



2025

Project Implementation Report (PIR)



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Amu Darya - MFA

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A. Basic Data

Project Information	
UNDP PIMS ID	6463
GEF ID	10352
Title	Conservation and Sustainable Management of Land Resources and High Nature Value Ecosystems in the Aral Sea Basin for Multiple Benefits
Country(ies)	Turkmenistan, Turkmenistan
UNDP Technical Team	Ecosystems and Biodiversity
Management Arrangements	CO Support to NIM
Project Implementing Partner	Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Protection
Joint Agencies	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
Project Type	Full Size
Implementation Status	4th PIR
GEF Fiscal Year	FY25
Trust Fund	GEF Trust Fund

Project Description
The objective of the project is to promote land degradation neutrality, restore and improve the use of land and water resources in Turkmenistan's Amudarya watershed to enhance the sustainability and resilience of livelihoods and globally significant ecosystems. This will be achieved through a multifocal strategy, that includes three interrelated outcomes that will support the government's efforts to prioritize policies and technical capacities to address desertification and biodiversity loss and deliver multiple Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs). The GEF investment will promote non-depleting farming and at the same time effective conservation of critical ecosystem services, through a no-net-loss approach to the land-based natural capital, within the context of supporting sustainable livelihoods for local resource users. The expected results are: Stabilized ecosystem services on 746,000 ha of production landscape. Non-depleted soil productivity and effective water use management on 100,000 ha of irrigated arable land. Crops resilience to salinization on 10,000 ha. Restored degraded arable and forest land on 60,000 ha. Strengthened effectiveness of the PAs and secured biodiversity status on 1,077,554 ha of PAs in the Amudarya landscape, including new areas of approximately 60,000 ha of endangered KBAs/IBAs proposed to be designated as Sanctuaries. Increased protection of KBAs/IBAs will translate into stable population of rare bird species, such as the Saker falcon (<i>Falco cherrug</i>), Egyptian vulture (<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>), Great grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>), Dalmatian Pelican (<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>), Great White Pelican (<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>), Great Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>), Grey heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>), Purple heron (<i>Ardea purpurea</i>). The project will span over 5 years mobilizing a total of \$4,583,196 GEF investment.

Project Contacts

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Project Implementing Partner	Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan
Other Partners	(not set or not applicable)

B. Key project dates

Project duration	60 months
PIF Approval Date	Dec 19, 2019
CEO Endorsement Date	Oct 6, 2021
Project Document Signature Date (project start date):	Mar 3, 2022
Date of Inception Workshop	Nov 10, 2022
First Disbursement Date	Jul 31, 2022
Expected Date of Mid-term Review	Apr 6, 2025
Actual Date of Mid-term Review	May 28, 2025
Expected Date of Terminal Evaluation	Dec 3, 2026
Original Planned Closing Date	Mar 3, 2027
Revised Planned Closing Date	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>

C. Overall ratings

Overall DO Rating	Moderately Satisfactory
Overall IP Rating	Moderately Satisfactory
Overall Risk Rating	low

D. Procurement

Question #1: CO Programme Officer -- Has the project experienced any procurement challenges during the reporting period, which may risk the completion of any critical activity within the approved project duration? <i>Procurement challenges can originate, for example, from delays in the planned initiation of key procurement processes, capacity gaps to develop technical requirements (TORs/specifications) or poor quality of these, procurement capacity gaps, none or very limited market response to tenders issued, evaluation delays, rejections/delays on reviews by procurement oversight committees, protests/complaints logged by bidders, incapacity of contractors to deliver on contractual terms, weak contract management, weak operational and/or maintenance plans developed, intellectual property right issues, etc.</i>
Yes
If yes, please (a) flag the challenge/s accordingly in the Quantum project risk register and (b) provide brief text on the nature of the challenge/s in the below text box.
Project procurement has experienced some delays due to a limited market response to advertised tenders. This affects both the procurement of services, whether from individual consultants or companies, and the procurement of goods needed for project implementation. The primary cause is the limited capacity and quality of the domestic market to supply qualified services and goods. For instance, delays often stem from improperly completed applications by bidders submitted through the Quantum ERC system, which leads to extensions and prolongs recruitment timelines and, in turn, impacts the project's activity schedule.
Question #2: BPPS Technical Advisor (RTA) -- What category of Procurement support does this project need? (choose one and provide justification)
B) Notification of procurement challenges to the VF Hub Procurement Advisor (potential-to-be-serious issues)
If A) is selected please briefly describe the plan to manage this significant procurement challenge. (This response will be pulled into the PIMS+ Risk Dashboard)
(not set or not applicable)
'Serious issues' include, for example, rejection of cases by CAP/RACP/ACP, vendor protests, procurement tenders recurrently resulting in no or low number of offers, recurrent contract variations / amendments, contracted values often exceeding budgeted allocations, OAI cases under investigation or completed, project extension granted/needed entailing significant procurement/contractual activities which need to be completed prior to project closure, serious procurement concerns reflected in NIM audits, etc.
'Potential to be serious' issues include, for example, lack of planning, few staff/personnel with procurement certification, long procurement processing timeframes, wrong procurement strategies adopted, limited knowledge/use of UNALL/Quantum, etc.
If B) is selected, please provide a brief description. If C) is selected, please add comments if needed. <i>'Serious issues' include, for example, rejection of cases by CAP/RACP/ACP, vendor protests, procurement tenders recurrently resulting in no or low number of offers, recurrent contract variations / amendments, contracted values often exceeding budgeted allocations, OAI cases under investigation</i>

or completed, project extension granted/needed entailing significant procurement/contractual activities which need to be completed prior to project closure, serious procurement concerns reflected in NIM audits, etc.

'Potential to be serious' issues include, for example, lack of planning, few staff/personnel with procurement certification, long procurement processing timeframes, wrong procurement strategies adopted, limited knowledge/use of UNALL/Quantum, etc.

If B) is selected, please provide a brief description. If C) is selected, please add comments if needed.

The project experienced delays due to limited domestic market response and incomplete/below-standard bid submissions in Quantum ERC, affecting both services and goods. Mitigation may include: refinement of packaging and technical specs (support from the regional and HQ procurement team could be necessary in terms of trainings or TOR templates for distinct NbS related specs given the complexity of field works); pre-tender market outreach and bidder briefings; standardized evaluation timelines; and timeline milestones aligned to the RP's capacity-building plan.

E. Nature Pledge

Contribution to the Nature Pledge

Is this project and/or its results contributing to UNDP's Nature Pledge*? If 'Yes', please respond to the questions in the below 3 sections. If 'No', you may leave this section blank and move on to other parts of the PIR.
Yes

1) Nature Pledge Alignment

Narrative and Behavioral Shift: Valuing Nature
Define and deploy new narratives to elevate nature to the heart of development to catalyze behavioral change in different economic sectors and societal segments.: Yes
Catalyze rapid global behavior shifts through increased accountability, strengthened deterrence, and empowered communities, especially indigenous people and local communities and women and women's groups.: No
Economic and Finance Shift: Accounting for Nature
Accelerate adoption of tailored economic, fiscal, and monetary policies, tools and plans.: No
Implement biodiversity finance solutions, in line with national and sub-national development and recovery programmes, including reduction of nature negative public finance.: No
Mobilize and upscale private investment in nature-positive actions, while reducing financing of nature-negative business processes.: No
Policy and Practice Shift: Harnessing the Power of Nature
Strengthen national capacity for GBF implementation and policy coherence.: No
Mainstream nature into development, production sectors and spatial policy, planning and practice.: Yes
Upscale gender responsive nature-based solutions targeting climate action, poverty reduction and inclusive growth, job creation, disaster and conflict prevention and pandemic prevention.: Yes
Strengthen coverage and management of terrestrial and marine protected and conserved areas including indigenous and community conserved areas.: Yes
Accelerate and upscale ecosystem restoration and sustainable land and water management.: Yes

2) Measuring Nature Pledge Results

a) Number of advocacy and communication campaigns launched to elevate the value of Nature across economic sectors and societal groups, and to catalyze awareness and

behavioral change.
Applicable
a) If applicable, provide number
1
b) Number of major non-environment sectors or constituencies where Nature has been mainstreamed in deliverables such as conference decisions, outcome documents or official reports.
Not Applicable
b) If applicable, provide number
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
c) Did the project support development or strengthening of governance systems at national, sub-national, or local levels to help operationalize and protect the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment?
Not Applicable
c) If applicable, please select Yes or No
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
d) Number of legal instruments (laws, policies, regulations, etc.) supported to mitigate and/or reduce nature degradation, or whose enforcement is strengthened at national, sub-national or local levels.
Applicable
d) If applicable, provide number
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
1
e) Did the project directly or indirectly support in the closing the biodiversity finance gaps?
Applicable
e) If applicable, please select Yes or No
Yes
f) Amount of biodiversity finance mobilized or catalyzed from public and private sources (in USD). (Here, biodiversity finance refers not only to Protected Area financing but also other Nature-positive finance flows, including those directed towards water security, food security, drought resilience, adaptation, agriculture etc.)
Applicable
f) If applicable, provide the amount in USD of biodiversity finance mobilized or catalyzed from public and private sources

1325571
g) Did the project directly or indirectly support the creation of a subsidy repurposing plan?
Not Applicable
g) If applicable, please select Yes or No
(not set or not applicable)
h) Amount of Nature harmful subsidies redirected, repurposed and/or eliminated as direct or indirect result of UNDP support (in USD).
Not Applicable
h) If applicable, provide amount in USD
(not set or not applicable)
i) Amount of asset size of major listed companies that are supported by the project to disclose information aligned with standards in Taskforce for Nature-Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) framework.
Not Applicable
i) if applicable, provide amount in USD
(not set or not applicable)
j) Amount of asset size of major listed companies that are supported by the project to disclose information aligned with standards in Taskforce for Nature-Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) framework.
Not Applicable
j) If applicable, provide amount in USD
(not set or not applicable)
k) Did the project support the mainstreaming of Nature into national development plans, spatial and sectoral plans and related gender strategies?
Applicable
k) If applicable, please select Yes or No
Yes
l) Did the project support women's leadership in natural resource management and close gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources?
Applicable
l) If applicable, please select Yes or No
Yes
m) Hectares of terrestrial ecosystems supported with improved management and/or

protection, including protected areas, OECM and other conserved areas*.
Applicable
m) If applicable, provide number of hectares
1077554
n) Hectares of landscapes (excluding protected areas) and production systems under sustainable management*.
Applicable
n) If applicable, provide the number of hectares
0
o) Hectares of marine ecosystems supported with improved management and/or protection, including OECMs, Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMEs), and other conserved areas*.
Not Applicable
o) If applicable, provide the number of hectares
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
p) Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management. *
Not Applicable
p) If applicable, provide the number of shared water systems under new or improved cooperative management
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
q) Number of landscapes supported on food and agricultural commodity system transformations. *
Not Applicable
q) If applicable, provide the number of landscapes supported on food and agricultural commodity system transformations
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
r) Number of direct beneficiaries benefitting from Nature Pledge activities. *
Applicable
r) If applicable, provide the number of direct beneficiaries benefitting from Nature Pledge activities
4383
s) Number of indirect beneficiaries benefitting from Nature Pledge activities (Number of people benefitting from legal and social empowerment and ecosystem services, including enhanced climate resilience, food, and water security, health benefits, increased life expectancy, and overall wellbeing).

Not Applicable
s) If applicable, provide the number of indirect beneficiaries benefitting from Nature Pledge activities
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
t) Hectares of Indigenous Peoples and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) with improved management effectiveness and/or governance systems (including equitable governance with government and other actors, legal transfer of management responsibilities, and legal land use rights).
Not Applicable
t) If applicable, provide the number of hectares of Indigenous Peoples and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) with improved management effectiveness and/or governance systems
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
u) Hectares of agricultural land, forest, natural grass, woodlands and wetlands under restoration. *
Applicable
u) If applicable, please provide the number of hectares of agricultural land, forest, natural grass, woodlands and wetlands under restoration. *
423
v) Tons of greenhouse gas emissions avoided and/or carbon sequestered in agriculture, forestry, and other land use*.
Applicable
v) If applicable, provide the number of tons of greenhouse gas emissions avoided and/or carbon sequestered in agriculture, forestry, and other land use.*
0
w) Number of people with increased access to employment opportunities and strengthened and/or new livelihoods.
Applicable
w) If applicable, provide the number of people with increased access to employment opportunities and strengthened and/or new livelihoods.
0
x) Did the project invest in grassroots innovators, Nature-positive microenterprises, and promote agency of Indigenous Peoples and local communities?
Not Applicable
x) If applicable, please select Yes or No
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>

3) Narrative Reporting on Nature Pledge Results

a) Please provide any additional information on the indicators noted above.

Guidance tip: As needed, please provision of further context and information on results.

(Response is not mandatory.)

d) Number of legal instruments (laws, policies, regulations, etc.) supported to mitigate and/or reduce nature degradation, or whose enforcement is strengthened at national, sub-national or local levels. Reported: 1. The project experts developed amendments to the Land Code and channeled them to the Parliament. These amendments introduce a definition of the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) concept, which will provide mechanisms for practical LDN implementation and enable the “balancing” of newly degraded areas by restoring lands that have already degraded.

f) If applicable, provide the amount in USD of biodiversity finance mobilized or catalyzed from public and private sources

Reported: USD 1,325,571 representing materialized co-financing related to recovery of high-value desert forests and creation of protective forest belts

k) Did the project support the mainstreaming of Nature into national development plans, spatial and sectoral plans and related gender strategies? Reported: yes. The project is working on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) integration into the new version of the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification in Turkmenistan (NAPCD). An expert team is engaged to make sure that the internationally recognized LDN approaches and methodology will be incorporated into the national policy framework, specifically the National Action Program to Combat Desertification, so that it includes the LDN dimension and relevant practical LDN-compatible solutions.

l) Did the project support women's leadership in natural resource management and close gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources? Reported: yes.

Since its inception, the project has directly engaged 352 women farmers across all four pilot etraps in Lebap and Dashoguz velayats. This engagement went beyond mere participation; it involved providing practical seminars and consultations on crucial aspects of natural resource management, including orchard cultivation, beekeeping, fishing, water management, and land management. By equipping these women with enhanced knowledge and skills in these areas, the project directly empowered them to make more informed decisions regarding their natural resources. This, in turn, has demonstrably led to an increase in their agricultural yield and income, thereby strengthening their economic control and influence over the resources they manage. This direct capacity building and the resulting economic empowerment are key indicators of progress in both women's leadership and the reduction of gender disparities in natural resource management.

The majority of rural women in the project impact regions do not have formal employment and are engaged in household duties and small-scale farming on their household plots. Firstly, they are directly interested in obtaining additional sources of income. Secondly, the women entrepreneurs themselves form a list of opportunities for this. They are interested in efficient water consumption at the household level and sustainable use of land and other related resources. Local women shape the project plans on alternative livelihoods support, identifying areas that are important and interesting to them, so that they can implement a sustainable resource use scheme on their small household plots, grow what they are capable of, and generate a sustainable income from it. The topics of professional trainings in the reporting year (wool processing and horticulture, beekeeping and sustainable use of collector waters in agriculture) were offered by the local female leaders based on their own needs assessment.

b) Additional Headline Indicators: If there are any other indicators you consider important for reporting the progress of the project on Nature Pledge, please list them in the section below along with the specific results achieved. *

Guidance Tip: Kindly consider providing "key indicators" and "progress against them" as have been used by the reporting project for donor mobilization, accountability and wider transparency needs. In case no other indicator is relevant, please note 'not applicable' below.

(Response is mandatory.)

n/a

c) Spotlight Results Example: Please provide a comprehensive results example that elaborates on project contributions to the UNDP Nature Pledge. Please feel free to add more than one example below. *

Guidance Tip: In providing results example, please consider (i) 'what' was achieved; how' it was achieved; (ii) 'who' it was achieved for and with; and (iii) 'where' it was achieved. Please write "not applicable" in case the question does not apply.

(Response is mandatory.)

