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MAINSTREAMING INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES (IAS) PREVENTION, CONTROL & MANAGEMENT PROJECT

UNDP-GEF PIMS ID: 5503

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acronyms

AFRC	Albion Fisheries Research Centre
AHRIM	Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs de l'île Maurice
AR	Annual Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CIRAD	Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DAF	Direction Départementale de l'Agriculture et des Forêts
EDRR	Early Detection and Rapid Response
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPCO	Environment Protection and Conservation Organization
ERC	Evaluation Resource Center
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Areas
EU	European Union
FFEM	Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial
FS	Forestry Service
FSP	Full Sized Project
GALS	Gender Action Learning Systems
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEFSEC	Global Environment Facility Secretariat
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
IW	Inception Workshop

IP	Implementing Partner
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
KAP	Knowledge to Awareness to Practices
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAIFS	Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security
MCIA	Mauritius Cane Industry Authority
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools
MCCP	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
MOBEMRFS	Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
MESWMCC	Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
MRA	Mauritius Revenue Authority
MOI	Mauritius Oceanography Institute
MSIRI	Mauritius Sugarcane Industry Research Institute
MSP	Medium Sized Project
MTourism	Ministry of Tourism
MTR	Mid Term Review
MWF	Mauritian Wildlife Foundation
NCG	National Coast Guard (Mauritius)
NIASC	National Invasive Alien Species Committee
NIASIS	National IAS Information System
NIASSAP	National Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NPCS	National Parks and Conservation Service
NPD	National Project Director
NPPO	National Plant Protection Office
NWC	National Women Council
OIDC	Outer Island Development Corporation
PA	Protected Areas

PAN	Protected Area Network
PB	Project Board
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PRF	Project Results Framework
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RRA	Rodrigues Regional Assembly
RP	Responsible Party
SBAA	Standard Business Assistance Agreement
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEIP II	Second Environment Investment Programme
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SSTrC	South to South Triangular Cooperation
STAP	GEF Scientific Technical Advisory Panel
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP-GEF	UNDP Global Environmental Facility

1 Introduction

The Mainstreaming Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Prevention, Control and Management project (IAS Project) was received by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on 14th of July 2016 and the preparation grant was approved on 28th of September 2016. The concept was approved on the 3rd of October 2016 and project was approved for implementation on 27th of July 2019. A Project Document (ProDoc) between the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security (MAIFS) and UNDP was signed on 11 March 2020.The total cost of the project is USD 28,417,793 with USD 3,888,265 from GEF Project Grant and USD 24,417,793 as co- financing. The project implementation started in 2021 and the duration is six years (72 months). This project is being implemented by the National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS) operating under the aegis of the MAIFS.

As per the GEF requirements and UNDP, a Project Inception Workshop (IW) should be held within the first two months of project start . The Project Document was signed on 11th of March 2020 and following the recruitment exercise, the full Project Management Unit (PMU) was in place on 1st of March 2021. The IW is crucial to build ownership for the project results and to plan the first-year annual work plan. The IW serves to assist the stakeholders to understand and take ownership of the project's goals and objectives, as well as discuss the project's workplans, activities, budget allocations, risks and the proposed monitoring and evaluation plan. This Inception Report documents the proceedings and outcomes of the IW.

2 Project Overview and Objectives

2.1 Project Overview

The GEF funded project "Mainstreaming Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Prevention, Control and Management" for Mauritius was approved by the Global Environment Facility on 25th of June 2019. The Local Project Appraisal Committee met on 6th of August 2019 to formally endorse the project and its objectives.

Due to Covid-19 and other unforeseen delays, the Delegation of Authority (DOA) for the project was only received in February 2020 and project document was signed by UNDP in the March 2020.

UNDP confirmed the appointment of a Project Manager and Project Officer in February 2021. The Project Assistant was recruited in March 2021. The Project Management Team is based at the National Parks and Conservation Service, Reduit, Mauritius. The main Project Partners in Mauritius are the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, NPCS, the Forestry Service, Rodrigues Regional Assembly etc. (for a full list of project partners see table 5 of the ProDoc).

2.2 Project Objectives

The 'Mainstreaming Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Prevention, Control and Management' project seeks to safeguard globally significant biodiversity in vulnerable ecosystems,

through the prevention, control, and management of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in the Republic of Mauritius through strengthening the systemic, institutional, and operational capacity by:

a) Creating the policy and institutional frameworks needed for effective prevention, control, and management of IAS to secure ecosystem goods and services under pressure from IAS. It builds the right enabling environments (policies, institutional coordination) for mainstreaming IAS prevention, control, and management.

b) Establishing a multi-tier strategy for effective tackling of IAS - The strategy includes improved preventative measures at points of entry into the country and inter-Islands, early detection, and rapid response programmes to eradicate new incursions. It also includes improved capacity to upscale proven methodologies for managing IAS on a landscape level.

c) Up-to-date information for raising public awareness and enhancing understanding of the centrality of IAS programmes for protecting biodiversity, ecosystems, the economy, and livelihoods. It ensures that knowledge management supports monitoring, assessment and learning and forms the basis for adaptive project implementation, achievement of results, impacts, and upscaling of experiences in the Republic of Mauritius and in the region. This will ensure that the interventions of the project will inform and influence the behaviours of a wider IAS constituency.

2.3 Barriers

The three critical challenges being addressed are: -

(i) *Fragmented legislative, policy, and institutional framework*
There has been no systematic implementation of the National Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan (NIASSAP) due to lack of funds, arising from inadequate prioritization of IAS management in the budgeting process.

(ii) *Insufficient capacities to prevent, control, eradicate or manage IAS effectively*

Prevention of IAS invasion is generally the preferred option for IAS management, as it is often more cost effective than subsequent eradication or control options. Effective prevention requires: i) understanding the pathways of potential invasions; ii) capacity and efficient systems for risk assessment, understanding invasiveness potential, economic and environmental cost of likely invasive species (before they invade); iii) effective import and border controls capable of preventing the introduction of all potential IAS into the country and transfers between islands. Although the relevant authorities understand the pathways, the country has very limited capacities to manage the risk of invasions through its borders. The rapid increase in the number of vessels and visitors arriving at its ports and airports from

increased trade and tourism has made the challenge harder to tackle. Consequently, the number of invasions has risen steadily over several decades

(iii) *Lack of knowledge and awareness of the risks and impacts posed by IAS and the need for biosecurity measures among the public, key industrial sectors, importers and shipping agents*

While most Mauritians are aware of specific biological invasions related to outbreaks of human and animal disease and agricultural pests, they are largely unaware of the broader impacts of IAS on the environment and the economy, and the likely evolution of these changes/interactions/impacts with the changing climate. The public, key industrial sectors, importers, freight agents and shipping agents lack awareness of the harmful impacts of IAS, knowledge of how IAS enter Mauritius and spread on the islands, and of the measures needed to prevent the spread. This constitutes an important barrier to better IAS prevention. There is no comprehensive assessment of the socio-economic impact of IAS in Mauritius along the lines of those undertaken in some other countries.

2.4 Project Description and Outcomes

To safeguard globally significant biodiversity in vulnerable ecosystems through the prevention, control and management of IAS in the RoM.

Project Outcomes

- Outcome 1: The Republic of Mauritius has a gender sensitive policy, regulatory and institutional framework, and capacity to manage IAS effectively
- Outcome 2: The government effectively prevents and manages IAS threats based on risks
- Outcome 3: Planning, management and decision making by all relevant stakeholders are informed by Knowledge management and learning

2.5 Project Budget

The total cost of the project is USD 28,417,793 and USD 3,888,265 will be financed through a Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant. UNDP, as the GEF Implementing Entity, will be responsible for the execution of the GEF resources transferred to UNDP bank account only.

The budget breakdown is as follows:-

Table 1. Project budget breakdown

Project Component	GEF Grant (USD)
Component 1	909,400
Component 2	2,298,210
Component 3	495,500
Project Management Cost	185,155
Total (USD)	**3,888,265**

Table 2. Co-financing budget breakdown

Institutions	**Amount in USD**
UNDP	20,000
Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security	19,925,000
Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping	301,000
National Women Council	3,000
Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare	12,000
Rodrigues Regional Assembly	2,550,000
Vallee D'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation	5,000
Ebony Forest Ltd	200,000
Mauritian Wildlife Foundation	1,260,000
University of Mauritius	10,000
Environmental Protection and Conservation Organisation	39,528
La Vallee de Ferney Co. Ltd	70,000
Mauritius Cane Industry Authority	120,000
Outer Island Development Corporation	10,000
TOTAL Amount mobilized	***24,525,528***
Grand Total	**28,417,793**

2.6 Project Implementation Modality

The project will be implemented following UNDP's National Implementation Modality (NIM), according to the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) between UNDP and the Government of Mauritius signed in 1974 and the Country Programme Document (CPD). The GEF project has been officially endorsed by the National Focal Point, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED). MOFED will oversee the project execution and ensure that it is implemented in accordance with the applicable national policies. The Implementing Partner in UNDP terminology is the entity responsible and accountable for managing the project, including the monitoring and evaluation of project interventions, achieving project outcomes, and for the effective use of UNDP/GEF resources.

2.7 Project Management Structure

In terms of project management, there will be three levels of implementation, i.e. international, national and local. The project organigram is illustrated in Figure 1.

