



2020

Project Implementation Review (PIR)



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SA PROTECTED AREA EXPANSION STRATEGY

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A. Adjustments

Risk Management

The Country Office is responsible for completing the Risk Management section of the PIR in consultation with the RTA. Before updating the PIR, the Country Office must update project-level risks in the Atlas Risk Register line with UNDP's enterprise risk management policy and have a detailed discussion with the RTA on risk management. Next, the Country Office must select below the 'high' risks identified in the Atlas Risk Register as well as any other 'substantial' risks from the Atlas Risk Register identified by the RTA as needing to be addressed in the PIR. Moderate and Low risks do not need to be entered in the PIR Risk Management section. After selecting the risk, a text field will appear where the Country Office should describe the risk and explain actions undertaken this reporting period to address the risk selected.

Select the risk(s) from the options that match the 'high' risks in the project's UNDP Risk Register as well as any 'significant' risks from the register, as agreed with the RTA. Please describe the risk identified and explain the management approach agreed between the RTA and Country Office on managing/mitigating the risk.
Social and Environmental
Safety and Security
Operational

Comments on delays in key project milestones

Project Manager: please provide comments on delays this reporting period in achieving any of the following key project milestones: inception workshop, mid-term review, terminal evaluation and/or project closure. If there are no delays please indicate not applicable.
<p>The project closure date was amended 30 June 2020 due to the late endorsement of the project document and the late start of the project.</p> <p>The project was granted a no-cost extension due to delays reported in the previous cycles, to the new date of 30 June 2021</p> <p>Early stages of planning for terminal evaluation are underway pending decisions on whether there will be another extension as a response to the impacts of Covid-19.</p> <p>The implementation has been slowed down due to Covid-19 restrictions as detailed above. Output 3 is the most affected part of the project due to historic delays that have been compounded by the pandemic. Undertaking the workshops for completion of the financial scorecards has been delayed, where 2 of the 5 agencies have been delayed. Implementation of 3 of the 17 sub-projects is underway, with the remainder at the planning phase and procurement of service providers.</p>
Country Office: please provide comments on delays this reporting period in achieving any of the following key project milestones: inception workshop, mid-term review, terminal evaluation and/or project closure. If there are no delays please indicate not applicable.

The project has been granted a no-cost extension until June 2021. The terminal evaluation is planned to be complete by the first quarter of 2021. The PMU is already working on preparations for the consultants but due to COVID 19, there might be adjustments that may lead to delays.

Output 3 - add comments!!!

UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser: please provide comments on delays this reporting period in achieving any of the following key project milestones: inception workshop, mid-term review, terminal evaluation and/or project closure. If there are no delays please indicate not applicable.

This project is in post-MTR phase, and was originally planned to conclude in June 2021, but project was granted an extension until June 2021 and the expectation was that by then all activities will have been implemented. The Outbreak of COVID-19, and the particular severity on South Africa, which resulted in lockdowns since March 2020, has significantly affected implementation of activities, and although the PMU quickly reoriented to working virtually, the transition to the highest level of COVID-19 restrictions by government, which included moratoria on procurement, near-complete shutdown of online platform and systems providing government services, mean at some point even virtual work become minimal. South Africa COVID infection rates are slowing reducing but it is not clear yet when the government will resume full operations. It is therefore expected that due to the loss of much of 2020 implementation period, part of which was the extension phase, there will be minimum gains made, and this may necessitate a need for further extension to make up for the time lost due to COVID restrictions.

B. Social and Environmental Standards

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

The Project Manager and/or the project's Safeguards Officer should complete this section of the PIR with support from the UNDP Country Office. The UNDP-GEF RTA should review to ensure it is complete and accurate.

SESP: PIMS 4943_SESP_Jan242019 TC_NT inputs.docx
For reference, please find below the project's safeguards screening (Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) or the old ESSP tool); management plans (if any); and its SESP categorization above. Please note that the SESP categorization might have been corrected during a centralized review.
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
1) Have any new social and/or environmental risks been identified during project implementation?
No
If any new social and/or environmental risks have been identified during project implementation please describe the new risk(s) and the response to it.
2) Have any existing social and/or environmental risks been escalated during the reporting period? For example, when a low risk increased to moderate or a moderate risk increased to high.
No
If any existing social and/or environmental risks have been escalated during implementation please describe the change(s) and the response to it.
N/A
3) Have any required social and environmental assessments and/or management plans been prepared in the reporting period? For example, an updated Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) or Indigenous Peoples Plan.
No
If yes, please upload the document(s) above. If no, please explain when the required documents will be prepared.
N/A
4) Has the project received complaints related to social and/or environmental impacts (actual or potential)?