Policy and Practice Shift

Legal & policy reform (Land Code amendments on LDN)

- What was achieved & how:

Draft amendments to the Land Code introducing a formal definition of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and a "counter-balancing" mechanism that offsets newly degraded areas through restoration of already degraded lands; developed by project experts and submitted to Parliament.

2) Nature mainstreamed into national planning (NAPCD)

- What was achieved & how:

LDN integration underway in the new National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCD), ensuring internationally recognized LDN approaches and methodologies—including practical, LDN-compatible solutions—are embedded in the national policy framework; delivered through an engaged expert team coordinating with line ministries

3) Women's leadership & reduced gender gaps in NRM

- What was achieved & how:

352 rural women farmers directly engaged across four pilot etraps through practical seminars and consultations (orchard cultivation, beekeeping, fishing, water and land management), and targeted trainings (wool processing, horticulture, beekeeping, sustainable use of collector waters). Women co-designed alternative livelihood plans, applying new skills to improve yields and incomes, strengthening their decision-making and economic control over natural resources.

- Who it was achieved for & with:

For rural women (largely not formally employed) and their households; achieved with local female leaders who identified training topics and shaped project support, alongside the project team and community groups.

- Where:

Four pilot etraps in Lebap and Dashoguz velayats, Turkmenistan.

d) Delivering Multidimensional Results: UNDP Nature Pledge emphasizes the foundational role of Nature in delivering other Sustainable Development Goals. Please provide a comprehensive results example that elaborates on project contributions in delivering multiple benefits for the People and Planet. Please feel free to add more than one example below. *

Guidance Tip: Besides supporting (directly/indirectly) the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan, please consider how the reporting project supports other Multilateral Environmental Conventions and Sustainable Development Goals. These could include synergies and further contributions to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Land Degradation Neutrality Targets, and broader national/ sub-national development mandates. This section also provides an opportunity to highlight any interlinkages and scaling-up between project results and broader activities at Global, Regional, and Country levels. Please write "not applicable" in case the question does not apply.

(Response is mandatory.)

- LDN is being embedded in the revised National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCD), with national LDN targets, a monitoring system (SDG 15.3.1), and a costed Action Plan.
- Draft Land Code amendments introduce an official LDN definition and a counterbalancing mechanism (prevent new degradation and restore previously degraded land).

The need to combat land degradation and desertification in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15.3 means achieving a land degradation-neutral world by restoring the degraded land and soil compared to the baseline level and preventing further land degradation. For Central Asian countries, a priority in achieving SDG 15.3 is establishing the national LDN targets and creating monitoring systems for LDN indicators.

Currently, a national expert group is revising and updating the National Action Program to Combat Desertification (NAPCD) in Turkmenistan. The new NAPCD concept includes components such as combating desertification at the landscape level; setting the LDN national targets; identifying measures to prevent and mitigate drought consequences, sand and dust storms; harmonization of legal and institutional frameworks related to desertification and land degradation issues; synergy among the three Rio Conventions.

The new NAPCD should involve specific measures aimed at improving the legislative framework, defining priority actions, and promoting sustainable land management practices among land users. The NAPCD is being designed as a program document for preventing degradation of natural pastures and irrigated lands, forest restoration under climate change conditions, and should be aligned with international programs aimed at combating desertification. It is expected that the new NAPCD will be adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers.

In 2024, a roadmap was developed for integrating the principles of land degradation neutrality (LDN) in the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCD). An expert team engaged by the UNDP-GEF project performed an in-depth analysis of national policies, laws, and regulations for their "fitness" and responsiveness to the land degradation neutrality (LDN) concept. The experts assessed the legal and institutional potential and capacity to achieve LDN at national, regional, and local levels. Measures and solutions for achieving LDN were proposed, and the availability and sufficiency of data for implementing proposed activities have been considered to pave the way for ensuring the LDN dimension in the NAPCD.

According to the NAPCD Concept adopted by the UNCCD National Focal Point office, this key framework document will have a separate section on Land Degradation Neutrality and include a set of recommendations aimed at ensuring LDN. Most importantly, the NAPCD should be accompanied by an Action Plan for the Implementation of the NAPCD that will include the LDN practical dimension.

The LDN concept is a new element in the national policies related to combating desertification in Turkmenistan; its inclusion is related to the need for comprehensive consideration of desertification,

land degradation, drought, dust, and salt transfer processes. Mainstreaming LDN in the NAPCD is necessary to comply with Turkmenistan's international obligations under the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and to meet the UNCCD requirements for national policy framework documents.

Conventions & policies the project supports through its LDN compliance approach:

- UNCCD/LDN (national LDN targets & MRV)
- CBD/GBF: T1 (spatial planning), T2 (restoration), T10 (sustainable agriculture), T14 (biodiversity mainstreaming), T18–19 (incentives & finance), T22 (gender)
- UNFCCC: NDC/NAP co-benefits on drought adaptation, water efficiency, soil carbon
- NBSAP: integration of biodiversity-friendly land-use planning and restoration
- SDGs: 15.3, 2.4, 6.5, 13.1, 15.1/15.2, 5.5/5.a, 17

The Project's supported Biodiversity and landscape connectivity (new sanctuary and buffer zones linked to livelihoods). Studies completed for three proposed sanctuaries (~60,000 ha) (Pitnyak, Zengibaba, Tallymerjen); 5-year management plan for Amudarya NR & Kelif SNR under preparation; biodiversity monitoring initiated.

Conventions & policies this supports:

- CBD/GBF: T1 (spatial planning), T2 (restoration), T3 (halt human-induced extinction—via habitat integrity), T10 (sustainable production landscapes), T14 (policy mainstreaming), T22 (gender)
- UNCCD/LDN: restoration counts toward LDN gains; reduced degradation drivers at edges
- UNFCCC: NDC/NAP via ecosystem-based adaptation; erosion control and micro-climate benefits
- NBSAP: PA network effectiveness & connectivity

SDGs: 1.2 (income), 2.4, 5.5/5.a, 8.3, 13.1, 15.1/15.2, 17

e) Leveraging Partnerships: Please provide relevant information on the key partner(s) involved in the project and supporting the delivery of UNDP Nature Pledge. *

Guidance Tip: UNDP Nature Pledge calls for an “All of Government” and “All of Society” approach. Therefore, partnerships are central to its successful delivery. This section provides an opportunity for you to highlight the creation, strengthening, and leverage of a broader partnership base. Please write “not applicable” in case the question does not apply.

(Response is mandatory.)

The key national and sub-national stakeholders include the Ministry of Environment Protection and the Ministry of Agriculture, the State Committee on Water Resources (SCWR) including the province level sub-divisions (Production Departments) of “Dashoguzsuvkhodzhalik” and “Lebapsuvkhodzhalik,” the State Statistical Committee; Inter-Sectorial Commission on Environmental Protection; Hydrometeorology Service of the MoEP, Administrations of regions (governors of Lebap and Dashoguz provinces and their technical teams) and district level authorities (khyakimliks). For the regional water management related aspects, the project works with the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) and representatives of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) and Dashoguz branch of the Executive Committee of IFAS, with Central Amudarya Department of the Association Basin Water Management (BWO).

The project has initiated targeted research, land, water resources assessments, soil sampling and biodiversity surveys, involving specialists from a wide array of research and academic institutes from the Academy of Science, the National Institute of Deserts, Flora and Fauna, the Turkmen Agricultural

Institute in Dashoguz, the Turkmen State Pedagogical Institute in Turkmenabat, the Engineering and Technological University of Turkmenistan, the Turkmen Agricultural University, the Turkmen State Water Management research Production and Design Institute “Turkmensuvylymtaslama”. At local level the project works with private livestock farmers, water users other farmers associations and daikhan farms. The NGOs are very actively involved in training and awareness activities. The project invests a great deal of time and effort into deploying participatory approaches engaging local authorities at district (etrap) and province (velayat) levels, local communities, farmers, water users, daikhan associations. The project engages non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in training and awareness activities, including the NGO “Eco Durmush”, and the NGO “Tebigy Kuwwat” a sub-division of the Nature Protection Society of Turkmenistan.

The project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan includes information on roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the project implementation.

The following mechanisms are used by the project to support mutually beneficial partnerships with stakeholders at the current stage of its implementation:

1. The project joins efforts with related projects (FAO, ICWC SIC, IFAS, etc.) to achieve a synergistic effect.
2. The project attracts additional funding and resources to carry out the planned activities to minimize financial risks for the project workplan implementation.
3. The project seeks support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and local hakimliks, which facilitate more active participation of other beneficiaries (the State Committee for Water Management, the Ministry of Agriculture).
4. The project has analyzed the synergy of its components with the national development programs such as the National Forestry Program 2021-2025, the National Aral Program 2021-2025, the Regional Development Program 2019-2024, and the Socio-Economic Development Program until 2030. During meetings with beneficiaries, this analysis was presented, and an understanding was reached that joint work will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the national programs, for which almost all stakeholders of the project are responsible.
5. Another mechanism is the involvement of NGOs in the implementation of the project's activities and the provision of a platform by the project to expand the NGOs capacities.
6. Another example is cooperation with private sector organizations that have qualified expertise and share their experience with the project in various areas. Partners provide the project with their agronomists, technicians, estimators, and resources (office for meetings, additional transport for field trips, assistance in organizing working meetings with local authorities at the level of their etrap).

Please upload evidence to support responses in this section.

Co Financing Table Aral project__May 2025.xlsx

F. Development Objective Progress

It is mandatory for all reported progress to be substantiated by evidence. Please upload evidence files for each objective/outcome via the DO PROGRESS section in the online PIR platform. If there is no evidence to upload, the Project Manager is required to provide an explanation.

Description					
Objective Project Objective: To promote land degradation neutrality, restore and improve the use of land and water resources in Turkmenistan's Amu Darya watershed to enhance the sustainability and resilience of livelihoods and globally significant ecosystems.					
Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target level	End of project target level	Level at Jun 30, 2024	Cumulative progress since project start as of Jun 30, 2025
Indicator 1 (GEF 7 Core Indicator 1) Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (ha) (sum of Indicator 19 and Indicator 20 below)	0 ha	Flora and fauna Inventories and habitat mapping necessary for the preparatory work completed	1,137,554 ha	This indicator represents the total for Indicator 19 “terrestrial PAs created” and Indicator 20 “PAs with improved management effectiveness”. The quantitative target for newly created terrestrial PAs for conservation and sustainable use (Indicator 19 below, 60,000 ha) remains at the baseline level. The project is on track to attain the midterm target for this indicator and will have flora and fauna inventories and habitat mapping completed during the 2024 field season, i.e. before the project MTR. For the existing PAs with improved management effectiveness (Indicator 20), the expected scope for project intervention was	Indicator Definition: This indicator represents the total for Indicator 19 “terrestrial PAs created” and Indicator 20 “PAs with improved management effectiveness”. Progress: The quantitative target for newly created terrestrial PAs for conservation and sustainable use (Indicator 19 below, 60,000 ha) remains at the baseline level. The project reports of completed flora and fauna inventories and habitat mapping completed during the 2024-spring 2025 field season. These assessments feed the revised justification packages for the establishment of the new PA.

				confirmed as follows: Sum of ha coverage of existing PAs under the project scope: Kaplankyr State Nature Reserve 926,203 ha (includes Sarygamish Sanctuary 541,466 ha) and Shasenem Sanctuary (109,002 ha); Amudarya State Nature Reserve 151,351 ha which includes Amudarya Reserve territory (48,351 ha) and its Kelif Sanctuary of 103,000 ha). Total ha coverage of existing PAs targeted by the project for improved management effectiveness: 1,077,554 ha The mid-term METT assessment for the existing PAs is underway and will be completed before the project MTR in October 2024, providing the reporting data for Indicator 20. The project reporting on Indicator 21 below provides details on project increment for the improved PA management effectiveness.	For the existing PAs with improved management effectiveness (Indicator 20), scope for project intervention remains unchanged from the project approval: Sum of ha coverage of existing PAs under the project scope: Gaplangyr State Nature Reserve 926,203 ha (includes Sarygamish Sanctuary 541,466 ha) and Shasenem Sanctuary (109,002 ha); Amudarya State Nature Reserve 151,351 ha which includes Amudarya Reserve territory (48,351 ha) and its Kelif Sanctuary of 103,000 ha). Total ha coverage of existing PAs targeted by the project for improved management effectiveness: 1,077,554 ha The METT assessment for the existing PAs feeds the reporting data for Indicator 20. The mid-term METT assessment of the Gaplangyr and Amudarya State Nature reserves shows the following progress: 4 points in METT scores for Gaplangyr reserve above the baseline and 3 points for Amudarya reserve Gaplangyr State Nature Reserve METT Score: 58 Amudarya State Nature Reserve METT Score: 59
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					For evidence and progress assessment please refer to Indicators 19 and 20 below
Indicator 2 (GEF 7 Core Indicator 4) Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares, excluding PAs) (sum of Indicators 11; Indicator 12 and 50% of Indicator 26 below)	0	Baseline methodologies agreed. Expert mapping necessary for the preparatory work completed	746,303 ha	This indicator represents the total for Indicator 11 - 500,000 ha of pastureland (Output 1.4); Indicator 12 - 100,000 ha of irrigated land (Output 1.3); 50% of Indicator 26 - 146,303 ha (Output 2.3). The project reports the achievement of the mid-term target having determined the scope and content of the planned intervention and finalizing the preparatory work for the implementation of demonstration sub-project in sustainable pasture management and efficient water management for irrigated arable lands. The project has a plan of interventions targeting sustainable agricultural practices in the buffer zones of the two pilot reserves. The project specialists identified the existing regulatory gaps for the establishment and actual functioning of PA buffer zones and corridors. A practical mechanism for setting limitations on agricultural use of lands to support biodiversity will be developed before the project MTR. For sustainable pasture management (Indicator 11), a pilot site was preliminarily identified to demonstrate sustainable pasture management. In the selected area, pasture	Indicator Definition: This indicator represents the total for Indicator 11 - 500,000 ha of pastureland (Output 1.4); Indicator 12 - 100,000 ha of irrigated land (Output 1.3); 50% of Indicator 26 - 146,303 ha (Output 2.3). Status: The project achieved and surpassed its mid-term targets having agreed baseline methodologies and determined the scope and content of the planned intervention and finalizing the preparatory work for the implementation of demonstration sub-project in sustainable pasture management and efficient water management for irrigated arable lands, and initiating the fieldwork on both pasture and abandoned agricultural land restoration. The project has a plan of interventions targeting sustainable agricultural practices in the buffer zones of the two pilot reserves. The project specialists identified the existing regulatory gaps for the establishment and actual functioning of PA buffer zones and corridors and are working on regulatory improvements together with MOEP legal department. The project experts are

