

United Nations Development Programme

Ms. Midori Paxton
Head, Ecosystems and Biodiversity
UNDP – Global Environment Facility
304 E 45th Street, FF-928
New York, NY 10017, USA



04 May 2016

Atlas-Project 00081396
PIMS: 4581

Dear Ms. Paxton,

RE: REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF PROJECT 00081396 – CONSERVATION OF IONA NATIONAL PARK

PRODOC signature date: 13 February 2013

Project Duration: 4 years (until 02 February 2017)

Proposed Revised Date: 20 April 2018

I am writing to request the extension of the project “Conservation of Iona National Park”, which is jointly funded by the GEF, EU and UNDP, until 20 April 2018. The project aims to catalyze an improvement in the management of Angola’s protected areas network, through rehabilitating Iona National Park

The project commenced in February 2013. However, because of significant initial delays, due in part to staff recruitment¹ and in part to institutional and administrative issues, implementation is behind schedule. While most issues have now been addressed, and a project team is now in place and functioning well, the project will not be able to complete all its planned activities and reach all of its objectives by the scheduled project closure date (February 2017). Additional time is required to maximize the global, national and local environment and development impacts of the project.

Fortunately, the budgeted staff costs of the project in combination with the delays in staff recruitment mean that there are sufficient funds remaining to support a project extension to 20 April 2018 without requiring additional resources for the 22 project field staff based in Iona National Park (International Park Manager, National Park Administrator, 20 rangers). While funding for the Administration and Finance Manager of the project expires in 2016, this function could be jointly conducted by a similar position in another project (UNDP/GEF-5 project “Expansion and Strengthening of Angola’s Protected Area System”) that is about to be signed (DOA has recently been approved).

¹ Difficulty of finding a suitability qualified international park manager; change of recruiting procedure of international park manager from UNDP to Government recruitment upon request of the latter; delays in identifying sufficient number of qualified ex-combatants and then community members in the region to serve as park guards.

The funds for the National Project Coordinator (NPC) will be spent by end October 2016. In order to continue having this essential function in the project, we propose to support the NPC from November until the proposed end of project from funds currently allocated for a hydrological study of the Iona Park area that the technical steering committee has agreed is not needed (line 1.3.6 in Annex 1). The available budget for this study is US\$ 123,834, of which US\$ 9,818 in 2016, US\$ 57,600 in 2017, and US\$ 17,760 in 2018 would be used to support the NPC until the proposed end of project (further details below).

Other than this change, the extension of the project duration would not require reallocation of funds among budget lines, just reallocation of funds among years within some budget lines that are identified in Annex 1.

Justification of Extension

In March 2016, the Mid-term Review (MTR) report recommended that the project should be extended to complete outstanding activities, provided that a series of conditions were met by the Project (p. 50). These conditions are listed and discussed below. The Management Response to the MTR can be found in Annex 2 to this request.

Major Achievements to Date

The project goal is 'to establish and effectively manage a network of protected areas to conserve representative samples of Angola's globally unique biodiversity'. The overall objective of the project is to catalyze an improvement in the management of Angola's protected areas network, through rehabilitating Iona National Park. The Project has two outcomes: Outcome 1: Rehabilitation of Iona National Park, and Outcome 2: Strengthening institutional capacity to manage the protected areas network of Angola. The MTR report confirms that the Project has made a number of achievements.

To date, the major achievements of the project include:

- The staffing of Iona National Park has been completed with (i) an International Park Manager who oversees and trains the national park staff and provides input into the Park Management Plan and major studies and plans being developed for the park; (ii) a National Park Administrator who will ensure the long-term park administration after the project has ended; and (iii) 20 park rangers who patrol the park and interact with the communities living in the park on a regular basis.
- The rehabilitation and/or construction of basic park infrastructures, especially three posts of which the main post (Espinheira) is based centrally within the park and two other posts (Salondjamba and Pediva) serve as entrance controls to the park, is in an advanced state. The posts are supplied with radio stations, essential furniture and equipment (including computers). Five vehicles including one small truck are used for patrolling the park and supplying the posts.
- A park management plan and community study are in advanced stages of development, though not completed.
- Consultant teams have been contracted to produce the key deliverables of Outcome 2 of the Project, including (i) to prepare a protected areas strategy for the National Institute of Biodiversity and Protected Areas (INBAC) and (ii) to analyze the current status and provide management plans for six further protected areas (Luiana-Luengue, Mavinga, Cameia,

Maiombe, Mupa and Luando). The work on these studies, expected to take 6-9 months, has been initiated in early 2016.

These listed tasks are expected to be completed by the end of the scheduled Project closure in February 2017. However, other Project components are delayed and will not be completed by that date. For completing these tasks, a project extension is required:

- The Project has an important component of engagement with the communities living within the boundaries of Iona National Park, currently living mostly from nomadic livestock herding but partly also living in established, permanent settlements with fixed houses (e.g. Iona village). These are putting, mostly through their livestock, significant pressure on the park ecosystems and are locally competing with wildlife for resources, especially water and pasture vegetation. Intended Project activities include the zoning of the park in various use and non-use zones, followed by an extensive program of communicating these zones to the communities and monitoring compliance through the park staff; identification and promotion of alternative livelihood opportunities; and related to this the generation of trust between park administration and local communities. This project component, which will have a strong focus on ecotourism as an alternative income option involving the communities, has not started yet, in part because of delays in the finalization of the Park Management Plan, although the planning of the activities and their localities has been initiated. Its full implementation will require time beyond the current duration of the Project. Without it the management plan might remain a document without much impact on the ground.
- Partly related to the previous point, the systematic engagement with the local authorities at provincial, municipal and community level has been insufficient and a significant effort is still needed to create the level of ownership of the park among the local stakeholders that is necessary for sustaining the park after the end of the Project.
- The trans-frontier component of the Project through connection with conservation activities on the Namibian side of the frontier has not started. For establishing a relationship of mutual learning and exchange between Angolan and Namibian conservation professionals, a first exchange visit planned for the first half of 2016 will need to be followed up by further visits at political, technical and community levels.
- Although the park infrastructure will mostly be completed by the scheduled end of Project, there are tasks that would benefit from more time. This is especially the case for the idea of building a bridge across the Curoca River to enable year-round access to the park, which may require negotiations of shared funding with the provincial government and possibly other donors.

