the responsibility of the Implementing Partner (MoMA, RSCN, PDTRA and ASEZA) with the support, guidance and overall coordination of the PCU. In each case, the Implementing Partner nominate a senior official to serve as the Local Project Director (LPD) who serves as the formal link between the project, UNDP and the PCU with the Implementing Partner. The PCU therefore has a Local Project Officer (LPO) at each location, namely, Dibbin, Petra and Wadi Rum, to facilitate project activities (under Outcomes 2 and 3) on site. In each case, the Implementing Partner is expected to use existing infrastructure and staff support resources and facilities to implement project activities and these are considered to be part of their contribution to the project in-kind. However, the Project can and has assisted with equipment and facilities to safeguard the effective implementation of project activities. The project has also helped to provide the necessary expertise and know-how as well as the incremental resources required to carry out the agreed Project Activities leading to the targeted Outputs.

A Local Advisory Committee (LAC) has also been established by the respective LPD at each of the project localities. The LAC comprises of representatives of the Implementing Partner, any relevant central government organizations, the private sector, NGOs, communities and individuals known to possess valuable expertise. The LAC is chaired by the LPD for the Implementing Partner and provides advice and support to the LPD, the LPO and others involved in project implementation.

During this MTR Mission the Reviewer was able to meet with most of the people involved in these various management and advisory structures and to see them in operation. All stakeholders generally expressed satisfaction with the management arrangements for this project and the MT Reviewer was also more than satisfied with the arrangements and interactions.

Adaptive Management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)

The UNDP GEF BITS project has shown many examples of adaptive management during the first half of the project, many of which have undoubtedly aided in a more effective delivery of activities and results, as well as in developing closer relations and trust between stakeholders and with local communities. One other very important observation is the help being provided by BITS project to WRPA in order to meet World Heritage Organizations recommendations regarding Wadi Rum’s new management plan; 3 out of 9 recommendations were responded to by the project and they are;

* Survey on the State of Conservation of Rock Art and Archeological Sites
* The Interpretation Program for the Property Values - Natural and Cultural
* The Buffer Zone of the WRPA

One very laudable example of adaptive management which has been supported and promoted by this project has been the creation of a Tourism Green Unit within the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The project has supported an advisory consultant position to assist with this process who is based at MoTA and whose functions are very much focused on capacity building and training in sustainable ‘green’ tourism. There is also a person working with MoTA with a particular remit to support the development of the TGU and the presence of the TGU may well have been instrumental in strengthening coordination and interaction between MoTA and MoEnv. It is possible that similar units might be developed in other Ministries.

Another change in the project design (between the PIF and the endorsed Project Document) was to alter the ‘field’ sites for demonstrating strengthening of institutional capacities for planning, monitoring and enforcement. Two of the original sites were dropped (Dead Sea Development Zone and Aljoun) and replaced by Wadi Rum and Shoubak. Later the Project Management Board also replaced Shoubak as A. the community at Shoubak were not ready for this area to be designated as a PA and B. Petra was now planning to move ahead with its PA and Buffer Zone declaration.

The project has demonstrated a good use of the Project Management Board and the Executive Committee to revise budget and funding needs where necessary as Is discussed below.

Management/Partnership Arrangements (including relevant stakeholder’s involvement in the country/region)

As noted above, the Ministry of Environment appear to have had little or no involvement in the original project design or its initial implementation but are now ‘on-board’ and an active partner, with good relations with MoTA and other stakeholders and implementing partners.

Academia has also been an important partner, and this will be particularly the case for the second half of the project as the finding of the BITS studies will be mainstreamed into the academia level as lessons learned and case studies. The project has started this kind of dialogue recently with Yarmouk University and King Hussein University as both universities have tourism programs. Having academia as one of the stakeholders is therefore very valuable as it can transfer the lessons and training back into the education sector and on to students and associated communities.

More emphasis is now being placed on the role of local communities, especially at the site level for Dibbin and, to some extent, at Wadi Rum. There were assurances from a number of stakeholders that communities were engaged into the project effectively. Wadi Rum and Dibbin both have community involvement in the management process through Local Advisory Committees (LACs) and they have been sharing experiences through exchange site visits where they can compare such aspects as best waste handling methodologies and other practices. There has also been tribal involvement at the local community level through the local project/site focal points and officers with Wadi Rum being an example where the Bedouin are interacting directly. In discussions with local stakeholders in Wadi Rum it seemed clear that they consider this strong community engagement to be a direct product and result of the presence of the project and they welcome this successful effort by the project to catalyse this engagement process.

The private sector has also had some involvement in relation to the Project. They developed the National Tourism Strategy along with community input, which then went to government for review and approval. Private sector may well get more involved but this should not happen (according to stakeholders) until government is fully on board at the higher level. The private sector has been mainly engaged through the development of business plans and through the possible development of eco-certification, yet there are concerns that the tourism industry had not been as closely involved in the earlier days as it should have been (i.e. Tourism Operators and Tourism Guides).

The project was consistently commended on the way it has been instrumental in creating trust and bringing together the various stakeholders and responsible ministries and departments. In particular, it appears that there is now a growing interaction and relationship between MoTA and MoEnv which many stakeholders have noted is a result of the presence of the project. There is undoubtedly a strong commitment from MoTA to embrace the mainstreaming of biodiversity into its tourism strategy, but the constraint would seem to be one of staffing and of capacity.

With the future adoption of the new natural Buffer Zone around the Petra Archaeological Park, PDTRA feels there will be a need for more expertise and capacity strengthening on biodiversity and environmental issues. It May be possible to develop an MoU or similar agreement with RSCN to work with PDTRA and provide advice to this management body (PDTRA) in relation to biodiversity issues in the Buffer Zone. It was noted on several occasions that there was not originally good coordination or trust between the various bodies and agencies working at Petra but that the UNDP GEF project had worked hard to resolve any issues (e.g. sensitivities over the Management Plan for the PAP) and there is now good relations and close collaboration between all parties.

Feedback from M&E activities used for Adaptive Management

The various minutes from the Project Management Board meetings show a number of decisions that were taken in the best interests of achieving the project objectives and deliverables:

* According to the Minutes of the 15th June 2014, the Project Executive Council and the regional unit of GEF agreed to delete the fourth indicator under the overall objective of the project on the **Total annual revenue earned from tourism operations in targeted PAs**. The change is not captured under PIR 2015 and It was not possible to confirm this with the 2016 PIR as this was not prepared in time for the MTR.
* Agreement to review and replace some of the animal species indicators in the Results Framework (as noted in that section below) e.g. removal of Lacerta media and replacement with Persian Squirrel and removal of Caracal and replacement with Ibex
* Changes and amendments to the budget in order to more directly align activities toward implementation of biodiversity goals on the ground along with social and economic development at the three sites.
* Agreement on the need for local municipalities to play a key role at the Dibben site and adjacent Land Use Planning areas.
* Agreement to send an official letter to MoMA along with the final Dibbin Area Land Use Plan urging them to ensure the implementation of and compliance with this LUP.
* Agreement to strengthen the role of local advisory boards for the various sites and to integrate them into the project along with their involvement in the project activities and for capacity building training programs to be offered for these local representatives so as to assist them in maintaining and conserving the development of their areas as appropriate

Proposed work-plans and budgets for the year were also reviewed, discussed and approved at all of these Board meetings.

Regular Quarterly Reports have been submitted by the Project Manager to UNDP with very good detail on activities and delivery and accurate information on procurements.

UNDP Implementation (MTR Rating = 6)

The Project Coordination Unit has been based in the UNDP office. This reflects the fact that there is no single implementing partner/executing agency in the country (see below) and keeps a sense of equity and balance between the project and its partners. All appropriate stakeholders and consultants interviewed spoke highly of the support and management input from UNDP to the project and acknowledge that the UNDP Country Office and the project has been very efficient so far in contracting and procurement and that these processes have all run smoothly without complaint.

A few relatively minor concerns were raised in relation to actual ‘ownership’ of the project in its earlier stages in the context of it being a ‘UNDP’ project or a ‘Jordan’ project but those misunderstandings now seem to have been alleviated. It is important that the country stakeholders, and particularly the government agencies, feel strong ownership of this project if it is to remain sustainable after the GEF funding support has ended. This should not be seen or perceived to be a UNDP project but rather a Jordanian project that is being supported by UNDP with assistance in implementation and administrative management. It is important to ensure that it is the national bodies, agencies and individuals that are the beneficiaries from the project. Also, there were some concerns over stringent recruitment practices. In one case a local consultancy position was advertised and had only one applicant. Because UNDP needed to ‘review’ at least three applications this created delays in hiring which also delayed the international consultant and the star of a significant indicator-related delivery. Obviously, as in all projects, there is a need to balance efficiency and delivery against due process and transparency of actions. UNDP is required to follow certain specific rules, regulations and procedures for procurement, contracting, etc. and it is the very presence of such relatively rigid and carefully audited processes that qualifies UNDP to be an Implementing Agency for GEF.

In a project of this nature, the Project Manager needs to be able to make day-to-day decisions based on an overall agreed work-plan, but the Project Coordination Group also has to maintain overall management control and correct any misdirection of the project activities should they occur. This certainly appears to be the situation at the time of the Mid-Term Review This is only the second time that UNDP has been involved in a partnership in the Petra region with PDTRA (the first was in a Disaster Risk Reduction Project) and this has been welcomed by PDTRA who consider it to be a successful partnership so far. UNDP is helping them to discover new tourism options and possibilities through mainstreaming biodiversity and PDTRA hopes this will open further doors for such a partnership with UNDP. What PDTRA would now like is to gain more assistance and support with raising awareness and with training and building capacity, in particular with strengthening their ‘technical’ English so that they can take advantage of more advanced training courses and workshops. This can also be complemented by training in specialised scientific techniques in Arabic using regional experts. PDTRA is particularly pleased with the assistance they have received from UNDP in developing a good database for the entire region including PAP and the new Buffer Zone but they also realize that, now they have this baseline, they need A. to undertake a gaps analysis along with a plan to fill these gaps, and B. to continue with monitoring in order to understand and act on any changes and impacts.

The overall opinion of all the stakeholders is that the project has been very well managed and coordinated despite any inevitable small concerns or individual issues that arise and are dealt with. This reflects a strong adaptive management approach and should be encouraged and continued. The situation at the Mid-Term in relation to the Main Implementing Agency (UNDP) can be classed as **Highly Satisfactory**.

Implementing/Executing Partner (MTR Rating = 5)

One of the obvious challenges to this project and its management arrangements was the selection of five different Implementing Partners to assist in the execution of the project outputs and activities. Five Implementing Partners were chosen in total. Undoubtedly this created an additional level of administrative demand, bureaucracy and coordination but it was also both necessary and appropriate under the circumstances. Choosing any one or even two of these partners over-and-above the others would have disenfranchised those other bodies and created a real risk of lack of ownership and even resentment leading to non-delivery. Each of the chosen Implementing Partners are crucial to the success of the project. Furthermore, having all of them involved at the same level of ‘implementation’ has encouraged and enhanced cooperation between these important stakeholders. This was inevitably a difficult decision for UNDP but has proven to be effective and very workable once all the Implementing Partners had ‘settled in’ and developed and appropriate level of trust and interaction. In this context, the project has added more value through its support and encouragement to bring together diverse agencies and ministry departments to work closely together toward a single objective.

In reviewing the actual Implementing Partners themselves, unsurprisingly there have been different levels and degrees of commitment and input and much of this reflects the nature of the activities taking place during the first half of the project. There is some room for stronger individual Agency involvement, particularly at the site level, which would undoubtedly enhance project delivery and achievement. Wadi Rum is one example, where the ‘on-the-ground’ management processes are struggling to achieve and maintain their objectives and management capabilities due to a lack of compliance and enforcement, which can only be resolved at the highest level of ASEZA.

Despite this constraint, the Implementing Partners, particularly at the level of the Project Coordination Group, demonstrate a sense of growing trust and collaboration which bodes well for the future management and delivery of the project and for its sustainability. At the Mid-Term this is definitely a **Satisfactory** position for the project to have reached in the context of its main partnerships and stakeholders.

## Work Planning

The project has been fairly meticulous in the development and review or work-plans through its lifetime so far. Work-plans are circulated to the PCG in advance and then discussed at monthly meetings to ensure delivery and identify shortfalls and challenges that need addressing.

The actually planning of work itself as in field visits or workshops/ meetings appears to be well organised based on the attendance of several such workshops and committee-type meetings, with everyone understanding their role and expected inputs.

## Project Finance and Co-finance

Project Finance Totals from the Project Document were:

GEF USD 2,700,000

Government USD 20,067,398

UNDP USD 500,000

Other USD 2,142,945

**Total Budget USD 25,410,343**

The GEF contribution to this project is US$2.7 million. Although this may seem a little low for a 4-year project it is A. sufficient to meet the requirements for delivery and B. is constrained as always by the STAR allocation for the country which is was total of $7 million under GEF 5 when this project was submitted and endorsed.