			lands are distributed among private pasture users of the Gabaklı gengeshlik of the Dyanev etrap, Lebap velayat. The total area of pasture lands in Deynau etrap is about 1,478,505 hectares of which 86,812 ha is pastureland of Gabakli gengeshlik. For irrigated arable land under efficient water management (Indicator 12), 4,700 ha were mapped for direct impact, including replication of initial demos (38ha); the methodology and approaches preliminary defined; the scope for agrotechnical reclamation, including innovative phyto-melioration methods and irrigation works were preliminarily determined. On-the-ground works on demo fields in progress. For Indicator 26, the project attempts to remove barriers towards effective functioning of nature reserves' buffer zones, though promotion of legally grounded and binding agreements on sustainable agricultural practices. For this to happen, the regulatory amendments should be in place: the regimented use of agricultural lands should be based on the respective national regulations; the limitations in the land use should be clearly defined in accordance with those regulations. Buffer zones should be defined according to a clear methodology. There should be references to them in other laws and regulations, and consequently in the lease agreements. This also applies to the creation of ecological corridors. The project's	developing a practical mechanism for setting limitations on agricultural use of lands to support biodiversity in active consultation with the relevant stakeholders. For sustainable pasture management (Indicator 11), sustainable pasture management planning is underway for 1,001,185 ha of pastures managed by Dovardarchylyck state agricultural enterprise in Dashoguz and 165,183 ha managed by Serdar state agricultural enterprise in Lebap. For irrigated arable land under efficient water management (Indicator 12), The project has established a water management baseline and identified gaps related to Integrated Water Management. It is currently focused on developing irrigation regimes for agricultural crops and implementing hydro-module zoning to create tailored irrigation regimes for specific zones, supporting stable agricultural productivity while conserving water and balancing environmental and agricultural needs. These activities, methodologically and financially supported by the Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (SIC ICWC) in Uzbekistan, are being adapted for the Turkmenbashi etrap in Turkmenistan's Dashoguz region, covering 77,032
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			International Chief Technical Advisor (ICTA) has developed a concept paper clarifying the existing regulatory gaps for the establishment and actual functioning of buffer zones and corridors. A practical mechanism for setting limitations on agricultural use of lands to support biodiversity will be developed before the project MTR. This is extremely relevant for the planned project increment on the restoration of tugai forests. First, the project initial plans changed so that the target areas for restoration will be set within the buffer zone of the Amudarya reserve. Even with this shift, there are no regulations and enforcement mechanisms to support the long-term restrictions ensuring non-depletory use of tugai ecosystems. The project is in active consultation with hakimlyaks (local authorities) and local communities aiming to increase the level of understanding of the value of tugai forests. Corridors should be organized with the direct participation of hakimlyaks. Therefore, awareness work is required as a first step. As initially planned, the project targets the community based sustainable pasture management agreement and biodiversity conservation at Tallymerjen IBA/KBA (167,701ha). According to the proposed zonation and management plan, non-depletory regimented grazing will be ensured for the “core” territory of the refuge (once established). This territory will be monitored	hectares. The work involves building a local database of soil, meteorological, and hydrological data; creating digital soil and salinity maps; conducting hydro-module zoning; updating water consumption norms for local crops; and scientifically developing irrigation norms and regimes for crops. The project aims to devise comprehensive water use plans at both intra-farm and inter-farm levels and develop knowledge management tools for hydro-module zoning and irrigation regime modeling for adoption by sectoral agencies. For Indicator 26, the project attempts to remove barriers towards effective functioning of nature reserves' buffer zones, though promotion of legally grounded and binding agreements on sustainable agricultural practices. For this to happen, the regulatory amendments should be in place: the regimented use of agricultural lands should be based on the respective national regulations; the limitations in the land use should be clearly defined in accordance with those regulations. Buffer zones should be defined according to a clear methodology. There should be references to them in other laws and regulations, and consequently in the lease agreements. This also applies to the creation of ecological corridors. A practical mechanism for setting limitations on agricultural use of lands to support biodiversity will be developed in 2025.
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			by the Koitendag Nature Reserve's staff with capacities enforced following the acquisition of the UNESCO WH status. No regulation of grazing is mentioned for the buffer zone. The project experts will review the regulations of the wildlife sanctuary and the current legislation to: a) Assess the grazing load and the carrying capacity of the pastures; b) Based on the condition of the pastures and carrying capacity, justify restrictions on pasture use in the sanctuary. These restrictions should vary depending on the season, proximity to watering holes and migration corridors of wild ungulates, nesting sites and congregation areas of migratory birds. Additionally, they should consider the degree of degradation and specific restoration needs of individual pastures, etc. For the IBA territory that will not have the legal status of a sanctuary, the project will use GEF resources to focus on the consultations with the local resource users and secure agreements on sustainable agricultural practices in the pasture areas surrounding and/or overlapping this IBA. The project will engage local khakimliks and communities in awareness activities, and will make the micro-grants programme available to demonstrate sustainable practices. Please also see details provided for Indicators 11,12 and 26 below.	For progress assessment and reference please refer to Indicators 11,12 and 26 below.
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Indicator 3 (GEF 7 Core Indicator 11) Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment (#):	N/A (zero beneficiaries)	Midterm target Total: Total: 4,150 (1,245 women and 2,905 men)	EoP target Total: 10,150 (3,045 women and 7,105 men)	The project is reporting a conservative assessment of the number of direct beneficiaries since project start, as follows 1,655 individuals (402 women and 1253 men), including:	The project is reporting a conservative assessment of the number of direct beneficiaries: 4,383 individuals representing 43% of the EoP target (1480 women (34%) and 2903 men), including:
# of public sector employees with improved capacity for LDN, SLM, integrated land use		Public sector employee: 50 public sector staff at national and local level of which at least 30% women (15 women and 35 men)	Public sector employee: 100 public sector staff at national and local level of which at least 30% women (30 women; 70 men)	Public sector employee for reporting period: 769 individuals of which 166 women and 603 men	Public sector employee: 1072 public sector staff at national and local level of 18% women (196 women; 876 men)
# of local resource users and agricultural producers with improved awareness and technical knowledge on LDN, SLM and sustainable water use, alternative livelihoods, benefiting from the project activities		Local resource users and agricultural producers: Total 4,000 (1,200 women and 2,800 men)	Local resource users and agricultural producers: Total 9,750 (2,925 women; 6,825 men)	Local resource users and agricultural producers 265 individuals of which 70 women and 195 men	A total 926 Local resource users and agricultural producers, of which 354 women(38%) and 572 men.
# of Grants Micro-scheme beneficiaries		Grants Micro-scheme beneficiaries:	Grants Micro-scheme beneficiaries	PA staff/environment officials: 35 PA staff with enhanced capacity, of which 6 women and 29 men.	123 PA staff with enhanced capacity, of which 20 women and 103 men.
# of PAs staff/environment officials with enhanced individual capacity in biodiversity conservation and sustainable management, legal enforcement and patrolling.		N/A (too early for accrued benefits)	100 (30 women; 70 men)	The above categories do not include the number of radio listeners.	The above categories do not include the number of radio listeners.
		PA staff/environment	PA staff/environment officials 200 PA staff with enhanced capacity (60 women and 140	The project is below the mid-term target for direct beneficiaries due to limited progress with on-the-ground activities targeting local resource users and agricultural producers.	As reported earlier, the project has created a platform (supporting mechanism) for local NGOs to implement environmental activities aimed at enhancing capacity and improving practical skills to disseminate project experience in the project regions.
					The project progress towards the EoP target level is slower than planned, due to limited progress with on-the-ground activities targeting local resource users and agricultural producers.

		officials: 100 PA staff with enhanced capacity (30 women and 70 men)	men)	The project has created a platform (supporting mechanism) for local NGOs to implement environmental activities aimed at enhancing capacity and improving practical skills to disseminate project experience in the project regions. Within the framework of this platform, partner NGOs implemented 6 related projects through donor funds (grant programs). The project is currently revising its methodology for ongoing account of project beneficiaries related benefits and will present a more accurate account to the mid-term review (MTR). For relevant evidence, please refer to the following attached documents: - Project Log of Direct Beneficiaries (Indicator3_Ev1_Beneficiaries Table June 2024)	For relevant evidence, please refer to the following attached documents: - Project Log of Direct Beneficiaries (Indicator3_Ev1_LOP_Beneficiaries Table)
The progress of the objective/outcome can be described as:	On track				
Evidence uploaded:	YES				
Outcome 1					
Component 1:					

Promoting Land Degradation Neutrality

Outcome 1: Land degradation neutrality in Aral basin promoted, as evidenced through:

- LDN-compatible land use in 760,000 ha of production landscape.
- crop resilience to salinization improved in 10,000 ha
- 50,000 ha of degraded pasture and forest land restored.
- improved livelihoods of 9700 farmers (30% women) directly, with immediate replication potential for 46,800 people.

Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target level	End of project target level	Level at Jun 30, 2024	Cumulative progress since project start as of Jun 30, 2025
Indicator 4: Existence of baseline values for LDN indicators at national and region/province scale	Baseline assessment for LDN indicators at national level	LDN working groups set-up (30% women) and LDN baseline collection methodologies elaborated	Baseline assessment for LDN indicators at province level in Dashoguz and Lebap provinces	The project is on track towards achieving the midterm target for this indicator. LDN working group was established in 2023. An institutional setting for the LDN Working Group was agreed through a series of stakeholder consultations: the WG uses the technical capacities of the Scientific and Public Council on Desertification and is institutionally supported by "Tebigi Kuvvat" NGO. A Scope of Work (SoW) for the national-level LDN working group was developed and discussed with relevant stakeholders. Gender requirements included as part of the draft SoW. Two workshops were conducted in July and December 2023 to facilitate knowledge sharing among experts, NGOs, and government representatives on advancing	Progress: Mid-term target achieved and exceeded, 60% of the EoP target achieved with the LDN Working Group established, capacitated and fully functional, and the LDN assessments in place to substantiate the regional LDN baseline collection and target setting. As reported previously, the national-level LDN working group was formally established in 2023. In the reporting period, the Scope of Work (SoW) was revised and endorsed by key stakeholders, and the Workplan for 2025 was developed. The LDN Working Group currently includes 4 women (the total number of members is 17), aligning with the gender target of at least 30% female representation. To further strengthen intersectoral

			LDN implementation in Turkmenistan through policy, legislation, and on-ground interventions. The workshops discussed LDN Working Group activities and cooperation with parallel initiatives; progress on LDN work in Turkmenistan, including proposed national LDN targets and measures like reforestation, minimizing the Aral Sea crisis impact, and improving environmental monitoring; LDN integration into national policy framework and legislation. The project is engaging the best available and most relevant international LDN expertise to enhance regional and local capacities in LDN planning, target setting, and reporting. An international expert team supports the work of the LDN Working Group. LDN baseline collection methodologies at the national level were elaborated as reported last year. For the regional LDN baseline collection and target setting, the methodology is being developed by project international consultants in consultation with the LDN WG members and will be presented for appraisal in October 2024. For relevant evidence, please refer to the following attached documents: - Proceedings of LDN workshop in July 2023 (Indicator4_Ev1_Minutes_LDNIWorkshop_26.07.23) - Proceedings of LDN workshop in	coordination and technical capacity, a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture was added to the Working Group in 2024. This contributes to cross-sectoral integration of land degradation neutrality (LDN) agenda, enhances inter-agency cooperation, and supports more effective implementation of planned activities. On November 27, 2024, the LDN Working Group convened to review ongoing and planned activities, align efforts with complementary initiatives, and assess progress on defining national LDN targets. Discussions also focused on priority measures, including reforestation, mitigation of the Aral Sea crisis impacts, and improvements in environmental monitoring. The meeting also addressed the integration of LDN into the national policy and legal framework. For the reporting period, baseline values for LDN indicators have been established at both national and regional (Lebap and Dashoguz velayats) levels. As part of the project activities, a national team of consultants was mobilized to assess and validate the baseline values for SDG indicator 15.3.1 and its three sub-indicators: land cover, land productivity, and soil organic carbon. Using the Trends.Earth GIS platform, the expert team analyzed multi-temporal satellite imagery and global datasets to calculate the baseline values for the
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				December 2023 (Ind4_Ev2_Ind5_Ev1_Minutes_LDN Round-Table_15.12.23)	period 2000–2015 and to assess land degradation trends up to the most recent available data. The analysis was carried out specifically for Lebap and Dashoguz velayats, and provides spatially explicit data, including maps and statistics for each sub-indicator. The results of this work are documented in a technical report, which includes: • The methodology applied for computing SDG 15.3.1 and LDN baselines; • Regional-level maps showing the distribution of degraded and non-degraded lands; • Quantified baseline values for each sub-indicator at velayat level; • An aggregated LDN baseline that enables future tracking of degradation neutrality targets. This work provides a scientifically robust baseline for LDN monitoring in the project regions and contributes to the national dataset required for UNCCD reporting and national policy alignment with SDG target 15.3. For evidence, please refer to Ind4_Ev1_Minutes_LDN WG Meeting_(Act 1.1)_27.11.24_Final Ind4_Ev2_ToR_LDN_working
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					group_Final Ind17_Ev2_LDN assessment report EoD
Indicator 5: Prioritized policies and regulations to facilitate LDN implementation	Incomplete framework to enable LDN implementation	Policy and regulatory amendments developed and submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Protection for approval	- National Action Plan to Combat Desertification showcasing Dashoguz and Lebap LDN regional target setting, approved and under implementation. -Bylaws (gender sensitive) developed under the Law on Pastures to include regulations for sustainable pasture use and monitoring submitted for approval. - Amendments to the Land Code introducing LDN concept and regulations for the counterbalancing mechanism submitted for approval.	The project is solidly on track to meet the mid-term target for Indicator 5 through the development of policy and regulatory amendments enabling LDN integration in the country. Based on the gap analysis and stakeholder consultations, a road-map to develop regulations and by-laws on pasture management was developed to be implemented in 2024. A series of consultations with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment Protection were held to identify policy gaps and possible amendments to the regulatory framework enabling LDN implementation in the country. As a result of expert consultations facilitated by the project, the following policies and regulations were prioritized to facilitate LDN implementation: Land Code; Guidelines for irrigated lands inventory; a manual for compiling large-scale soil maps and developing agro-meliorative measures of agricultural territories of the country; regulations for use and lease of pastures. The project experts developed amendments to the Land Code and channeled them to the Parliament. These amendments introduce a definition of the LDN concept, which will provide mechanisms for practical LDN	Progress: 80% of the mid-term target and 40% of the EoP level achieved as the project has engaged relevant national and international expertise to developed policy and regulatory amendments identified in consultations with the respective government authorities. As part of the national effort to strengthen the enabling environment for LDN, a comprehensive review of national policies, laws, and regulations related to land use and degradation was conducted. Key recommendations were developed to integrate LDN principles into updated legal instruments, including the draft Land Code, Law on Irrigated Lands, and sub-laws under the Pasture Law. These proposals aim to legally define “land degradation,” establish sustainable land use models, and enable effective implementation of LDN-compatible practices. Based on the gap analysis and stakeholder consultations, a comprehensive ToR to develop regulations and by-laws on pasture management was developed to be implemented in 2025.

				implementation and enable the “balancing” of newly degraded areas by restoring lands that have already degraded. The project experts are preparing and justifying LDN-based measures and solutions to address various challenges, including preventing soil salinization and degradation of arid pastureland, mitigating and coping with sand and dust storms, thus combating desertification and ensuring land degradation neutrality. These measures will be included in the updated National Action Programme to Combat Desertification in Turkmenistan (NAPCD). For evidentiary documents, please refer to the following attached documents: - Proceedings of LDN workshop in December 2023 (Ind4_Ev2_Ind5_Ev1_Minutes_LD N Round-Table_15.12.23) - Roadmap for pasture management regulations (Ind5_Ev2_Roadmap legal amendments 2024)	The project is working on LDN integration into the new version of the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification in Turkmenistan (NAPCD). An international expert is engaged to make sure that the internationally recognized LDN approaches and methodology will be incorporated into the national policy framework, specifically the National Action Program to Combat Desertification, so that it includes the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) dimension and relevant practical LDN-compatible solutions. For evidence, please refer to: Ind5_Ev1_TOR EoD NAPCD LDN Consultant 2025 Ind5_Ev2_ToR Legal Expert_EoD_eng
Indicator 6: Status of integrated land use planning in Aral Sea Basin landscape	No integrated land use planning	Integrated land use planning working group under the	4 Integrated land use plans completed, adopted and under	The project is on the way to achieving the mid-term target for Indicator 6 in the next reporting period, however, the actual work on integrated land use planned is yet to	Progress:80% of the mid-term target and 40% of the EoP target achieved as reported below: while the LDN assessments and mapping have been