The requested extension will thus provide essential additional time for the project to complete ongoing activities, consolidate its impact and perform closing activities such as the Terminal Evaluation. *It should also be mentioned that the Project was originally designed by the World Bank as a 5-year project and was reduced to 4 years when passed over to UNDP because of the insufficient initial funding level. The funding constraint was partly overcome when the EU decided to support the project but the project duration was not adjusted.*

Meeting MTR requirements for extension

Given the achievements and the strategic importance of the project, not least as a pilot for the upcoming GEF-5/UNDP “Expansion of Protected Areas” Project, the MTR recommended to grant an extension request provided the following conditions were met:

- There is a demonstrated substantial improvement in implementation, in particular in relation to Outcome 2 expected outputs, products and results.
- There is a firm exit strategy delineated and sustainability aspects are already implemented by the time of the no-cost extension request.
- There are substantial improvements with the Project’s decision-making processes.
- There is a demonstrated reformulation of aspects of the Project that need to be changed with alterations implemented as needed.
- There is a clear understanding of the results-based framework which is expected to be followed and not just a request to spend allotted funds without a results-oriented strategy.
- The request furthermore should be clearly articulated and indicate realistic time-bound results expected and how these are to be achieved.
- A thorough review of the log frame is carried out and presented with, inter alia, adjustments to it made that reflect an effort towards improving implementation and aiding in monitoring and measuring performance, maintaining expected outcomes. The review should contain as a minimum, the following adjustments:
 - i. A thorough review of the log frame indicators should take place. For instance, where indicators are not sufficiently specified, these should be expressed in such a way. Where indicators have been deemed obsolete between project formulation and implementation, they should be updated. Overly ambitious indicators could also be revised and be adjusted to more fitting gauges.
 - ii. As important is a review of verification methods, moving away from anecdotal verification and towards more substantive methods based on analysis, studies, and methodically obtained data. Revised verification methods based on data and studies should be incorporated in revised log frame.
 - iii. Also regarding verification methods, the log frame should incorporate robustness in the way the indicators are analysed and verification methods are implemented. Tracking tools (METT, financial score card, etc.) need to be specified thoroughly in the revised log frame and when implemented they need to be realised in a methodologically robust manner, again not in a circumstantial manner and always based on systematically obtained data.

Efforts have been made to meet these requirements and a number of problems have already been solved. Specifically, the following progress has been achieved:

Extension Requirement	Status
There is a demonstrated substantial improvement in implementation, in particular in relation to Outcome 2 expected outputs, products and results	As mentioned before, the set of studies that forms the core of Outcome 2 have been contracted since the MTR visit took place, and a system of regular monitoring of progress through periodic meetings with the consultants at INBAC has been agreed. Two such meetings with all consultants have already taken place in March 2016. This Outcome will be completed by the scheduled end date of the Project (Feb 2017).
There is a firm exit strategy delineated and sustainability aspects are already implemented by the time of the no-cost extension request	Some sustainability aspects have been implemented, notably a simplification of the overly ambitious and costly staffing structure intended in the PRODOC. This was decided already at the Inception Workshop. The integration of park management costs into INBAC's budget will be an important task for the project during the extension phase so that INBAC can fully take over the funding of the park after the project has ended.
There are substantial improvements with the Project's decision-making processes	The Project's decision-making processes have seen major improvements since the MTR visit. Decisions are now made at frequent meetings of the project team (including UNDP) at INBAC. The Project Coordinator also spends one day per week at UNDP to discuss technical and administrative matters related to the project. The Technical Committee of the Steering Committee has met three times during 2015 and once during 2016 to discuss important technical issues of the Project, while the high-level Project Board has met once during 2015 and it is hoped that it will meet at least twice during 2016.
There is a demonstrated reformulation of aspects of the Project that need to be changed with alterations implemented as needed	Although significantly delayed in important aspects, the project is being implemented largely as planned and currently no major adjustments of the project strategy are envisaged or seem necessary.
There is a clear understanding of the results-based framework which is expected to be followed and not just a request to spend allotted funds without a results-oriented strategy	Project implementation and management have significantly improved since the visit of the MTR consultant and it can now be said that the project implementation follows its design logic and strategy in all major aspects.

<p>The request furthermore should be clearly articulated and indicate realistic time-bound results expected and how these are to be achieved</p>	<p>The results to be achieved during the extension phase have been listed above and the detailed activities and budget lines are specified in Annex 1. The main focus will be on the engagement with the communities in the park where the remaining project time is not sufficient for achieving lasting impact.</p>
<p>A thorough review of the log frame is carried out and presented with, inter alia, adjustments to it made that reflect an effort towards improving implementation and aiding in monitoring and measuring performance, maintaining expected outcomes. The review should contain as a minimum, the following adjustments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A thorough review of the log frame indicators should take place. For instance, where indicators are not sufficiently specified, these should be expressed in such a way. Where indicators have been deemed obsolete between project formulation and implementation, they should be updated. Overly ambitious indicators could also be revised and be adjusted to more fitting gauges • As important is a review of verification methods, moving away from anecdotal verification and towards more substantive methods based on analysis, studies, and methodically obtained data. Revised verification methods based on data and studies should be incorporated in revised log frame • Also regarding verification methods, the log frame should incorporate robustness in the way the indicators are analyzed and verification methods are implemented. Tracking tools (METT, financial score card, etc.) need to be specified thoroughly in the revised log frame and when implemented they need to be realized in a methodologically robust manner, again not in a circumstantial manner and always based on systematically obtained data. 	<p>A thorough review of the log frame of the project, also in the light of the MTR comments, revealed that while the indicators are valid in the context of the project and reflect its dual objective of local and national/institutional scale impacts, the two principal weaknesses of the logframe are 1) that the scorecard system is difficult to understand for the non-specialist and therefore the meaning of the scores and their changes are not easy to communicate to a wider audience; and 2) that the methodology of collecting the data has not been sufficiently documented so that the scores may appear arbitrary. A solution to this problem could be to remove the indicators related to the METT and FSC from the log frame and use them independently from the log frame. This change could obviously be made very easily and would make the remaining log frame more “user friendly” and intuitive. The other part of the solution is to use rigorous methods to arrive at the values for the indicators and to specify these methods. This, however, does not require a revision of the log frame in itself. Due to delays in the implementation of the project, quantitative information on certain indicators has not been available (e.g. information on communities that should come out of the – still unfinished – community study; wildlife numbers to be collected in the aerial survey etc.) but this situation should improve now that these activities are progressing. Considering this, we suggest not to change the log frame at this point in the project, but rather to make sure that it is used with greater rigour in the remaining time of the project.</p>