The original project ATLAS Budget was modified at the Inception Meeting to reflect changes in needs since submission to GEF. These changes were relatively minor and full justification was provided. In summary, the changes reflected:

* Increased allocation for Contractual Services rather than individual consultants. This reflected the intention for a more rational use of national consultancy bodies rather than International consultants.
* Increased allocation toward more tangible, on-the-ground interventions at the project sites. This was also a rational and sensible approach and has resulted in stronger ownership and local community support.
* Increased allocation for IT needs, particularly in Outcome/Component 2. This predicted the priority requirements to support the development of BIMS and to maintain/sustain this platform both institutionally and through regular monitoring and updating.
* Some of the funding allocated directly toward Awareness Raising was moved to support more ‘on-the-ground’ activities. Again, these ‘concrete’ and visible activities built ownership and did, in fact, help to raise and strengthen awareness.
* Increased allocation into training and workshops to allow for more exchange learning and capture of best practices. This has also been seen in a very positive light by the various stakeholders.
* Decreases in allocation to support the above changes came primarily from Consultancies, Local Travel (as a result of proposed new delivery modalities), Project Supplies (due to more effective management) and Contingency (also due to more effective management and budget planning)

Further minor adjustments have been proposed at the MTR. See Table below.

 **AMENDMENTS TO THE PROJECT BUDGET AT INCEPTION AND PROPOSED AT MTR**



The above changes have been justified as follows:

* **Component One** was found to be slightly over budgeted due to its mainstreaming focus.
* **Component Two** was found at Inception to be in need of some additional resources to fulfil the requirements for the land use planning and BIMS components. More budget was also made available for the development of the interpretation and information systems at the project localities. However, this can now be reduced at MTR as the project has realized much of the LUPs and RSCN has taken responsibility for BIMS
* **Component Three** allocations were found fully valid and appropriate at Inception with no need to make any changes. However, at MTR there is a slight increase of 2.5% proposed which is appropriate in view of the need for stronger support for the Local Advisory Committees, etc.
* **Component Four/Project Coordination** was found relatively over budgeted, as it represents the project operations and coordination costs mainly. The 5% GEF overhead ceiling was not changed and significant allocations were moved to component two and to a lesser extent component one to enhance the technical and on-the-ground interventions of the project.

The Mid Term Reviewer supports these proposed changes as a process of Adaptive Management. These would now need to be reflected in a revised ATLAS Budget and approved by the Project Management Committee and the Project Executive Board then advised at the next appropriate meeting.

Actual expenditure of the GEF grant commitment as of the MTR was $1,012,534 which represents 38% of the overall commitment of $2,700,000. This means that there is ample funding left for activity support in the second half of the project, as discussed in the budget reallocations proposed above. There are a number of reasons for this slow expenditure in the first half of the project. A. the project faced a serious problem in the first year, as the original Project Manager resigned just after the inception phase July 2014, a new Project Manager came on board on 1st November 2014 leaving a period of some 4 months during which every little activity took place. In the second year, the project developed an ‘emergency’ plan to follow up on the delayed issues and to bring the project back on track; B. the project also used the UNDP money in the first half and some of the other partner’s cash contribution (See analysis below); C. the planned expenditure of GEF funds till the end of 2016 (i.e. beyond the MTR but at the half-way point) is $1,363,076.46 which then represents almost half of the GEF budget. The amendments and realignments in the project budget reflecting the new requirement and adaptive management approach of the project may also provide some of the reason for the slightly lower than expected expenditure at MTR.

The sources of co-financing and contributions are identified within the endorsed Project Document and are shown in table below along with the actual totals received at MTR. Much of the contribution from outside of GEF (e.g. Ministries, etc.) represents ‘in-kind’ co-financing which is always very difficult to assess in the context of how much has actually been allocated. The confirmed co-financing figures at the MTR were provided by the UNDP Country Office

**ORIGINAL CO-FINANCING COMMITTED IN THE PROJECT DOCUMENT VERSUS ACTUAL RECEIVED AT MID-TERM**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sources of Co-financing | Name of Co-financer | Type of Co-financing | Amount Confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US$) | Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Mid-Term Review (US$) | Actual % of Expected Amount |
| GEF Partner Agency | UNDP | In-Kind & Other (cash) | $500,000 | $433,908 | 87 |
| Local Government | Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority | In-Kind & Other (cash) | $9,400,000 | $7,051,000 | 75 |
| Local Government | Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority | In-Kind & Other (cash) | $9,992,000 | $7,497,299 | 75 |
| Foundation | Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature | In-Kind | $800,000 | $1,064,100 | 133 |
| National Government | Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities MOTA | In-Kind & Other (cash) | $175,000 | $132,000 | 75 |
| National Government | Ministry of Municipal Affairs MOMA | In-Kind | $500,000 | $475,000 | 95 |
| Private Sector | Crown Plaza Resort Petra | In-Kind | $942,945 | $707,945 | 75 |
| Private Sector | Aqaba Hotel Association | In-Kind | $300,000 | $225,000 | 75 |
| Private Sector | Captains Tourist Services and Desert | In-Kind | $100,000 | $76,000 | 76 |
| **TOTAL** | $22,709,945 | $17,662,252 | 78 |

From this table it is clear that actual funding received at the mid-term from each of the co-financers has been greater than 75% of the original commitment which is noteworthy and gratifying as all-too-often the pledged co-financing is not realised or certainly not to the extent promised. 75% contributed at MTR is commendable.

The co-financing commitment figures can be further reviewed in the context of actual cash commitments and contributions. The precise cash contributions committed are listed in the Project Document and in the Table and these also constitute part of the formal Project Budget itself which means they are very specifically necessary for the achievement of results and delivery. The table below compares the Committed Cash Funding with the Actual Cash Funding Received at the Mid-Term on the project

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NAME OF FUNDING SOURCE** | **CASH COMMITTED AT PRODOC** | **CASH RECEIVED AT MTR** | **PERCENTAGE OF CASH RECEIVED AT MTR** |
| UNDP | $500,000 | $433,908 | 87 |
| Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority | $200,000 | $50,000 | 25 |
| Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority | $140,000 | $0 | 0 |
| Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities MOTA | $25,000 | $0 | 0 |
| **TOTALS** | **$865,000** | **$483,908** | **56** |

This table shows that 56% of cash commitments have already been realized at the MTR. However, this is somewhat skewed by the fact that UNDP has delivered on its commitment with nearly all of the pledged cash contribution having been realized at this half-way point. Other funding sources have not been delivering so well on their cash commitments. PDTRA has only delivered 25% of its commitment at the Mid-Term while the other two parties have not, as yet, contributed any of their pledged commitments. There may be justifiable reasons for this in that these cash contributions were not required in the first half of the project but will be needed to support those activities that are expected to take place in the second half. It would be wise if the project were to create a brief work-plan to cover the second half of the project (not necessarily as detailed as a full 12-month work-plan) with an emphasis on identifying in a budget alongside this workplan where these cash contributions can be expected and to get the agreement of the relevant Agencies on this. Undoubtedly, the matter of these pledged cash contributions will be a priority at the Final Evaluation.

All of the stakeholders interviewed felt that the project financing and budgeting were being handled efficiently. One logistical concern raised was the fact that discussion of the budget early in the project lifetime always centred around the UNDP ATLAS budget structure and budget lines and it would have been more appropriate at the Management Committee level if discussions could focus on actual expenditures and proposed funding for specific activities, especially at the site level. It is sometimes difficult for the stakeholders to understand on what basis funding is being allocated to different sites. This has since been rectified by the PCU and budgets (such as the 2016 AWP) are now presented both as Input/Output Budgets and ATLAS Budgets. This is an important lesson for future projects, to ensure that a more detailed ‘activity’ and site related budget is presented to the Project Management body for discussion and approval as well as any standard UNDP ATLAS budget. The Project Management body should then agree on this budget.

In summary, the project appears to be in a healthy financial position at the Mid-Term with no problems arising from over-expenditure at this stage although there has been some under-expenditure which may need addressing. The only main concern which can and should be rectified before the Final Evaluation is that of the outstanding cash contributions.

From this point forward in the Mid-Term Report, each section provides a formal Rating of project performance based on the following scores

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

## Project Level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

**Project Monitoring and Evaluation: Design at Entry (MTR Rating = 4)**

The M&E element of the Project Document and the M&E Workplan and Budget are in order and appropriate to the needs of this project. Quarterly Reports and APR/PIRs are specified and the actual reporting requirements are noted. The need for periodic site visits is captured in this section. There does not appear to be anything missing from the M&E Design as per the original Project Document and the M&E Work-Plan and Budget are presented effectively.

The Results Framework however, as an important M&E tool, shows some minor shortcomings at the design stage which are discussed above under the **Analysis of Results Framework**. The indicators and targets all refer to end-of-project while it would have been more effective (for monitoring and evaluation purposes) if there had also been mid-term targets. In this respect the objective (in this case, the use of the Results Framework for M&E purposes) is expected to achieve its purpose but with some minor shortcomings in the context of measuring delivery

Therefore, this should receive a **Moderately Satisfactory** rating.

**Project Monitoring and Evaluation: Implementation (MTR Rating = 5)**

A Project Inception Workshop was carried out in May 2014 and a detailed report has been provided and is discussed under **Progress Toward Results**. The Inception Workshop presented and discussed the M&E Plan/Framework, its timeframe and its budget so as to ensure all stakeholder were clear on what was expected. No changes were proposed to this Project M&E system as it was considered to be fully appropriate to the project context. The Project

The M&E Plan appears to have been sufficiently budgeted and funded during both project preparation and during its implementation so far.

 Quarterly reporting is a standard mechanism for monitoring project progress, delivery and overall management and these reports have been prepared effectively for all the relevant quarters and contain sufficient information to monitor progress. They address the status of the output targets for that current year, main results achieved to date and key activities for the reporting period. Importantly, they also review Risks and provide proposed Countermeasures, with a clear emphasis on recognising and updating risks during project implementation. The Quarterly Reports undertake a similar review of specific issues that are affecting project performance and how these are being resolved. They also capture Lessons Learned for the project and identify any Monitoring requirements/dates that are imminent. These Quarterly Project Reports are of a high standard and to be commended.

The 2015 PIR Report provides early indications of delivery as well as challenges encountered. The PIR notes two obvious improvements in mainstreaming biodiversity that can be directly linked to the project:

1. At the beginning of the project the focus of PDTRA was very much on the conserving the archaeological values of the Petra Archaeological Park (PAP). Now, after being heavily engaged in this project, their interest in biodiversity conservation became notably higher. This is evident by the fact that the PDTRA has decided to include the PAP in the national PA network and get the PAP nominated as a natural PA, according to the national system, an initiative that is being supported by the project. Furthermore, the PAP is currently formulating its new management plan with intention to enlarge the ecological component and give more attention to biodiversity conservation; this is also being supported by the project.
2. The second observation relates to the biodiversity agenda in MoTA. Although the Ministry still has a long way to go to fully mainstream biodiversity conservation into its policies, it is noted in the PIR that interest in biodiversity aspect has been positively increased. This is evident by the fact that the MoTA has approved the establishment of a Tourism Green Unit within its structure which will be mainly concerned with integrating biodiversity considerations into the licensing and inspection policies and procedures. The initiative is also being supported by the project, including assistance with building necessary capacities.

There were no critical risks observed during this PIR reporting period. It was, however, noted that among the challenges facing the project at its inception phase was the lack of common understanding of the concepts of "Mainstreaming". Therefore, the project had to invest in clarifying and promoting such concepts. A satisfactory rating was given at this 2015 PIR stage as the project was considered to be on track in achieving its development objective.

Regular visits to the field sites (Dibbin, Petra and Wadi Rum) are a standard part of the project monitoring process as undertaken by the Project Manager and usually involve community meetings and meetings/reporting back from the appropriate responsible bodies (e.g. RSCN, PDTRA, ASEZA and their representatives on-site).

Work-Plans are presented and adopted/amended on a yearly basis and the Project Coordination Group meets to review the work-plan and delivery as well as any other issues on a monthly basis. Any significant changes in work-plan or to the budgets are reviewed by the Project Executive Board which meets every 6 months (see **Management Arrangements**). UNDP audits the Project on a yearly basis as per the M&E Workplan.

The project and its stakeholders show a keen sense of participatory adaptive management in reviewing project delivery through the QPRs and PIRs as well as their regular project meetings and adopting follow-up actions to address any issues that arise. The role of and impact on youth, women. Indigenous people and/or the poor seems to be a frequent subject of discussion in such meetings.

These monitoring tools provide the necessary information for effective monitoring and include /involve all the key partners through the PCG and through site visits and regular exchanges and dialogue between the Project Manager and the various key players and executing partners.