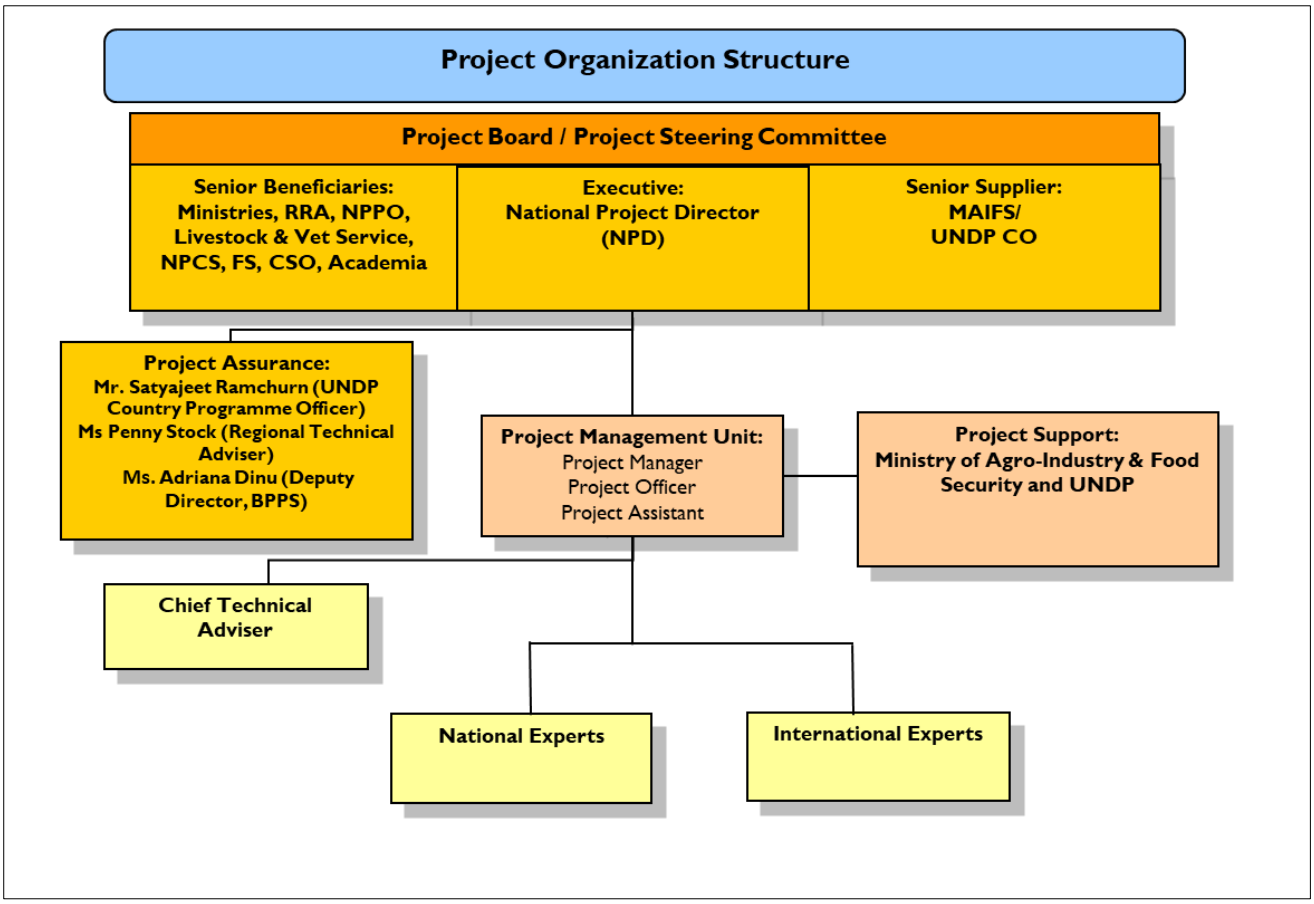


Figure 1. Project Organigram

The UNDP will be collaborating with the Executing Entities Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security, National Parks and Conservation Service, and the Forestry Service in Mauritius and Rodrigues, Regional Assembly in Rodrigues, who will act as Responsible Parties to carry out activities within the NIM Project. They will report progress to the Project Manager and the Project Steering Committee.

Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) is responsible for making by consensus, management decisions when guidance is required by the Project Manager, including recommendations for UNDP/Implementing Partner approval of project plans and revisions. The PSC will be responsible for decisions including, amongst others:

- Provide overall guidance and direction to the project, ensuring it remains within any specified constraints.
- Address project issues as raised by the Project Manager.
- Review the project progress and provide direction and recommendations to ensure that the agreed deliverables are produced satisfactorily according to plans.
- Provide guidance on new project risks and agree on possible countermeasures and management actions to address specific risks.
- Subject to first-level approval by the PSC Sub-committee, appraise the annual project implementation report (PIR), including the quality assessment rating report; and make recommendations for the workplan.
- Triggering the project mid-term reviews (year 3) and terminal evaluation (year 6 and approval of the reports for submission to the GEF
- Assess and decide to proceed on project changes through appropriate revisions.
- Decisions on recruitment and contract extension decisions for project staff

During the IW, no further amendments were proposed.

The terms of reference of the PSC is at Annex 1.

2.8 Project Management Team (Roles and Responsibilities)

Role of National Project Director (NPD)

The NPD is the focal point for responsibility and accountability at the Implementing Partner (IP). The NPD will be appointed at Director or higher level in the IP. The NPD works on the project on a part time basis and should be able to devote a reasonable amount of time to project activities. As a person appointed by Government, the NPD will not be paid

or compensated for services to the project but will represent a Government in kind contribution to the Project.

- Assumes overall responsibility for the successful execution and implementation of the project toward achieving the outcomes and outputs;
- Ensures the proper use of project resources;
- Serves as a focal point for coordination of the project with implementing agencies, UNDP, Government and other partners;
- Ensures that Government inputs for project are available;
- Leads and coordinates partners in the selection of the Project Manager;
- Supervises the Project Manager and facilitates the work of the Project Manager and all staff;
- Ensures that the required project work plan is prepared and updated in consultation and agreement with UNDP and distributed to the Government (Counterpart Ministry);
- Leads and arranges the recruitment of project professional and support staff in line with laid out recruitment process;
- Authorises commitments of resources for inputs including staff, consultants, goods and services and training. May appoint an alternate that can support the project work in the absence of the NPD;
- Will represent the Implementing Partner at project meetings and annual reviews;
- Will lead efforts to build partnerships for the support of outcomes indicated in the project document; and
- Will support resource mobilisation efforts to increase resources in cases where additional outputs and outcomes are required.

Role of the Project Manager

The Project Manager (PM) will be responsible for the overall management of the project, including the mobilization of all project inputs, supervision over project staff, consultants and sub-contractors. The PM will report to the UNDP-CO, in close consultation with the host institution for all of the project's substantive and administrative issues. From the strategic point of view of the project, the PM will report on a periodic basis to the Project Steering Committee (PSC). Generally, the PM will be responsible for meeting government obligations under the project. He/She will perform a liaison role with the Government, UNDP and other UN Agencies, NGOs and project partners, and maintain close collaboration with any donor agencies providing co-financing.

Role of the Project Officer

Under the direct supervision of the Project Manager, the Project Officer (PO) is responsible to assist and support in the implementation of project activities, while ensuring high quality, accuracy and consistency of work. He/She will be responsible for the technical implementation of project activities and achieving the results mentioned in the project document.

Whenever the Project Manager or Project Assistant is absent, the Project Officer is expected to enable the team to function smoothly and deliver expected results. The Project Officer position is intended to help the project in terms of stakeholder engagement and implementing fully the Social and Environmental safeguards of UNDP-GEF projects.

Role of the Project Assistant

The Project Assistant will be responsible for the overall administration of the project. The Project Assistant will report to the Project Manager. Generally, the Project Assistant will be responsible for supporting the Project Manager in meeting government obligations under the project.

2.9 UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements

The project results as outlined in the project results framework will be monitored and reported annually and evaluated periodically during project implementation to ensure the project effectively achieves these results. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan will be applied in accordance with the established UNDP procedures throughout the project lifetime. The UNDP Country Office will work with the relevant project stakeholders to ensure UNDP M&E requirements are met in a timely fashion and to high quality standards.

3.0 GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements

GEF Monitoring and Evaluation is carried out over and above UNDP's Monitoring and Evaluation and will be conducted as per Table 3.

Table 3: Project Monitoring and Evaluation work plan and budget

GEF M&E requirements	Primary responsibility	GEF Grant	Timeframe
Inception Workshop	UNDP Country Office	USD 11,000	Within two months of project document signature
Inception Report	Project Manager	None	Within two weeks of inception workshop
Standard UNDP monitoring and reporting requirements as outlined in the UNDP POPP	UNDP Country Office	None	Quarterly, annually
Monitoring of indicators in project results framework	Project Manager	USD 24,000 (USD 4,000/year)	Annually
GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR)	Project Manager and UNDP Country Office and UNDP-GEF team	None	Annually
NIM Audit as per UNDP audit policies	UNDP Country Office	USD 16,000	Annually or other frequency as per UNDP Audit policies
Lessons learned and knowledge generation	Project Manager	USD 18,000 (USD 3,000/year)	Annually
Monitoring of environmental and social risks, and corresponding management plans as relevant	Project Manager UNDP CO	None	On-going
Addressing environmental and social grievances	Project Manager UNDP Country Office BPPS as needed	None for time of project manager, and UNDP CO	Costs associated with missions, workshops, BPPS expertise etc. Chargeable to the project budget.
Project Board meetings	Project Board UNDP Country Office Project Manager	None	At minimum annually
Supervision missions	UNDP Country Office	None[1]	Annually
Oversight missions	UNDP-GEF team	Paid for by UNDP Fees	Troubleshooting as needed
Knowledge management as outlined in Component Three	Project Manager	USD 38,883 (one percent of GEF grant)	On-going

[1] The costs of UNDP Country Office and UNDP-GEF Unit's participation and time are charged to the GEF Agency Fee.