		chairmanship of the State Land Management Service under the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Protection (MAEP) set up Criteria and methodologies defined for : mapping of degraded lands in targeted provinces, identification of priority land and forest restoration zones and identification of buffer areas around PAs, KBAs/IBAs	implementation for 4 targeted districts in Dashoguz and Lebap provinces	commence. Target areas for participatory integrated land-use planning in target districts of Dashoguz and Lebap provinces (Turkmenbashi and Ruhubelent; Danev and Darganata) are confirmed. Land use planning baseline has been defined. The institutional setting for integrated land-use planning is in place, based on the Local Steering Committees in the pilot regions. ToRs for two committees include stakeholder consultations, workshops and round tables contributing to the achievement of LDN targets and facilitating ILUP-related consultations. The LSCs are composed of the national stakeholders with a mandate in land governance, representatives of daikhan associations and farmers associations and local NGOs. The LSCs discussed the ILUP coverage and content, the current landuse planning framework as well as the tentative roadmap for ILUP development at their regular meetings in March and April 2024. The tender for procuring field equipment to carry out SLM demos and strengthen the technical capacity of local hakimliks has been launched. This equipment will be used for land management activities to showcase technologies and solutions, contributing to the development of ILUPs. For evidentiary documents, please refer to	completed, the on-the-ground investments and integrated territorial planning activities are still pending due to limited national experience with ILUP and the absence of enabling regulatory frameworks. Technical support and modelling tools are under preparation to address these gaps, but ILUP operationalization requires further institutional engagement and capacity building. The project supported the development of a landscape-based approach to integrated land use planning in the project regions. Mapping of land degradation hotspots in Dashoguz and Lebap velayats was completed, along with classification of land use types and assessment of sustainable land management (SLM) potential. A registry of sustainable land use models and decision-making tools based on LDN targets is being developed as part of the updated National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCD). While on-the-ground implementation of integrated land use planning (ILUP) activities is still pending, the project has made substantial progress in laying the technical, institutional, and analytical groundwork for ILUP in Turkmenistan, where no such planning system formally exists. Key progress to date includes: A comprehensive baseline analysis of
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				the following attached documents: - LSC meeting minutes, Dashoguz March 2024 - LSC meeting minutes, Lebap April 2024	land use systems was completed in the project regions, including selection of focus areas and mapping of land degradation hotspots in Dashoguz and Lebap velayats. A landscape-based approach to land use planning was defined, with classification of land types and assessment of sustainable land management (SLM) potential conducted. Evidence: Road map with LDN List of activities Ind17_Ev1_List of LDN-based measures and practices The project commissioned a feasibility study on the existing land use planning system in Turkmenistan, with findings used to identify feasible entry points for integrating ILUP principles under current legal and institutional frameworks Evidence: Ind6_Ev1_Land management framework analysis). In November 2024, the project facilitated consultations with the Ministry of Agriculture, resulting in a draft Concept for Sustainable Land Resource Management. This concept proposes planning frameworks aligned with cadastral land categories, including: - o Pasture use plans - o Land use plans for irrigated lands - o Plan for afforestation, including
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				proposals for sustainable forest use - o Water use plans for irrigated areas - o Management plans for protected areas and their buffer zones Additionally, the project initiated the development of a registry of sustainable land use models, to be integrated into the updated National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCD). Although implementation of ILUPs at field level has not yet started, preparatory work is advanced: • Pilot sites and stakeholder groups (daikhan associations, private farmers, pasture user groups, forestry committees, etc.) were identified. • Initial institutional engagement was completed, and frameworks for local planning are under technical development. • An international ILUP consultant has been mobilized to validate the overall strategy and adjust implementation modalities where needed. For more detail on project project strategy regarding ILUP please see Ind6_Ev2_Rationale and Concept Note for ILUP devt.doc
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Indicator 7: # of landscapes or jurisdictions with LDN regional voluntary targets, action plans and monitoring systems in place	0	Criteria and methodologies established for regional LDN target setting in the targeted provinces	2 (LDN regional targets set in Lebap and Dashoguz provinces)	The project is on track with the confirmation of methodology for regional LDN target setting and should be in a position to report the achievement of the midterm target for Indicator 7 by MTR. In 2023, the LDN Working Group proposed three national LDN targets to be embedded in the National Action Program to Combat Desertification (NAPCD). Building on this work, the project will offer expert recommendations on LDN target setting for the Turkmen part of the Aral Sea basin (Dashoguz and Lebap velayats), incorporating relevant international experience and knowledge. The project collaborated with FAO and provided incremental funding to enhance technical capacity for LDN metrics in the Dashoguz and Lebap project regions. As part of this effort, two sets of GNSS equipment () were procured for the Land Service of the Ministry of Agriculture of Turkmenistan. Additionally, the project supported participation of land service specialists from Dashoguz and Lebap regions in a two-week practical training on the use of this equipment in September 2023. For evidence supporting the reported	Progress: The mid-term level and 50% of the EoP target achieved with criteria and methodologies established for regional LDN target setting in the targeted provinces, aligned with the UNCCD recommended instruments and practice. LDN voluntary targets and monitoring baselines have been established for four project regions – Darganata and Danev etrab in Lebap and Ruhubelent and S.Turkmenbashi in Dashoguz velayats – using Trends.Earth and other national data sources, as well as on-the-ground studies, such as soil analyses and botanical assessments carried out by the project and partners. These targets are accompanied by detailed hotspot maps, sub-indicator assessments (land productivity, land cover, SOC), and recommendations for site-specific interventions. The regional outputs are integrated into the ongoing update of the NAPCD and serve as a model for further replication across other regions. In 2024, the project involved an international expert team who commissioned an analysis of the main causes and driving forces of desertification, land degradation, and biodiversity loss in the region, with a focus on climate change impacts. Key drivers identified included irrigation, livestock
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				progress , please refer to the following attached documents: - Ind7_Ev2_GNSS training report	farming, and the loss of woody and shrub vegetation. These factors were assessed for their frequency and potential danger across genetically homogeneous territories, highlighting the uneven distribution of these issues due to natural conditions and human-induced impacts. For the baseline assessment, the experts analyzed archival and cartographic materials, noting that 17.7% of Turkmenistan's land area was degraded as of 2022 and 2023. The experts proposed a mechanism for establishing a baseline for evaluating national LDN indicators, emphasizing the use of dynamic and target indicators tailored to specific land use types and natural-economic characteristics. Recommendations included comparing indicator assessments with undisturbed analogues, using data from protected areas for baseline, and employing dynamic indicators based on historical data. The group expert assignment was focused on applying the LDN assessment methodology and the Trends.Earth GIS module for LDN assessments at the level of national provinces, i.e. the Lebap and Dashoguz velayats of Turkmenistan. The experts produced extensive cartographic material and analysis which demonstrates the possibilities of using the LDN methodology to assess LDN in Turkmenistan, with an emphasis on the areas of the Lebap and Dashoguz
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					velayats. The experts identified "hot spots" in the region, which require immediate action to restore ecosystems and implement sustainable practices. These hot spots are primarily influenced by anthropogenic factors such as high pasture load, soil erosion, salinization, and technogenic impacts. Further detailed studies were recommended to refine assessments made through the Trends.Earth software module. The experts proposed alternative indicators for assessing LDN, including soil salinization, deflation, aridity, and dust storms, which are particularly relevant for Turkmenistan. These indicators can replace less applicable for the local context global indicators, allowing for more accurate national evaluations and tailored strategies to address land degradation in the region. Finally, LDN hotspots, including degraded and abandoned arable lands, severely degraded pastureland and threatened desert forest areas in the two target regions have been identified and mapped based on LDN assessments and UNCCD recommended methodologies and confirmed through on-the ground research and data analysis. For evidence, please refer to the LDN regional target setting report Ind7_Ev1_Report Vasiliy Lobkovsky rus
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Indicator 8 (GEF Core indicator 3.Sub-indicator 3.1) Area (ha) of degraded arable land restored for improved ecosystem services	N/A To be determined during the first year	Baseline and methodologies developed.	4,700 ha	This indicator is based on corresponding global-level GEF 7 indicator3 (above) and feeds into the global indicator of degraded arable land restored. The EoP target is 4,700 ha arable land restored (Output 1.2/Act. 1.2.1). The project reports the achievement of the mid-term target for this indicator, with the preparatory work and methodologies in place to demonstrate restoration of degraded arable land for sustainable farming. 4,700 ha of LDN hotspots for restoration in the two target regions have been identified: 2,300 ha in Dashoguz and 2,400 ha in Lebap. Selected demonstration plots include abandoned lands, and it is envisaged that these lands will be restored for agricultural production. The scope of agrotechnical reclamation, including innovative phyto-melioration methods and irrigation works have been pre-determined. Needs assessment (technical equipment and materials, required resources, etc.) performed.	Indicator definition: This indicator is based on corresponding global-level GEF 7 indicator 3 and feeds into the global indicator of degraded arable land restored. The EoP target is 4,700 ha arable land restored (Output 1.2/Act. 1.2.1). Progress: The mid-term target and 60% of the EoP target achieved (restoration designs for 38 ha ready for implementation) As reported previously, 4,700 ha of LDN hotspots of degraded and abandoned arable lands in the two target regions have been identified and mapped based on LDN assessments and UNCCD recommended methodologies: 2,300 ha in Dashoguz and 2,400 ha in Lebap. The mid-term target is therefore achieved, further progress depends on appraisals for proposed technical solutions and procurement. The project is progressing towards the EOP target and is ready with a comprehensive package for procurement of equipment and works. The package includes technical solutions and engineering designs for reclamation works and restoration of the irrigation infrastructure; optimized management

				During the 2024 field season, the project team will continue active on-site consultations with local stakeholders to finalise feasibility assessments and develop detailed ToRs for restoration pilot design. However, the development of a detailed restoration methodology and indicators is currently hindered by institutional constraints, such as the absence of a Responsible Party to contract national consultants. For evidentiary documents, please refer to: - Ind8_E1_Analytical report irrigated lands DZ - Ind8_E2_Analytical report irrigated lands LB	scenarios for efficient water use and installation of metering equipment; and crop management plans.. The project invested more time into packaging the restoration solution than was originally planned, primarily due to extensive stakeholder consultations and analyses of technical options and scenarios aimed at selecting those that are cost-effective and replicable without external subsidies. Equipment for soil and water analysis has been purchased to strengthen the technical capacity of local khakimliks, conduct land management activities, and demonstrate technologies and solutions for the further development of ILUP in pilot regions. For evidentiary documents, please refer to: - Ind8_Ev1_Technical solutions for restoration of degraded lands and sustainable water management for irrigation
Indicator 9 (GEF Core indicator 3/Sub-indicator 3.2) : Area (ha) of forest restored for improved ecosystem services.	0 ha To be determined during the first year	Baseline and methodologies developed.	5,300 ha (5,000 ha under management planning to restore	This indicator is based on and feeds into the corresponding global-level GEF 7 indicator 3. The target is 5,000 ha of degraded saxaul forest ecosystem with planned restoration actions. The indicator further includes 300 ha of tugai forest restored in Amudarya Reserve	Indicator definition: This indicator is based on and feeds into the corresponding global-level GEF 7 indicator 3. The target is 5,000 ha of degraded saxaul forest ecosystem with planned restoration actions. The indicator further includes 300

			degraded saxaul ecosystem 300 ha of Tugai Forest restored)	buffer zone. The project is well-positioned to report achievement of the mid-term target for this indicator for tugai forests (planned restoration on 300 ha), as follows: - Mapping of tugai forests in and around nature reserves completed; - Methodology for restoration of tugai forests devastated after forest fires updated and adapted to be used by Amudarya reserve based on their forest nursery; - Tugai areas used by local resource users nearby nature reserves identified. The incremental investment in actual restoration will take place within the Amudarya reserve to minimize the risks to the sustainability of restoration efforts. In addition to supporting natural recovery, the project will organize a tree planting campaign twice a year in two velayats, involving volunteers and students. Project experts confirm that there is no need to invest into planting and supporting the plantations, as the self-restoration capacity of the tugai flora is very high. Instead, project specialists emphasize that restoring tugai forests requires implementing an ecosystem restoration regime. This includes a 2-3 year ban on grazing, mowing, logging, and measures to prevent forest fires. The project will focus on securing these restrictions through national regulatory	ha of tugai forest restored in Amudarya Reserve buffer zone. Tugai forests: 80% progress relative to EoP target (mid-term target achieved, restoration demo implemented). The project direct impact in tugai forest restoration (8 ha of restoration plot and a tree planting campaign), according to restoration methodology, will ensure natural regeneration of at least 300 ha in 3 years. The methodology for restoring fire-damaged Tugai forests was updated for use in Amudarya Reserve, incorporating seedling planting and an ecosystem restoration regime, including a 2–3 year ban on grazing, mowing, and logging, along with fire prevention measures was approved by MOEP. The project's on-site monitoring reports indicate satisfactory condition of 8 ha of seedlings planted for tugai forest rehabilitation at a demonstration plot devastated after forest fires at Kabakly site of the Amudarya reserve. Restoration of this LDN hotspot will provide for natural regeneration of at least 300 ha of tugai forests. For evidence, please refer to: Ind9_Ev4_Tugai restoration evidence summary In Dashoguz velayat, 7 ha of natural tugai forests seriously threatened by illegal
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				instruments and amending land tenure and land use patterns on stakeholder consultations, to facilitate the natural self-restoration of tugai ecosystems on lands adjacent to the reserve and within its buffer zone. The project effort to define a cost-effective increment in restoration of degraded saxaul forests (outside the PAs) is still ongoing. The project will propose an adaptive change to the original project strategy that has a target of 5,000 ha for direct restoration activities, to the consideration of the MTR and the Project Board. Considering the scale and volume of government funding for the planting of saxaul in the Turkmen Aral Sea region, the UNDP-GEF project's impact should be strictly incremental to the ongoing governmental effort, and provide for sustainability and upscale. The current strategy for the GEF increment would be to test innovative technologies by creating a demonstration site for reforestation using innovative irrigation methods in the Ruhubelent etrap of the Dashoguz velayat. Under the National Forest Program, an area of 20,000 hectares was set aside for reforestation in the Botendag region, and measures were taken to plant saxaul and other desert plants, but due to poor water supply, some of the plantings partially died from drought.	cuttings and fires will also be involved in supported natural regeneration. These areas are located outside the PAs (forest fund); the area will be fenced and natural forest regeneration supported (limited seeding, sanitary measures) thus ensuring required capacities for the local forestry department to ensure forest recovery. In addition to supporting natural recovery, the project supports a tree planting campaign twice a year in two velayats, involving volunteers and students; first planting round took place in November 2024. For evidence, please refer to Ind9_Ev1_Recommendations on Restoration of Tugai_2025 Saxaul forests: 30% progress relative to EoP target (mid-term level achieved, 1244 ha restoration capacity ensured) As reported previously, the project supported creation of two tree nurseries in the Amudarya and Gaplangyr state nature reserves (total nursery area is 1.2 ha) and procured water supply equipment for the nursery. The annual capacity of two nurseries to provide saxaul seedlings for afforestation can cover 311 ha. Over the four years of project implementation, the afforestation area can be increased by 1,244 hectares. The project is also supporting a nursery
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				The GEF increment will involve using innovative methods of growing desert plants and demonstrating cost-effective, regionally suitable techniques for sowing seeds and irrigation, all without the need for expensive infrastructure. The main challenge faced by forestry enterprises in restoration is irrigation. Following successful demonstration, this technology will be scaled up to cover 20,000 hectares. Irrigation methods will be tested for forest restoration on a 5-hectare demonstration site; if successful, the technology will be outlined in a guide for further use and replication within the framework of state reforestation programs for desert areas. As reported last year, the project conducted a series of campaigns to support creation of a tree nursery in the Amudarya state nature reserve. The project procured water supply equipment for the nursery. The same has been agreed for Kaplankyr state nature reserve (total nursery area is 1.2 ha). The annual capacity of two nurseries to provide saxaul seedlings for afforestation can cover 311 ha. Over the four years of project implementation (until March 2027), the afforestation area can be increased by 1,244 hectares.	managed by the Dashoguz velayat forestry department: a 3-hectare of LDN hot-spots (patches of severely degraded forest area) in Murzebashi will be turned into a nursery, and a water pump will be procured for irrigating seedlings. The adaptive management scenarios for saxaul forest restoration implemented by the project ensured that GEF resources were used strictly as an increment to the ongoing forest restoration efforts under the National Forest Programme. The GEF increment focused on testing and demonstrating innovative, low-cost, and regionally appropriate methods for cultivating desert plants, including seed sowing and irrigation techniques that do not require expensive infrastructure. To address the major challenge of irrigation, the project established collaboration with the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, focusing on the cultivation of desert vegetation under arid conditions. This initiative has been supported by the Desert Research Institute of Turkmenistan, with which the project signed a 2025 work plan outlining research cooperation and technical expertise support. As part of this effort, the project identified a pilot site for sustainable saxaul restoration and initiated the testing of non-irrigation-based restoration methods. In parallel, innovative small-scale irrigation solutions, including the use of a mobile water tank
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				For evidentiary documents, please refer to: - Analytical report on forest restoration (Ind9_Ev1_Analytical report_Forest_Expert_Huseyinov) For evidence, please refer to the ToR for team leader on developing National Forest Programme Ind9_Ev2_TOR_for NC_Group Leader on Development of NFP_final and A Joint Activity Plan with NIDFF for 2025 Ind9_Ev3_Work plan for 2025_NIDFF	trailer for post-planting care, were piloted. The feasibility and effectiveness of these methods are being documented for potential replication within national reforestation programs targeting LDN hot-spots.
Indicator 10 (GEF Core indicator 3/Sub-indicator 3.3): Area (ha) of land where degradation is reduced and pasture habitats restored as a result of phyto-reclamation evidenced by: - Shrub and semi-shrub vegetation cover - Success of pasture establishment - Use of distant pasture	0 ha Baseline: • Clay deserts without shrub vegetation • Sandy pastures subject to deflation • Distant pastures not in use	Baseline and methodologies developed.	50,000 ha • 50% vegetation cover increase observed on clay desert pastures (stable plant communities of black saxaul Haloxylon aphyllum and chogon Aellenia subaphylla formed on formerly bare takyr soil) • 50% increase of vegetation cover	The target is 50,000 ha of pastures under sustainable management plans (Output 1.4) to restore degraded pastures, and reflect increased vegetation cover, soil productivity improvements, pasture productivity improvements, and improvement in distant pasture use. The project is on the way to achieving the mid-term target having developed a plan to ensure sustainable impact in degraded pasture restoration on an area of 152,000 ha. The project proposes a revision of its EoP target based on the results of degraded	Indicator definition: The target is 50,000 ha of pastures under sustainable management plans (Output 1.4) to restore degraded pastures, and reflect increased vegetation cover, soil productivity improvements, pasture productivity improvements, and improvement in distant pasture use. Progress: Progress: 50%, mid-term target achieved as a detailed costed plan was developed to ensure sustainable impact in degraded pasture restoration on an area of 172,237 ha. LDN hotspots (heavily degraded pastureland) were mapped and assessed based on spatial LDN assessment