Overall, the project M&E process seems to be efficient, streamlined and cost-effective to date. The only shortfall was the lack pf a 2016 PIR at the time of the MTR although this was under preparation. **The rating given is Satisfactory**

## Stakeholder Engagement

The original Project Document discusses stakeholders in several places and in detail. It does note the fact that, while they do not have administrative responsibilities strictly speaking, two important institutional stakeholders who do exert a degree of influence are UNESCO and USAID. There does not appear to have been much involvement of these two bodies during the project planning stage or initially in the project activities and management.

However, since then, the Reviewer understands that the project has had several meetings and discussions with UNESCO team regarding the project activities and assignment, especially the ones inside PAP. Furthermore, the project has collaborated with UNESCO through input to a UNESCO file report as part of the Petra LUP development. The main objective of this report is to help Petra in preparing and reviewing the UNESCO requirement. The file is also including monitoring process framework and adequate long-term legislative and regulatory measures. This report has since been discussed and approved by PDTRA and UNESCO. The project is now chairing two out of the fourteen committees (those on sustainability and natural resources) to assist in the development of an Integrated Management Plan for the PAP in which the natural aspects and biodiversity will appear for the first time in a Petra Management Plan. The new Management Plan is currently being developed by UNESCO and three meetings have been held so far between the project, UNESCO, PDTRA and other relevant stakeholder’s in order to mainstream the biodiversity aspect within the new plans. At an early stage of the project, UNESCO was also involved in the Petra LUP phase I and Management Plan for Rum.

In relation to closer collaboration with USAID, the project has built stronger linkages in mutual areas of interest and concern in both Rum and Petra which has resulted in the implementation of two activities together in Petra and the beginning of joint work in Rum. Furthermore, USAID is currently working with MoTA in the development of the new National Tourism Strategy while the BITS Project is assisting MoTA and the TGU in the development and adoption of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Both projects/teams have agreed to collaborate and work together to develop a new NTS that capture the SEA and reflects biodiversity mainstreaming and conservation.

## Reporting

Reporting has been good so far at MTR. Adaptive management needs are identified by the project Management and various stakeholders and these are then submitted and discussed at PCG meetings and at PEB meetings for adoption as appropriate. The PIR process was successfully and comprehensively undertaken for 2015 but has been left late in 2016 and was not available at the time of the MTR. The 2015 PIR was given fair and credible ratings as follows:

Overall Risk Rating Moderate

Overall Development Objective Rating Satisfactory

Overall Implementation Progress Rating Moderately Satisfactory

The PIR is discussed under further and in more detail under Monitoring and Evaluation as is the Quarterly Reporting process. The Latter has been particularly well-organised and precise with much attention to detail and well-circulated.

## Communication

Communication within the Project with the various stakeholders has been very effective and on a regular basis. This includes communication and feedback with the Local Advisory Committees at the PA sites as well. This has contributed to project awareness and outreach beyond both national and local committees and local awareness raising has been effective with strong support for the project objectives at the PA sites as well as nationally within the relevant Ministries, particularly MoTA and MoEnv. The Jordan BITS Fact Sheet is readily accessible online and the website can be accessed at the following address and carries all the necessary information and links:

<http://www.jo.undp.org/content/jordan/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/eco_tourism.html>

Public awareness and outreach is evident at the PA sites and their visitor centres. The MT Reviewer discussed opportunities for improving awareness and outreach with the project so that visitors can see the project in action.

## Sustainability and Risk

The Project Document contains a detailed table of risks and assumptions. These are reviewed in the following Table to see what changes may have occurred at the Mid-Term:

**REVIEW OF RISKS FROM INCEPTION TO MID-TERM REVIEW**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **RISK** | **Likelihood at Inception** | **Likelihood at MTR** |
| That political support for the adoption and implementation of environmental regulations and guidelines for tourism development, will waiver, and changes to legal provisions and procedures may take long to adopt thus reducing the effectiveness of the project upstream tools | LOW | LOW |
| That the political context in Jordan will be indecisive and unable to confirm, endorse, adopt or otherwise accept project products such as new legal processes and requirements, the declaration of Shoubak as a PA, etc. | MEDIUM | LOW (now Petra has replaced Shoubak) |
| That political unrest in the region will negatively affect tourism development in Jordan | HIGH | HIGH |
| That the private sector may not be willing to invest in biodiversity- friendly tourism services and products | LOW | LOW |
| That long-term changes in climate will exacerbate or present additional and unforeseen challenges for biodiversity conservation in Jordan as a whole | LOW | LOW |
| The MoTA is highly committed to the reduction of the impact of tourism on biodiversity, however, policy changes brought about by changes in government, could affect this commitment | LOW | LOW |
| Social acceptability in Jordan and in the tourist market for biodiversity as an added attraction for visitors, may turn out to be weaker than expected | LOW | LOW |
| Project Management Risks - in a project of this nature, with activities at four different localities spread throughout the country, there is always a risk of complications | LOW | LOW (Management has already proved itself) |

As can be seen from the above. There is little change in the risk rating. The political context and possible indecisive nature to adopt or endorse project products has probably fallen now from Medium to Low with the replacement of Petra for Shoubak and the designation of a Petra PA already being excepted by MoEnv. Political unrest remains a high-risk issue for tourism and hence for biodiversity mainstreaming. In 2015, only about 4 million tourists came to Jordan, half as many as those that came in 2010 and about 20% less than 2014. About a million of these tourists were Arabs from countries like Saudi Arabia, Oman, UAE, Kuwait and GCC countries. Also, under Project Management, although the risk was identified it was paced at Low and remains Low as the management process has already proven itself by the Mid-Term.

The following section deals with the Sustainability Ratings for the project. Please Note that these are different to the 1-6 rating levels for the Outcomes, Effectiveness and Efficiency sections above. Sustainability Ratings are ranked as follows:

4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability

3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks

2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks

1. Unlikely (U): severe risks

The sustainability and viability of the project was reasonably address in the original project design yet the potential for political sustainability was always a risk and this has dropped the overall rating of the Project through no direct fault of its own (see **Progess Towards Outcomes Analysis**).

Financial Resource Sustainability and Risks (**MTR Rating = 3, Moderately Likely**)

The 2015 PIR noted that political unrest in the region would negatively affect tourism development in Jordan. Despite the fact that this threat represents an industry threat rather than a project threat, it nevertheless represents a very real threat to the financial security and sustainability of the PAs, which currently rely almost entirely on government grants and/or development aid as sources of finance. The political unrest in the region has increased since the project started. It is not possible to decrease the probability of this threat, but the project may be able to reduce its impact on the Objectives. The PIR recommends that this could be done through several ways; one of them is to mainstream biodiversity at national and local levels while tourism activities are not a serious threat to biodiversity, and conduct a set of laws and by-laws that govern and control the tourism activities when the political unrest in the region situation changes. The PIR further notes that the project represents a real opportunity to set and document the real biodiversity level in the project site, and how to protect it in the future.

On one specific note, databases related to biodiversity and tourism will need updating, especially BIMS and this will require identified and committed funding. The Reviewer understands that RSCN has agreed to host and cover at least some of the funding for such updating and monitoring processes but this will also need to have some specific attention in any Sustainability Strategy developed and agreed through the project.

The Financial Sustainability Scorecard (see **Progress Toward Results**) shows a Significant improvement in the potential for sustainability. There are still some constraints however in relation to 1. The political unrest in the region which continues to depress the tourism market and 2. The need for a long-term Sustainability Strategy for mainstreaming biodiversity into the tourism sector. The second issue has been captured by the MTR as a Recommendation for the Project Management and Project Management Board to follow up. The former concern related to political unrest is difficult to address as the cause is beyond the control of the project. However, the project is responding to his concern and attempting to find new approaches to tourism that will both enhance the existing product and will assist in keeping tourists in Jordan and strengthening the tourism revenue potential. Again, the MT Reviewer has discussed this in detail with the project management and the stakeholders and has therefore made some recommendations to this effect. The sustainability of the financial resources related to the project therefore is in a **Moderately Likely** condition at the Mid-Term but can be expected to improve from this rating if the recommendations of the MTR are followed.

Socio-economic and Political Sustainability and Risks (**MTR Rating = 4, Likely**)

The presence of protected areas in Jordan is now an essential element for sustainable tourism. In recent years, tourism in Jordan has declined dramatically as a result of regional conflicts that have jeopardised tourist security. This is mainly due to Jordan being viewed by tourists as just one destination with an overall tourism package that would have otherwise included other countries which have a historic interest and background (e.g. Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt and Syria). Although Jordan itself is a relatively safe destination, with the outbreak of conflicts and general political instability in these neighbouring countries, both international and regional tourists have been disinclined to book such packages and Jordan has suffered financially from this situation. However, with the further development of ecotourism and the mainstreaming of biodiversity into the tourism sector (along with the strengthening and expansion of the protected areas), this now provides Jordan with an opportunity to re-package itself as a single-destination tourist attraction which can keep tourists in the country and visiting many different sites within one vocational trip. Not only would this revitalise the lost tourism but it would actually increase revenues as more tourist days are spent in the country.

Communities are growing more and more involved in the project activities and with their support, yet they still need to see more tangible benefits from tourism whilst being made aware of the cost-benefits of ecotourism and biodiversity tourism.

Although the socio-political sustainability of the region itself has taken a dramatic turn for the worse since project inception, this is clearly not the fault of any decisions or planning made by the project itself. In fairness, the project is attempting to address these issues head-on. The actual socio-political sustainability for the Project within the country however is in a strong condition with good political support and good local/community support and therefore deserves a rating of **Likely.**

Institutional Framework and Governance Sustainability and Risks (**MTR Rating = 3, Moderately Likely)**

As is so often the case, the sustainability of project objectives and achievements lies outside and beyond the project’s control. However, there is strong support for the project at the technical and mid-management level, yet this needs to be reflected at the higher policy level and, at present, it is not clear that such support is there. The Reviewer has made some specific recommendations to this effect

The Land Use Planning process is critical to the success and long-term sustainability of the project and it is therefore gratifying to note at this Mid-Term stage that this process is proceeding efficiently and should deliver on its targets.

If MoEnv manages to institutionalise the Strategic Environmental Assessment with supportive legislation and policy, then this will be a major contribution to the long-term sustainability of the project objectives. Similarly, if the EIA process can be harmonised and enshrined appropriately in law then this will also further strengthen sustainability of mainstreaming biodiversity and overall improvements in environmental protection and conservation.

It would be appropriate now for the project to explore the possibility of undertaking an updated review of the legislation to see if it requires any further harmonisation or realignment in order to A. fully address mainstreaming of biodiversity into the tourist sector and B. ensure better coordination of legislation and mandates between appropriate ministries and stakeholders.

It is now crucially important that the project considers its ‘exit strategy’ in the context of sustainability. Although much has been achieved and will probably continue to be so with good delivery of the targets and objectives, this will be meaningless and a waste of investment in both time and financing if the objective and the deliverables cannot be maintained and properly ‘mainstreamed’. This can only realistically be achieved through political ownership and support as demonstrated and captured in improved and revised legislation and formal institutional strengthening/ interaction that reflect the direct linkage between biodiversity and tourism. The SEA and the project support for land use planning will be of no value if these are not now institutionalised and legislated under the appropriate Ministries, with formal coordination between those Ministries. The Green Tourism Unit is an excellent vehicle to help to promote this but even the TGU has questionable sustainability unless staff are contracted and the role of the TGU is formally institutionalised within MoTA. Currently, the TGU has no permanent staff but there are plans within MoTA to hire at least two persons to make this a permanent ‘institutional’ arrangement within the Ministry. The main stakeholders, particularly the Implementing Partners, need to address this issue of sustainability before the end of activities and, ideally, as early as possible in the second half of the project. For this to be effective there needs to be a direct face-to-face dialogue and formal agreement between these partners at a senior policy level on what is required and when this will be adopted.

Several stakeholders have asked for capacity building and training in mainstreaming biodiversity. This was a particularly strong request from MoMA within the land use management strategies and approaches (so that they can integrate more biodiversity-tourism linkages into the LUPs). So far the emphasis of the project has been on environmental issues and biodiversity and not focused so much on land use planning. MoMA would appreciate a specific consultancy from the project to assist them in this way and to strengthen MoMA’s understanding of mainstreaming biodiversity into the tourism sector as well as into land use planning. Greater strengthening of capacity would be beneficial and appropriate across the project, both at the ‘site’ level as well as at the ministry management and decision-making level. The main focal points and the representatives from each of the Implementing Partners would generally benefit from both a broader understanding of the concepts of sustainable biodiversity as well as a more detailed understanding of the various conservation and biodiversity management tools and their applications. The MT Reviewer understands that the BITS project has already entered into discussion with MoMA in relation to this need and that this will now have a strong focus in the second half of the Project.