GEF M&E requirements	Primary responsibility	GEF Grant	Timeframe
GEF Secretariat learning missions/site visits	UNDP Country Office and Project Manager and UNDP-GEF team	None	To be determined.
Mid-term GEF Tracking Tool to be updated	Project Manager	USD 10,000	Before mid-term review mission takes place.
Independent Mid-term Review (MTR) and management response	UNDP Country Office and Project team and UNDP-GEF team	USD 30,000	Between 2nd and 3rd PIR.
Terminal GEF Tracking Tool to be updated	Project Manager	USD 10,000	Before terminal evaluation mission takes place
Independent Terminal Evaluation (TE) included in UNDP evaluation plan, and management response	UNDP Country Office and Project team and UNDP-GEF team and consultants	USD 30,000	At least three months before operational closure
TOTAL indicative COST Excluding project team staff time, and UNDP staff and travel expenses		USD 187,883 (<Five percent of GEF grant budget)	

4.0 Inception Workshop Objectives

The Inception Workshop should address a number of key issues including:

(i) Assist all partners to fully understand and take ownership of the project.

(ii) Detail the roles, support services and complementary responsibilities of UNDP CO and PMU

(iii) Based on the project results framework, to finalize the first annual work plan. Review and agree on the indicators, targets and their means of verification, and recheck assumptions and risks;

(iv) Provide a detailed overview of reporting, monitoring and evaluation requirements. The Monitoring and Evaluation work plan and budget should be agreed and scheduled;

(v) Discuss financial reporting procedures and obligations, and arrangements for annual audit. Audits on the project will follow UNDP finance regulations and rules and applicable audit policies; and

(vi) Plan and schedule Project Steering Committee and Project Coordinating Committee meetings. Roles and responsibilities of all project organization structures should be clarified and meetings planned. The first Project Steering Committee meeting should be held within the 12 months following the inception workshop.

Given the nature of the Mainstreaming Invasive Alien Species project, it was expected that the IW would have been held physically in one location for stakeholders from both Mauritius and Rodrigues. However, in the context of the travel restrictions resulting from

the Covid-19 pandemic, the IW was held via Zoom on 30 June and 1 July 2021. A copy of the IW agenda is provided as Annex 2 to this Report.

In line with the requirements of the project document, this IW Report is a key reference document and must be prepared and shared with participants to formalize various agreements and plans decided during the meeting.

5.0 Proceedings of the Inception Workshop

The workshop was attended by a total of approximately 60 participants from public institutions, the private sector, civil society on both days. The list of participants is given in Annex 3 to this Report.

The workshop was officially opened by Hon. Maneesh Gobin, Attorney General and Minister of Agro Industry and Food Security for the Republic of Mauritius. Mr. Tony Muhumuza, UNDP's Senior Economist who represented Ms. Amanda K. Serumaga, UNDP Resident Representative for Mauritius and Seychelles, also delivered a speech and Mr. Kevin Ruhomaun, Director of the National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS) and National Project Director delivered the opening remarks.

5.1 Speech of Dr. Tony Muhumuza, UNDP's Senior Economist for Mauritius and Seychelles

Dr. Muhumuza's speech focused on the continued commitment of UNDP and the GEF to safeguard local biodiversity. He also highlighted previous projects in the UNDP GEF portfolio, including the "Expanding Coverage and Strengthening Management Effectiveness of the Protected Area Network in Mauritius" project, and the "Review and update of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan" both executed under the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security.

He highlighted the aim of the Mainstreaming IAS project which consists of enhancing efforts towards a more effective prevention, control and management of Invasive Alien species, to safeguard globally significant biodiversity in vulnerable ecosystems in the Republic of Mauritius. He added that the project is for the Republic of Mauritius and as such interventions will be carried out in Rodrigues as well. Specifically, for Rodrigues, the major target concerns the gazetting of 200 hectares of protected areas ha at Mourouk Valley.

A copy of Dr. Tony Muhumuza's speech is provided as Annex 4 to this Report.

5.2 Speech of the Attorney General and Minister of Agro Industry and Food Security, Mauritius

Mr. Maneesh Gobin, Attorney General and Minister of Agro Industry and Food Security, delivered his speech by focusing on how Mauritius is dependent on the healthy functioning of both its terrestrial and marine ecosystems for its economic development and social wellbeing. He went through the three main components of the project.

He emphasized that invasive alien species represent one of the primary threats to biodiversity, and that risks may be increasing due to increased global trade, transport, tourism and climate change. The Republic of Mauritius intends to effectively implement Article 8(h) of the Convention of Biological Diversity along with the other International instruments, such as the International Plant Protection Convention, and relevant international organizations such as the Office International des Epizooties, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization, the World Health Organization and other international organizations that develop relevant standards and agreements.

A copy of the Minister's speech is provided as Annex 5 to this Report.

5.3 Presentations

In line with the project outcomes, key players in the sector were invited to deliver presentations on activities related to the project. This was important for stakeholder involvement in project implementation. A summary of each presentation is provided in the following subsections.

5.3.1 Presentation on Project Overview by the Project Manager

Mr. Seewajee Pandoo, Project Manager for the Mainstreaming IAS project, elaborated on the objective, funding and different components, outcomes, outputs and activities of the project. He provided an indication of the proposed restoration sites in Mauritius, and Rodrigues. The overall organizational structure and management and fiduciary arrangements of the project were presented.

Moreover, the amount to be contributed in terms of in-kind co-financing by the different stakeholders was projected.

A copy of this presentation is provided as Annex 6 to this Report.

5.3.2 Presentation on Procedures and implementation arrangements under a NIM Project /Guidelines to be followed regarding update of project baseline and indicators during the inception workshop

This presentation was delivered by Mr. Shakil Beedassy, GCF Coordinator on behalf of Mr. Satyajeet Ramchurn, Head of Environment Unit at the UNDP CO. The presentation of Mr. Beedassy focused on Introduction to NIM Modality, Legal Context, Roles and Responsibilities of UNDP, UNDP's Accountability, Cash Transfer Modalities, Combined Delivery Reports and Audits and Guidance for project revision during implementation.

A copy of this presentation is provided as Annex 7 to this Report

5.3.3 Presentation on Roles and responsibilities of the Project Steering Committee (PSC), National Project Director (NPD) and Project Management Unit (PMU)

Mr. Sameer Kaudeer, Project Officer for the Mainstreaming IAS project presented the roles and compositions of the Project Steering Committee (PSC). He elaborated on the responsibilities of the National Project Director (NPD) and the Project Management Unit (PMU) in the project.

A copy of this presentation is provided as Annex 8 to this Report.

5.3.4 Presentation on GEF policies, UNDP Financial rules and regulations / Project Evaluation and Monitoring

This presentation was delivered by Dr. Penny Stock, UNDP GEF Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) for Ecosystems and Biodiversity. She elaborated on the project implementation responsibilities, monitoring and evaluation milestones and requirements, results-based management and environmental and social safeguards. She emphasized that the tools and approaches to be used for adaptive management included the PSC, Project Performance Reports, Quarterly and Annual Work Plans, monitoring and data collection, Mid-term Review, impact assessments and the Project Results Framework.

Dr. Stock highlighted those changes to project indicators requires the approval of the Project Steering Committee. She also elaborated on the different risk categories and key elements of UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES), namely biodiversity conservation and sustainable nature resource management, climate change mitigation and adaptation, community health, safety and working conditions, cultural heritage, displacement and resettlement, indigenous peoples, labour and working conditions, and pollution prevention and resource efficiency.

A copy of this presentation is provided as Annex 9 to this Report.

5.3.5 Presentation of Stakeholder participation plan

This presentation was delivered by Mr. Sameer Kaudeer. He highlighted the principles guiding the stakeholder participation in the project and explained the role each stakeholder will play in the project implementation. He emphasized that the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security is the most important stakeholder which is contributing USD 19 million as co-financing. The roles of other stakeholders such as the private sector, NGOs and academia were also explained including their level of co-financing for each institution.

A copy of this presentation is provided as Annex 10 to this Report.

5.3.6 Presentation on the Project risk log / Social and Environmental Standards (SES)

Mr. S. Pandoo went through the project risk log and mentioned that it is very important to manage risks in any project. He explained on how risks are calculated and that for the Mainstreaming IAS project, five risks were identified. He stressed the added risks entailed by the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of economic recession, procurement delays and travel restrictions, and new Government structures which required the need for re-engagement at high level with project stakeholders and staff turnover.

The objectives of the Social and Environmental Standards (SES) were to strengthen the social and environmental outcomes of programmes and projects, avoid adverse impacts to people and the environment, minimize, mitigate, and manage adverse impacts where avoidance is not possible, strengthen capacities for managing social and environmental risks, and ensure full and effective stakeholder engagement. It was noted that the project team was responsible for managing risks.