			observed on sandy pastures (proportion: 30% shrubs-60% semi shrubs- 10% herbaceous vegetation) • At least 30% of sown plants in generative growth stage by end project • 50% increase of distant pastures in use	pasture mapping (152,000 ha). The project team will justify this change, present the restoration methodology, risks and assumptions to the consideration of MTR. 152,000 ha of degraded pastures have been mapped during the reporting period where activities related to the rational use of pastures will be implemented with project support. Jointly with the National Desert Institute and FAO, geobotanical studies were conducted at a pilot site in Dashoguz. In the fall of 2024, the project plans to continue geobotanical studies in in Dashoguz velayat for Ruhublent etrap (70,000 ha) and in Lebap velayat for Danev etrap (82,000 ha), as according to the methodology, these studies need to be conducted over a period of two years during the spring and autumn seasons. During the 2024 field season, the project team will continue active on-site consultations with the local stakeholders to finalise the feasibility assessments and develop detailed ToRs with restoration pilots' design. However, the development of a detailed restoration methodology and indicators is currently hampered by institutional constraints, such as the absence of a project Responsible Party to contract national consultants.	methodology (Trends.Earth) and geobotanical studies; the targeted areas for pasture restoration have been confirmed (83100 ha in Dashoguz and 89137 ha in Lebap pilot regions). Jointly with the National Desert Institute and FAO, geobotanical studies were conducted in spring and autumn to determine the species composition of dominant vegetation, assess forage capacity, and evaluate degradation levels to plan surface or fundamental improvement works. The assessment of pasture forage capacity is planned for the autumn of 2025 based on the results of conducted and upcoming geobotanical studies. Most severely degraded hot-spots are associated with functional watering points. In order to reduce the grazing load on these areas, the project will co-finance repairing of dysfunctional sardobs and water wells. Around dysfunctional watering points, pasture areas are not used due to a lack of water and low forage capacity. Assessments indicate that repairing the two existing sardobs would provide watering for over 1,000 heads of small livestock each for 2-3 months, allowing use of the area during hot periods of the year. The project would focus its efforts on demonstrating innovative and economically efficient methods for restoring water regimes in pasture areas while continuing to seek
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				A principal agreement was reached with the local stakeholders and authorities to develop pasture management plans in Dashoguz velayat for two etrabs and in Lebap velayat for Danev etrap. The project will hire an international consultant to develop a Model Pasture Management Plan based on the best applicable practice in the region. For evidentiary documents, please refer to: - Ref: Ind10_Ev1_Analytical report Identification_pasture_pilot_site_Lebap_Yazh anov_19.10.23 - Ref: Ind10_Ev2_Analytical Report_Pasture_DZ_Ruhubelent_Rozyev (pasture expert)_12.06.24 - Ref: Ind10_Ev2_Analytical Report_Pasture_DZ_Ruhubelent_Rozyev (pasture expert)_12.06.24 - Ind10_Ev3_Analytical Report_Pasture_LB_Denev_Rozyev (pasture expert)_12.06.24	optimal solutions for sardob repairs. Evidence: Ind10_Ev1_Pasture_Justification_for restoration_of water intake structures The project provided a direct investment in on-site phyto-reclamation of pastures. In February 2025, 33 ha of degraded pasture land was planting with saxaul seeds by local pasture users using a tractor-mounted seeder; the restoration design involves active monitoring by local users, observation of grazing ban for two years, and limited low-cost watering of seedlings. The pilot will be replicated and upscaled via pasture users' groups; the knowledge management impact (this technology was not available for local hearders) and the behavioral shift (the hearders actively involved and co-financing the restoration) is already in place. The reclamation works started in the spring season of 2025; the project deplored a methodology for phyto-reclamation and procured saxaul seeds. The project coordinator in Lebap is regularly monitoring the seedlings, and assisting local farmers with irrigation and locust protection measures. Evidence: Ind10_Ev2_Report_saxaul planting in LB The project experts developed a draft concept for pasture rotation and had it appraised with the pasture users in the pilot districts of Ruhubelent and Deinau. Two initiative pasture users' groups,
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					namely Dovdarsylyk state enterprise in Ruhubelent and private pasture users' association (chekene) in the Gabaklı gengeshlik in Deinau have been established and supported for pasture rotation planning and implementation. Evidence: Ind10_Ev3_Pasture Rotation Concept_Ruhubelent Ind10_Ev4_Pasture Users Groups
Indicator 11 (GEF Core Indicator 4 Sub-indicator 4.1): Area (ha) of sustainable pastureland regimes in production zones and buffer areas	0 ha	Baseline and methodologies developed.	500,000 ha under sustainable use, linked to government investment plans	The target is 500,000 ha of pastureland managed in a biodiversity-friendly way incorporating gender-sensitive measures . This includes greater involvement of women in decision making process, where possible (Output 1.4), increasing the use of distant pastures and reducing or preventing the degradation of actively used pastures. The project is on the way to achieving the mid-term target by selecting areas and defining the impact scope. Selected areas are primarily located around PAs and KBAs/IBAs to prevent further habitat destruction due to unsustainable use of pastures and encroachment with KBAs. In the long term, these areas around KBAs/IBAs	Indicator definition: The target is 500,000 ha of pastureland managed in a biodiversity-friendly way incorporating gender-sensitive measures. This includes greater involvement of women in decision making process, where possible (Output 1.4), increasing the use of distant pastures and reducing or preventing the degradation of actively used pastures. Progress: assessed at 60% of the EoP level as a) the project finalized the feasibility assessments to define the impact areas, its strategy and workplans aimed to support sustainable pasture management, as reported previously (mid-term targets achieved), and b) sustainable pasture management planning is underway for 1,001,185 ha of pastures managed by Dovardarchylyck state agricultural enterprise in Dashoguz

			and PAs are expected to be managed sustainably by the local livestock farmers, forestry enterprises, local authorities. Sustainable pasture management options and eligible pilots for project support were discussed through a series of stakeholder consultations. Initial (Prodoc) plans amended to include incremental assistance for development of a mechanism for the creation/definition of buffer zones around nature reserves and their sanctuaries. During the reporting period, project specialists and partners collected and analyzed baseline data, assessed expectations of local communities and specialists, and organized consultations with representatives from local hakimliks and gengeshlik "Kabakly", sectoral organizations, and private pasture users. Following visits and assessments of pasture areas and water supply conditions, as well as meetings with representatives of the Amudarya State Nature Reserve to determine conditional boundaries of buffer zones, a pilot site for demonstrating sustainable pasture management was preliminarily identified. The selected area includes pasture lands distributed among private pasture users in the Gabakli gengeshlik of the Dyanev etrap, Lebap velayat. The total area of pasture lands in Deynau etrap is about 1,478,505 hectares,	and 165,183 ha managed by Serdar state agricultural enterprise in Lebap. Sustainable pasture management integrates the following key elements: - LDN-based assessment of pastureland conditions; - Mapping of pasture carrying capacity; - Recommendations and models with applicable LDN-based SLM practices; - Pasture rotation planning and modelling; - Recommendations for watering infrastructure and other on-land technical solutions to reduce overgrazing for LDN hotspots, with an economic assessments of costs and benefits. In the reporting period, the project identified key hotspots of pasture degradation through field-based assessments and satellite data. A series of consultations was conducted with local authorities and representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture to identify regulatory and institutional gaps in pastureland management. At the community level, awareness-raising activities and capacity-building sessions were carried out to emphasize the importance of restoring desert ecosystems and maintaining pasture
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				with 86,812 ha located in the Gabakli gengeshlik. For evidentiary documents, please refer to: - Ref: Ind10_Ev1_Analytical report Identification_pasture_pilot_site_Lebap_Yazh anov_19.10.23 - Ref: Ind10_Ev2_Analytical Report_Pasture_DZ_Ruhubelent_Rozyev (pasture expert)_12.06.24 - Ref: Ind10_Ev2_Analytical Report_Pasture_DZ_Ruhubelent_Rozyev (pasture expert)_12.06.24 - Ind10_Ev3_Analytical Report_Pasture_LB_Denev_Rozyev (pasture expert)_12.06.24	rotation systems. Two pasture user groups were established in the project target areas, where demonstration sites were set up to pilot sustainable pasture management practices. Ongoing geobotanical study is being conducted on these sites to monitor vegetation recovery and inform adaptive management for the project increment related to degraded pastureland. Group members and other pasture users are participating in training programs on alternative income-generating activities, such as wool processing—an underutilized resources currently often discarded. A comprehensive analysis of the pasture use system was completed, and a concept was developed to guide the achievement of the project's key indicators. The UNDP-GEF project closely cooperates with the FAO project “Support to Strengthening National Monitoring of Agricultural Crops using Remote Sensing Technology (TCP/TUK/4001)”, particularly focusing on pastureland monitoring. Given the cross-sectoral nature of pastureland planning, strong institutional foundations and coordination among all relevant ministries are essential. For this reason, the project is expanding its partnerships and consolidating efforts to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to pasture management.
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					For evidence, please refer to: Ind11_Ev1_Pasture use_Analytical report_G.Ahmetyarowa 5th LSC Minutes
Indicator 12 (GEF Indicator 4 Sub-indicator 4.3): Area (ha) of irrigated arable land under efficient water management	0 ha (project activities not under implementation)	Detailed methodology and approaches for updating water management information in support of an improved water and crops management	100,000 ha under sustainable management, linked to government investment plans (Efficient water management plans on 100,000 ha of irrigated areas in 4 targeted districts; It covers sustainable water management planning on 90,000 ha irrigated areas and crop resilience plans demonstrated for 10,000 ha, linked to government investment plans)	The project is on the way to achieve the midterm target for demonstration of efficient water management for irrigated arable land. A ToR has been developed to ensure the declared impact (integrated water management programming) for the target area of 100,000 ha. During the reporting period, 4,700 ha were mapped for direct impact, including replication of initial demos (38ha); methodology and approaches preliminary defined. On-the-ground works on demo fields in progress. In the pilot regions, the scope for agrotechnical reclamation, including innovative phyto-melioration methods and irrigation works were preliminarily determined. Needs assessment performed. The area of the demonstration fields is 20 ha in Dashoguz region and 18 ha in Lebap. The project proposes changes to the original Prodoc pans for integrated water resource management planning covering an area of 100,000 hectares in the Turkmen Aral Sea region. According to the project experts and specialists, it seems more realistic and	Progress: 60% of the mid-term target and 30% of the EoP level. The project is still at baseline 0 ha under sustainable water management, however the project reports that the water management baseline has been defined and that gaps with respect to Integrated Water Management have been identified. Currently, the project is working on: a) developing irrigation regimes for agricultural crops; and b) hydro-module zoning that establishes differentiated irrigation regimes tailored to specific zones, thereby ensuring stable agricultural productivity while conserving water resources and balancing agricultural demands with environmental conservation. These elements will be methodologically and financially supported by the Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (SIC ICWC in Uzbekistan) and adapted for use in the Turkmenbashi etrap of the Dashoguz region in Turkmenistan. The area to be covered by the water

				effective to prepare a unified water use program for the Turkmen Aral Sea instead of four separate water use plans. This program will be developed in collaboration with the Water Management Committee and "Turkmenylimsuvtaslama" and will be of a recommendatory nature. For evidentiary documents, please refer to: - 3rd Project Board meeting minutes - Draft ToR for Output 1.3	management plan based on hydro-module zoning and new irrigation regimes in S. Turkmenbashi etrap is 77,032 ha. This work includes: - Creating a local database of soil, meteorological (nearest weather station), and hydrological (groundwater levels, irrigation system layouts) parameters. - Creating digital maps/schemes of soils and soil salinity to identify hydro-module zones. - Conducting hydro-module zoning and creating updated maps of hydro-module areas. - Developing updated norms for water consumption of agricultural crops grown locally. - Developing scientifically based irrigation regimes for key agricultural crops in each hydro-module area, using the CROPWAT and REQWAT computer programs, applying FAO methodology and adapting it to the natural and operational conditions of the pilot areas. - Developing comprehensive water use plans, both intra-farm and inter-farm (between farmers associations), taking into account the updated irrigation regimes for the main agricultural crops. - Developing and adapting in sectoral agencies the following two sets of KM tools: (1) hydro-module zoning, and (2)
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					model calculation of the irrigation regime. Evidence: Ind12_Ev1_Cooperation Agreement with SIC ICWC From October 15 to 18, 2024, a training seminar was held to determine the basic data for developing a water use plan for the Middle Amudarya hydro-modular district, determining crop planting structures adapted to the terrain, determining the scheme of irrigators, and filling in climate data for the hydro-module table. In October and November 2024, practical sessions were conducted demonstrating new water-saving technologies using the example of a fire hydrant. Water-regulating structures of the "Chipolletti" system were installed in the intra-farm irrigator Murtokay (Lebap, Middle Amudarya hydro-modular district) and on the irrigator Uzbek (Dashoguz, Lower Amudarya hydro-modular district). The construction of the "Chipolletti" water-regulating structure system in two regions was chosen as a result of joint work with representatives of agricultural organizations and beneficiaries, as one of the optimal solutions for the region, considering financial accessibility and ease of installation on irrigated territories. This will help reduce the load on water resources and increase their availability for irrigation, as well as provide practical consultations on installing monitoring wells for groundwater. Based on the experience of creating plots
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					for drip irrigation in Dashoguz, it is planned to develop Guidelines for an effective approach to drip irrigation in regions with arid conditions and water supply concerns. Evidence: Ind12_Ev2_training report Chioletti In the reporting period, the project commissioned two KM products in support of the integrated water management planning: The Methodology for the use of Chipoletti Water Accounting System serves as a detailed guide, specifically tailored to Turkmenistan's context, for the effective collection, analysis, and interpretation of water use data. Its objective is to ensure precise and timely water accounting, which forms the foundation for rational water allocation and utilization. The methodology was approved by the “Turkmensuwlymtaslama” Institute of the State Committee for Water Management and will be disseminated for further use by the Directorate of the State Committee, the Garagumsuvkhajlyk Administration, the S. Niyazov Agricultural University, as well as relevant departments and water management enterprises in the two pilot regions — Lebap and Dashoguz velayats. Evidence: Ind12_Ev3_Methodology for recommendations on the installation of Water Acc_Sys The Methodology for irrigating saline
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					lands, which offers practical recommendations for enhancing irrigation efficiency in agriculture. It focuses on the use of economical techniques, adapted to local conditions, such as furrow irrigation, which significantly reduce water losses and optimize water use. The Methodology was approved by the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan and will be used by a wide range of ministries and agencies involved in land and water management, as well as by farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs. Evidence : Ind12_Ev4_Methodology of irrigating saline lands
Indicator 13. Number of Water Users Groups in the 4 pilot districts capacitated to apply water saving irrigation technologies	0	2	4 Water Users Groups	The project re-considered its mid-term target on the number of Water Users Groups to be established and reports the achievement of this target by establishing one Water User Group. The justification for re-consideration of the target (1 WUG instead of 2) will be available for the MTR's viability assessment. Consultations with stakeholders, round tables, trainings and opinion poll in the target regions were held. Danev etrap, Gengeshlik Isbaz was identified as the most relevant region for piloting establishment of a Water User Group (WUG) as an informal association of water users. 1 WUG in Lebap region established and met	2 (two) Water User Groups established and fully functional. Progress: the mid-term target and 50% of the EoP target achieved Consultations with stakeholders, round tables, trainings and opinion poll in the target regions were held. Deinau etrap, Isbaz gengeshlik was identified as the most relevant region for piloting establishment of a Water User Group (WUG) as an informal association of water users. The 1st WUG was established there in 2023 and consists of private farmers using the Mortokay Yap irrigation system.