Furthermore, it would be appropriate as the project enters its second and final stages. To consider the possibility of a further ‘Implementation’ phase with an emphasis on implementing tools for sustainable Land Use Planning and Protected Area Management as well as other tools linked to mainstreaming biodiversity. There will be a need for technical support to implement the various Management Plans. The Tourism Green Unit will need further support and strengthening but it does provide a very promising ‘platform’ for overall sustainability of the project’s aims and objectives. In particular, it can provide the basis and monitoring capacity for a comprehensive yet standardised certification process for tourism-related activities. A number of hotels and other tourism venues are already certified through ‘Green Key’ and other sustainability and eco-tourism certification mechanisms. These need to be harmonised and standardised to avoid duplication and to assure the highest quality of ‘star’ ratings for tourism venues. This also needs to be done at the destination/site level as well as at the level of individual establishments.

Sustainability of the institutional framework and overall governance related to the project has taken a promising direction but still needs more formal commitments to achieve its long-term assurance. Project management had delivered well on raising the profile and importance of the project and its objectives within government and within the stakeholders. Increased capacity building and training would be appropriate in the second half of the project. Also, the sustainability greatly depends on the appropriate legislation being adopted. It will be important to create a long-term partnership between the main Implementing Partners if institutional and governance sustainability are to be realised beyond the project lifetime. At the Mid-Term, the sustainability of the institutional framework and the governance process appears to be **Moderately Likely**.

Environmental Sustainability and Risks (MTR Rating = 4)

As with all projects of this nature, what is essential to monitoring and ensuring sustainability is an *ex post* evaluation. This has long been missing from UN GEF projects and is a major gap in the process and in protecting the GEF investment and that of the donor countries. UNDP needs to sit with government and discuss this need and define how it can be secured to ensure that there is a post-project evaluation and monitoring process in place.

There is strong support and momentum from MoTA and its TGU for eco-labelling and certification. Jordan has several such certification partners such as Green Key, Green Globe, Blue Flag etc. so the Ministry doesn’t necessarily need to develop its own label but can acknowledge and link into any or all of these. Already the project is developing a biodiversity-friendly Tourism Charter including a set of standards that will be developed, tested and adopted in support of MoTA certification schemes for all hotels, eco-tour operators, eco-lodges and camp sites. The project has established a Working Group to work with both an International and a Local consultant to evolve and develop this Charter, which will meet for the first time on 30th October. This process (which constitutes a major indicator in the Results Framework) has been delayed until the middle of the Project, partly in response to some minor recruitment delays and procedural constraints, but primarily as a reflection of the need to better understand the existing situation through an initial phase that reviewed all legal and institutional gaps within the various laws and legislative infrastructure as this process was being undertaken for the first time at the national level. Consequently, this is yet another good example of the project’s Adaptive Management approach and flexibility and it is appropriate that this ‘strategic’ delay was imposed in order to ensure a more effective end-product.

MoTA is also reviewing its entire certification scheme across the board and across the country to try and harmonise and standardise it for all hotels, camp sites, ecotourism areas and protected area infrastructure. This would now be an excellent opportunity to develop a state-of-the art star certification scheme with all the appropriate ‘award’ and quality criteria, particularly those that address environmental issues and needs. It is also important to show these venues that there is a very real ‘cost-benefit’ to this certification and that it is not just a ‘box-ticking’ arduous exercise. Such certification is now a requirement from international tour operators and NOT having it means losing substantial business. Of course, equally importantly, the certification requires certain measures to be taken which (for example) reduces waste production, water usage, detergent usage, excessive energy/electricity demand so this is also in the interests of these hotels and other venues as it will in fact cut down on their overheads. Also, such certification can only ever be as good as the follow-up monitoring and evaluation of compliance.

The land use planning process remains a concern in the context of legislation and enforcement if there is to be broad environmental sustainability linked to the aims of the project. Already, in areas like Aljoun for example, decisions have been made to sub-divide lands which effectively ‘re-zones’ them, changing the applicable regulations and fragmenting natural habitats while allowing a massive increase in housing and development. Again, the land use plans will only be as effective as the body that regulates them and its compliance and enforcement capacity, as well as its ‘willingness’ to enforce its regulations.

Sustainability needs were summed up by several stakeholders as being A. An official commitment from government in support of mainstreaming biodiversity into the tourism sector through effective legislation (e.g. SEA and Land Use Planning); B. the need to hire qualified people and/or training existing personnel and generally build the capacity at the appropriate institutional level within the appropriate departments, and C. develop a more effective mechanism for interaction and cooperative management of both biodiversity and tourism across the various responsible sectors and partners that otherwise tend to work in isolation, even duplicating each other’s efforts unnecessarily.

With the design and adoption of new Buffer Zones around both Petra and Wadi Rum there are now opportunities for not only protecting existing biodiversity but also for possible enhancement. Wadi Rum is already planning to introduce more Ibex into its protected area through a partnership with UAE. This could also be extended geographical to re-introductions to Petra and it may also be valuable to consider undertaking a feasibility study for a breeding and re-introduction programme for these and other species in these areas and elsewhere. This feasibility study could be further extended into looking at other opportunities to enhance biodiversity alongside the tourism experience.

At the Mid-Term, the Environmental Sustainability of the project rates as **Likely.**

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

## Overall Conclusions

## The project has achieved much in its first half and has created both ownership and momentum through building strong partnerships and trust and through actual delivery on the ground. Consequently, there is every reason to expect that this project will be able to deliver most of its objectives and deliverables on time. As is often the case, in complex projects like this with many different ‘formal’ stakeholders and government departments involved, the expectations for what could be done over a four-year period were optimistic. Nevertheless, it is impressive to see what the project is achieving mostly through the dedication and hard efforts of the project management working closely alongside the growing trust and involvement of the various stakeholders.

One of the possible dangers or risks from this successful process and the activities that have already been delivered is the creation of a high level of expectation. This has grown as the various stakeholders and partners have noted the positive impact from the project. There are now higher management expectations at all of the PA sites with their expansion through Buffer Zones. Nevertheless, it is the MT Reviewer’s opinion that, as long as this momentum and ownership can be maintained the project will achieve its goals. What will be of critical and essential importance is the development and formal agreement on a Sustainability Strategy by the Implementing Partners at the highest level

There are inevitably a few weaknesses that should either be addressed within the project or captured as lessons and practices for future projects of a similar nature. As is so often the case in donor-funded projects, there is a clear need for stronger coordination between various related projects and their donors. Capacity building and training has been a significant focus as is evident from the number and types of training and workshops that the project has supported. Yet, there is still a need for a more rational capacity building and training programme that prioritises the requirements within the stakeholders and the needs of the project in order to meet its objectives. Furthermore, although the original project design did not make any allowances for technical assistance at the national level, it is clear to the Reviewer that the project Coordination Unit is stretched too far in terms of manpower and that the Project Manager is committing to huge amounts of additional time (beyond what is reasonable to expect of such a position) to ensure that all aspects are running smoothly while also visiting all of the project sites on a very regular basis. There is no doubt that this is one of the reasons why the project has created such strong ownership and partnership but it is also clearly placing a lot of strain on the project management process. The Reviewer would therefore recommend that the budget be carefully reviewed with a view to finding funding for a technical advisor/assistant to assist the Project Manager in his work.

## Recommendations and Corrective Actions Required (along with responsibility for action)

The following recommendations arise from the Mid-Term Review and are promoted/supported by the Reviewer. These are not necessarily in an order of priority:

1. There is a strong need to move ahead expeditiously with Certification and ‘Green Labelling’ not just for hotels but for camp sites and for visitor/tourism aspects of Protected Areas as well. The project should consider extending the original ToR for this process to ensure it is completed and also includes a single-system rationalised national Star Award system which includes appropriate environmental and sustainable mainstreaming biodiversity criteria. **Proposed Actors: MoTA, Green Unit and Project Management**
2. Project Results and Next Step requirements (including this MTR) need to be translated into Arabic and discussed at a high-level in order to ‘buy’ sustainability from government and other stakeholders at the policy level. **Proposed Actors: UNDP and Project Management**
3. A ’Sustainability Strategy’ High Level Round-Table within the last year of the project at the level of Secretary-General to discuss and agree on way forward for sustainability of project achievements and to review possible next implementation stage for submission to GEF. **Proposed Actors: Senior Level Government Staff and Senior Level UNDP along with other NGO representation, supported by Project Management**
4. It is essential that there is institutionalisation of the SEA process with supportive legislation and other ‘biodiversity mainstreaming’ legislation. **Proposed Actors: MoEnv and Project Management**
5. Similarly, there needs to be harmonisation and standardisation of a single EIA process under MoEnv and this also should be captured within appropriate legislation **Proposed Actors: MoENV and Project Management**
6. The Implementing Partners and UNDP should identify a mechanism for Post-Project Assessment and evaluation of sustainability. This could be included under a further project proposal (see recommendation to that effect). **Proposed Actors: UNDP and other Implementing/Executing Partners**
7. The Results Framework should be updated to rationalise the changes in PA sites and associated Indicators as discussed under Section on Results Framework in the text of this report. **Proposed Actors: Project Coordination Group, Project Executive Board, Regional GEF Representation, UNDP.**
8. Development and adoption of a Capacity Building and Training programme for the appropriate stakeholders and Implementing Partners for the rest of this project should be prioritised for urgent and immediate training with a view to identifying funds under the current project where possible. This programme could also be extended to form part of a ‘next phase’ project on Implementing and Enhancing Biodiversity within the Tourism Sector. This CB&T programme needs to recognise the fact that there are skills and expertise scattered throughout government but they are not necessarily in the right departments. **Proposed Actors: Project Coordination Group and Project Executive Board.**
9. The appropriate Government body (probably MoPIC) should make the requisite arrangements to bring related projects together to present their aims and achievements and to share lessons. Currently, this donor/project coordination is absent and leads to inevitable duplication and the potential for much ‘re-invention of the wheel’. **Proposed Actors: Project Management, MoPIC and UNPD**
10. The project should consider undertaking a Feasibility study on developing a Small/Medium Size Enterprise support process for PAs once the appropriate legislation is in place and once community-level management is ensured. This could also be part of a future next-phase. **Proposed Actors: Project Management and UNDP in consultation with Project Coordination Group**
11. A similar Feasibility Study should be considered looking at possible enhancement of biodiversity values with tourism focusing on environmental/biodiversity trails and guides as well as the possibility of strengthening existing breeding and reintroduction programmes for charismatic species (e.g. such as Oryx, Ibex and the Houbara Bustard), with close coordination in this process between appropriate Protected areas such as Wadi Rum and Petra. **Proposed Actors: PDTRA, ASEZA, Project Management**
12. Draft a new Concept for a ‘next-phase’ project for submission to GEF and/or other donors looking at Implementing the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Process and Enhancing/Restoring Biodiversity in Jordan noting that the United Nation General Assembly has declared the adoption of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. **Proposed Actors: UNDP and Project Executive Board with action by Project Management**
13. Review the remaining budget to identify the possibility of funding a further project position to provide technical and planning assistance to the Project Manager and Implementing Partners. **Proposed Actors: UNDP and Project Management with endorsement from Project Coordination Group and** Executive Board
14. Establish a briefing process for media, including awareness and outreach workshop and/or symposium. **Proposed Actors: Project Management/UNDP and Media with input and direction from Project Coordination Group.**
15. A specific consultancy from the project to assist and to strengthen MoMA’s understanding of mainstreaming biodiversity into the tourism sector as well as into land use planning would be a valuable ‘outreach’ from the project. **Proposed Actors**: **MoMA and Project Management and endorsed by Project Coordination Group**
16. The MT Reviewer has reviewed and discussed the proposed revisions to the project budget at the MTR. These are relatively minor and all have been justified. The MTR recommends adoption of these budget revisions through a revised ATLAS budget which should then be approved at the next Project Coordination Group and the Project Executive Board informed of this measure at its next meeting. **Proposed Actors: UNDP, Project Management and Project Coordination Group**
17. The Reviewer also recommends that the project should convene a Lessons Learned and Best Practices workshop for the purpose of capturing the valuable results from the three sites and making them available to other Protected Areas and Buffer Zones as well as for MoMA to use in other Land Use Planning activities. **Proposed Actors: project Management assisted by UNDP**

N.B. The Reviewer also defined some Site-Specific Recommendations that are included under **A.5. Reviewer’s Notes on the Three Protected Area Sites Visited During the Mid-Term Evaluation**.

## Lessons and Practices Arising from the Project (National and Global)

* Results Framework for projects should have both Mid-Term and Final SMART Indicator and Targets for more effective evaluation of progress and corrective recommendations
* Project Budgets should focus on activities and deliverables as well as ATLAS-style budgeting. This may require two Budgets to be included in the Project Document to this effect. This would make the budgeting plans more transparent to the project stakeholders
* On-the-ground ‘concrete’ activities that demonstrate clear benefits to the local communities that will be required to oversee and manage biodiversity and protected areas are essential to build ‘ownership’.
* Some form of high-level ‘Sustainability Strategy’ workshop and subsequent formal Agreement should be adopted as a project activity and as a requirement for achieving project sustainability.