It should be emphasized that from 2015 to 2016, the Project has made major advances in terms of efficient project management, including much stronger involvement of UNDP in the management and supervision of the project at technical level. During the second half of 2015, the Project was temporarily

without a person directly responsible for oversight within UNDP, due to the departure first of the project's Chief Technical Advisor and then of the environment and M&E officer of the UNDP-Angola Country Office in August 2015 whose replacement only arrived in November 2015. The arrival of the new staff member allowed UNDP to engage much more directly and frequently with the Project management team and the various stakeholders of the project. With the support of UNDP, several key meetings were held in late 2015 and early 2016 to bring the strategic consultancies of Outcome 1 (Park Management Plan, Community Study) back on track and to ensure close interaction between the Project Management Team and the consultants of Outcome 2 (Strategic Plan for Protected Areas System, Studies of the Status and Rehabilitation Plans for six protected areas). Regular meetings are now held with consultants at INBAC to discuss work plans and progress, and the National Project Coordinator spends at least one day per week working at the UNDP office where current issues of the project are discussed. As a result, the project is running much more smoothly now, critical issues are being identified and addressed, and communications among institutions (INBAC, UNDP, consulting companies, etc.) have become much more frequent and productive. There is also a continuous effort to integrate the park management team better into activities and decisions of the project, such as elaborating the park management plan, developing ToRs for infrastructure and services, and preparing and commenting on project reports and documents. As a result, there is now good progress on a number of delayed activities, and it can be confidently predicted that, if the extension request is granted, the project will complete all its scheduled activities.

Financial Status

The overall cumulative financial delivery of the project as at 31 December 2015 was 37.7 % of the US\$8,405,000 total Project grant. Of the US\$2,000,000 GEF grant, 33.3 % had been expended, and of the US\$5,265,000 EU grant, 29.3 % had been expended by the end of 2015, as shown in the following table:

Year	Expenditure GEF funds (US\$)	% of GEF funds	Expenditure EU funds (US\$)	% of EU funds	Expenditure UNDP funds (US\$)	% of UNDP funds
Total at the end of 2015	666,039	33.3	1,541,607	29.3	964,928	84.6*

* The remaining UNDP funds allocated to this project were spent during the long start-up of the project prior to official project initiation, therefore the amount of remaining UNDP funds in this project is in fact zero.

Project Management Cost

The available funds for project management, which include the costs of the Administrative and Finance Assistant and the National Project Coordinator will be spent by end June 2016 and end October 2016, respectively, while funds for the park staff will be sufficient until 20 April 2018 (the proposed new project end date).

As mentioned earlier, the funds for the Administrative and Finance Assistant will be spent in June 2016 and after this the administrative and financial support can be provided by staff from other projects. The funds for the National Project Coordinator will be spent by end October 2016. In order to continue having this essential function in the project, we propose to support the NPC from November until the proposed end of project from funds currently allocated for a hydrological study of the Iona Park area that the technical steering committee has agreed is not needed (line 1.3.6 in Annex 1). The available

budget for this study is US\$123,834, of which US\$ 9,818 in 2016, US\$ 57,600 in 2017, and US\$ 17,760 in 2018 would be used to support the NPC until the proposed end of project.

We hope that the above information provides strong justification for the requested project extension. The UNDP GEF Ecosystems and Biodiversity Regional Technical Advisor, Penny Stock, is supportive of this extension. We fully count on your support on this matter and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henrik Larsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Henrik Larsen

UNDP Country Director

Cc: Ms. Adriana Dinu, GEF Executive Coordinator, UNDP

Ms. Penny Stock, Regional Technical Advisor for Ecosystems and Biodiversity, UNDP

We attach for your information:

- Annex 1: Work plan and budget for the remaining and new additional activities to be implemented in 2016-2018
- Annex 2: Management Response to the Mid-term Review report.

Annex 1: Work plan and budget for the remaining and new additional activities to be implemented in 2016-2018

Outcome 1: Rehabilitation of Iona National Park						
Output 1.1: Appoint, train, equip and deploy park staff						
Activity	Funding Source	Funds available 1 Jan 2016 (USD)	Estimated expenditures (USD)			Targets / comments
			2016	2017	2018 (until 20 April)	
1.1.1-3 Expenses with park staff (International Park Manager, National Park Administrator, and 20 park rangers) (former lines 10,35)	EU	709.998	306.250	306.250	97.498	Salaries of park staff are paid until 20 April 2018 (proposed end of project)
1.1.4 Supplies for Iona Park including vehicle maintenance (line 15)	EU	154.150	60.000	60.000	34.150	Supplies for vehicles, construction materials used in the park, etc.
1.1.5 Payment of services provided by customs broker (park rangers equipment) in 2014 (lines 5,13,38)	EU GEF	5.000 7.000	5.000 7.000	0	0	Fully allocated
Output 1.2: Establish key park infrastructure, equipment and services						
1.2.1 Supervision of the implementation of the detailed construction and renovation plan of Iona NP infrastructure (Lines 11,36,45,46)	EU	15.000	7.500	7.500		Coordination field visits
1.2.2 Construction of a storage area, health center, training center, waste treatment facilities, water holes, and solar energy in the park (line 16)	EU	970.385	500.000	470.385		About \$390,000 are committed to pay for infrastructure that has already been implemented. Remaining funds (\$580,000) will be used to implement a storage area, solar energy in three guard posts, water supply for Salondjamba and Pediva posts.
1.2.3 Purchase and installation of three diesel tanks and a fuel management system in Salondjamba, Espinheira and Pediva posts (Line 14)	EU	15.000	15.000			Will be carried out once suitable, protected space for fuel storage has been built under 1.2.2.
1.2.4 Complete the installation and maintenance of the radio and satellite communication system in Iona NP (Line 6)	GEF	29.790	29.790			Fully allocated
1.2.6 Analyze the situation, develop ToR and hire a company for water supply and sanitation for the communities in the Park (line 40)	EU	372.000	200.000	172.000		Improve water supply and sanitation for permanent, fixed communities, including as incentive for park residents to settle in those communities and reduce human and