A copy of this presentation is provided as Annex 6 to this Report.

5.3.7 Presentation on Project Quality Assurance

Mr. Pandoo emphasized on how UNDP provides a three-tier action, supervision, oversight and quality assurance role. The latter supports the Project Steering Committee and Project Management Unit by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. This role ensures appropriate project management milestones are managed and completed. He also stressed that quality standard for programming, strengthen and enable achievement of results.

A copy of this presentation is provided as Annex 6 to this Report.

Question/ Comment No. 1 from Mr. S. Ramchurn, Head of Environment Unit, UNDP.

With regard to the presentation on Project Quality Assurance, Mr. Ramchurn mentioned that the risk level for this project is *Moderate* and not high.

Question/ Comment No. 2: How did the probability of 2 for Climate Change impact has been reached?

Mr. Ramchurn mentioned that if during implementation of the project, any incremental change in climate change impact will/may affect the outcome of the project, then only the risk rating can be changed.

Question/ Comment No. 3: from Ms. Rudee Parmasse, Member of Ter Mer Rodriguez Association.

For the case of stakeholder participation plan, Ter Mer Rodriguez Association (TMRA) which is a Non-Governmental Organization in Rodrigues has already started restoration work on Gombrani Islet under a project entitled 'Increase the biodiversity of Gombrani Islet in Rodrigues via enhanced conservation practices' funded by Critical Partnership Ecosystem Fund (CEPF). The association has undertaken considerable work up to now like the establishment of a management strategy for the islet and control of invasive species over 10 ha and planting of endemic plants. As a Member of TMRA, I personally think that TMRA should be considered as a potential participant in the implementation of Mainstreaming IAS project especially for management of IAS on islets under Output 2.3.

It was agreed that the PMU will come to Rodrigues to meet the stakeholders, primarily the RRA, and set up the mechanism to integrate all relevant parties in Rodrigues in terms of restoration works that need to be carried out in Gombrani Island and Mourouk Valley.

Mr. Ruhomaun also proposed to have an Inception Workshop in Rodrigues, but owing to the pandemic, it was decided to have a consultation meeting with Rodrigues first.

Question/ Comment No. 4: from Mr. Vimal Nundlaul of National Parks and Conservation Service, on lessons learnt from previous projects and how will same be integrated in this project.

Mr. Ramchurn stated that with the lessons learnt from other UNDP funded project, and with the involvement of Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU), UNDP Country Office has already dealt with this issue in the preparation phase and currently the UNDP has intensified its oversight and monitoring of the project. Now each stakeholder is informed on its roles and responsibilities. Roles should be clear and there should not be overlaps. Success of this project will depend on this partnership in implementation.

Question/ Comment No. 5: Has the PSC been already set up?

Yes, and the first PSC was held on 6 July 2020.

5.3.8 Project Results Framework: Review the results framework and finalisation of the indicators - Component 1. i.e. Policy, regulatory and Institutional framework and capacity for effective IAS management.

The Project Manager went through the different project objectives, indicators and outcomes for Component 1. The baseline, midterm objectives and end of year project results (as per the ProDoc) were also shared with the participants. For Outcome 1, it is expected that by year 2024, the Republic of Mauritius has a gender sensitive policy, regulatory and institutional framework, and capacity to manage IAS effectively.

A copy of this presentation is provided as Annex 6 to this Report.

Question/ Comment No. 6: from Mr. Kevin Ruhomaun, National Project Director and Director of National Parks and Conservation Service.

Given the delays in the implementation of the project, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, etc, the project is left only with 18 months for the Mid-term Review, which is supposed to be held by end of next year. It is too optimistic to put the percentage high for some output knowing the current prevailing situation we are in currently.

Mr. Ramchurn mentioned that there is a need to liaise with the RTA to finalise the starting date of the project. Is it the Inception Workshop or the signature of the project document? The date of the Mid-term Review can take place at a time later than that initially scheduled in order to allow some project activities/achievements to take place.

Question/ Comment No. 7: from Dr. Vikash Tatayah, Conservation Director, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation

With regard to the IAS Biodiversity Score, can this include NGOs and private sector entities involved in IAS work, as IAS control is not only done by governmental institutions?

Mr. Pandoo stated that we should compare like with like to see the trend with regard to the government institutions but nevertheless we can try to loop NGOs and private sector entities in when establishing the next biodiversity score.

Mr. Ramchurn mentioned that NGOs and private sectors can be accounted for as part of these scores.

Question/ Comment No. 8: will there be a review and assessment of the previous NIASSAP implementation?

The Project Manager stated that there will definitely be an assessment and review of the previous National Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan (NIASS & NIASSAP 2009 – 2018) as it is important to evaluate the gaps and weaknesses in its implementation before updating the document.

Question/ Comment No. 9: from Dr. Vikash Tatayah, Conservation Director, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation

With regard to indicator 5 i.e., Percentage of recommendations in the review of IAS-related acts, policy and cabinet decisions that are fully implemented and its target of 80% reached at the end of the project, Dr. Tatayah proposed that the target should be 100%, otherwise the remaining part will not get adopted for another 10 years.

Mr. Ruhomaun apprised the participants that the review for the legal framework takes time, and he would be happy if all the legal amendments are brought with the project cycle, but the 80% earmarked are more attainable. Definitely, even after the project cycle, the recommendations for Mainstreaming IAS in the legal framework will need to continue.

Question/ Comment No. 10: from Mr. Vinesh Gopal, National Parks and Conservation Service

The project proposes to have a National Apex IAS Coordination Committee under the aegis of the National Parks and Conservation Service. As Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Park Act 2015 caters only for terrestrial biodiversity what about the freshwater and marine IAS?

Mr. Pandoo mentioned that the objective of having an Apex Coordination Committee is a stepping stone towards a fully-fledged IAS Institution. But this takes time, that is why in the ProDoc it was proposed to have the National Apex IAS Coordination Committee with a defined ToR. With the support of the company to be recruited under Component 1, a proposal will be made for the establishment of the independent institution, but this will be effected in a phase-wise manner. With regard to the purview and mandate of NPCS, not all thematics identified for the control of IAS is under the NPCS, e.g. Marine IAS.

Mr. Ruhomaun added that the process with regards to the setting up of such body is still under discussion. The Apex Committee will be evolutionary, and it should fall under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) as it has a national implication.

Question/Comment No. 11: from anonymous on EPCO co-financing?

Mr. Kaudeer stated that the PMU has a copy of co-financing letter from EPCO stating where they will contribute to the project, i.e. USD 39,528 mainly for provision of training of wise use of IAS.

5.3.9 Presentation on the Status of Ballast Water Management and Biofouling under Component 2. i.e. Incorporation of risk-based management of IAS into pathways and ecosystem management.

This presentation was delivered by Mrs. B. K. Kalidin, Marine Scientist from the Shipping Division of the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping (MOBEMRFS). Mrs. Kalidin started by explaining on the potential pathways for the introduction of IAS. She emphasized on the different instruments that the International

Maritime Organization (IMO) has developed to address the issue of transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens through ships' ballast water and sediments and ships' biofouling. She also elaborated on Mauritius' response to Marine IAS invasions and the national instruments that are being developed.

A copy of this presentation is provided as Annex 11 to this Report.

Question/Comment No. 12: from Mrs. Padmini Seebun, National Plant Protection Office (NPPO).

Under the International Plant Protection Convention, there is also an initiative for the management of ballast water. When MOBEMRFS is developing any initiatives, the NPPO should also be involved in discussions or formulation of projects, as this is a concern for plant protection.

Mrs. Kalidin mentioned that currently there is no such regulations as such as there are still at the data gathering stage. The Shipping Division is currently doing the National Status Assessment and they will rope in all concerned stakeholders, including the NPPO.

Question/Comment No. 12: from Mr. Kumar Rughooputh, Mauritius Ports Authority.

Mr. Rughooputh wanted to know when the Ballast Water Management Convention will be ratified?

Mrs. Kalidin responded by saying that this is at a work-in-progress stage, as there are still gathering all required information needed to be submitted for the ratification of the Ballast Convention.

Question/Comment No. 13: from Mr. Vinesh Gopal, National Parks and Conservation Service.

He queried whether there is an inventory on the IAS species in the ballast water?

Mrs. Kalidin replied that they do not have a complete inventory at this stage.

Question/Comment No. 13: from Dr. Vikash Tatayah, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation.

There are a large number of ships which are coming to or passing by Mauritius, and there have been shipwrecks, like the one in St. Brandon, which has caused a sort of red algae (an IAS, which has invaded significantly) to colonize the lagoon. This shows the risks of having invasive species invaded through shipwrecks. The process within which samples are taken from hulls of boats after a shipwreck are a bit slow. There should be a contingency plan for shipwrecks, to be able to take samples quickly. He enquired whether his suggestion can be taken onboard in the strategy of the Ministry.

Mrs. Kalidin acknowledged that this will be taken into consideration.