				in the reporting period (October 17, 2023). For evidentiary documents, please refer to: - WUG membership list (Ind13_Ev1_WUG Members_17.10.2023)	Since the start of its operation, the WUG's membership has grown by 20%. The project effectively works with the group of water users. At the intra-farm irrigator Mortokay, a "Chipolletti" water accounting system has been installed, and technologies for controlling water supply to WUG irrigation areas have been demonstrated. The installation of a water metering device is planned, which will account for the supply of irrigation water limits and provide water savings that can be used to irrigate additional areas of fallow land. The group of water users was formed among private daikhan farms (which retain 30% of their income and give the rest to the state; they can take loans and are more financially stable), where the principle of basin management is applicable. The project adapted this mechanism for state farmers in Rukhubelent Etrap of Dashoguz Region who irrigate their lands using the "Ashyk Aydin" inter-farm irrigation system. There, the project is testing the viability and effectiveness of a WUG mechanism for non-private daikhan associations (collective farms) and attempts to integrate WUG tasks into the existing management and operation mechanism of the drainage network. In the future, this project approach is expected to contribute to the introduction of integrated water resources
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					management (IWRM). As an active project partner, the NGO Ynanç Wepa has been closely involved in project activities. Building on the project's results, the organization successfully secured a grant to establish a Technical Water User Group, whose main objective is to provide advisory support to water user groups across the country. With organizational support from the project, a study tour to Uzbekistan was conducted from June 20 to 28, involving six representatives from the International Scientific and Technological Park of the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan. Evidence: Ind13_Ev1_WUG Progress Report
Indicator 14. Area (ha) of irrigated crops with increased resilience to salinization, as evidenced by: - Percentage of soil salinity reduction - Percentage of water wastage at farm level - Soil productivity measured by humus content	0 ha Salinity baseline: 0.03-0.10 (low salinity) on 5,000 ha 0.10-0.30 (moderate salinity) 3,000	Detailed methodology and approaches for updating water management information in support of an improved water and crops management	10,000 ha (Efficient water and crops resilience to salinity demonstrated at 10% of the targeted 100,000 ha irrigated areas through, promotion of modern irrigation technologies, diversification of agricultural crops including: crop	This indicator focuses on the successful demonstration of crop resilience to salinization on 10,000 ha (Output 1.3/Act 1.3.1/1.3.3). The project will implement the demonstration activities for the area of 4,700 ha. This changes the target value for the indicator and will be discussed with the MTR. The project reports the achievement of the mid-term target concerning the development	Progress: 0 ha so far; mid-term target achieved as all preparatory work completed for piloting smart irrigation technologies and cultivation of soil tolerant crops. The project has begun the practical implementation of the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and the basin approach on a plot of 479.01 hectares. This territory is used by 33 members of the Water Users' Initiative Group, who operate the Mortokay Yap irrigation system. The essence of the approach promoted by the

	ha • 0.3-0.6 (strong salinity) on 2,000 ha Water wastage baseline: • m3 water losses/baseline to be set at project inception Soil productivity baseline: • Humus content ≤ 0.8 (Baseline to be refined/validated at inception stage)		rotation, use of salt tolerant crops, agroforestry) • 15% reduction in soil salinity compared to baseline levels • 15% reduction of water wastage compared to baseline • Humus content > 1.8 (by end of project)	of methodology and approaches. In this reporting period, measures aimed at reducing salinity across 4,700 ha in the target regions have been identified. Monitoring of available data and assessment of soil fertility and salinity were conducted on 18 ha of a demonstration site in the Danev etrap. Additionally, the technical condition of the irrigation system, including losses in on-farm canals and farmer fields, was evaluated. Fieldwork activities, including agricultural practices, reclamation and engineering irrigation activities, have been determined. Additionally, initial cost assessment, including the purchase of water supply equipment and materials, has been performed. Proposed measures will be included in Sustainable Water Management Plans for target regions in Dashoguz and Lebap velayats. Efficient water use and crops resilience to salinity, initially demonstrated on 38 ha, will be replicated at 10% of the targeted 100,000 ha irrigated areas. This will be achieved through the promotion of modern irrigation technologies, diversification of agricultural crops, including crop rotation, use of salt tolerant crops, and agroforestry. By the end of the project, improvements in soil salinity (15% reduction), reduction of water wastage (15%	project lies in supporting comprehensive planning of water distribution within a single irrigator, taking into account agro-meliorative, climatic, and social factors, with the planning carried out by the farmers themselves. The project will provide methodological support in developing an on-farm water use plan and will facilitate consultations among the water users' group members aimed at effective and equitable water distribution among them. The water use plan (expected to be finalized by the end of 2025) will also include recommendations on applying methods to improve water use efficiency, aimed at reducing soil salinity levels, minimizing water consumption through the introduction of water-saving technologies, cultivating salt-tolerant agricultural crops adapted to current climatic conditions, optimizing on-farm water distribution and increasing the efficiency of irrigation systems, and enhancing the participation of farmers and local water users in water resource management. The project will replicate this experience on the plots irrigated by the Khan Yap irrigator and will cooperate with the Basin Water Organization of the lower Amu Darya in the city of Dashoguz. Evidence: Ind13_Ev1_WUG analysis
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				reduction) and slight increase in humus content are expected. A complex and detailed ToR was developed for the implementation of Output 1.3 that includes the development of a detailed methodology and approaches for updating water management information in support of an improved water and crops management.	
Indicator 15 (GEF 7 Core indicators 6 Sub-indicator 6.1): GHG emissions mitigated (tCO ₂ -eq)	N/A (project activities not under implementation)	No change (project outcomes and impacts not yet at stage where GHGs avoided/sequestered)	2,028,250	The indicator represents GHG emissions avoided as a result of restored arable land (at 10,000 ha) and forestland (50,000 ha). The project activities are not yet at a stage where GHG avoided/sequestered can be considered. No impact was planned for the project mid-term.	Indicator definition: The indicator represents GHG emissions avoided as a result of restored arable land (at 10,000 ha) and forestland (50,000 ha). Progress: The project activities are not yet at a stage where GHG avoided/sequestered can be considered. The project falls under the AFOLU sector (even though it does not belong to the GEF FOLUR cohort) and is expected to contribute to GHG emissions mitigation through land restoration, reforestation, and sustainable pasture management. During the reporting period, the project identified available methodologies for estimating GHG impacts as an add-on to the FAO's EX-ACT tool and the national CO₂ accounting framework. A proposed approach for assessing carbon sequestration from project interventions (e.g., artificial saxaul plantations, improved pasture rotation) has been developed and will be applied to calculate

					expected tCO ₂ -eq mitigation. Methodological work is being integrated into the ToRs of technical experts for implementation in the next reporting cycle.
Indicator 16 (KM): Level of information necessary for improved irrigation water management at farm level considering the climate change impacts and knowledge regarding the necessary water requirements of the lakes and wetlands ;	Insufficient knowledge of Water users sharing the same irrigation canals and collector drainage on efficient water management approaches; Limited knowledge of and access to water saving technologies. Poor technical knowledge on efficient water distribution and crop resilience to salinity measures Lack of information	Detailed methodology and approaches for 1.updating water management information at district/etrap level and farm levels in support of an improved water use at farm/inter-farm level, 2.equitable share of the water resources among multiple water users and considering the required ecological flow necessary to maintain lakes, wetlands and riparian zones in Amudarya Basin.	Increased level of information on efficient and sustainable water use in agriculture and for natural ecosystems as evidenced by: - Comprehensive inventory of water use patterns, water losses and the realistic water requirements in agriculture sector in the targeted areas (for 100,000 ha of irrigated areas) available to water managers and water users. - Hydroclimatic scenarios and water economic models-informed	The targets have been defined to track progress with the following elements of the project design: (i)Comprehensive inventory of water use patterns, water losses and the realistic water requirements in agriculture sector in the targeted areas (for 100,000 ha of irrigated areas) available to water managers and water users. (ii)Hydroclimatic scenarios and water economic models-informed Sustainable Water Management Recommendations for optimization of water allocation among multiple water users, approved by decision makers. (iii)Water Management Plans covering 100,000 ha approved and under implementation. (iv)Researched water requirements for lakes, wetlands and riparian zones in Amudarya Basin (within Turkmenistan side), is completed and accessible to end users and water managers. At mid-term point, the project does not yet have a detailed methodology and approaches	Indicator definition: The targets have been defined to track progress with the following elements of the project design: (i)Comprehensive inventory of water use patterns, water losses and the realistic water requirements in agriculture sector in the targeted areas (for 100,000 ha of irrigated areas) available to water managers and water users. (ii)Hydroclimatic scenarios and water economic models-informed Sustainable Water Management Recommendations for optimization of water allocation among multiple water users, approved by decision makers. (iii)Water Management Plans covering 100,000 ha approved and under implementation. (iv)Researched water requirements for lakes, wetlands and riparian zones in Amudarya Basin (within Turkmenistan side), is completed and accessible to end users and water managers. The progress is assessed at 40% of the EoP target. The following KM products have been

	available on the required water volumes and minimum ecological flows by the lakes and wetlands, necessary to maintain ecological integrity, especially under climate change predicted deficits.		Sustainable Water Management • Recommendations for optimization of water allocation among multiple water users, approved by decision makers • Water Management Plans covering 100,000 ha approved and under implementation. • Researcher's water requirements (minimum ecological flow) for lakes, wetlands and riparian zones in Amudarya Basin (within Turkmenistan side), is completed and accessible to end users and water managers.	for the above KM elements of the project design. An inventory of water use patterns, water losses, and realistic water requirements in the agriculture sector is planned as part of the ToR developed for the implementation of Output 1.3 (as detailed above under Indicator 14). Sustainable Water Management Recommendations informed by hydroclimatic scenarios and water economic models will be developed to optimize water allocation among multiple water users. These recommendations, along with Water Management Plans will be approved by decision-makers and provided through the implementation of RFP for Output 1.3.	commissioned so far: 1) The Methodology of Irrigating Saline Lands https://sic-icsd.com.tm/ru/databases/water-resources-management 2) The Methodology for Installation of Water Accounting Systems https://sic-icsd.com.tm/ru/databases/water-resources-management Evidence: Ind12_Ev3_Methodology for recommendations on the installation of Water Acc_Sys Ind12_Ev4_Methodology of irrigating saline lands In 2025, the project is expanding its KM efforts to include: - Recommendations for the revision of hydro-modular district boundaries, based on agro-climatic modeling and historical irrigation data - Definition of optimal irrigation regimes for key agricultural crops in two hydro-modular districts, considering current and projected climate conditions (e.g., changes in evapotranspiration, rainfall patterns); - Development of intra-farm irrigation plans, tailored to farm typologies and infrastructure in pilot sites, including
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					canal layouts and field-level distribution practices. These efforts contribute to establishing a knowledge base that supports climate-resilient irrigation planning, more accurate water allocation, and potential reduction of water stress on adjacent natural ecosystems such as wetlands and lakes. The KM outputs are intended to serve as technical guidance for local water users, hydro-engineering services, and policy-level decision-making. To support this work, the project has signed a cooperation agreement and developed detailed Terms of Reference for a technical expert group in hydro-engineering. The contract is currently in the final stage of processing. In addition, coordination meetings have been held with key national partners, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection and the State Committee for Hydrometeorology, to align on the proposed technical approach and workplan. The project is also reviewing remote sensing datasets (e.g., Google Earth Engine, Copernicus) to complement field data and improve spatial targeting of irrigation interventions. Further progress will depend on the institutional uptake of recommendations and alignment with national water sector reforms currently under consideration.
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Indicator 17 (KM): Existence of formal guidelines and methodology on LDN and integrated land use planning, on SLM measures applicable for practical improvements of land management, use of mineralized drainage water and restoration of saline lands	N/A	Environmental data collected, methodologies elaborated and first drafts of different knowledge products are discussed with local and national authorities and other key project partners. Available UNCCD-promoted innovative LDN compliant land use planning module (Act 1.1.5) based on the results of the GEO-LDN Technology Innovation Competition.	• Methodology for setting up regional LDN targets approved by the MAEP, showcasing Lebap and Dashoguz experience • Methodology for LDN compliant/compatible Integrated Land Use Planning at etraps/district level approved by the MAEP, showcasing Dashoguz and Lebap experience • Available innovative land use planning module centered on LDN principles (Act.1.1.5) • Guidelines on the development of sustainable pastures and forest management	The project is on the way to achieving the mid-term target for this indicator, however, the progress has been hampered by the lack of qualified expertise for LDN-based land use planning in the country. The project is not yet at a stage to report any significant achievement with the knowledge products on LDN-based integrated land use planning. Global data on three LDN indicators for the period 2000-2015 and 2016-2021 years were collected. For the reporting period, the project reports the achievement of the following key milestones (achieved with an incremental input from the project jointly with the UNCCD Focal Point team): - National LDN target setting; - Concept and Roadmap for the development the National Action Program to Combat Desertification; - LDN definition through amendments proposed for the Land Code. The project will discuss its planned impact regarding the UNCCD-promoted innovative LDN compliant land use planning module (Act	The progress under this indicator has significantly advanced and is currently estimated at 75% of the EoP target, following the successful completion of a comprehensive assignment by an international expert group on LDN and integrated land use planning. The expert group delivered a suite of knowledge products and strategic recommendations that collectively serve as a national-level technical and methodological foundation for LDN-based land management, including: • A GIS-based methodology for LDN monitoring aligned with UNCCD indicators, identifying land degradation hotspots in Dashoguz and Lebap velayats; • Guidelines for integrating LDN into land use planning, including spatial zoning, criteria for saline land restoration, and the use of mineralized drainage water in irrigation under controlled regimes; • A proposed indicator system for tracking LDN at national and regional levels, including proxy indicators for salinization, wind erosion, and aridity relevant to Turkmenistan; • A review and harmonization proposal for national land legislation to