						livestock presence in fragile areas that have little use value but are important for wildlife
1.2.7 Purchase of vehicles for the park (Line 31)	EU	12.901	12.901			Buy 4 motorcycles for park staff to patrol park
Output 1.3: Develop an integrated park management plan						
1.3.1 Travel for technical support, supervision and training of personnel related to the studies in Iona NP (Line 2)	GEF	1.019	1.019			Travel for the Management Plan public consultation
1.3.2 Preparation of the Strategic Management Plan for Iona NP (Line 12)	EU	58.800	58.800			Fully allocated. Strategic Management Plan is being finalized
1.3.5 Aerial survey of wildlife and livestock in the Iona NP to update the last survey (2003) (Line 4,5,17,19)	GEF	99.805	99.805			Park management is negotiating details with service provider in Namibia
1.3.6 Conduct hydrological study in Iona NP (Line 3)	GEF	123.834	9.818 (NPC) 38.656	57.600 (NPC)	17.760 (NPC)	There is a consensus in the Technical Committee that a hydrological study is not a priority. Use part of funds to pay National Project Coordinator (NPC) from November 2016 to April 2018 (end of project). Remaining funds can be used for tourism plan for park.
Output 1.4: Build community and local government support for, and participation in, the conservation of the park						
1.4.1 Continue the livestock survey in the Iona NP, evaluate conflicts between humans and wildlife, the impact of livestock on biodiversity, suggest mitigation measures and implement pilot projects (line 9)	EU	50.000	50.000			Fully allocated. Is component of community study. First part has been submitted in March, final report is expected following a second visit to the park in May. Payment of 45.000 has been made in April 2016.
1.4.2 Ensure permanent communication and local representation in the decision-making processes of the park; agree measures to minimize the impact of local communities on biodiversity and allow conflicts resolution; make participatory approach to training; organize meetings of community cooperation; travel of community members for this purpose (Line 45)	EU	5.000	2.500	2.500		Park Manager will attend regular meetings between the Iona commune and traditional chiefs (<i>sobas</i>) (~ 3x per year)
1.4.3 Identify, through consultation, sustainable forms of alternative livelihoods, including employment opportunities for members of local	GEF	55.000	55.000			Component of ongoing communities study, see 1.4.1.

communities (Line 3)						
1.4.4 Facilitate training, advice and exchange to support training for communities, including travel costs (Line 11,36,45,46)	EU	116.716	50.000	50.000	16.716	Exchange between Iona and Namibia's communities to be planned during the visit to Namibia (see 1.1.6) Use part to contract Namibia NGO to support local NGO and communities
1.4.5 Identify, plan and implement confidence building interventions with communities; development and implementation of income generation activities for communities, including skills development and recruitment of community members (Lines 48,37)	EU	260.664	150.000	100.000	10.664	Communicate strategic management plan to communities once completed Implement tourism plan that benefits communities.
1.4.6 Equipment for income generation activities for communities (Line 8,38)	EU GEF	117.287 4.417	50.000 4.417	50.000 0	17.287 0	To be allocated based on findings of community study
1.4.7 Supplies for income generation activities (Line 39)	EU	28.144	28.144			To be allocated based on findings of community study
1.4.8 Support and facilitate cross-border cooperation process; exchange visits with Namibia. Develop and implement cross-border coordination plan at local level (communities, local authorities, park staff), including cooperation meetings, exchanges and capacity building (Line 11)	EU	75.000	30.000	30.000	15.000	Exchange visits with Namibia. Follow-up activities to be planned during visit to Namibia in April 2016
Outcome 2: Strengthen institutional capacity to manage the protected areas system						
Output 2.1: Prepare a Strategic Plan for the protected area system						
Output 2.2: Develop the organizational and staffing structure for the protected area system						
2.1.1 Consultancy for preparation of a Strategic Plan for the conservation areas system. Company selection, contract award and implementation of study (Line 21)	GEF	110.000	110.000			Fully allocated. Study has been contracted. Project will make periodic meetings with the company in order to monitor the work
2.2.1 Development of an organizational structure and staffing for the conservation areas system						Key parts of study have been integrated into 2.1.1.
Output 2.3: Assess the current state of national parks and strict nature reserves						
Output 2.4: Prepare detailed implementation plans for the rehabilitation of national parks						
2.3.1 Preparation of an Assessment of the conservation areas in Angola and rehabilitation plans (Line 21)	GEF	782.000	400.000	382.000		Fully allocated. Studies have been contracted. Project will make periodic meetings with companies to monitor work