5.3.10 Presentation on the Status of Ecosystem restoration on St Brandon under Component 2

Dr. V. Tatayah, from MWF, delivered this presentation on behalf of Dr. Nik Cole, MWF's Islands Restoration Manager. He focused on the status of ecosystem restoration on St. Brandon. He emphasized how rats and mice are major IAS on the island, with a high evidence of impact, such as the lack of ground-nesting seabirds and the predation on hatchling turtles. Different species of geckos are continuing to be introduced in the island and having ecological impacts. He emphasized on how biosecurity is essential to prevent re-invasions and new invasions, particularly at docks, on vessels within Mauritius and the archipelago.

A copy of this presentation is provided as Annex 12 to this Report

Question/Comment No. 14: from Ms. Housna Naujeer, National Parks and Conservation Service

What is the cost implication for St. Brandon Island Conservation Programme?

Dr. Tatayah mentioned that if the cost implication concerns eradication of the IAS, then this needs to be costed out. There is a need to see what method of control will be used. For example, the costs for the use of helicopters or people or drones differ hugely from each other. He added that the costing for this eradication has not yet been calculated and is requesting financial support from stakeholders' present.

Question/Comment No. 15: from Ms. Housna Naujeer, National Parks and Conservation Service.

What are the constraints and/or challenges for implementing any IAS control or eradication programme on St Brandon?

Dr. Tatayah responded by saying that it is logistically difficult, but not impossible to implement IAS control. There is also the issue of funding which should be taken into consideration. Most of the in-shore islands need to be tackled at one go. However, one of the biggest challenges and priority is to put in place a quarantine system for every boat going to St. Brandon.

Question/Comment No. 16: from Ms. Housna Naujeer, National Parks and Conservation Service.

Has there been any scientific study on the impact of mice on fauna survival on St. Brandon?

Dr. Tatayah mentioned that trips to St. Brandon tend to be short, due to cost implications and thus long-term investigation of the impact has not been possible. However, there is

evidence of hatchling turtles and seabirds which are being predated by mice. The institutional mapping and priorities that are being produced by MWF shows that there are a number of priorities for St. Brandon.

Question/Comment No. 17: from Christine Griffiths, Ebony Forest.

Are there any endemic geckos on the island?

Dr. Cole stated that there are no endemic geckos on the island

Question/Comment No. 18: from Dr. John Mauremootoo.

Have there been any studies on the impact of climate change scenarios on the islands' biodiversity? And can the climate risks be mitigated?

Dr. V. Tatayah apprised the members present that following the visit of British Antarctic survey scientists to Mauritius some couple of years ago and because St. Brandon is a relatively low human impact island, it is possible to monitor man-induced sea-level rise on those islands. There are many opportunities to do research, but the islands are too small and dynamic.

Question/Comment No. 19: from Kevin Ruhomaun, National Parks and Conservation Service?

There are 50 to 55 islands on St Brandon, some of which are permanent, some semi-permanent, while others are not permanent. How much of the islands could fall under the National Parks, etc?

13 islands are under the management of Raphael Fishing, while the rest are under the management of Outer Island Development Corporation (OIDC), but they all need to be managed as one unit. This needs to be sorted out by the OIDC who owns the major number of the islands.

Question/Comment No. 20: from Dr. Lakshmi Devi Ramprogus, Veterinary Services.

Do we have any disease surveillance program in place in respect of Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in migratory birds? It is noted that there is significant movement of formites (people).

Dr. Tatayah mentioned that there has been no investigation into HPAI or other diseases.

Question/Comment No. 21: from Mr. Kamlesh Ramdhony, Mauritius Oceanography Institute.

Have there been any studies on the releases of pollutants or alien biota (through biofouling) from shipwrecks around St. Brandon?

Dr. Tatayah mentioned that there was an assessment of the Kha Yang shipwreck done by Mr. Olivier Tyack, especially on the marine impact assessment. In his report, he clearly mentioned the pollution caused by biofouling. Similarly, there is a team from South Africa, which have also done a similar study (Van de Schyff et al., 2020).

Question/Comment No. 22: from Dr. John Mauremootoo.

Could a programme of rat eradication backfire if it results in an explosion of mice numbers?

Actually, there are mice on some islands, while there are rats on some others. Both are not present on the same islands. But we look to tackle mice and rats at the same time as logistically it is more feasible.

Question/Comment No. 23: from Mr. Vinesh Gopal, National Parks and Conservation Service.

It is important to show increase caution while using rodenticides for the control or eradication of rodents as studies have shown that rodenticides are persistent in some wildlife.

Question/Comment No. 24: Mrs. B. Kalidin, Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping

Are reports of the 2016 Fact finding mission: value, restoration, sustainability and the 2019 Survey native fauna & flora, invasive species and feasibility of eradication, marine debris, erosion, available?

Dr Tatayah said that he will share the publications with the PMU for onward sharing with Mrs. Kalidin.

5.3.11 Presentation on Project Results Framework: Review the results framework and finalize the indicators - Component 2.

Mr. Pandoo elaborated on **Outcome 2: By 2024, the government effectively prevents and manages IAS threats based on risks.** He emphasized on IAS control-led ecosystem restoration undertaken in 421 ha of high priority PAs to sustain populations of 38 critically threatened species, namely Flat Island (253 ha), Gabriel Island (42 ha), Gunners Quoin (76 ha), Rodrigues (Gombrani Island 46 ha) and Saint Brandon Island (45 ha) and IAS threats managed in 200 hectares of newly declared Mourouk Valley Protected Area.

A copy of this presentation is provided as Annex 6 to this Report.

Question/Comment No. 25: from Dr. Vikash Tatayah, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation.

Dr. Tatayah mentioned that the Mourouk Valley has been listed as an accredited Botanic Garden under the Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI).

Question/ Comment No. 26: from Mr. Kevin Ruhomaun, National Project Director and Director of National Parks and Conservation Services.

Mr. Ruhomaun mentioned that with regard to the size of the areas being under IAS control, this needs to be defined further. Work has already started with regard to IAS control. Gombrani has been surveyed and work is being carried out by an NGO in Rodrigues. However, with the present funding, we will not be able to tackle the 421 hectares. Mr. S. Ramchurn suggested to organize a brainstorming session with all the relevant stakeholders with respect to output 2.3 and 2.4 to discuss and finalise the expected outputs.

Question/Comment No. 27: from Dr. John Mauremootoo.

The baseline for physical checks of imported goods is rather high. How was this derived?

Mr. Kaudeer replied that this was derived from data collected through organizations involved in these checks such as the National Plant Protection Office, the Fisheries Division, the Veterinary Service and Custom Department during the project write up, and this is mentioned in the ProDoc.

Question/Comment No. 28: from Mr. Vinesh Gopal, National Parks and Conservation Service.

With the incidence of MV Wakashio, is it possible to include the South East islets and Pt D'Esny and Blue Bay Ramsar site as restoration sites under the project?

Mr. Kaudeer mentioned the area agreed under the ProDoc needs to be respected and we need to confirm for the size to be restored. This is still under discussion and validation with the different stakeholders. In case there are any changes in size or site, this needs to be approved by the PSC and the RTA.

Mr. Ramchurn and Mr. Ruhomaun added that we should consider the objective of the project and the funding when considering including other sites for restoration. The objective for this project is to remove IAS and there is a need not to mix IAS with other issues, as cautioned by the RTA. There is also limited funding and hence we have to see what is feasible with the funding available over the next five years. In case it is possible to add more sites once sites which are foreseen are completed, and there is a good rationale

to add them, then that can be done. Mr. Ramchurn proposed that a separate stakeholder's workshop be held to look at these aspects in detail.

Question/Comment No. 29: from Jean Alain Perrine, Rodrigues.

For the time being, Mourouk has not been declared a protected area. However, RRA has decided that Mourouk be declared a Nature Reserve.

Question/Comment No. 30: from Dr. Vikash Tatayah, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation.

Dr. Tatayah highlighted that it would be good if Gunner's Quoin is maintained because of its biodiversity richness and Mourouk Valley also, because of the endemic species it contains and finally St. Brandon.

Question/Comment No. 31: from Mr. Reshad Jhangeer-Khan, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, Rodrigues.

It does not seem realistic to control IAS in the 200 ha of Mourouk Valley within the 5 years project duration. There is however the 18 ha area within this valley, supporting the last Ebony (*Diospyros diversifolia)* stand in which IAS could more realistically be controlled. This could be a core zone within the greater protected Valley.

The Mourouk Valley also contains the RRA Mourouk Botanical Garden, RRA Mourouk Gene Bank and numerous IUCN Critically Endangered (CR) founder species, so protection by gazetting is necessary.

5.3.12 Presentation of the WIKTROP Portal in line with one of the project outputs i.e. The establishment of a National IAS Information System (NIASIS) -under Component 3. i.e. Knowledge Management and Learning

This presentation was delivered by Dr. Azaad Gaungoo, Cultural Operations and Weed Agronomy Department, Mauritius Sugarcane Industry Research Institute. His presentation focused on weed knowledge and its management through informed scientific and technological approach. He also described and showcased the WIKTROP portal and concluded that experience of the WIKWIO/WIKTROP Portal can be useful for setting up the National IAS Information System (NIASIS) platform, which can lead to effective visibility and public awareness on the project. Moreover, the portal can lead to dynamic and symbiotic interactions among collaborators.

A copy of this presentation is provided as Annex 13 to this Report.

Question/Comment No. 32: from Ms. Housna Naujeer, National Parks and Conservation Service.

What is the frequency of updating the WIKTROP portal most particularly with respect to biogeographical distribution and abundance of weeds whilst considering a dynamic ecosystem landscape?