## A.1: Terms of Reference for MTR

**INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT PROCUREMENT NOTICE**

Date: 29 Aug, 2016

**Country: Jordan**

**Description of the assignment:**

**International Consultant to Conduct a Mid-term Review**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Post Title:** | **International Consultant to Conduct a Mid-term Review**  |
| **Starting Date:** | Sept. 2016 |
| **Duration:** | **30 working days** during period Sept. – Nov 2016, **out of which 14 working days in Jordan.**  |
| **Location:** | Jordan (Amman, Dibbin, Rum and Petra) |
| **Project:**  | Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation in Tourism Sector Development in Jordan |

* 1. **BACKGROUND & CONTEXT**

Please refer to below website of the project

<http://www.jo.undp.org/content/jordan/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/eco_tourism.html>

 **PROJECT GOAL, OBJECTIVES and OUTCOMES:**

The Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Tourism Sector Development in Jordan Project is a GEF/UNDP project commenced in January 2014. The four-year project aim is to make the consideration of biodiversity a fundamental part of everyday planning and development for tourism in Jordan. More specifically, the Project Objective is:

“**Biodiversity conservation objectives are effectively mainstreamed and advanced into and through tourism sector development in Jordan”.**

The project executed jointly by a number of national institutions namely, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA), the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA), the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA). The project is further coordinated with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) and the Ministry of Environment (MoEnv).

The project scope includes three components, each reflected in one strategic outcome as follows:

**Outcome 1:** Regulatory and enforcement framework in place to avoid, reduce, mitigate and offset adverse impacts of tourism on biodiversity.

**Outcome 2:** Institutional capacities for planning, monitoring and enforcement strengthened in Jerash, Petra and Wadi Rum landscapes so as to manage the impacts of tourism development on biodiversity within ecologically valuable and sensitive areas.

**Outcome 3:** Improved management effectiveness particularly in revenue generation, tourism planning and management, and community relations in Dibbin, Shoubak and Wadi Rum Protected Area.

**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:

* 1. **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.
	1. **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.
	1. **Management arrangements**
3. 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.
4. Review the quality of execution of the project Implementing Partners and recommend areas for improvement.
5. Review the quality of support provided by UNDP and recommend areas for improvement.
6. **METHODOLOGY**

The MTR must provide evidence based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The MTR consultant 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 consultant 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, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA), the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA), the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), the Ministry of Environment, and other 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 Dibbin PA, Rum PA and Petra.

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 Reviewer(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 Reviewers 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.*

**Reviewer 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).

**4. 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  |
| 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.
 | 45 days after signing the contract  |

1. **REQUIREMENTS FOR EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS**

**A) Education:**

* Advanced university degree in Biodiversity, environment, sustainable development or another relevant subject.

**B) Professional Experiences & Skills:**

* Preferably 10 years of professional experience in fields relevant to biodiversity, environment or relevant fields.
* Preferably experience of Biodiversity.
* Minimum 5 years’ experience in conducting evaluation of similar UNDP and/or GEF projects; experience with regional projects is preferred but not required.
* Sound knowledge of results-based management (especially results-oriented monitoring and evaluation).
* Fluency in written and spoken English. Arabic is valuable but not required.
* Full computer literacy.

**C) Competencies**

* Strong interpersonal skills, communication and diplomatic skills, ability to work with stakeholders including governments.
* Ability to plan and organize his/her work, efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results
* Openness to change and ability to receive/integrate feedback
* Ability to work under pressure and stressful situations
* Strong analytical, reporting and writing abilities

**D) Consultant Independence**

The MTR consultant cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project’s related activities.

1. **DOCUMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WHEN SUBMITTING THE PROPOSALS.**
* Interested individual consultants must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications:
* 1. Proposal:

(i) Explaining why they are the most suitable for the work

(ii) Provide a brief methodology on how they will approach and conduct the work.

* 2. Financial proposal
* 3. Personal CV including past experience in similar projects and at least 3 references

**FINANCIAL PROPOSAL**

**Lump sum contracts**

The financial proposal shall specify a total lump sum amount including fees, travel cost (total of two weeks mission), tickets, DSAs, accommodation. While local transportations (local travel means inside each country will be covered by the project). Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR. In order to assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lump sum amount.

1. **EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES**

Individual consultants will be evaluated based on the following methodologies:

 Cumulative analysis

When using this weighted scoring method, the award of the contract should be made to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as:

a) responsive/compliant/acceptable, and

b) Having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria specific to the solicitation.

\* Technical Criteria weight; 70%

\* Financial Criteria weight; 30%

Only candidates obtaining a minimum of 50 point would be considered for the Financial Evaluation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Criteria*** | ***Weight***  | ***Max. Point*** |
| *Technical* | *70%* |  |
| Having carried out similar or related work |  | *35* |
| Technical approach and methodology and work plan demonstrating a clear understanding of the job to be done |  | *35* |
| *Financial* | *30%* | *30* |

1. **DURATION OF MISSION**

# The expected duration of this assignment is up to 10 weeks maximum, expected to consist of approximately 30 working days to conduct necessary meetings and finalize the evaluation report.

# A.2: Agenda for Mid-Term Review Reporting and Mission

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITIES** | **TIMELINE- 2016** |
| Contract Signed | 10 October |
| Initial Review of Project Documents (PIF, ProDoc, Results Framework, etc.) | 16 – 20 October |
| Travel to Jordan | 21-22 October |
| Meeting with UNDP CO and Project Team | 23 October a.m. |
| Attendance of Tourism Green Unit Training Programme | 23 p.m. – 24 October |
| Site Visit Dibeen - meet with RSCN, BIMS Manager and other stakeholders | 25 October |
| Site Visit Dibeen – meet with PA Manager/ other stakeholders and visit Picnic Area and other appropriate sites | 26 October |
| Amman - Potential Meeting with GEF Focal Point and other stakeholders as available | 27 October |
| Start Drafting Report | 28 October |
| Travel to Southern Project Sites (Wadi Rum and Petra vicinities) | 29 October |
| Site Visits and Stakeholder meetings at Southern Project Sites | 29 October – 1 November |
| Return Amman and further Stakeholder meetings (esp. Ministries) | 2 – 4 November |
| End of Mission Debriefing with UNDP | 4-5 November |
| Return to South Africa | 5 - 6 November |
| Report Drafting | 7- 10 November |
| Submission of Draft Report to UNDP | 10 November |
| Feedback from UNDP and Stakeholders | 21 November |
| Submission of Final Report and end of MTR | 24 November |

N.B. All in-country activities are subject to amendment based on availability of stakeholders etc. (by agreement between consultant and UNDP/Project Manager)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sunday** | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** | **Saturday** |
| **OCTOBER** |
| **16** | **17** | **18** | **19** | **20** | **21** | **22** |
| Review Project Documents | Review Project Documents | Review Project Documents | Review Results Framework and Indicators | Final Preparations and Delivery of Agenda and WorkPlan | Fly South Africa to Amman | Arrive Amman |
| **OCTOBER** |
| **23** | **24** | **25** | **26** | **27** | **28** | **29** |
| **UNDP CO** Meetings with UNDP and Project Team | **AMMAN**Meetings with other stakeholders | **DIBEEN DAY VISIT**Visit project site and meet with Stakeholders | **DIBEEN DAY VISIT**Further Stakeholder Meetings | **AMMAN**Meetings with Stakeholders in Amman | WORK ON REPORT | **TRAVEL TO SHOUBAK/WADI RUM/PETRA SITES** |
| **OCTOBER** | **NOVEMBER** |
| **30** | **31** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **SHOUBAK/WADI RUM/PETRA**Site visit and meetings with Stakeholders | **SHOUBAK/WADI RUM/PETRA**Further site visits and meetings with Stakeholders | **SHOUBAK/WADI RUM/PETRA**Site visits and meetings continued | **RETURN AMMAN**Further meetings and discussions with UN and Project Team in afternoon if time | **AMMAN**Final Project Team and Stakeholder Discussions | **AMMAN**Debriefing and initial findings/ concerns | Fly Back to South Africa |
| **NOVEMBER** |
| **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **----> 21** | **----> 24** |
| Arrive South Africa | Report Drafting | Report Drafting | Report Drafting  | Submission of Draft Report to UNDP | Feedback from UNDP and other Stakeholders | Submission of Final Report |

# A.3: List of Persons Interviewed

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NAME** | **TITLE** | **INSTITUTION OR FUNCTION** |
|  |
| Nedal Alouran | Head of Environment Portfolio | UNDP Country Office Jordan |
| Rana Saleh | Environmental Programme Associate | UNDP Country Office Jordan |
| Mahmoud Arab | Director of Tourist sites management directorate (MoTA focal point)  | MoTA |
| Niels Jensen | International Consultant | Sustainable Tourism Charter |
| Sami Ahmed Al Hasanat | Local Consultant | Sustainable Tourism Charter |
| Samar Taha | SEA Local Consultant | MoTA |
| Eyad Batarseh | TGU Local Consultant | MoTA |
| Yehya Khaled | Director-General | RSCN |
| Maen Al-Smadi | Head of Protected Areas and Project Focal Point | RSCN |
| Nizar Abujaber | LUP External Reviewer/Consultant | German-Jordan University |
| Nashwah Suboh | Dibbin LUP Team leader  | CCG |
| Deema Abu Thaib | Project Manager - Dibbin Land Use Plan assignment  | CCG |
| Emad Hijazan | Deputy Chief | PDTRA |
| Basheer Ayasreh  | Dibbin Protected Area manager | Dibbin Protected Area |
| Hosan Al Zubi | Dibbin Local officer | UNDP  |
| Abeer Khouzai | Education Officer |  Dibbin LAC member |
| Mohamed Afeef | RSCN Ranger | Dibbin Protected Area |
| Abu Ma’an |  | Dibbin LAC member  |
| Raed Bani Hani | Director, Nature Protection Directorate and Implementing Partner Focal Point | Ministry of Environment |
| Bilal Shagareen  | Head division, Biodiversity | Ministry of Environment |
| Enas Sakheja | Biodiversity Information Management System (BIMS team leader)  | RSCN |
| Basima M. Al-Arda | Head of Cultural Heritage and Senior Urban Planner, Rum LUP Team leader | Dar al Omran Consulting Company |
| Hani Damer | Project Manager, Rum LUP  | Dar al Omran Consulting Company |
| Majdi Salamah | Environmental/Social Consultants to project on EIA and SEA and for Petra Land Use Planning | Enviromatics |
| Mohamed Abu Bakr |
| Tahani Salhi | Director of Cultural Resources Management PDTRA Project Focal Point | PDTRA |
| Mohamed Enab | Director of LUP  | Ministry of Municipal Affairs |
| Rowayeda Habahbeh | LUP Head division and project focal point |
| Eba’a Al Eysa | Environment Department | Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation |
| MajedaAssaf  | Programme Manager | UNDP |
| Lama Bashour | SEA Team leader assignment  | Ecocentra Consultants |
| Various |  | Dibbin/Jerash Land Use Planning Meeting |
| Various |  | Wadi Rum Local Advisory Committee |
| Various |  | Project Management Committee |

## A.4:Documents and Materials reviewed during the Mid-Term Review

List of Documents Reviewed for the Mid-Term Review

BITS Project PIF Submission

BITS Project GEF Review Sheet

BITS Project STAP Review Sheet

BITS Project PPG (Project Preparation Grant) Request

BITS Project Request for CEO Endorsement

BITS Project Document as Endorsed January 2014

BITS Project Inception Report May 2014

BITS Project Annual Progress Report 2014

BITS Project Annual Progress Report 2015

BITS Project Implementation Review 2015

Bits Project Executive Board Meetings – Summary of all

Bits Project Quarterly Reports (from Inception to MTR – 8 in total)

Wadi Rum Business Plan September 2016

Jordan National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan 2015-2020

Jordan National Tourism Strategy 2011-2015

Local Advisory Committee Experience Exchange Visit Report November 2016

Petra Archaeological Park -Nomination File for National Protected Area 8/17/2015

Tourism Green Unit Training Programme 23-24th October Amman, Jordan 2016

Update Report on BITS project Training and Workshops

GEF Review of World Bank Ecosystem Management and PA Project 08/18/2014

GEF Trust Fund Grant Agreement for ‘Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Jordan Rift Valley ‘

World Bank Terminal Evaluation of ‘Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Jordan Rift Valley ‘

IFAD Project Document ‘Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Sylvo-pastoral and Rangeland Landscapes in Pockets of Poverty in Jordan’

IFAD Project Document ‘Mainstreaming Sustainable Land and Water Management Practices in Jordan’

ToRs for Project Consultancies - various

BITS Financial Log-Book and Spreadsheets for BITS Budget

Financial Score Cards for Dibbin, Petra and Wadi Rum

METT Score Cards for Dibbin, Petra and Wadi Rum

Co-financing Pledge Letters

UNDP Combined Delivery Report of Expenditure

Powerpoints Reviewed

Project Coordination Group Meeting November 2016 - Project Update

Dibbin Alternative Development Scenario presentation - October 2016

Wild Jordan: Helping Nature, Helping People

# A.5: Signed UNEG Code of Conduct Form

**Reviewers:**

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

**Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form**

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

**Name of Consultant:** David Hugh Patrick Vousden

**Name of Consultancy Organization** (where relevant)**:** Independent Evaluation Consultant

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

Signed at Grahamstown, South Africa on21st October 2016

Signature:



## A.6: Evaluation Questionnaire

**Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation in Tourism Sector Development in Jordan**

**UNDP GEF Mid-Term Review**

Please answer whichever questions you feel are relevant to yourself - as this is a generic questionnaire

This is a **Confidential Questionnaire**. Please return all responses to david.vousden@asclme.org without copying to other parties. Feel free to expand any comments onto more sheets of paper if required.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Questionnaire for All Stakeholders |
| **A** | **GENERAL** |
| 1 | Please describe the nature of your involvement in this Project |  |
| 2 | Who are your primary counterparts in UNDP GEF with whom you have most actively been involved in this Project? |  |
| **B** | **RELEVANCE AND APPROPRIATENESS OF ORIGINAL PROJECT DESIGN AND OBJECTIVE** |
| 1 | Do you feel that the Project Objective was appropriate to the expectations of the country and the stakeholders? |  |
| 2 | Have the Project Objectives altered during the course of the Project to date? |  |
| 3 | Were the original budget arrangements appropriate and have they changed during the course of the Project so far? |  |
| 4 | In broad overview, are the Project Document and its expected deliveries realistic within the time-frame and funding? |  |
| **C** | **PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION (Effectiveness):** |
| 1 | To what extent have the intended outcomes and objectives of the Project been achieved so far? |  |
| 2 | What is the likelihood of the objectives and deliverables being met within the timeframe? |  |
| 3 | Are the management arrangements for the Project appropriate and effective? |  |
| 4 | Has there been effective oversight and ‘steering’ of the Project by the National Steering Committee?  |  |
| 5 | Has there been effective leadership and management provided by the Implementing Agency (UNDP) and the various in-country Implementing Partners/ Executing Agencies[[1]](#footnote-1)? |  |
| 6 | Do you think that the presence of this Project has created any positive improvements so far in ensuring that the Conservation of Biodiversity is being taken as a serious consideration within the development of Jordan’s Tourism Sector? |  |
| 7 | Have the financial arrangements for the Project (i.e. disbursement of funds and procurement of services and goods) been effective, well-managed and appropriate? |  |
| 8 | Has the Project been effective to date in generating the proposed co- financing and in**-**kind support? |  |
| 9 | Has there been continuity in the Project Implementation team throughout the Project or has there been a lot of staff turnover (explain)? |  |
| 10 | In the context of Project Management and Implementation, have any valuable lessons been learned so far which should be captured for the remaining implementation period or for future Projects and initiatives of this nature? |  |
| **D** | **SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES** |
| 1 | In your opinion, are the relevant activities and outputs from the Project likely to continue after the end of this phase of funding? |  |
| 2 | Have sources of funding (from the national budget or otherwise) been identified that will support the long-term continuation or expansion of Project activities? |  |
| 3 | What is the likelihood of financial resources not being available after GEF and UNDP support ends? |  |
| 4 | Are any of the lessons learned from the Project being transferred either nationally or locally within the country? |  |
| **E** | **STAKEHOLDER PROCESSES** |
| 1 | In terms of Project management and outreach, has there been sufficient dialogue with stakeholders? Has there been sufficient transparency and information sharing?  |  |
| 2 | Have there been public awareness and outreach efforts and how effective has the Project been in attracting public attention? |  |
| 3 | Has there been effective cooperation with and involvement of NGOs so far? |  |
| 4 | What is your view of the Project’s approach to partnership with the private sector, including co-financing from that sector? Do you see ways in which these partnerships could be improved? |  |
| 5 | Do you think there is country ownership, willingness for continuation, and stakeholder participation to drive continuation of the Project and its objectives to the end of the Project and beyond? |  |
| 6 | Can you identify any gaps or lessons learned so far during the Project in relation to effective stakeholder engagement? |  |
| **E** | **OVERALL PROJECT IMPACT** |
| 1 | What changes have occurred as a result of this Project? What practical improvements have there been as a result? Please be as specific as possible.  |  |
| 2 | Do you see any enhancement of national capabilities, strengthening of institutions, more cooperation and coordination as a result of this Project? |  |
| 3 | Has the Project contributed to Biodiversity Conservation locally and/or nationally? |  |
| 4 | Has there been effective monitoring and reporting on Project status and achievement so far? |  |
| 5 | Are Project outcomes contributing to national development plans and priorities? |  |
| 6 | Has the Project made any impacts on the socioeconomic status and quality-of-life of any of the stakeholders?  |  |
| 7 | Has the Project contributed to women’s empowerment/employment? Can this aspect of the Project be enhanced/improved in any way? |  |
| 8 | Please comment on any other issues that may not have been raised above but which you feel should be taken not of and addressed. |  |
|  |  |

# A.7: Mid-Term Reviewer’s Notes on the Three Protected Areas Sites

Reviewer’s Notes on the Three Protected Area Sites visited during the Mid-Term Review

**Dibbin Site**: This site tends to attract local tourist from Jordan because of the presence of the Aleppo pines and other trees which are rare to see in the rest of the country. On average, they receive about 100,000 visitors per year. Annual running costs are around JD 120,000. RSCN covers this running cost (which includes salaries and park management costs) and the PA generates about JD 30,000 in revenue from entrance fees. He carrying capacity of the park is around 1,200 per day but the actual visitor numbers experienced at peak periods in March and April can be over 8,000 per day. One major impact from these high numbers is the rubbish and waste that then accumulates within the park. The site is more focused on demonstrating and strengthening interaction with the communities in and around a designated and well established protected area. In 2004, GEF provided funding support to develop a management plan, undertake socioeconomic studies and to identify alternative livelihoods. They also looked at alternative energy sources (especially with the rise in fuel prices) and improved water harvesting. The Park is currently training local community members (2 professionals plus 14 trainees) in various skills such as embroidery and pottery so that they can make a revenue from the visitors. Dibbin has two types of rangers (RSCN and Ministry of Agriculture) and there are three of each. The RSCN rangers are more involved in biodiversity, conservation and monitoring illegal activities but they have no powers outside of the actual nature reserve. The Ministry of Agriculture’s (MoA) Rangers have the actual powers to deal with compliance and enforcement issues and any infringements of the rules. The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for distributing wood for fuel from fallen trees. However, much of this can find its way into Jerash and Amman rather than the local communities. There is currently encroachment of inappropriate activities into the buffer zone which needs to be addressed between RSCN and MoA and within the new Land Use Plan. The PA has an Education officer who deals mainly with students in the local community between the ages of 12-17 years old. She also teaches at the University on the goal of the reserve, its aims and its challenges. Students also come to visit the reserve and are taken on an Educational Trail as well as experiencing some ‘fun’ activities so as to stimulate their interest (e.g. soil testing, transpiration in trees, etc.). During their holidays the Park runs a four-day camp (only daytime activities, not overnight). Park employees also receive educational training on how to deal with the visitors and what to tell them and teach them. Park educational staff and RSCN also train teachers within the community on park-related issues and biodiversity. The main problems see to centre on illegal cutting of wood and poor waste management, although the latter has improved since RSCN has started handing out bin-bags for collect waste. The Rangers make scheduled ‘rounds’ of the Park day and night to check on activities based on an agreed work-plan that divides the load between the three rangers. They use vehicles and horses to patrol as well as going on foot. The local community maintains that, before RSCN was running the Park there were many problems but thinks have greatly improved since, with far less waste and less illegal logging. Because of this difference, there is strong support from the local community for RSCN and its presence and work in the Park. The local community would like to see lighting at the picnic site as well as a restaurant. MoA state that they need more fire-fighting equipment as this remains a big threat to the pine forest. Restoration of the Aleppo Pine has been ongoing with some 400 trees planted through the project. They need part-time or volunteer rangers to supplement the full-time rangers as it is not possible otherwise to patrol the Park effectively, especially in the winter months when there is a demand for wood for fuel.

Land Use Planning at Dibbin

 A Land Use Plan for Dibbin Forest Reserve and surrounding Buffer Zone is under development through a consultancy hired by the project. Among its objectives, the LUP will aim to ensure the sustainability of natural and cultural assets and to maintain associated ecosystem, services. The study area was identified by including all areas that lie within a radius of 5 km from Dibbin Forest Reserve boundary considering the administrative boundaries of concerned Municipalities. The study area covers a little over 1560 hectares and includes a population of approximately 106,400. One of its criteria is that it should be based on strong stakeholder involvement and input. It is also required to develop the necessary regulatory framework, policies and guidelines along with monitoring plans and mechanisms. Progress so far has delivered 1. An Updated assessment report (filling the gaps), data collection, analysis, field survey, meeting with key stakeholders; 2. A field survey to assess biodiversity (consultant team with RSCN); 3.A biodiversity sensitivity map; 4. Alternatives for the buffer zone; 5.Draft alternative scenarios for the study area. The LUP consultancy also looked at an assessment of spatial growth needs and land ownership and found that privately-owned land covers 62% of the study area. The consultancy also undertook a socioeconomic assessment for the area. The study found a number of problems related to infrastructure needs including road networks (causing habitat fragmentation) and public transport shortages. It also identified waste dumping and excessive use of agro-chemicals to be a problem as are tree-cutting for fuel, fires, over-grazing and private land ownership (linked to resource exploitation). A Legal Framework Assessment was also undertaken which identified an absence of proper protective legislation for forest (including inadequate definition of what constitutes ‘forest’) and a lack of common policy for the organisation and management of the forest. There is also a conflict of responsibilities between various agencies and ministries that are involved in forest protection and management. The draft Land Use Plan includes a set of Strategic Goals and Alternative Development Scenarios which vary depending on the balance between development and conservation. The Dibbin Management Plan has been revised now to reflect the new Land Use Plan and with input from BIMS. It is just waiting for endorsement from the Ministry of Environment. A National Consultant has been hired to address the visitor management capabilities through improved visitor facilities, better trained rangers and eco-guides, and generally improved management capacities.

Specific Recommendations for Dibbin

* Urgent need for more fire-fighting equipment and a response plan
* Part-time/volunteer community rangers to protect the Park against illegal wood-cutting, especially in the winter months

**Wadi Rum Site**:

According to its Business Plan, The Wadi Rum protected area is spread on an area of 74,000-hectares and is situated in southern Jordan, near the border with Saudi Arabia. It lies between Petra and Aqaba. The landscape is unique as it is a mix of sandy desert, lime stones, Granite, gorges, massively tall rock cliffs, mountains, natural ramps and arches, caverns, landslides and water. It is believed that the desert has seen civilization for at least 14,000 years, and boasts of over 25,000 rock carvings, many of them showing traces of human evolution and development of language tools. Wadi Rum has been largely inaccessible to people for centuries due to its remoteness from population centres but also because of the nature of the terrain and high rock cliffs and mountains. This has helped Wadi Rum to be preserved from mankind and associated various destructive habits. The Bedouin have been living sparsely in Wadi Rum for over a century. In more recent times, as the population has grown in the Rum area, so has the usage of its land and scarce resources. There have been reports of illegal hunting of rare and endangered species in the area and some permitted subsistence wood fuel and pastoral grazing by the local communities. While these are still considered as within permissible level, they are on the rise and need to be closely monitored. At the moment, commercially viable mineral resources through mining or other means in the Rum area is still not sufficient, however the local Bedouin have started looking at ways to make money, through selling small rocks to tourists in the area, usage of sand, soil and rocks in pottery and ceramic production.

This site attracts foreign visitors (along with Petra). It has only relatively recently been established and needs to develop stronger interaction with the private sector. Wadi Rum has been on inscribed onto the World Heritage Site listings in 2011 as a mixed natural and cultural site. There are a number of challenges facing Wadi Rum. There is little control over what happens not only in the Buffer Zone but, to some extent, in the Protected Area, as the PA staff have no real authority and are not supported by the local police. Consequently, tourists are being intercepted by non-approved ‘outside’ elements with no authority from the park and are being taken to the wrong places and charged entrance fees and receive a very poor quality experience. There is also a big problem with illegal camps in the Buffer Zone (although there is better control over these in the actual PA). There is an active Local Community Association which is aware of these problems and is struggling to resolve them. Visitors themselves are not aware that there is an actual Protected Area in Wadi Rum and this needs to be promoted somehow. With the adoption of the Buffer Zone and a Land Use Plan, the Wadi Rum Director will have more legal control through ASEZA. The Buffer Zone and its Business Plan is now very close to an approval stage and should be adopted early in 2017. One specific point made by the PA management was that all-too-often projects of this nature come in and do a lot of ‘paper’ work with very little delivery but, in the case of this relatively small (in terms of finances) UNDP GEF Project, they are very pleased with what has actually happened on the ground, and the fact that the project is being reviewed at the Mid Term says a lot about how UNDP and GEF take their activities, delivery and sustainability seriously. They are particularly pleased with the database that the project has created and its potential for monitoring. But they do need law enforcement and more awareness about biodiversity issues (including training of the rangers and guides).