2.3.2 Travel costs related to the 6 conservation areas reports and implementation plans (Line 47,49)	GEF EU	50.302 19.479	50.302 0	0 19.479		Could partly be used for exchange visit with Mozambique proposed by EU ROM
2.3.3 Publishing ToR (Line 22)	GEF	3.061	3.061			completed
2.4.2 Professional Services and translation (Line 22)	EU	2.227	2.227			
2.4.3 Capacity building (Line 24)	EU	14.584	14.584			Not yet allocated
2.4.4 Develop a proposal and design the construction of the bridge at the entrance of Salondjamba, through contracting of a consulting company, including environmental impact assessment (Line 42)	EU	283.000	200.000	83.000		MINAMB has contracted study that still needs to be seen and analyzed. Obtain budget for simple bridge and discuss feasibility at Steering Committee meeting.
Outcome 3: Project management						
Output 3.1: Project staff selected, appointed and deployed						
3.1.1 Project administrative assistant (Lines 29, 44)	GEF EU	14.895 14.895	14.895 14.895			Salary paid until June 2016. From July 2016 on financial and administrative services will be supported from other funds
3.1.2 National project coordinator (Line 29)	GEF	47.782	47.782			Salary paid until October 2016
3.1.3 Driver for the project office in Luanda (Line 50)	EU	25.967	11.500	11.500	2.967	Salary paid until 31 March 2018
3.1.4 Office, fuel and other supplies: vehicle maintenance in Luanda; cellphone and internet cost for the National project coordinator and project assistant; general supplies (Lines 32,33)	EU	32.505	15.000	15.000	2.505	
3.1.5 Project staff travel (Line 30)	EU	10.922	10.922			\$10.000 contribution to INBAC Meeting of park managers in Bicular in March 2016
Output 3.2: Project office in Luanda						
3.2.1 Office space at INBAC incl. services (Line 20)	GEF	5.056	3.000	2.056		
3.2.2 Final evaluation (Line 23)	EU	60.000			60.000	
Output 3.3: Communication, coordination, visibility and mobilization of support						
3.3.1 Implementation of the visibility and communication plan, data management and information (Line 43)	EU	50.183	50.183			Finalize Iona NP's movie and identify potential partners to promote it (public television, airlines, etc.)

						Conduct workshop for public discussion of management plan and alignment on remaining part of project with stakeholders and local government in Namibe
GMS (Indirect cost) 7%	EU	243.586	129.178	96.433	17.975	
GEF total		1.333.961	874.545	441.656	17.760	
EU total		3.723.393	1.974.584	1.474.047	274.762	
Project total		5.057.354	2.849.129	1.915.703	292.522	

Management response to the Midterm Review of “Report for the midterm evaluation (MTE) of the National Biodiversity Project: Conservation of Iona National Park”²

Project Title: National Biodiversity Project: Conservation of Iona National Park

Project PIMS #: 4581

GEF Project ID (PMIS) #: 81396

Midterm Review Mission Completion Date: 28/03/2016

Date of Issue of Management Response: 04/05/2016

Prepared by: UNDP Angola Country Office, National Project Coordinator

Contributors: former Principal Technical Advisor (Caroline Petersen)

Cleared by: National Project Director

Context, background and findings

The “National Biodiversity Project: Conservation of Iona National Park” in Angola has an overarching aim to establish and effectively manage a network of protected areas to conserve representative samples of Angola’s globally unique biodiversity. The Project, which is implemented nationally (NIM) with the Ministry of Environment (MINAMB) as the executing entity, seeks to catalyze an improvement in the overall management of the protected areas network, through rehabilitating Iona National Park.

In order to achieve the project objective, and address the barriers, the project’s intervention has been organized into two outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Rehabilitation of Iona National Park.
- Outcome 2: Strengthen institutional capacity to manage the protected areas network.

At a local level (within Outcome 1), the project seeks to assist the national Government in rehabilitating what was the largest National Park in Angola at the time of project formulation, Iona National Park of 15

² This template is in alignment with the Management Response Template for UNDP project-level evaluations in the Evaluation Resource Centre

150 square kilometers. At the broader national level (Outcome 2), the project supports the Government in the establishment and operationalization of the 'Department of Conservation Areas' within the recently established *Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidade e Áreas de Conservação* (INBAC).

As pointed out in the Midterm Review (MTR) Report, the project has achieved several expected outputs during the first 3 years of implementation while others are delayed. While the MTR report highlights the advances made with the staffing of the National Park and the training of the staff, the engagement of communities living in the park and using park resources, notably for cattle and goat herding, is delayed. This is largely related to the delays in finalizing two key studies of Outcome 1, notably the community study and the park management plan, both of which were expected to provide guidance for the engagement with the communities within a broader concept of park management. This would also include the zoning of the park into areas of various uses and non-use zones as a central component of the management plan. While these two studies have been initiated and drafts have been presented to the project team during the year 2015, detailed guidance to the consultants for the completion of the studies, including necessary field work, has only been provided in late 2015 and early 2016, after the MTR visit. As a result of the delays in these studies, a comprehensive, consistent community engagement strategy can only be developed and implemented during 2016.

The engagement of the communities in the management of the park is generally recognized and it will be a priority for the remaining time of the project. While the presence of human residents in National Parks is formally against the law in Angola, there is also an understanding that the traditional communities are going to remain in the area, even if compromises will have to be found with regard to the uses and non-uses of various parts of the park by humans, their livestock, and wildlife some of which is very sensitive to human presence. These compromises will first be reflected in the zoning of the park management plan, and then be translated into practical activities with the communities. For example, the project could use its budgeted funds for improving water access to the communities and developing alternative livelihood activities in such a way that it provides an incentive to the resident communities to focus their activities on certain parts of the park (e.g. the more humid and fairly densely settled eastern part) and reduce their presence in other parts (e.g. the desert-like west that has the greatest presence of wildlife). Such measures have to be designed very carefully to avoid attracting additional settlers into the park, keeping in mind that the whole area, and not just the park itself, is very poor in natural resources (e.g. water, pasture) and infrastructure. As a first step, it has been decided that the national park administrator would attend the regular meetings in Iona community of the traditional chiefs of the area, of which about three are held

every year. This platform can serve to discuss issues concerning the park with the traditional community leaders and the community administration and raise awareness for the park. Also, once the management plan of the park, including its zoning, has been finalized, the process of communicating and discussing the plan with the communities, involving the park staff (including the 20 rangers) and probably a local NGO, will be fundamental for engaging the communities directly in the management of the park. Promoting and implementing an effective ecotourism strategy with direct involvement of the local communities will be another important element of this strategy. The community study will also attempt to identify other alternative livelihoods opportunities for the communities, although such opportunities are likely very limited given the remoteness and the very dry environment of the area. However, given the short time remaining for completion of the project, the successful completion of these tasks will depend on an extension of the project.