			plans, to achieve LDN, for local natural resources users approved by MAEP • LDN compatible Integrated Land Use Planning GIS based Concept available to land use decision makers • Integrated Bio-saline Agricultural Model for Sustainable and Integrated Use of Mineralized Water Resources and salt-affected soils • LDN Regional Workshop Proceedings Report entails an analysis of methodologies used by different countries during regional LDN target setting process.	1.1.5) with the international group LDN of experts engaged by the project, and present the results to the MTR.	enable the formal adoption of LDN principles into land use and desertification strategies; • Inputs to the draft National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCD), embedding LDN-compatible planning approaches. These outputs have been formally shared with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Agriculture. The findings were presented and discussed in two major capacity-building events held in November 2024: 1. A national LDN workshop introducing the updated NAPCD and its LDN roadmap; 2. An LDN Working Group meeting under the Scientific and Public Council on Desertification, which facilitated feedback and multi-stakeholder dialogue. In addition, the project compiled and analyzed global data on the three official LDN indicators (2000–2015, 2016–2021) and applied the Trends.Earth platform for regional assessments, building national capacity in LDN reporting. Building on the results achieved by the national LDN expert group and the technical outputs delivered to date, the project is continuing the development of a Toolkit for LDN-Compatible Integrated Land Use Planning. This knowledge product is designed to support national
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					and sub-national stakeholders in incorporating LDN principles into spatial planning. The toolkit includes standardized mapping templates, a catalogue of SLM practices for saline and degraded lands, and guidance on the adaptive use of mineralized water resources in agriculture. To ensure continuity and scale-up of this work, the project is in the process of engaging an International LDN Expert. This expert will provide strategic and technical leadership in the development of LDN-compatible land use plans, including the design of a GIS-based Land Use Concept built on a registry of tested models, SLM solutions and land use typologies. The expert will also support stakeholder coordination, deliver targeted capacity-building, and contribute to the generation of knowledge products to inform evidence-based decision-making and policy dialogue. For evidence, please refer to: Ind17_Ev1_List of LDN-based measures and practices Ind17_Ev2_ LDN Assessment Report EoD Ind17_Ev3_TOR LDN Int Conslt PIMS6463 TKM Amudarya Project_Final
Indicator 18: Existence of	N/A	EO datasets	• 10 capacity	This is an outcome level indicator that track	Indicator definition: This is an outcome

capacity building events (attended by 30% women participants) on EO datasets interpretation, LDN, SLM and integrated land use planning for LDN working groups, decision makers and farmer groups		interpretation guide; methodology for integrating different datasets (national metrics, global default datasets, other LD index) developed Gender sensitive Training materials developed Invitees lists developed (30% women) 5 Capacity building events for LDN working groups 5 Capacity building events on SLM and land use planning 2 Farmers Field Schools	building events on EO datasets interpretation, LDN target setting and monitoring- to inform land degradation assessments, designed for decision makers at national and local levels • 8 capacity building events on SLM measures and sustainable agricultural practices and rural entrepreneurship • 8 training workshops for the Water user Groups (WUGs) on sustainable irrigation and water management • 4 training workshops on land-water legislation • 5 Farmers Field Schools • LDN Regional Workshop to share	results in relation to capacity development activities for LDN target setting under Output 1.1. and SLM measures Output 1.3 and Output 1.4. Since project start, the project organized 10 capacity building events with 312 participants, including 59 women. The project is below the mid-term target level on capacity building events under Component 1. In the reporting period the following capacity building events were organised: 2 (two) practical trainings and awareness raising workshops on LDN (which is still a new concept for Turkmenistan) were organized to enhance understanding of the LDN concept among national/regional stakeholders and perform a baseline analysis for setting regional LDN targets and identifying the main drivers of land degradation and biodiversity loss, and to facilitate knowledge sharing among experts, NGOs, and government representatives on advancing LDN implementation in Turkmenistan through policy, legislation, and on-the-ground interventions (17.5% and 15% of women respectively). A practical training on dust monitoring capacitated local specialists in the Lebap and	level indicator that track results in relation to capacity development activities for LDN target setting under Output 1.1. and SLM measures Output 1.3 and Output 1.4. Since project start, the project organized 15 capacity building events with 352 participants, including 89 women (25%).. The project overpassed the EoP target level on capacity building events under Component 1. In the reporting period, the following capacity building events were organised: • Capacity-building workshop and dissemination of best practices in LDN target setting and LDN-based and use planning for national and local authorities and project partners, LDN workshop on 26th of November, 2024. The event aimed to build the capacity of local specialists and facilitate knowledge exchange on achieving land degradation neutrality for sustainable land resource management. During the workshop, participants were introduced to the revised National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCD) in Turkmenistan and the Roadmap for incorporating the LDN concept into national programmatic documents, development plans, and strategies. • LDN Working Group Meeting on November 27, 2024,... Participants reviewed progress on setting LDN targets
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			experience, generated knowledge, challenges, and opportunities in LDN regional target setting.	Dashoguz regions (23% of women). Sustainable pasture management was in the focus of 5 (five) trainings and round tables that discussed the existing models of pasture use and seasonal distribution of livestock, principles of sustainable management of desert pastures and the use of modern methods and technologies to combat salinization of irrigated lands (20-30% of women). The project involved the local households leaders, mostly women, in 2 (two) trainings and practical seminars on BD-friendly horticulture development in arid climate (24% and 41% of women respectively). For evidentiary documents, please refer to: - Aral_M&E_List of participants_June_2024_Outcome 1 trainings	and developing relevant indicators, incorporating international best practices and addressing modern challenges. They also discussed the need to strengthen the legislative framework to support LDN efforts. On June 17, 2025, in Ashgabat, the Project convened a Round Table gathering representatives of key ministries, agencies, and other organizations responsible for developing and implementing national policy, as well as the Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and representatives of local authorities, to discuss previously proposed recommendations by local experts on updating the National Action Program to Combat Desertification in Turkmenistan. The main objective of the event was to promote the integration of the principles of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) into the National Action Program to Combat Desertification (NAPCD), develop capacity, and share knowledge for sustainable land resource management. Special attention was paid to the interconnection between desertification and droughts and the need for an integrated approach to managing land and water resources. As a result of the discussions, concrete proposals were formulated for the content of the future key strategic document. This document will cover strategic planning, synchronization of national natural
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					resource policies, legal and institutional frameworks, as well as practical recommendations on preventing desertification, achieving LDN, combating sand and dust storms, restoring degraded pastures, and improving legislation. On-site knowledge management sessions were held in January and April 2025 across four pilot regions to support restoration of degraded arable and forest lands. In Dashoguz pilot regions sessions focused on establishing demonstration sites for desert-adapted species, promoting sustainable land and water management practices, assessing opportunities for digitalizing pasture and water data, coordinating reforestation and pasture restoration. Key directions identified included water infrastructure rehabilitation (e.g., sardob design), GIS-based mapping of water points, pasture restoration and rotational grazing, community-led saxaul planting, nursery development and seedling protection, and the introduction of digital tools for pasture planning—laying the groundwork for model restoration sites through strong stakeholder engagement and innovation. In the Lebap region, sessions focused on promoting salt-tolerant crops, protective forest belts, and income-generating activities such as food processing, handicrafts, beekeeping, and cultivation of medicinal herbs, with a strong emphasis
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					on engaging women and youth in alternative livelihoods like agri-processing and eco-tourism. These efforts strengthened local dialogue, encouraged practical innovation, and highlighted the value of integrating local knowledge with low-cost solutions, with upcoming phases prioritizing training and small grants for women’s cooperatives. For evidentiary documents, please refer to: Knowledge management plan_Aral_2023_25_Final_updated_July_25
The progress of the objective/outcome can be described as:	On track				
Evidence uploaded:	YES				
Outcome 2					
Component 2: Securing Critical Ecosystems for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services					
Outcome 2: Secured biodiversity status in >0.5 mln ha of KBAs in the Amu Darya basin, as evidenced by:					
- non-deterioration of globally threatened species, including Egyptian Vulture, Saker Falcon, Dalmatian Pelican, Houbara Bustard, Cinereous Vulture, Ferruginous Duck. - Management effectiveness increased for targeted protected areas from ~20% to ~40%. - New protection mechanisms established covering additional 50,000 of currently unprotected KBAs, increasing PA coverage of KBA area in the target landscape by ~5%, to roughly 50%					
Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target	End of project	Level at Jun 30, 2024	Cumulative progress since project

		level	target level		start as of Jun 30, 2025
Indicator 19 (GEF Core Indicator 1/Sub-indicator 1.1.): Terrestrial protected areas created for Conservation and sustainable use (ha)	0	Flora and fauna Inventories and habitat mapping necessary for the preparatory work completed	60,000 ha	This project indicator is designed to align with and feed into GEF Core Indicator 1 (Objective level) above. The two new proposed PAS areas encompasses: (i) Pitnyak upland and the heights of Altykarash, Zheldi and Muyger, part of the water areas of the Sultansanjar and Koshbulak reservoirs Pytnyak area on approx. 40,000 ha and (ii) Lake Zengibaba Zengibaba-Goyungirlan (KBA/IBA) area on approximately 20,000 ha. The quantitative target for newly created terrestrial PAS for conservation and sustainable use remains at the baseline level. The project is on track to attain the midterm target for this indicator. Inventories and habitat mapping as part of feasibility studies justifying the establishment of three new PAS are planned for 2024 field season. Before MTR, the project will accomplish the baseline assessments and preparatory work (including presentation of data on the population numbers of flagship and red-listed species and threats to their habitats) as part of technical feasibility study for the establishment of the refuges (sanctuaries, IUCN cat.IV) "Pitnyak", "Zengibaba", Tallymerjen. The project assisted MOEP with creation and support of the working group responsible for the PA feasibility analyses and justifications.	Indicator description: This project indicator is designed to align with and feed into GEF Core Indicator 1 (Objective level) above. The two new proposed PAS areas encompasses: (i) Pitnyak upland and the heights of Altykarash, Zheldi and Muyger, part of the water areas of the Sultansanjar and Koshbulak reservoirs Pytnyak area on approx. 40,000 ha and (ii) Lake Zengibaba Zengibaba-Goyungirlan (KBA/IBA) area on approximately 20,000 ha. Progress: 100% of the mid-term target and 60% of the EoP target achieved as all preparatory works and assessments have been completed to justify the new PA establishment, and the submissions packages prepared and revised for further consideration by the Cabinet of Ministers. The quantitative target for newly created terrestrial PAS for conservation and sustainable use remains at the baseline level. During the 2024-25 field season, project specialists carried out species census and habitat mapping and presented data on the populations of flagship and red-listed species, as well as the threats to their habitats. Following the findings of these assessments, the initial proposals for establishing the refuges (sanctuaries, IUCN category IV) "Pitnyak," "Zengibaba," and "Tallymerjen" have been revised to incorporate buffer zones,

				The project raised a particular issue regarding the Pitnyak refuge area: not all lake areas were included in the refuge area due to a) the absence of working regulations that consider the interests of local resource users, such as fishers within a protected area (refuge), b) complications with border authorities, and c) a reduced water level in the lake, which has further diminished annual influx due to CC. Project experts are currently consulting with MOEP to finalize the justification and prepare the submission package to the Cabinet of Ministers. Once reviewed, the project experts will address comments and provide additional information as necessary. For evidentiary documents, please refer to 1) Explanatory note on Pitnyak refuge (Ind19_Ev1_Explanatory note Pitnyak refuge) 2) Explanatory note on Tallymerjen refuge (Ind19_Ev2_Explanatory note Tallymerjen) 3) ToR avifauna baseline study and justification (Ind19_Ev3_ToR Ornithologist_EoD_eng_revised June) 4) ToR ungulates baseline study and justification (Ind19_Ev4_ToR Zoologist_EoD_eng_revised June)	ecological corridors, and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECM). The Project National Coordinator at the Ministry of Environment Protection is actively involved in this process, collaborating with both national and international biodiversity experts. The finalized packages are planned for resubmission to the Cabinet of Ministers by end of summer 2025. By submitting the PA establishment packages by the end of 2025, the MOEP and the Project will fulfil the respective commitments indicated in the National Forest Programme. Evidence: Ind19_Ev1_Explanatory note new PA establishment Ind19_Ev2_Flora and fauna Inventories for Pitnyak Ind19_Ev3_Flora and fauna Inventories for Zengibaba
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Indicator 20 (GEF Core Indicator 1/Sub-indicator 1.2): Terrestrial protected areas under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (ha)	0 ha	Flora and fauna Inventories and habitat mapping necessary for the preparatory work completed)	1,077,554 ha	This project indicator is designed to align with and feed into GEF Core Indicator 1 (Objective level) above. The expected scope for project intervention was confirmed as follows: Sum of existing PAs under the project scope remains unchanged (1,077,554 ha): Kaplankyr State Nature Reserve 926,203 ha (includes Sarygamish Sanctuary 541,466 ha) and Shasenem Sanctuary (109,002 ha); Amudarya State Nature Reserve 151,351 ha which includes Amudarya Reserve territory (48,351 ha) and its Kelif Sanctuary of 103,000 ha). Progress with individual activities aimed at PA management improvement reported below for Indicator 21. Flora and fauna Inventories have been completed as part of the work within preparation of the 4th edition of the Red Book of Turkmenistan. The project vastly contributed to the completion of this key information source for BD values in the country.	Indicator definition: This project indicator is designed to align with and feed into GEF Core Indicator 1 (Objective level) above. Progress: 100% of the mid-term target with the completed flora and fauna inventories, 50% of the EoP target measured as percentage from planned EoP increase in METT scores (Indicator 21) The expected scope for project intervention was confirmed as follows: Sum of existing PAs under the project scope remains unchanged (1,077,554 ha): Gaplangyr State Nature Reserve 926,203 ha (includes Sarygamish Sanctuary 541,466 ha) and Shasenem Sanctuary (109,002 ha); Amudarya State Nature Reserve 151,351 ha which includes Amudarya Reserve territory (48,351 ha) and its Kelif Sanctuary of 103,000 ha). Specific progress with PA management improvement is reported below for Indicator 21 and measured by % improvement in METT Score. Also, Pprogress with individual activities aimed at PA management improvement is reported below for Indicator 21.
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					As previously reported, flora and fauna inventories have been completed. Evidence: Ind20_Ev1_Flora and fauna Inventories for Amudarya State Nature Reserve Ind20_Ev2_Flora and fauna Inventories for Gaplangyr State Nature Reserve In the reporting period, a biodiversity monitoring program was developed by project experts in collaboration with staff from the pilot nature reserves. This program includes systematic monitoring of the designated areas. It is aimed at regularly tracking the state of ecosystems, species composition, and natural processes, which helps to strengthen scientifically based measures for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Evidence: Ind20_Ev3_Amudarya reserve monitoring program Ind20_Ev4_Gaplangyr reserve monitoring program; According to the developed monitoring program and with the aim of strengthening the capacity for scientific research, monitoring, and patrol activities in the pilot reserves of the Project, field equipment and gear were purchased. This facilitated the conduct of three field monitoring and census assessments (monitoring of ungulates and key mammal species, two seasonal bird monitoring
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				sessions) to confirm the inventory of flora and fauna. The monitoring materials were handed over to MOEP for further use in regular reporting under international conventions (CBD, CMS, AEWA, Ramsar, CITES). Evidence: Ind20_Ev5_LB_Amudarya_Birds monitoring _01.2025 Ind20_Ev6_Gaplangyr_Birds Monitoring _01.2025 Ind20_Ev7_LB_Ungulates _Amudarya_Oct. 2024 Ind20_Ev8_DZ_Ungulates_ oct 2024_1 The project has prepared an identification guide for rare and key species for two pilot nature reserves based on the results of inventory and monitoring. The project is engaging both national and international expertise to prepare proposals for the adoption of regulations to the Law "On Protected Areas" aimed at defining the legal regime of PA protected/buffer zones. The experts will develop a draft Model Regulation on the PA buffer zones and for ecological corridors, which will establish the basic principles of the legal status and management regime in the buffer zones and ecological corridors, including the principles for definition of buffer zone size and the configuration of ecological corridors, and the legal regime for land
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					and water use, relevant restrictions and limitations to be imposed on economic activities within the buffer zones and ecological corridors.
Indicator 21: Change in the capacity of the management of key Protected Areas to implement effective biodiversity conservation and sustainable management measures	Gaplangyr State Nature Reserve (METT Score: 53) Amudarya State Nature Reserve (METT Score: 56)	Gaplangyr State Nature Reserve (METT Score: 58) Amudarya State Nature Reserve (METT Score: 61)	Gaplangyr State Nature Reserve (METT Score: 64) Amudarya State Nature Reserve (METT Score: 67)	The project activities aim to increase METT scores (as much as possible) for METT questions related to material capacity building for patrolling, monitoring and outreach activities, and PA staff capacities. (Output 2.1-Output 2.2 and Output 2.3). The mid-term METT assessment of the Kaplankyr and Amudarya State Nature reserves are underway and will be finalised before the mid-term review of the project. Preliminary discussions and assessments took place during a field visit and a KM workshop at the two nature reserves on June 12-16, 2024, with participation of the reserve's key staff, Project Team Lead for Component 2, Project International Technical Adviser, National CBD Focal Point and contributors to the baseline METT assessment. The experts note the increased patrolling and monitoring capacities of the reserve, and improved skills for management planning based on investments, trainings and consultations provided by the Project. Project investments in upgrading the material	Indicator definition: The project activities aim to increase METT scores (as much as possible) for METT questions related to material capacity building for patrolling, monitoring and outreach activities, and PA staff capacities. (Output 2.1-Output 2.2 and Output 2.3). Progress: 50% of the EoP target METT_scorecards_PIMS6463_Amudarya_Turkmenistan_mid-term_rev The mid-term METT assessment of the Gaplangyr and Amudarya State Nature reserves shows the following progress: 4 points in METT scores for Gaplangyr reserve above the baseline and 3 points for Amudarya reserve Gaplangyr State Nature Reserve METT Score: 58 Amudarya State Nature Reserve METT Score: 59 The METT mid-term assessment was carried out by the project staff (PA Analyst, ICTA), with participation of the reserve's key staff, National CBD Focal Point and contributors to the baseline METT assessment. The experts note the