Dr. Gaungoo replied that the WIKTROP portal is constantly being updated with information about species and the portal is automatically updated with observations in the observation module.

Question/Comment No. 33: from Ms. Housna Naujeer, National Parks and Conservation Service.

How far will WIKTROP and NIASIS complement each other in terms of information dissemination?

The WIKTROP portal can be a tool for getting information about IAS. Discussions have to be made on how the information can be migrated on the portal.

Question/Comment No. 34 from Dr. John Mauremootoo.

How do you propose to sustain funding for the WIKTROP portal to ensure that it remains up to date?

Currently, there is no issue regarding funding to sustain the portal. But additional funding is welcomed in order to improve it.

Question/Comment No. 35 from Dr. John Mauremootoo.

Can the WIKTROP portal be used as a basis for a comprehensive IAS portal?

Definitely, with regard to plants. There is already a lot of information regarding IAS on the portal.

5.3.14. Presentation of Project's Procurement Plan

Mr. Kaudeer presented the procurement plan of the project by explaining the UNDP procurement thresholds that shall apply to the procurement of goods, works and services and the relevant UNDP procurement method to be used.

As the Mainstreaming IAS project is a NIM project, some procurement will be taken care at the Ministry's level.

He also presented the Procurement plan for the year 2021. The National Implementing Agency i.e. MAIFS through the NPCS, shall update the procurement plan throughout the duration of the project, at least annually, by including contracts previously awarded.

A copy of this presentation is at Annex 14 to this Report.

Question/Comment No. 36: from Dr. Vikash Tatayah, Conservation Director, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation

Good Nature Traps

Dr. Tatayah stated that the amount of 185,000 USD allocated to the purchase of the Good Nature Traps (GNT) should go in priority, if not in toto, in setting up these traps in the Black River Gorges National Park (Brise Fer, Macchabee) as it would be of great advantage to endemic birds like Echo Parakeet, Pink Pigeons, Kestrel. It would increase the potential of introducing other birds like the Olive White Eyes and be beneficial to native plants as well.

For the moment around 10 hectares on mainland have GNT, and this would be an opportunity to increase it to 20 – 25 hectares.

Pet facility

Dr. Tatayah said that we should not restrict ourselves to dogs and cats, as there are many other pets that are being brought or are being reported like Iguanas, Madagascar Geckos, Terrapins, etc. These unwanted animals IAS should be brought to this facility and be put down the more humanely possible, as catching these animals and releasing them elsewhere is not correct at all.

RFPs for NIASS review and Biosecurity strategy

Dr. Tatayah wanted to know the way forward regarding these RFPs as no bidders answered these calls for proposals. And these RFPs are the basis for the rest of the project to be implemented.

Question/Comment No. 37 from Mr. Vicky Pandoo, Project Manager Mainstreaming IAS Project

WRT to GNT, Mr. Pandoo stated that the proposal of Dr. Tatayah is noted, and he proposed to have a meeting to further discuss on this issue and to include the staff of the NPCS.

For the Pet Quarantine facility further discussions will have to take place regarding the modalities and institutional mandate.

For the RFPs, Mr.Pandoo agree that these RFPs especially RFP for component 1 is the backbone of the project. He informed the participants that potential bidders attended the pre-bids meetings but unfortunately none of them applied. As a matter of priority the sub-committee has been established at the level of the PMU, UNDP, including the CTA and RTA to discuss the way ahead.

Question/Comment No. 38 from Mr. Kevin Ruhomaun, NPD, Director NPCS

Mr. Ruhomaun stated that a few meetings have already been organized with regard to the amount and expansion of the coverage area of the good nature traps i.e. in Brise Fer or any other potential areas. Apart from the funding for GNTs in the Mainstreaming IAS

Project there's also funding from the EU Funded Ridge to Reef Project. 100 hectares of main land island will be concerned and for the moment the work is focused on the management of such a system in particular the manpower requirements as these GNTs needs to be taken care of, maintained and replaced when needed. We now have information wrt the operationality of these traps through their large-scale use by MWF and Ebony Forest. We are now moving out from the experimental research stage to managing a whole system. Progress have been made in their large-scale use within the National Parks, in particular at Brise Fer and expansion is planned at Combo for the population of Olive White Eyes. The facility at Combo is now ready to support the management of such a system.

Further meetings will be organized to discuss on the set up and management of these traps.

Question/Comment No. 39 from Dr. Ramprogus, Senior Veterinary officer, Division of Veterinary Services (DVS)

Dr. Ramprogus informed the participants that the Division of Veterinary Services already purchased microchip readers through another funding and proposed to replace by other equipment's and diagnosis kit.

Mr. Pandoo stated that this is well noted and informed the representative of the DVS that an official request should be made to the NPD in line with the budget allocation as included in the ProDoc.

Mr. Ruhomaun agreed with Mr. Pandoo and added that there should be no issue as long as the request for these materials are in line with the project's objectives.

Question/Comment No. 40 from Dr. Ramprogus, Senior Veterinary officer, Division of Veterinary Services (DVS)

Dr. Ramprogus also informed the participants that all import of live animals requires an import permit as per the Animal Disease Act, and quarantine is also mandatory.

Mr. Ruhomaun added that the Quarantine facility was also meant for the illegal imports of animals due to previous cases of illegal importation. These animals should either be sent back to their country, for those which are very rare, or disposed of i.e. put down or put in a secure facility pending a risk assessment.

Question/Comment No. 41 from Dr. John Mauremootoo

Dr. Mauremootoo is supportive of the proposals made by Dr. Tatayah and Mr. Ruhomaun regarding the GNTs. He pointed out that it is very important to allocate a budget for their monitoring to show their ecosystem impacts.

5.3.15. Review of annual workplan for 2021 (AWP 2021)

Mr. Kaudeer presented the Project's workplan for the year 2021. He described the planned activities under each output and relevant component, with its allocated budget for the year 2021.

A copy of the presentation is at Annex 15 to this report.

Question/Comment No. 42 from Dr. Vikash Tatayah, Conservation Director, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation.

Dr. Tatayah asked for a clarification regarding the time period the year in the AWP referred to.

Mr. Kaudeer stated that the year was the calendar year with Q1 starting as from the date the PMU was recruited i.e. February 2021. He also informed the participants that the AWP and Procurement plan needs to be approved by the PSC and signed by the National Project Director and UNDP's Resident Representative.

Dr. Tatayah expressed his appreciation that the AWP includes the design and implementation of a surveillance programme for new incursions at ports. He mentioned that we've been witnessing incursions of snakes in containers at port level, especially at the seaport, these recent years. He wanted to know if there would be any training to handle and/or neutralize snakes.

Mr. Pandoo stated that this is one of the gaps the project will be addressing. Regarding component 2, each institution will have its own mandate and for specific issues finetuning would be needed. For example, for snakes we need to define clearly under the mandate of which institution it falls under and regarding the existing gaps, which necessary skills would be needed.

Question/Comment No. 43 from Mr. Vinesh Gopal, National Parks and Conservation Service.

Do you have a contingency system for the running of the project even if we must face any kind of situation like the COVID 19 lockdown?

Mr. Pandoo replied by stating that a COVID 19 contingency plan exist at the UNPD's country office level for business continuity for various level of crisis situation.

Mr. Ramchurn informed the participants that the project timeline is approved by the GEF and under GEF-6 rules maximum extension is one year. With the current COVID situation, a new normal is arising and we are already adapting ourselves to maintain the project implementation as far as possible. During lockdowns there are activities that would be carried out by the PMU staff and consultants working from home. Delays in some activities like restoration works would be justifiable if access to sites are restricted.

At UNPD's level no excuse will be accepted in terms of delivering less because of lockdown as now people are expected to work from home. Despite last year's lockdown, the UNDP Country Office spent more in terms of project works compared to previous years, most probably due to an increase in productivity when working from home. And if consultants can't come to Mauritius and there is no necessity of their physical presence here, we'll have cost savings as well.

GEF has given extension for project preparations when there was general lockdown around the world. Now as vaccines are being deployed, we would need very serious justifications in delaying the project implementation. There's a lot of work on the shoulders of the PMU and we will need the full collaboration of the various stakeholders for the project success.

The Mauritian Government has approved the *Work from Home* policy since March 2021 and whatever is paper works, report writing need to continue even during lockdown. Digital platforms like zoom should be used for stakeholder consultations and other workshops.

Mr. Ramchurn emphasized to respect deadlines and deliverables as GEF is very strict on these and project's extensions are not granted easily.

He also expressed his concerns regarding the fact that we had no bidders for RFPs for component 1 and 2. But he mentioned that the PMU with the UNDP office is thinking of various strategies to find solutions. He acknowledged that IAS management is a very small niche and launching two RFPs as the same time can be confusing for consultants to decide on which one to bid. He suggested to may be combine the 2 RFPs and to ensure a sequential approach in the deliverables expected of these consultancies.

Dr. Tatayah was of the opinion that it would better to separate the RFPs instead of merging them.

Mr. Pandoo took good note of these views and proposed to have further consultation to decide on the way forward.

Question/Comment No. 44 from anonymous attendee:

It is important to build capacity of institutions including undertaking inventory risk assessment, training needs assessment and this need to be done appropriately. There's a lack of funding for research on IAS for knowledge and information including for universities.