Another delayed component is the transboundary aspect of the project through exchange of experiences with conservation authorities and communities across the border in Namibia. This delay was caused by the slow progress of political negotiations between the two Governments, which are outside the control of the project. Meanwhile it has been decided to initiate the exchange at technical level, with advances at political level following later. If considered useful, the project may engage UNDP-Namibia to help with the political process between the two governments. Such options will be discussed at future Steering Committee meetings and during the planned exchange visits of project staff to Namibia.

Another major delay in the project affected Outcome 2 where several studies are planned, including the development of a protected areas strategy for INBAC and detailed assessments of the current state and rehabilitation plans for six protected areas other than Iona NP. These studies had not been contracted at the time of the MTR review, although the selection processes have meanwhile been completed based on detailed Terms of Reference developed by INBAC, and the work on all studies has been initiated. Completion of these studies is planned for late 2016.

The MTR report draws attention to some design defects of the project, where important local aspects were not considered in the project design and some risks have been underestimated. These include specifically the viability of tourism as the main source of revenue to support the maintenance of the park after project closure. Given the remoteness of Iona NP and the overall low level of tourism in Angola (caused in part by the difficulty of obtaining visas and thus outside the influence of the Project), the idea of funding the Park through tourism fees is unrealistic in the near term. This does not diminish the potential role of tourism in engaging the communities, creating awareness for the park and its

biodiversity, and building political buy-in for long-term public support to the Park. MINAMB and INBAC, with UNDP's support, need to evaluate alternative options for achieving financial sustainability of the park and minimize the related risks to long-term project impacts. Options for achieving financial sustainability for the protected areas system in total will be discussed as part of the protected areas strategy study under Outcome 2, taking also international experiences into account. Clarity about the use of entrance and tourism concession fees for park maintenance will be an important element of this financial sustainability, though not be sufficient on its own especially for the remote Angolan parks including Iona.

The MTR report also mentions the somewhat infrequent meetings of the Project Steering Committee (once per year). However, it should be noted that in addition to the high-level "Project Board" meetings, chaired by the Minister of the Environment, the Technical Committee of the Steering Committee, chaired by the Director General of INBAC, is meeting more frequently, i.e. three times during 2015 and already once during 2016.

It is also important to emphasize that measures to mitigate management deficits and delays of the project's implementation have already been taken while the MTR process was taking place; these are therefore not reflected in the MTR report. Since early 2016, weekly meetings between INBAC (through the National Project Coordinator) and UNDP at UNDP's office are being held in order to improve coordination and communication and provide technical, managerial and administrative input and backstopping to the Project. Furthermore, several working meetings have been held at INBAC on specific issues, especially the delayed implementation and insufficient involvement of project staff in key consultancies such as the elaboration of the park management plan and the community study, with the result that key aspects of these studies have been re-launched and a new round of field work of the consultants in direct collaboration with Park Management has been scheduled for April/May 2016.

As a general conclusion, it can be said that the MTR report highlights a number of important problems and delays of the project. While many of these have already been addressed, with the consequence that the project has been making good progress during the first months of 2016, the little time remaining within the scheduled duration of the project implies that the completion of some important components of the project, notably those related to the communities and local stakeholders of Iona NP, will depend on an extension of the project. For this, a detailed request will be presented at a later time.

Recommendations and management response

This section addresses management response to all issues pointed out within the MTR Report.

Management response to the recommendations at the design level for future programming of GEF funded – UNDP implemented projects

Midterm Review recommendation 1: Design of these sort of projects should be realistic and not only respond to an overall matrix, one size fits all type of approach				
Management response: It is recognized that during the project design process some important national conditions were not taken into account or were underestimated. For future projects of this kind (e.g. GEF-6) local conditions will be given particular attention.				
Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking ³	
			Comments	Status ⁴
1.1 Ensure local conditions are fully incorporated in the design of GEF-6 biodiversity projects already at the PIF stage	December 2016	UNDP		Pending

Midterm Review recommendation 2: Indicators are key components of design and log frame and should be set at design with their intention made unequivocal: to determine a project's impacts and effects				
Management response: In future projects (GEF-6), a more user-friendly log frame with more easily understandable and usable indicators will be developed, following the new UNDP-GEF templates for Strategic Results Frameworks				
Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Develop user-friendly log frame with easily communicable indicators for GEF-6 proposals	December 2016	UNDP		Pending

Midterm Review recommendation 3: Exit strategy and sustainability factors should be part of the design of a project. This should include the realistic framework for results to continue after external aid is concluded, including schemes for accurate financial structures and policy to sustain achievements even after project concludes				
Management response: In future projects (GEF-6), more emphasis will be put on developing a realistic exist strategy that takes the local conditions into account				
Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
3.1 Build realistic exit strategy into GEF-6 biodiversity proposals	December 2016	UNDP		Pending

³ If the MTR is uploaded to the ERC, the status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database (ERC).

⁴ Status of Implementation: Completed, Partially Completed, Pending.

Recommendations for remaining implementation period

Midterm Review recommendation 4: The role, functions, and decision making processes of the Project Board Committee (PBC) should be reviewed and adjustments should be made for it to function properly and transparently with all partners involved				
Management response: MINAMB has decided to set up the Steering Committee / Project Board at a high political level, chaired by the Minister of the Environment. Its meetings have been relatively infrequent (about once per year) and have not been able to deal with the technical details of the project. On the other hand, these meetings are essential for high-level policy coordination and political buy-in. The Project Management response to this situation has been to create a more technical “lower house” of the Steering Committee in the form of a Technical Committee of the Steering Committee, chaired by the Director General of INBAC, that meets 3-4 times per year (3 meetings in 2015, one meeting so far in 2016) and discusses technical issues, including quarterly reports, and can also help prepare the high-level Board meetings where key issues can then be discussed and decided based on the recommendations of the Technical Committee. This division of the Steering Committee into an “upper house” and a “lower house” seems functional and efficient although more experience needs to be gathered especially with regard to the interactions between the two “houses”. In addition to the Steering Committee meetings, thematic meetings at technical level on specific issues (e.g. ongoing consultancies) are frequently held at INBAC with the participation of UNDP and often other participants, such as consulting companies involved in the topics to be discussed at the respective meeting.				
Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Hold quarterly Technical Committee meetings	February; June; September; December 2016	MINAMB, UNDP		Partially completed
4.2 Hold two high-level Project Board meetings with preparation from Technical Committee	June, December 2016	MINAMB, UNDP	Preferably to be held in Namibe for participation of provincial government	Pending