Yes
If yes, please describe the complaint(s) or grievance(s) in detail including the status, significance, who was involved and what action was taken.
<p>Standard 5: Displacement and resettlement and Standard 1: Biodiversity conservation and sustainable NRM</p> <p>1. In two ECPTA PAs, East London Coast and Mpofu Fort Fordyce, there are some encroachment issues where people illegally put up structures, and have to be resolved at a higher level. This was one of the findings of the boundary verifications process by the land surveyors contracted by ECPTA. In the East London Coast, in particular, this is likely to impact the declarations processes, routine operations, and integrity of the environment/management effectiveness within the PAs.</p> <p>a) The project output is:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">i) to achieve the project target of 10 000 ha has been achieved already, although this is in other areas and does not include the East London Coast and Mpofu-Fort Fordyce.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">ii) to address the administration required to complete the transfer of these reserves to ECPTA through resourcing transfer/paralegal resources. To date, the project has so far achieved: boundary delineations which have shed light on the specific properties affected by the encroachment. Follow-up administrative processes are underway.</p> <p>b) The land was under Department Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) and the vesting information has been sent to the Department of Public Works (DPW), who have informed ECPTA. Recent feedback indicates that the land has been transferred from DRDLR to DPW. The land surveyors are liaising with DPW who are tasked with making recommendations on actions to resolve the encroachment issues. DPW follows a detailed internal procedure and this likely to be resolved beyond this project's timelines. ECPTA's mandate is to manage these areas and hence, further declaration processes can only take place once DPW has given formal decisions and authorization.</p> <p>c) A recommendation reached between the IP and RTA for managing this issue is that ECPTA should only spend project funds on activities that directly support the project objectives.</p> <p>2) a) In the LEDET Lowveld areas, the declaration has been put on hold due to the problem of illegal occupation on the north of Letaba Ranch. These areas are under co-management arrangements between LEDET and the local communities of (names) and authorized for tourism use. The local tribal leadership resides further away from the PAs, and this poses challenges in that the community members who reside closer to the protected area favored different land uses. They proceeded to establish residential structures and livestock grazing illegally within the PAs. This presented an unsuitable working environment for the LEDET employees and a decision was made to withdraw them from the PA until resolution of the matter.</p>

b) The first entry point in resolving the matter was to allow the community to engagements with the local tribal council without LEDET involvement. Negotiations are ongoing but are compounded by distance and lack of effective mediation. Although the PA was declared under the project, a decision has to be made about the inclusion of the hectares as achieved in light of the dispute. The inability of LEDET to undertake normal activities e.g. game counts and monitoring, anti-poaching patrols, tourism activities, affects PA management effectiveness (Output 2). The PA is part of the Kruger National Park buffer system (KNP) and has some implications on the management effectiveness of the greater area. The project will engage with LEDET to possibly enlist the service of a mediator and to obtain more strategic resolution from the relevant regulatory structure of the entire KNP system.

3. The Kruger National Park and some PAs in its buffer areas were established on claimed land, and the government established a compensation programme for affected indigenous groups (explain further). The PA project has provided support to the Kruger Beneficiation scheme (KBS) involving 6 land-claimant communities; through sub-project that form part of Output 3. Recently, a representative of a 7th community (name), not involved in the KBS sent a formal complaint to the Minister of Environmental Affairs and main stakeholders challenging some of the legal and governance issues around the Kruger land claims process. The stakeholders include SANPARKS and UNDP and some of the issues have implications on the involvement of PA project. This matter is very recent (occurred around the PIR review process), and therefore the responses/interventions are just unfolding. Due to the high-level nature of the complaint, and the fact that the mandate of land-claims processes lies with National Government structures, the PA project can only manage issues directly linked to the project activities. The complaint is not directly linked to the PA project, however, the subject of his complaint relates to the need to undertake SES for the entire KNP area. A formal intervention/response from DEFF is pending.

4. In 2016, UNDP introduced a mandatory Social and Environmental Safeguards Procedure for all funded projects, which is a standard tool for most international funding agencies. At that stage, the PA project was already in progress. The lack of a comprehensive project risk analysis at the project planning phase as well as the assignment of a low score in the rapid desktop SESP done by the PMU in 2019 resulted in the low score assigned throughout previous reporting cycles and no comprehensive management of the risks instituted.

The RTA recommended that the PMU must work together with the UNDP country office to undertake a SESP for the whole project, by a specialist that UNDP has already sourced for other projects. This was adopted by the PSC and will be initiated urgently within the remaining period of 2020.