Land Use Planning at Wadi Rum

Both Dar al Omran and Enviromatics (Consultancy Companies) were contracted to develop the Land Use Plans for Rum. They are currently at Step Five of a seven step process for finalising the LUPs and are now close to finalising the first draft. When the LUP is complete it will be adopted by ASEZA (Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority). The draft will provide several management scenarios. The consultants interacted with many stakeholders over the development of this LUP. There was particularly strong interest and involvement of the community which is keen to see the area and their interests protected. There is general support from the community for the LUP. They see the need to control activities and the Local Management Committee (at the community level) is very concerned about unapproved and illegal activities within Wadi Rum. Cultural and social issue were of high importance in the discussions and development of the LUP. The establishment of uncontrolled camps is one of their particular concerns, particularly in the Buffer Zone (ASEZA and the Wadi Rum Protected Area Management oversee and control camps in the PA). Some of the approved camps are very good and the local tribes and community are directly involved but others are very poorly managed and give a bad name to local tourism. Also, some camps are not consistent with their culture and the tourist experience that they, as Bedouin, would like to promote. Some of the new camps are to high-market and fancy with swimming pools, etc., which they feel is not appropriate in a cultural desert experience. The communities would like to have support for setting up their own camps but they need financing (such as through Small and Medium Enterprise support). It is noted that USAID is providing such funding through its BEST project and this may be accessible for these communities. Water resources is a challenging issue for Wadi Rum as well and there is a need to control the access of four-wheel drive vehicles and try to make them follow set paths and safer routes.

Specific Recommendations for Wadi Rum

* There is a need for a standardised definition of what a Buffer Zone represents alongside a protected Area, and what activities can take place in a Buffer Zone as well as what is prohibited.
* Transfer the experience of species re-introduction from Wadi Rum to Petra.
* Legislation to control activities at Wadi Rum is essential for sustainability and, if this is to be effective, the Wadi Rum Community needs ownership and needs to have a formal veto and approval function within ASEZA in relation to the Wadi Rum PA and Buffer Zone activities.
* One other tourist experience which could increase tourist entrance and possibly revenues would be to take tourists to the areas where film sets were based (e.g. Martian, Star Wars, Lawrence of Arabia) and show them clips of the films against the current/original backdrop.
* Wadi Rum needs more information and interpretation related to biodiversity and the Bedouin way-of-life. This includes signs, information in the visitors centre, and training of official guides and rangers.

**Petra Site**: The Petra Archaeological Park covers an area of some 264 square kilometres, while the additional Buffer Zone covers a further 516 square kilometres. The total area of PDTRA responsibility and management mandate therefor exceeds 750 square kilometres. The PDTRA’s role is primarily the development of the Petra Region to economically capitalize on its potential in tourism. PDTRA is also responsible for other areas such as local community development, heritage management and protection, and the environment. The mandate of the PDTRA focuses on several areas, including:

* Managing and protecting the Petra Archaeological Park
* Developing tourism
* Zoning and land use
* Stimulating investment
* Improving socio-economic conditions of local communities
* Sustainable development across the region

The PDTRA reports directly to the Prime Minister and is headed by a Chief Commissioner who is assisted by four Deputy Commissioners. The Deputy Commissioners make up a council called “Commissioners Council” that manage the authority and oversee its affairs. This council includes:

PDTRA Chief Commissioner

Deputy Chief Commissioner of Petra Archaeological Park & Tourism

Commissioner of Infrastructure & investment

Commissioner of Financial and Administrative Affairs

Commissioner of Community Development & Environment

The Petra region is, in fact, a very important site for biodiversity in Jordan. But it also has some very complicated management requirements because of the many and varied interests such as environmental. community and archaeological. PDTRA is the overarching responsible body. The threats to biodiversity in the greater Petra area (including the Buffer Zone and further south) include hunting, grazing and wood-cutting. There is also some suggestion of the presence of gold at Masouda and the community close by are worried that the presence of protected areas may prevent access to this source of income. The Buffer Zone around the PAP and the Masouda area is considered to be one of the most important biodiversity and conservation areas in the country and PDTRA are very supportive of the need for its management and protection. During the MTR, the designation of the Buffer Zone and Protected Area around Petra was formally endorsed by the Ministry of Environment. It now needs to adopt a Management Plan and to develop the appropriate infrastructure for management within PDTRA. It may be both possible and appropriate for PDTRA to develop an agreement with RSCN whereby PDTRA maintains full control over the area while RSCN provides technical support and advice. Water and sanitation in the tourism area is also a challenge. The UNDP Project has provided Eco-Toilets which have been of huge value to Petra in demonstrating how large tourism numbers can be handled in terms of sanitation. The project has also assisted with interpretive signs, but these need to focus more specifically on mainstreaming biodiversity issues.

Land Use Planning at Petra

The Land Use Plan for Petra is now close to completion although it still has a few gaps. It also includes guidelines on how to implement the LUP. This package now needs to be submitted to the various Commissions of the PDTRA and also shared with UNESCO as such an LUP could not go ahead without UNESCO WHS approval.

The project is also assisting with the development of a Business Plan focusing on the back-road exit from Petra and on the Cultural Village project (as the main PAP already has a Business Plan).

The experiences that Wadi Rum has with introducing charismatic species such as the Nubian Ibex and the Arabian Oryx should be transferred and replicated in other areas and could create a significant tourist attraction if managed and presented properly, keeping tourists in the Petra and Wadi Rum region for an extra day. A feasibility study should be undertaken on this and possible other breeding and release projects that could enhance biodiversity within tourism.

Specific Recommendations for Petra

* Replicate the experience of species re-introduction from Wadi Rum to Petra.
* Undertake a Feasibility Assessment for enhancing the biodiversity experience at Petra to expand on the tourist attraction of the area

## A.8: Review of Delivery of the Project at Mid-Term along with some Potential Risks and Additional Needs for Sustainability

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| **OUTPUT** | **ACTIVITIES UNDERWAY/COMPLETED** | **ASSESSMENT OF DELIVERY AT MTR** | **RISK/NEEDS ASSESSMENT AT MTR** |
| **Overall Project Objective**: Biodiversity conservation objectives are effectively mainstreamed and advanced into and through tourism sector development in Jordan | * The regulatory and enforcement framework is under development and adoption
* Institutional capacities for planning, monitoring and enforcement at three project sites are being strengthened
* Improved effectiveness particularly in revenue generation, tourism planning, management, and community relations
 | Mainstreaming is well underway at MTR. The SEA and Tourism Charter are being developed with appropriate stakeholder engagement. The project has made several ‘Adaptive Management’ decisions to improve delivery and sustainability. Planned management improvements (LUPs, Management Plans and Business Plans) at the three project sites are delivering on time. Community relations have been engaged well within the project and the Local ‘Community Level’ Advisory Committees | Lack of political will, ownership and/or awareness of the biodiversity tourism mainstreaming process at the higher policy level could jeopardise long-term sustainability of project objectives and outputs. Project still needs to build this high-level ownership and awareness. A dramatic fall in tourist number due to the political situation have threatened this important source of revenue. This further highlights the inappropriate nature of selecting increased tourism revenue as an indicator for the project. |
| **Outcome 1: Regulatory and enforcement framework in place to avoid, reduce, mitigate and offset adverse impacts of tourism on biodiversity** |
| 1.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for tourism development to inform biodiversity considerations in land-use planning - defining spatial areas where development should be avoided; where it may be permitted subject to management controls, and mitigation and offset requirements  | * SEA Inception Report Completed
* Revised Scoping Report and ToR
* Stakeholder Analysis
* Stakeholder Consultation & Engagement Plan
 | The SEA was ‘strategically’ postponed to allow for coordination with the National Tourism Strategy revision. This then needs to be captured and embedded under new Environmental Law. **Good example of Adaptive Management. These two are now being developed in parallel and should be finalised by early 2017.** | Imperative that SEA is seen to be an integral part of the new National Tourism Strategy requirements. Needs real commitment from appropriate Government body toward implementation which, in turn, requires enabling legislation and policy support (most logically through MoEnv but also possibly through MoTA)  |
| 1.2 A biodiversity-friendly tourism charter including a set of standards developed tested and adopted for the MoTA certification schemes for hotels, eco-tour operators, eco-lodges and environmental camp sites. | * Stakeholder awareness raising and outreach report
* Green certification system report
* “Green” capacity building program report
* Develop TGU database and recruited TGU Expert
* Various Training programmes and materials developed and delivered to TGU and MoTA
* Develop Legal Charter ToR for international & local Consultant and recruit
* BD-friendly Tourism Charter (40% complete)
 | Started with a review of the various legal frameworks to identify any gaps constraining Biodiversity Mainstreaming. Originally there was no appropriate body in MoTA for Biodiversity Mainstreaming so Tourism Green Unit created. Certification and Star Awards for Green Tourism now being developed. **Good progress so far and another example of Adaptive Management by the Project Partners** | If the TGU is to be effective and sustain able it needs to have a staff allocation and a formal institutional role to oversee the SEA process, the Certification process and generally coordinate the biodiversity-tourism mainstreaming process. It would also benefit from having Governorate level focal points as well as the current institutional presence at the national level within MoTA. |
| 1.3 An effective system of penalties for breaches of permit conditions in the tourism sector developed, adopted and publicized reflecting the new Biodiversity-friendly certification system. |  | Terms of Reference developed for this process and should start working alongside MoTA and MoEnv at the end of this year or early next year. Needs to collaborate also with the Certification consultant to ensure compliance once Certification has been awarded. Satisfactory progress as expected at this stage. **Requires National Tourism Strategy and SEA process to be finished, along with the biodiversity-tourism charter and the Land Use Plans for the three sites (as a demonstration process)** | These penalties and associated enforcement and compliance measures are essential to the conservation & protection of biodiversity alongside tourism. This will ned to be enshrined in law and have effective institutional mechanisms before the end of the project. |
| 1.4 Biodiversity guidelines for the EIA Process as it applies to tourism developments and operations with a particular focus on off-site and cumulative impacts. | * National EIA & SEA Workshop (delayed till the approval of the new EIA)
 | Need to collate and integrate several different EIA proposals from a number of different projects that have all undertaken this activity. This single approach/strategy can then be captured and legislated in the new MoEnv Environmental Law. Meanwhile, the project is working with MoEnv on some environmental guidelines that can be informally applied in the interim. Also, MoEnv has a formal Agreement with MoTA for any new developments to be referred to MoEnv for environmental approval. Expect an endorsed EIA document by end of 2017 but will need appropriate infrastructure and administrative arrangements as well. **Good adaptive management so far to ensure effective EIA consultations, and future achievement and delivery is promising** | The EIA process will need to be formalised and tested at one or two sites well in advance of the end of the project to prove itself and to develop the necessary guidelines that can then be adopted by MoEnv. The project would then assist the Ministry of Environment with a publicity campaign as well as training for environmental consultants and industry exponents on how to apply the Guidelines. |
| 1.5 Economic incentives and disincentives to promote adherence by tourism industry to the reformed policies and regulation. | * Developed ToR for consultancy to review and assess Economic Incentives and Disincentives
 | Not appropriate yet to deal with this Output until the Certification process is complete and adopted and the Land Use plans are in place. Also, needs the TGU to be staffed and fully functional in order to manage such a framework and to oversee regulations and enforcement. **Level of progress as expected at this stage and this process is expected to start in 2017** | When appropriate, and well before the end of the project, an Economics Consultant will be hired to lead a Working Group comprising MoTA, the Ministry of Finance, and full participation by the tourism industry. The system will be tested at the local level for a trial period, and refined as necessary before national adoption |