Midterm Review recommendation 5: The work with local communities (nomadic, semi nomadic, etc.) has to begin to take place soonest, and at this stage should include a sort of immediate emergency plan to initiate pilot interventions as soon as possible. Work with the communities should be based on development principles and up-to-date views on how to integrate indigenous / local communities in protected areas as well as taking into account the community rights to development. Thorough analysis on what the real impact of a small number of subsistence–level groups truly have on natural resources within an area as large as Iona Park should be the basis for this work and mechanisms to reduce pressure yet upgrade their livelihoods and quality of life should be implemented. In order for these communities to be on board with new management schemes, true incentives need to be developed and implemented since they are weary of the many unfulfilled promises received				
Management response: Strengthening the work with the communities is clearly a priority for the remaining time of the project and the time that this work will require for lasting impact is a key reason for the intended extension request. Already park staff are interacting with the communities frequently, but this does not happen within a strategic engagement plan. In order to improve interaction and engagement with local communities, the National Park Administrator will attend the regular meetings of the traditional chiefs (<i>sobas</i>) in Iona Commune. Once the major use (and non-use) zones of the park have been defined (about May-June 2016), a program for communicating and discussing this plan with the communities will be implemented by the park staff (rangers) and a local NGO that will be contracted for this purpose. The project team is also preparing an ecotourism strategy whose implementation will involve the communities. Finally, the project has funds for improving the access to water and sanitation of the communities in the park whose precise use is currently being discussed by the park management and project team.				
Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status

5.1 Regular participation of park administrator in meetings in Iona with traditional chiefs	As scheduled by Iona Commune, about 3 / yr	National Park Administrator	Meetings are organized independently of the project	Pending
5.2 Finalize park management plan including zoning	June 2016	MINAMB, with UNDP support		Partially completed
5.3 Design and implement communication strategy about park management plan and zoning, with involvement of local NGO	Starting July 2016	MINAMB		Pending
5.4 Design and implement ecotourism strategy involving local communities	April-May 2016	MINAMB with UNDP support		Partially completed
5.5 Improve access to water and sanitation of local communities	April-May 2016	MINAMB with UNDP support		Pending

Midterm Review recommendation 6: Staffing and consulting roles should be clarified and streamlined in order to have an organizational unit with agile coordination, administration and management that has clear direction and reporting lines. International consultants should be hired temporarily and convened only when no in-country expertise is present, but always with the goal of generating and / or reinforcing capacity in the country

Management response: We believe that this is already the case. According to the project design, and international park manager would have led the on-the-ground work in Iona NP during the first 2 years then handing over to an incoming national park manager, but this unfortunate design has been overcome and now the international park manager is working alongside the national park administrator to build his capacity for eventual hand-over and to train the 20 park rangers. At central level, the National Project Coordinator is based within INBAC with reporting lines within the Government and is advised (but not supervised in a formal, administrative sense) by UNDP staff. International consultants are only hired as needed, often by national consulting companies for example in the set of studies under Outcome 2, and their use is limited by the current difficulties for national organizations to obtain international currency.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
6.1 Ensure capacity building and progressive taking over of responsibility by National Park Administrator	Continuous, until end of project	INBAC, International Park Manager		Partially completed

Midterm Review recommendation 7: A second workshop (with similar characteristics as the inception workshop held upon project launching) should be held in order to address key issues for the Project's conclusion phase, to reach comprehensive agreements on aspects that need to be reformulated in order to successfully conclude the intervention, and to clarify roles of different stakeholders. The workshop should be carried out with thorough preparation and with concrete proposals for reformulations or changes presented for analysis. All reformulations should take into account national issues and national needs.

Management response: The suggested workshop could be useful and could be combined with the presentation and discussion of the park management plan. It should be held in Namibe Province to maximize participation of local stakeholders. The workshop report and decisions could then be discussed and endorsed by the Project Board and would provide important guidance especially for the no-cost extension phase of the project. This workshop will be discussed during an upcoming visit to Namibe province by members of the project management team.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
7.1 Organize project workshop in Namibe Province	June-July 2016	MINAMB, with UNDP support		Pending

7.2 Prepare workshop report and obtain endorsement by Project Board	July-August 2016	MINAMB, with UNDP support		Pending
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Midterm Review recommendation 8: The role of UNDP within the Project should be strengthened, fully applying its function to guide implementation. UNDP should leverage implementation closely. Firstly, by proactive participation in decision-making structures. Second, by exercising fully all the roles revealed at the design level such as providing financial and audit services to the project, overseeing financial expenditures against approved budgets, as well as providing technical support as necessary, with adequate staffing to be able to meet these functions. UNDP should also create some exigency mechanisms where continued guidance and support is contingent upon achieving milestones. All of the above should be carried out in conjunction with the Government of Angola's full assimilation of national implementation modalities guidelines and procedures as well as UNDP's role in national implementation modalities.

Management response: The MTR visit to Angola took place at a time when UNDP's role in the project was weakened by the departure of a key program officer and prior to the arrival of the replacement. In the meantime, the role of UNDP in the project has been significantly strengthened, and UNDP is now advising the project and providing assistance in all technical and managerial matters. This involves weekly meetings with the National Project Coordinator at UNDP as well as frequent meetings at INBAC. This stronger role of UNDP is recognized and welcomed by the project partners.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
8.1 Weekly meeting between MINAMB and UNDP	Weekly meetings during 2016	MINAMB and UNDP		Partially completed
8.2 Ad hoc meetings	As needed	MINAMB and UNDP		Partially completed

Midterm Review recommendation 9: Project personnel should be trained and their capacity should be strengthened in order to be versant on all aspects of project implementation. In particular, there should be a transfer of knowledge of administration procedures, monitoring, implementation modalities, reporting and other requirements that implementation has.