Mr. Pandoo replied to that comment by apprising the participants that under component 3, there are funds earmarked for research work on IAS for research institutes including universities.

Dr. John Mauremootoo added that we need to be cautious for new research works in the IAS field as a lot of works have already been carried out in Mauritius or systems similar to Mauritius. It is important to make these resources available and make the best use of them.

Question/Comment No. 45 from anonymous attendee:

We should get quality products from quality consultants.

Mr. Pandoo is agreeable to this statement and stated that the PMU in collaboration with the NPD, PSC and UNDP Quality Assurance team will make sure that the standards are respected.

6.0 Closing Remarks

Mr. Pandoo thanked everyone for bringing their expertise and experience around the table and engaging in such fruitful, constructive and open exchanges throughout the two days of the inception workshop. Indeed, we are shaping an important dialogue and putting together tools and offering options for making this project a success.

He also paid gratitude to Mr. Congyi, UNDP intern, for making all the arrangement with respect to logistic for the webinar.

Special note to Mr. Ruhomaun and Mr. Ramchurn for spearheading the process of the inception workshop and The Honorable Minister and the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security for collaboration in making this workshop a success.

He congratulated the PMU team and UNDP Team – Mrs. Beedasee, Mr. Kaudeer, Mr. Ragen, Mr. Beedassy and Ms. Sunassee.

Mr. Ramchurn, Head of the Environment Unit of the Mauritius and Seychelles Country Office of UNDP delivered the closing remarks of the inception workshop. He elaborated the special circumstances under which the workshop had to be organised in the context of Covid-19 travel restrictions. He stated that the project team had taken note of all discussions held during the workshop. He highlighted that further consultation could still be held to capture the views of all stakeholders. The results of these consultations would be captured in the Project Results Framework and the Risk Log. The workshop was closed at 15.30 hrs, with a vote of thanks.

Mr. Ruhomaun thanked everyone for their active participation and closed the workshop.

6.0 Recommendations and Conclusions

6.1 Overall recommendations and conclusions

The overall updated Project Results Framework is at Annex 16 to this Report. It was also proposed that the Mid-term Review be affected in 2023 instead of 2020, since the project only started in 2021.

And for Project-specific Indicator 4: Percentage of decision makers for IAS that are women – the end target has been revised to 33 % of women instead of 50 % by end of project. This will be in line with the government of Mauritius national target of 33% minimum women/men representation in local councils.

6.2 Recommendations and conclusions on baseline, mid-term and end term targets for Component 1

With respect to the Project Results Framework for Component 1, updated baselines (further to the pre and post-inception consultations) pertained to the following: -

Indicator 5:

Percentage of recommendations in the review of IAS-related acts, policy and cabinet decisions that are fully implemented. It was highlighted during the inception workshop that the project can only provide the recommendations for review of policy and legal framework. It is the responsibility of the policy makers to get the recommendation fully endorsed.

Indicator 6:

Average aggregated score of national capacities in key agencies (NPCS, Forestry Service, NPPO, Veterinary Service, Rodrigues – to include IAS Apex Coordinating Committee). It was suggested that the score of NGOs be included in the Mid-term Review.

Indicator 7:

Change in IAS BD Score. It was suggested that the score of NGOs be included in the Mid-term Review.

6.3 Recommendations and conclusions on baseline, mid-term and end term targets for Component 2

With respect to the Project Results Framework for Component 2, it was recommended that some baseline indicators need to be updated/reviewed.

Indicator 8:

Average percentage of imported and transited consignments of plants and animals in airports and ports that undergo physical biodiversity checks by NPPO, Fisheries Division, Customs Office and Department of Veterinary Service, per year. the National Plant Protection Office (NPPO) stated that the end of project target (100%) was unachievable and a safe bet for them is to maintain their baseline target as they are predicting an exponential increase in the quantum of importation and with the logistics remaining same, it will be unrealistic for them to increase to the earmarked target.

Indicator 9:

Average Management Effectiveness Tracking score for Protected Areas. No comments were made.

Indicator 10: Reduction of IAS infestations in hectares on four key sites in Mauritius and two locations in Rodrigues and Indicator 12: No of hectares in the Republic of Mauritius covered by a standardized protocol for IAS control. These two indicators were discussed in parallel as they are cross cutting issues, and the deliberations led to the following proposal: a brainstorming session with all relevant stakeholders involved in restoration should take place. This workshop was held on 20 July 2021 to discuss on these two indicators and the following is reported:

It was agreed across the board that the 421ha earmarked for the five sites i.e. Gunners Quoin, Gabriel Island, Flat Island, St Brandon, Gombrani Island, is unrealizable during the project duration and suggestions were made to select zones on the selected sites as per table below:

The following table gives a breakdown of possible restoration costs on a total of 160 ha across the six sites as discussed during the July workshop.

Project Site	Area in ha.	Initial as per ProDoc	Proposed during workshop
Flat Island	253	-	30
Gabriel Island	42	15	42
Gunners Quoin	76	5	10
Gombrani Island	46	-	15
Saint Brandon Island	45	-	45
Mourouk	200	5	25
Total	662	25	160

From the budget allocated for the project, around USD 450,000 will be used for the above target. The funding for the areas earmarked for restoration for Flat and Gabriel Island

(initial weeding completed) will not come from the USD 450,000. This will be the contribution in kind from Forestry Service. As per the ProDoc they will beneficiate USD 50,000 for equipment from another Budget line from the project fund. FS have to submit the list of equipment including the specifications to the Project Steering Committee.

With regard to the remaining four sites, we propose the following:

Gunners Quoin – we will have to discuss with FS, NPCS and MWF to finalise the areas to be restored in terms of activities proposed and where to work. The cost involved will have to be worked out. PSC will have to approve the proposal.

For Mourouk Valley and Gombrani Island, we will finalise with RRA and they should submit their costed proposal to the PSC.

Please note that the Governments' contribution in kind for restoration will be looped in as follows:

NPCS has a yearly target of 50 Ha and after 6 years of the project this will amount to around 300 ha. Private land owners: around 30 ha for the next 6 year (at their own cost). This will entail an additional area of 330 ha.

Hence if all goes according to plan, we will have around 510 ha instead of earmarked indicator of 421 ha by the end of the project. And we will have more than 1200 ha (currently we already have more 700 ha restored in Mauritius, including islets) instead of the 621 ha by the end of the project (Indicator 12).

Without missing issues, Indicator 11: New PA (200 ha) established in Mourouk Valley: Nomination files for the gazettement of the Mourouk Protected Area agreed on by cabinet.

The project Management Team highlighted that they will assist RRA in the preparation of the Nomination Dossier but the gazettement process in not in their control. The members present also proposed if we could have Gombrani Island and St Brandon be proclaimed as Protected Areas, that we can increase the contribution to Aichi Target 11.

We can also stimulate discussions on how to optimise restoration work planned under the IAS project. These and other options can the scrutinised further for example using a SWOT analysis.

Another topic that needs to be addressed is what feasible methods are available to monitor the effect of restoration on IAS infestations and native biodiversity.

6.4 Recommendations and conclusions on baseline, mid-term and end term targets for Component 3

With respect to the Project Results Framework for Component 3, updated baselines (further to the pre/post-inception consultations) pertained to the following: -

Indicator 12:

Number of times that there is clear evidence that a government policy or management decision has been informed by information captured by the national IAS Information System – no further amendments were suggested

6.5 Recommendations and conclusions on the risk log

With regard to the Risk log, there was only one recommendation/observation on the climate change aspect. It was apprised that the climate change expert will review this issue and same will be incorporated in the updated risk log.

The updated risk log for the project is at Annex 17 to this Report.

7.0 Pre-Inception Consultative Meetings

Prior to the inception workshop, consultative physical and online meetings were held with various stakeholders namely Forestry Service-MAIFS, Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA), Entomology Division-MAIFS, Mauritius Sugarcane Industry Research Institute (MSIRI) and Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI). The aims of these meetings were to present the project outcomes, gather updated information and discuss on each institution's role in the project implementation. If there were any change to what was initially stated in the Prodoc, in terms of their needs for equipment and training, they were invited to officially informed the National Project Director.