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| **Outcome 2: Institutional capacities for planning, monitoring and enforcement strengthened in Dibbin, Petra and Wadi Rum landscapes/development zones, so as to manage the impacts of tourism development on biodiversity within ecologically-valuable and sensitive areas** |
| 2.1 Biodiversity Information Management System (BIMS), founded on initial ecological surveys to inform Land-Use Plans, serve as a platform for decision-making, and as a source of up to date knowledge on biodiversity. | * BIMS National Consultation process with all key stakeholders
* BIMS system developed with appropriate GIS and IT systems
* Field Surveys completed
* Stakeholder and target groups capacity building programme delivered
* Set of Knowledge product developed and disseminated
 | BIMS data collection now completed and undergoing gaps analysis (project provided direct support and equipment). Website established and running but still uploading data. Various levels of accessibility built into the process to protect sensitive data. RSCN will host and maintain this site thereby addressing any concerns/risks related to sustainability. **Very good progress and very satisfactory sustainability arrangements to maintain and update BIMS** | The sustainability of the BIMS process seems secure now it is housed and maintained by RSCN. The project should work closely with RSCN A. to ensure that the website is workable and B. that appropriate Indicators are being monitored as well as a road-map being adopted for regular (5-yearly?) full review and update of BIMS |
| 2.2 Comprehensive land-use plans based on BIMS and covering Jerash Governorate, PDTRA territory, the Petra proposed PA and its buffer zone, and the Greater Wadi Rum Landscapes/Development Zones to set development limits so as to protect biodiversity.  | * Stakeholder Consultations and Situation Analyses Reports for each site
* Alternative LUP and Management Scenarios for each site
* Regional Plan Report and Draft Land Use Plan for Wadi Rum
 | All land-use plans currently under development at all sites and nearing completion. Three different examples of land-use planning for three different administrative arrangements. **Very satisfactory progress (especially considering the different complexities at each site) and all land-use plans should be finalised in the near future** | LUPs can only be considered to be effective and sustainable if they are ultimately adopted within appropriate laws and have suitable institutional arrangements for monitoring and compliance. |
| 2.3 Biodiversity Monitoring System to update and maintain the BIMS, identify trends and ensure that any changes in biodiversity-important areas remain within acceptable limits; to include remedial measures that will be triggered by the monitoring. Include the use of indicator species as appropriate.  | * A project partners training program on ecological surveys design and implementation, prepared and delivered to key technical staff of project partners
* A land use oriented ecological monitoring system designed for the three project localities and handed over to their respective authorities
 | A monitoring plan for BIMS has already been developed and shared with partners. Need to review and revise appropriate ‘indicators’ for monitoring. Also need to define and adopt a mechanism for responding to changes and impacts (technical and managerial). **Good progress. Project needs now to ensure A. that monitoring is actually taking place (associated training and capacity building?) and B. that there is a response and management strategy (coordinate with RSCN)** | The Monitoring System is an excellent step forward for mainstreaming biodiversity. However, the response and management mechanism is also an essential step without which the monitoring serves little purpose. The project needs to work closely with RSCN to help to defines such a mechanism that can address changes and impacts as identified by the monitoring. |
| 2.4 Improved enforcement of land use development constraints geared to protecting biodiversity. | * Detailed legal framework and UNESCO conditions review and reports for Petra
* Capacity building Programme for Petra
 | Some activities started through development of Land Use Plans but these LUPs and the overall PA Management Plans need to be in place first before this Output can really begin. Project needs to implement a training package (including Training-of-Trainers) for compliance and enforcement. **Progress as expected at this stage of the project** | As with all legal reforms or additions, enforcement and compliance are the essential element. This enforcement-focused Output will need careful coordination and agreement between mandated government departments to clarify and agree roles before the project can implement an appropriate training package, develop handbooks or support PAs with signage |
| 2.5 Effective interpretation and information facilities at vantage points to inform visitors about the values and vulnerabilities of ecological resources and the consequences (ecological and legal) of not adhering to limits and regulations. | * Develop and revise PAP (Petra) brochure to include biodiversity conservation within the text & photos
* Development of movie that reflects biodiversity in PDTRA, Wadi Rum and Dibbin
* Upgrading of interpretation facilities at PDTRA visitor centre underway
 | National Consultant hired to develop Action/Work-Plan. Some signs and information already deployed on trails and at visitor’s centres. Also need the regulations to be in place for Buffer Zones and LUPs. **Progress as expected at this stage** | Public compliance is the focus of this Output. This will be developed at both the national and local level. Significant stakeholder involvement, particularly that of the Local Advisory Committees, will be necessary to agree on priorities as well as on-the-ground compliance plans and public interaction |

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| **Outcome 3: Improved management effectiveness particularly in revenue generation, tourism planning and management, and community relations in Dibbin, Petra and Wadi Rum Protected Areas** |
| 3.1 PA Management Advisory Boards for promoting increased involvement of the private sector and local community in PA management. | * Management/Local Advisory Boards established
 | Management Boards established at Dibbin and Wadi Rum; Petra under development for Buffer Area. National Protected Area endorsement for Petra just given by MoEnv during MTR. 1st Capacity Building Workshop held earlier this year; 2nd this month. Revenue generation needs to be linked to improving the tourism experience in relation to biodiversity at the sites. Community relations and community involvement very good and very supportive. **Good progress at Mid-Term** | No apparent risks here as long as the Management Boards are maintained with appropriate representation and have the LUPs and Business Plans to guide them. Additional capacity building and training will be a valuable contribution |
| 3.2 Dibbin PA, Petra PA and Wadi Rum PA Management Plans revised to reflect the principles espoused in the new Land Use Plans and the benefits from new BIMS and Monitoring System.  | * All Management Plan currently under revision
* Study tours between different sites carried out to share experiences on Management Plans and LUPs
 | Rum has already developed its own Management Plan, reviewed it for gaps and identified solutions to filling the gaps. Similar process near completion in Dibbin. The Management Plan has been updated to reflect the LUP and input from BIMS. It is now just waiting for MoEnv endorsement. Petra in progress but needs more time as needs to integrate with UNESCO WHS Management Plan which is already approved. **Good progress by Project Partners in developing, upgrading and/or improving Management Plans in alignment with biodiversity-tourism mainstreaming** | This element of the project seems secure. However, as noted above, the LUPs and Management Plans must have a legal basis and be properly monitored and enforced |
| 3.3 Visitor management capabilities (to reduce impact on biodiversity) in Dibbin, Petra and Wadi Rum PAs, enhanced through improved visitor facilities, better trained rangers and eco-guides, and improved management capacities, to expand visitor attractions and improve visitor experience while reducing impact on biodiversity in sensitive areas.  | * Improvements underway through staff uniforms, improved signage, dealing with waste (including animal waste), capacity building and training for staff
 | A National Consultant has been hired to address this requirement and to develop an Action Plan for all three sites. Eco-guides are an essential requirement for the biodiversity-tourism mainstreaming process (could also be rangers). Communities very keen for training related to eco-guiding and teaching biodiversity to tourists. **Wadi Rum has some significant problems with its responsibility and mandate over visitors and maintaining its management role for the PA which need to be addressed by ASEZA. Important now for project to focus on this requirement as the PA Buffer Zones and Land Use Plans are adopted** | More training of rangers and guides in biodiversity and environmental issues is essential. Linkages between biodiversity/environment and the tribal Bedouin people and even historically with the Nabataeans could be brought into the tourist experience. Further feasibility studies could identify potential breeding and reintroduction programmes for charismatic species, not just at Wadi Rum but elsewhere in the country |
| 3.4 Business plans for Dibbin, Petra and Wadi Rum PAs.  | * Dibbin = Consultant on-board and Business Plans under development
* Petra = Consultant under recruitment
* Wadi Rum = Business Plan finalised. Into Implementation phase with technical support
 | Wadi Rum Business Plan already completed and approved by ASEZA. Dibbin Business Plan currently under development and should be ready by mid-2017. Petra Business Plan needs to wait until the Management Plan is completed so should start also in 2017 and be completed before the end of the year. **Good progress so far on Business Plans – on target for project delivery** | The entire concept of biodiversity-related tourism and environmental conservation can create a new business model for tourism in Jordan and help to keep tourist numbers up through an attractive package. With the new Buffer Zones around Petra, Wadi Rum and Dibbin there are opportunities to focus on this additional tourist experience. |

# A.9: Training and Workshops undertaken during the BITS Project to Date

Mainstreaming Biodiversity conservation in Tourism Sector development/ Jordan (BITS project)

Trainings and workshops done by BITS project so far;

***First; Training programme***

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| **#** | **Training topic** | **Participants**  | **Objective(s)**  |
| 1 | Management plans development and implementation | 20 participants RSCN, PDTRA and ASEZA/Rum PA | Understand the added value and benefits of biodiversity management in and around cultural World Heritage sites; Know how to access and use additional guidance and resources on biodiversity management in a World Heritage context |
| 2 | Protected Area Regulations and Legislation Enforcement | 6 participants from ASEZA/Rum, PDTRA and RSCN/Dibbin | It was aimed at instructing course participants about law and regulations that govern management and operation of protected areas, including law enforcement |
| 3 | Biodiversity conservation and Sustainable Tourism  | 20 participants Dibbin and Rum LAC’s  | The main objective of this training programme was to involve local advisory committees with the project activities and to inspire them to raise their thoughts and insights about the project activities and their sites. |
| 4 | General principles of Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Areas | 9 participants ASEZA/Rum, PDTRA and RSCN/Dibbin | To enhance the participant skills and knowledge about the biodiversity conservation principles. |
| 5 | How to use BIMS System  | 8 participantsASEZA/Rum, PDTRA and RSCN/Dibbin | Aimed at Using BIMS: a database & GIS principle, and developed to give project partners the knowledge and skills on how to use the system and how it works? |
| 6 | Tourism and the environment and how to enhance the sustainability of tourism sector? | 40 participants mainly from MoTA with the participation of project partners (MOMA, PDTRA, ASEZA and MoEnv).  | How to enhance the sustainability of the Tourism sector which will be followed up with action plans and additional training programs to ensure the culture of change towards full understanding of the importance of biodiversity conservation and environmental protection to the tourism sector in Jordan.  |
| 7 | Transition of Tourism into Green Economy | 25 participants mainly from MoTA with the participation of project partners (MOMA, PDTRA, ASEZA and MoEnv).  | The aim of the training is to provide participants with an understanding of Green Economy concepts and how these concepts can be applied in the tourism sector. |
| 8 | Environmental Impact Assessment and Tourism | 25 participants mainly from MoTA with the participation of project partners (MOMA, PDTRA, ASEZA and MoEnv).  | The aim of the training is to provide participants with an understanding of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in relation to the tourism sector. |
| 9 | Integrating Biodiversity into the Tourism Sector | 26 participants mainly from MoTA with the participation of project partners (MOMA, PDTRA, ASEZA and MoEnv).  | The aim of the course is to provide the green tourism unit staff and selected representatives from project partners with relevant background information on biodiversity conservation importance in addition to presenting a proposed approach for integrating biodiversity into the tourism sector |
| 10 | Environmental Planning in Tourism | 26 participants mainly from MoTA with the participation of project partners (MOMA, PDTRA, ASEZA and MoEnv).  | The aim of the course is to demonstrate the importance of environmental planning in Tourism sector to the green tourism unit staff in addition to selected representatives from Project Partners.  |
| 11 | LAC’s Second training programme  | 21 participants RUM and Dibbin LAC’s  | To clarify the relationships between PAs (Biodiversity Conservation) and Tourism (Development). **Tourism can be devastating to biodiversity, and can be a saviour** and to give the participants some inspirations aboutwhat the communities can do to support nature conservation in PAs and enhance sustainable tourism. |

***Second; Workshops***

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| **#** | **Topics**  | **Participants**  | **Objective(s)**  |
| 1 | SEA Working Group (WG) workshop  | 18 national experts SEA/EIA Working groupFour Workshops  | 1. Establishment of the WG
2. To prepare/discuss draft Scope of Work for the SEA Working Group led by the Ministry of Environment, and to schedule its meetings and activities
3. To discuss how it is best to address SEA in environmental legislation in Jordan, i.e.
	1. do we need specific regulations for SEA?, and if yes, then
	2. should it be mentioned next to EIA in the environment protection law?
	3. should it be part of the EIA regulation and to be integrated in the EIA process or shall it be advocated as parallel process to EIA and to have regulation/guidelines for its governance?
	4. Anticipated constraints and measures to address them.
4. To discuss the plan for the National Workshop (objectives and targets, timing, agenda and invitees)
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| 2 | A national consultation process on the development and maintenance of the BIMS including all key stakeholders with emphasis on the project localities.  | 8 small workshops, meetings and focus group meetings for the relevant stakeholders.  | To ensure national integration, synergy and incremental effect of BIMS. |
| 3 | National BIMS lunching workshop  | All relevant stakeholders  | To lunch BIMS |
| 4 | PAP nomination file workshops | 2 main workshops (The assignment consultant with DoA, MoTA, PDTRA, MoEnv, UNESCO and RSCN)  | To prepare the nomination file and to ensure the integrity of the assignment.  |
| 5 | Rum Business plan workshop  | 35 participants from all relevant stakeholders  | To discuss the plans details and agreed on Rum priorities |
| 6 | Certifications workshop | 12 members from all relevant stakeholders(led by MoTA and comprise appropriate industry representatives and other national institutions associated with natural heritage conservation and green certification)  | The aim of this Work Group is mainly to contribute directly to the formulation of the charter based on central upstream approach |
| 7 | Rum land use plan workshops  | 4 Main workshops (All relevant stakeholders)  | * To discuss the assignment importance
* To ensure the integrity of the assignment with other relevant parties
* To discuss the developed scenarios with local communities and relevant parties
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| 8  | Dibbin land use plan workshops  | 4 Main workshops  | * To discuss the assignment importance
* To ensure the integrity of the assignment with other relevant parties
* To achieve consensus on the strategic direction of the under development land use plan through reviewing and agreeing on preferred scenario.
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1. Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN); Petra Development and Tourism Regional Authority (PDTRA); Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA);

Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA); Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA); [↑](#footnote-ref-1)