Management response: This capacity building is taking place continuously and at all levels. At the park level, the International Park Manager's principal role is to build the capacity of the National Park Administrator, who will take on his role after project closure, as well as that of the 20 park rangers. The International Park Manager is also now more engaged directly with the consultants of the two key products, the park management plan and the community study, and will accompany closely their renewed field work in April-May 2016. At Luanda level, intensive and frequent interactions between UNDP staff and the project team from INBAC are taking place, including through weekly meetings between the National Project Coordinator and the UNDP team as well as frequent meetings at INBAC that are chaired by the Director General of INBAC or his deputy. Innovations proposed by UNDP have been adopted by INBAC, such as more detailed planning of consultancies and regular meetings with consultants conducting studies for the project. Interactions of the Project Coordinator with the Finance and Administrative Assistant of the project are also frequent and close and help build local capacity in administrative matters. It can be said that this concern is being addressed by the project team. Participation in UNDP-GEF regional community of practice meetings and project manager trainings held at Addis Ababa can be envisaged for 2016 but will depend on the availability of funds.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
9.1 Scheduled (weekly) and ad hoc meetings between UNDP and project management to guide implementation process	Continuous	UNDP and MINAMB		Partially completed
9.2 Active involvement of National Park Administrator in project and park management, under the	Continuous	MINAMB, Park Management		Partially completed

guidance of the International Park Manager				
9.3 Participation of key project staff in UNDP-GEF community of practice meeting	2016	MINAMB, UNDP		Pending

Midterm Review recommendation 10: Project should implement a communication strategy, not only a visibility strategy, where the challenges and issues in the sustainable management of protected areas lie in Angola and how the Project is facing them. It should go beyond mere visibility of partners but should document and communicate issues, achievements, and challenges

Management response: The project has developed a communication and visibility strategy in 2014 and included it as annex in its 2014 annual report. During 2014 and 2015, a number of visibility activities have been implemented, including designing and printing leaflets and posters and producing a movie about Iona park that is being finalized. The remaining funds are now quite limited (USD 30,000) and will be used to finalize the movie and conduct the project workshop (Recommendation 7) that is also an essential part of the visibility of the project, especially in the province. Therefore, the possibility of carrying out additional visibility activities within the Iona project are quite limited. However, simultaneous with the remaining part of the Iona project, the new GEF/UNDP “Expansion of Protected Areas System” project will be initiated by MINAMB and will offer additional opportunities to communicate about Angola’s protected areas system and efforts at restoring it.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
10.1 Conclude movie on Iona NP	September 2016	MINAMB		Partially completed
10.2 Organize project workshop in Namibe Province (see 7.1)	June-July 2016	MINAMB, with UNDP support		Pending

Midterm Review recommendation 11: A sustainability strategy with concrete timeline should be generated soonest, not at the end of the Project’s implementation. This exit strategy should include aspects of capacity sustainability, policy tools needed to sustain achievements in the short and medium term as well as a realistic financial strategy to maintain results in the long run.

Management response: It is recognized that the current sustainability strategy of the project is insufficient. The project invests major efforts in capacity building of the Iona Park staff (National Park Administrator and 20 guards) through the day-to-day, on-the-job training through a dedicated International Park Manager. At the same time, UNDP in Luanda is making continuous efforts at improving capacity and introducing more effective project management procedures, which are being adopted and welcomed by INBAC. The planned, increased engagement with the communities of the park is also key for the sustainability of the park, and may involve local NGOs to increase the stakeholder basis of the park. However, more needs to be done on the key question of financial sustainability of the Park, even if this is a difficult question to address in the current situation of financial crisis of the Government. This will be a major topic to be addressed during the remaining time of the project and especially the extension phase. The objective will be that by the end of the project, INBAC is ready to absorb the national park staff into its structure and budget and to ensure the means for their operations. Regulations allowing the use of park entrance fees, collected fines, possibly concession fees of tourism operators (PPP) etc. for covering the costs of the park will be helpful but, realistically, most of the funds of the park will presumably have to come out of the budgets of central and provincial governments for the years to come. The urgency of the need to discuss these issues at the various levels of government, as well as the Project Board, is recognized. The transboundary aspect of the Park and international publicity and awareness raising events such as World Environment Day in Angola in 2016 will be helpful in creating the political will at various levels for allocating the financial resources for a sustainable protected areas system.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
11.1 Negotiate an increasing contribution to the cost of park	Over the year, Project	UNDP, MINAMB, Park Management		Pending

maintenance from Government at various levels, including at meetings of the Project Board	Board Meetings			
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Recommendations for an extension request

Midterm Review recommendation 12: If an extension request is presented at the time when Project would supposedly conclude, it is this evaluation’s assessment that it should be granted if the following aspects have been taken care in the interim between the mid-term review and the request:

- There is a demonstrated substantial improvement in implementation, in particular in relation to Outcome 2 expected outputs, products and results.
- There is a firm exit strategy delineated and sustainability aspects are already implemented by the time of the no – cost extension request.
- There are substantial improvements with the Project’s decision – making processes.
- There is a demonstrated reformulation of aspects of the Project that need to be changed with alterations implemented as needed.
- There is a clear understanding of the results – based framework which is expected to be followed and not just a request to spend allotted funds without a results-oriented strategy.
- The request furthermore should be clearly articulated and indicate realistic time – bound results expected, and how these are to be achieved.
- A thorough review of the log frame is carried out and presented with, inter alia, adjustments to it made that reflect an effort towards improving implementation and aiding in monitoring and measuring performance, maintaining expected outcomes.
- A thorough review of the log frame indicators should take place.
- As importantly is a review of verification methods, moving away from anecdotal verification and towards more substantive methods based on analysis, studies, and methodical obtained data.
- Also regarding verification methods, the log frame should incorporate robustness in the way the indicators are analyzed and verification methods are implemented

Management response: A no-cost extension request for the project is currently being prepared. This request will explain in detail how the MTR queries have been or are being addressed, additional to the points already discussed under the previous recommendations.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
12.1 Prepare and submit request for extension, detailing responses to MTR queries	May–June 2016	UNDP with input from MINAMB		Pending