Annex 16

This project will contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goals: **SDG 15** *(Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss)*, **SDG 14** *(Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development)*					
This project will contribute to the following country outcome included in the UNDAF/Country Programme Document: **CP Outcome 2:** Design and implementation of a portfolio of activities and solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of natural resources, integration of ecosystem services approaches, sound management of chemicals and waste, while ensuring that climate change challenges in terms of adaptation and mitigation are fully addressed					
This project will be linked to the following output of the UNDP Strategic Plan: **Output 2.5**: Legal and regulatory frameworks, policies and institutions enabled to ensure the conservation, sustainable use, and access and benefit sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems, in line with international conventions and national legislation.					
	Objective and Outcome Indicators (no more than a total of 15 -16 indicators)	**Baseline ~~2017~~2021**	**Mid-term Target ~~2020~~ 2023**	**End of Project Target ~~2024~~ 2027**	**Data Collection Methods and Risks/Assumptions**
Project Objective: Globally significant biodiversity in vulnerable ecosystems are safeguarded through the prevention, control and management of Invasive Alien	*IRRF Indicator 2.4.1*[2]*: 1* Extent to which policy frameworks are in place for conservation of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems[3]	***Partially***[4]	***Largely***	***Largely***	*Data collection method* - Annual review of project and government reports on policy and institutional reform processes by project management
	IRRF Indicator 2.4.1. 2 Extent to which institutional frameworks are in place for conservation, sustainable use, and/or				Annual review of a list of IAS critical positions by project manager;

2 The Indicator states - Number of countries with gender-responsive measures in place for conservation, sustainable use, and equitable access to and benefit sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems with four measures: i) Policy frameworks; ii) Legal and regulatory frameworks; iii) Institutional frameworks; iv) Financing frameworks

3 Qualitative rating scale (1-4): 1. Not adequately: No action has yet been taken and/or activities have been carried out but these have not yet led to the following results, e.g. conservation, objectives are not found in existing legal/policy/institutional framework(s). 2. ***Very partially***: The case for change has been made e.g. evidence gathering, piloting and demonstration activities, and / or activities to build partner capacity (knowledge, skills, approaches) have demonstrably made the case for the framework or and improved framework; or conservation objectives are mentioned in legal/policy/institutional framework(s), but not sufficiently to ensure sustainability of those practices. 3. ***Partially***: The framework has been approved by government e.g. conservation objectives are formalized in a stand-alone legal/etc. framework(s). 4. ***Largely***: e.g. sufficient staff capacities and resources have been allocated for implementation of the framework, and/or there is evidence of impact from the framework which can be recorded and verified; legal/etc. framework(s) on conservation. Align with international conventions and national legislation; mechanisms exist for the implementation/enforcement of the relevant legal/etc. framework(s); and or implementation/enforcement of the relevant legal/etc. framework(s) has been documented and is ongoing.

4 In 2017, Mauritius has a fragmented legislative, policy and institutional framework for IAS: The major guidance document for IAS management in Mauritius is the National Invasive Alien Species Strategy for the Republic of Mauritius (NIASS 2010-2019). However, the Strategy has not been fully implemented with IAS management still being driven by sectoral imperatives. Mauritian national legal measures have evolved in a reactive piecemeal manner, responding to new problems and pathways relating to IAS and single sector approaches have been the norm. In light of this failure at the policy level to recognize the importance of IAS, institutional mandates of relevance to IAS are fragmented and spread across departments in different ministries and Mauritius has no formal apex body responsible for IAS issues. The National Invasive Alien Species Committee (NIASC), formed in 2003, is a cross-sectoral body responsible for providing advice on IAS issues to individual government departments but it has no formal authority and no full-time staff. *For more details see GEF-6 PIF, Mainstreaming IAs Prevention, Control and Management, pp.9-10*

Species in the Republic of Mauritius	access and benefit sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems	***Partially***[5]	***Partially***	***Largely***	Risk: Co-finance is not provided making it harder for the project funds to shift the barriers to collaboration and inter-sectoral coordination to allow mainstreaming of NIASS into economic and other relevant sectors
	Mandatory indicator 3 # of direct project beneficiaries [Source: Annual review of project documentation by project manager, Frequency: annually]	**0**	**20,000**	**100,000**	
	Project-specific Indicator 4: Percentage of decision makers for IAS that are women	**39 percent**[6] 20%	**40 percent** 25%	**50 percent** 33%	Risk: Limited sea level rise, extreme weather events (notably cyclones) and extended dry spells, which may make conditions more suitable for colonization of certain IAS. Risk: IAS management may involve the application of pesticides that may have a negative effect on the environment or human health. Assumption: Current high political support for policy and institutional reform for IAS mainstreaming remain in place
Outcome 1 *Outcome 1: By 2024, the Republic of Mauritius has a gender sensitive policy, regulatory and institutional framework, and capacity to manage IAS effectively*	*Indicator 5:* Percentage of recommendations in the review of IAS-related acts[7], policy and cabinet decisions that are fully implemented. It was stated that the project can only make suggestions on amendments of the legal and policy to the Government who will be the ones that can gazette the amendments proposed. Hence the indicators should be number of amendments and new policies produced	**0 percent**[8] 0	**30 percent** 7	**80 percent** 9	Data collection method: Source: Annual review of recommendations and evidence of implementation by project management; Annual review (at PIR) of GEF IAS Tracking Tool and Capacity Scorecards

[5] see above

[6] This figure is only a proximate baseline based on a rapid assessment of participants at the IAS project inception workshop. A definite list of IAS critical decision makers will be drawn up during the project inception phase.

[7] a) Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act, 2015, b) Plant Protection Act (2006), c) Plant Protection Act (2006), d) Forest and Reserves Act (1983), e) Environment Protection Act (2002), f) Fisheries and Marine Resources Act (2007), g) Animal Diseases Act (1925)

[8] Review of IAS-related Acts will only be carried out during the first phase of project implementation in in early 2019

	Indicator 6: Average aggregated score of national capacities in key agencies (NPCS, Forestry Service, NPPO, Veterinary Service, Rodrigues – to include IAS Apex Coordinating Committee)	**41 percent**[9]	**63 percent**	**68 percent**[10]	Risk: Slow process of policy and institutional reform in the face of spikes in pressure from IAS (from liberalization, increased vessel arrivals, other economic development decisions disregarding best practice and technical advice) Assumption: No changes in land use that would cause challenges related o limited institutional conflicts over the management of land resources that could constrain the implementation of IAS activities
	Indicator 7: Change in IAS BD Score	**29.6 percent**[11]	**50 percent**	**70 percent**	
Outcome 2 **By 2024, the government effectively prevents and manages IAS threats based on risks** (focused on entire country).	*Indicator 8:* Average percentage of imported and transited consignments of plans and animals in airports and ports that undergo physical biodiversity checks by NPPO, Fisheries Division, Customs Office and Department of Veterinary Service, per year[12]	**90 percent**[13]	**92.5 percent**	**92.5 percent**	Data collection method: Desk review of NPO, DVS data[14]; Assumption: No or limited tropical cyclones which can disrupt activities and increase the risk of IAS introduction and spread Risk: the pressures from IAS grows too rapidly to be managed effectively by the biosecurity framework (spike in pressure could be from imports as a result of liberalization and other political decisions that might disregard best practice and advice)
	Indicator 9: Average Management Effectiveness Tracking score for Protected Areas	**46**[15]	**66**	**80**[16]	Data collection method: Annual updates of the Management

[9] Disaggregated baseline: Disaggregated baseline: Systemic (36%), Institutional (34%) and Individual (46%)
[10] Disaggregated target: 77%, Veterinary Services: 84%, Department of Forestry: 52%, NPCS: 60%
[11] 8 out of 27 points
[12] Not weighted; average % of a) airport inspection of fresh products by NPPO, b) seaport inspections of fresh products by NPPO, c) clearance of live animals by veterinary officer of DVS, d) inspections of fish consignments by Fisheries division
[13] a) 100% of consignments of live animals inspected and cleared by a veterinary officer of DVS; 100% of fresh products arriving at airports physically inspected at airports by NPPO; c) estimated 60% of fresh products arriving at seaport physically inspected at airports by NPPO; d) 100% of fish consignments inspected by Fisheries Division
[14] Veterinary Services: Annual Report (Live Animals) provided by DVS; NPPO: information provided on airport and seaport inspections (estimates), Fisheries division: information provided by division
[15] Disaggregated baseline: a total score of 46
[16] Disaggregated target: a) Mauritius 65 out of 72 points (90%), b) Rodriguez 50 out of 72 points (69%)

	Indicator 10: Reduction of IAS infestations in hectares on four key sites in Mauritius and two locations in Rodrigues[17]	52 ha	**200**	510 ha	Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), Section III of GEF Tracking Tools; Annual desk review of IAS implementation plans and achievements reported in project plans and PIR; Annual review of Mourouk PA gazettement process Assumption: IAS management measures have broad support and are implemented based on a high degree of collaboration between stakeholders Assumption: Continued political will and support to turn Mourouk Valley into a Protected Area; Risk: Change of government and/or policies may change priorities relegating IAS management and/or control and PA gazettement
	Indicator 11: New PA (200 ha) established in Mourouk Valley [Source: Nomination files for the gazettement of the Mourouk Protected Area agreed on by cabinet,	**0 ha of PA in Mourouk Valley**	**Nomination files for the PA submitted to Cabinet**	**PA gazetted (200 ha)**	
	Indicator 12: No of hectares in the Republic of Mauritius covered by a standardized protocol for IAS control	700 ha	1000-ha	1200 ha;	

[17] Mauritius: Gunners Quoin, Gabriel Island; Flat Island: St Brandon, Gobrani, Mourouk

Component/ Outcome 3 **By 2024, planning, management and decision-making by all relevant stakeholders are informed by knowledge management and learning**	*Indicator 13:* Number of times that there is clear evidence that a government policy or management decision has been informed by information captured by the national IAS Information System	**0**[18]	**10**	**50**	Data collection method: Annual review of government and project reports on IAS decisions by PMU; Annual analysis of Mourouk visitos records; Assumption: IAS info system receives the institutional support necessary to ensure its sustainable functionality Risk: political considerations override necessity for scientific consideration in decision-making such that up to date information is ignored in economic-decisions. Risk: Participation of the public in managing IAS is critical. However, there is a risk that the knowledge and awareness provided by the project failure to be translated to practices (KAP) for a majority of Mauritians within the duration of the project for a collective improvement in prevention, management and control of IAS;

[18] National IAS Information System is not yet operational.