			capacity of the two pilot reserves follow a technical capacity building plan. This plan, developed and updated in collaboration with the reserves' staff, focuses on targeted support to infrastructure and equipment to improve management, monitoring and patrolling activities within targeted PAs. To enhance PAs patrolling capacities and reduce incidents of poaching and illegal fishing in the, in 2023, the project procured two 4x4 vehicles (Mitsubishi L-200) for both reserves and, separately for the Amudarya Reserve, two engines for to restore existing boats for the PA to strengthen its patrolling capacities. According to the official reporting (Nature Chronicles 2023) of the Amudarya reserve, the inflow of funds (fines) from the detention of violators of the reserve's water regime has doubled, which indicates the exceptional effectiveness of the patrol group's work with the use of new equipment. In 2023, the project procured construction materials to create an enclosure for ungulates in the Kaplankyr state nature reserve with the costs of civil works were covered by the Nature Reserve. The enclosure is being used to keep and breed rare and endangered species of animals and birds to replenish their natural population (including sick and injured) and their further release into the wild. Procurement of field equipment for strengthening monitoring capacities of	increased patrolling and monitoring capacities of the reserves, and improved skills for management planning based on investments, trainings and consultations provided by the Project. Evidence: Mid-term METT assessment METT_scorecards_ PIMS6463_Amudarya_Turkmenistan_mid-term_rev As reported previously, project investments in upgrading the material capacity of the two pilot reserves follow a technical capacity building plan. This plan, developed and updated in collaboration with the reserves' staff, focuses on targeted support to infrastructure and equipment to improve management, monitoring and patrolling activities within targeted PAs. To enhance PAs patrolling capacities and reduce incidents of poaching and illegal fishing in the, in 2023, the project procured two 4x4 vehicles (Mitsubishi L-200) for both reserves and, separately for the Amudarya Reserve, two engines for to restore existing boats for the PA to strengthen its patrolling capacities. According to the official reporting (Nature Chronicles 2023 and 2024) of the Amudarya reserve, the inflow of funds (fines) from the detention of violators of the reserve's water regime has doubled, which indicates the exceptional effectiveness of the patrol group's work
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			Gaplangyr and Amudarya reserves is underway. Preparation of the 5-year Management Plan (MP) for the Amudarya reserve is underway. The Management Plan for the Gaplangyr Reserve, developed as part of UNESCO WH nomination package in 2020, was approved to be implemented till end of 2025. The project specialists have engaged the Reserve's management staff and the MOEP in consultations to review the implementation of the MP. A key finding is that the MP implementation, particularly the investment aspect, is severely constrained by financial limitations: the annual budgets provided by MOEP cover only basic salaries and expendables. To address this, the project will establish a working group comprising the reserves' staff, MOEP and the Ministry of Finance. This group will focus on securing financing for the MP and transforming it from a 'paper' document into a functional tool. The Project is currently developing a ToR for the working group, which will be submitted through the MFA to enable the new consultation mechanism. For evidentiary documents, please refer to: -Summary of PA monitoring visits July 2024	with the use of new equipment. Field equipment and gear for monitoring were procured in this reporting period. This facilitated the conduct of three biodiversity monitoring activities (monitoring of ungulates and key mammal species, two seasonal bird monitoring sessions) to confirm the inventory of flora and fauna. Evidence: Ind21_Ev2_Acceptance Deed_Monitoring Equipment Amudarya Ind21_Ev2_Acceptance Deed_Monitoring Equipment Gaplangyr
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				(Ind20_Ev1_BTOR Component 2 July 2024) - RFQ for PA monitoring equipment (Ind20_Ev2_RFQ PA Monitoring equipment)	
Indicator 22: Stable status/ positive change in the population of globally significant biodiversity at the new designated PA. • Great grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) • Great pelican (<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>) • Red crested pochard (<i>Netta rufina</i>) • Great cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) • Little cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax pigmaeus</i>) • White egret (<i>Egretta alba</i>) • Grey heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) • Red heron (<i>Ardea purpurea</i>)	Baseline to be established during inventories Pytniak Sanctuary (proposed IUCN IV category- Sanctuary 40,000 ha) • Great grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) • Great pelican (<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>) • Red crested pochard (<i>Netta rufina</i>) • Great cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)	Non-deterioration of baseline status	Increase relative to baseline	The indicator species have been selected to serve as indicators for the improved BD conditions at the newly established PAs based on several considerations: (i) they will be positively affected by the project interventions; (ii) are considered keystone species so that a positive change in species population reflects a positive change in the surrounding habitat; (iii) population can be reasonably monitored over multiple years, and (iv) there are global, or national Red List or endangered species or endemic or “iconic” for the country or the region. The project is aiming at minimizing threats to the newly designed PA, and if threats are minimized, population increases among indicator species can be documented within a few years, and therefore the project target is designed to set the project ambitions at contributing to an increase in the targeted indicator species populations. The project is unable to indicate any improvements in the BD conditions before the new PAs are established and functional. The baseline values for keystone species for	Indicator definition: The indicator species have been selected to serve as indicators for the improved BD conditions at the newly established PAs based on several considerations: (i) they will be positively affected by the project interventions; (ii) are considered keystone species so that a positive change in species population reflects a positive change in the surrounding habitat; (iii) population can be reasonably monitored over multiple years, and (iv) there are global, or national Red List or endangered species or endemic or “iconic” for the country or the region. The project is aiming at minimizing threats to the newly designed PA, and if threats are minimized, population increases among indicator species can be documented within a few years, and therefore the project target is designed to set the project ambitions at contributing to an increase in the targeted indicator species populations. Progress: baseline level (baseline established during inventories) As reported previously and still valid now, the project is unable to indicate any improvements in the BD conditions before

	• Little cormorant (Phalacrocorax pigmaeus) • White egret (Egretta alba) • Grey heron (Ardea cynerea) • Red heron (Ardea purpurea) Zengibaba-Goyugirlan Sanctuary ((proposed IUCN IV category-Sanctuary 20,000 ha) • Great pelican (Pelecanus onocrotalus) • Saker falcon (Falco cherrug) • Golden eagle (Aquila			the newly proposed PAs are included in the feasibility studies and technical documentation developed for the prospective PAs by the project experts. A third prospective PA, Tallymerjen refuge will be included in the reporting once and if the project's impact on reducing threats and improving biodiversity status in the future refuge area is defined and validated.	the new PAs are established and functional. The baseline values for keystone species for the newly proposed PAs are included in the feasibility studies and technical documentation developed for the prospective PAs by the project experts. A third prospective PA, Tallymerjen refuge will be included in the reporting once and if the project's impact on reducing threats and improving biodiversity status in the future refuge area is defined and validated.
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	chrysaetos) • Black Vulture (Aegypius monachus)				
Indicator 23 : Stable status /positive change in the population of globally significant biodiversity indicator species in the existent targeted PAs - Argali (Ovis vignei) - Kulan (Equus hemionus kulan) - Goiterred gazelle (Gazella subgutturosa) - Bukhara deer (Cervus elaphus bactrianus) - Houbara bustard (Chlamydotis undulata) - Dalmatian pelican (Pelecanus crispus) - Great white pelican (Pelecanus onocrotalus) - Saker falcon (Falco cherrug) - Golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos) - Yellow eyed pigeon	Baseline: as indicated in the METT scorecards	Midterm target: As indicated in the METT scorecards	End project target: As indicated in the METT scorecards	The project performed a retrospective check of the baseline values (2020) for the species indicators in the METT scorecards and collected mid-term data (based on 2023 Nature Chronicles reporting), and reports as follows: For Amudarya Reserve: - Goiterred gazelle (Gazella subgutturosa) Baseline 98; mid-term 98 - Bukhara deer (Cervus elaphus bactrianus) Baseline 125; mid-term 127 - Dalmatian pelican (Pelecanus crispus) Baseline 5; mid-term 1 - Great white pelican (Pelecanus onocrotalus) Baseline 130; mid-term tbd - Golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos) Baseline 1; mid-term 1	The project reports the following data supported by Nature Chronicles of the reserves and the results of field survey and census performed during the reporting period: For Amudarya Reserve: - Goiterred gazelle (Gazella subgutturosa) Baseline 98; current 98 - Bukhara deer (Cervus elaphus bactrianus) Baseline 125; current 131 - Dalmatian pelican (Pelecanus crispus) Baseline 5; current 1 - Great white pelican (Pelecanus onocrotalus) Baseline 130; current – no data available - Golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos) Baseline 1; mid-term 1 - Yellow eyed pigeon (Columba

(Columba eversmanni) • Otter (lutra lutra)				• Yellow eyed pigeon (Columba eversmanni) Baseline 73 for 2.3 km of monitoring route; mid-term tbd • Otter (lutra lutra) Baseline 2; mid-term 1 For Gaplangyr Reserve: • Argali (Ovis vignei) Baseline 67, or 0.013 per 1000 ha; mid-term 0.11 per 1000 ha • Kulan (Equus hemionus kulan) Baseline 71; mid-term 0.86 per 1000 ha • Goiterred gazelle (Gazella subgutturosa) Baseline 0.006 per 1000 ha; mid-term 1.7 per 1000 ha • Houbara bustard (Chlamydotis undulata) Baseline 1; mid-term 1 • Saker falcon (Falco cherrug) Baseline 7; mid-term 9 • Golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos) Baseline spring 6 fall 2; mid-term spring 25 fall 2 • Dalmatian pelican (Pelecanus crispus)	eversmanni) Baseline 73 for 2.3 km of monitoring route; current 83 for the same monitoring route • Otter (lutra lutra) Baseline 2; current 25 For Gaplangyr Reserve: • Argali (Ovis vignei) Baseline 67, or 0.013 per 1000 ha; current 0.11 per 1000 ha • Kulan (Equus hemionus kulan) Baseline 71; current 0.86 per 1000 ha • Goiterred gazelle (Gazella subgutturosa) Baseline 0.006 per 1000 ha; current 1.7 per 1000 ha • Houbara bustard (Chlamydotis undulata) Baseline 1; current 1 • Saker falcon (Falco cherrug) Baseline 7; current 9 • Golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos) Baseline spring 6 fall 2; current spring 25 fall 2 • Dalmatian pelican (Pelecanus crispus)
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				Baseline 5; mid-term 1 Great white pelican (<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>) Baseline tbd; mid-term spring 25 fall 2 The project team is currently reassessing the baseline indicator data; different original sources are being analysed, discrepancies identified and ways to reconcile the data (e.g. extrapolate) discussed with the reserves' and project's specialists. The justification for the baseline revision will be presented for the MTR's review.	Baseline 5; mid-term 1 Great white pelican (<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>) Baseline not available (at least 100, however, this data does not seem reliable); mid-term spring 25 fall 2 Progress: increase in population number of Bukhara deer and Otter in Amudarya Reserve and argali and Goitered gazelle in Gaplanyr Reserve; overall decrease trend for pelicans in both reserves; otherwise species population remain stable within natural fluctuation range For evidentiary documents, please refer to Ind23_Ev1_Species database Amudarya and Gaplanyr reserves
Indicator 24 : (KM): Updated and accessible environmental data and analysis on IBAs/KBAs and PAs.	Insufficiently developed data base in the PAs and environmental information on critical key species and habitats. Poor integration of existing data sets on biodiversity requirements in	Environmental data collected and methodologies elaborated. Assessments of ecological and cultural values; economic assessment of ecotourism potential in new and existing	-Gap Analysis Report on the IBAs/KBAs Ecological Integrity, Analysis of Anthropogenic Threats and Recommendations to Decision Makers -Data base on key species and habitats in the existing PAs and KBAs/IBAs under	This indicator focuses on the knowledge generation and sufficient information on key biodiversity areas and indicator species for effective and sustainable management of the PAs and KBAs/IBAs. The project will have the mid-term target for this indicator achieved before MTR. The project is supporting habitat mapping and biodiversity assessments for several KBAs/IBAs to update the information on their	Indicator definition: This indicator focuses on the knowledge generation and sufficient information on key biodiversity areas and indicator species for effective and sustainable management of the PAs and KBAs/IBAs. Progress: 25% of the EoP level (one out of planned four knowledge products commissioned) The project previously reported a technical justification package for 60,000 ha of KBAs/IBAs, including the Pytnyek and Zengibaba sanctuaries (refuges).

	different sectors.	PAs.	the project scope strengthened and accessible; PAs managers have a better access to environmental information and improved based for research and knowledge management -Study on the Potential for eco-tourism and ecosystem services assessments and potential PES mechanisms in the buffer and production zones around PAs, KBAs/IBAs in Amudarya Basin - available to decision makers and local communities -Experience generated during the development and implementation of two PES mechanisms established under the Management and Business	ecological integrity and BD values. The project specialists have prepared a technical justification package for 60,000 ha of KBAs/IBAs, including the Pytniak and Zengibaba sanctuaries (refuges). This package is now under official consideration by the Cabinet of Ministers. The project experts collected the justification package and coordinated with MOEP for its submission. The KM increment includes inventories and habitat mapping as part of feasibility studies, baseline assessments and preparatory work (including data on the population numbers of flagship and red-listed species and threats to their habitats). These elements are crucial for technical feasibility study aimed at establishing the refuges and ensuring protected status for the IBAs. As stated in the Prodoc, the preliminary gap analysis has identified the Tallymerjen IBA, located on the right bank of Amudarya Reserve in Dovletli district, as being under significant anthropogenic threat, with impact on key species such as black vulture, imperial eagle, steppe eagle, and peregrine falcon. Field research and technical studies conducted in 2020, based on results of an international expedition organized by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Great Britain), provided the foundation for preparing a new technical justification package. This package is now under consideration by the Cabinet of Ministers for	This package was amended in this reporting period following the 2024-25 field data and analyses, and is now under official consideration by the Cabinet of Ministers., The project will continue to support the legal designation of these national refuges (IUCN cat. IV). The project experts completed a study on Muskinata IBA, a small tugai forest and floodplain ecosystems on the left bank of Amudarya river. In 2020, the area was reported to have lost its IBA status and trigger species due to limited water availability and decline in bird nesting habitat. The project experts had a field IBA study to clarify the current status and ecological significance of these areas for further planning of conservation measures. Over the past two years, Muskinata has remained without water, which led the MOEP to propose its exclusion from the list of protected areas. However, this year the situation has changed, as detailed in the project expert field report and assessment. Muskinata IBA will therefore retain its status for the time being. For evidence, please refer to the expert report with detail on PA BD assessment data Ind24_Ev1_BD assessment report EoD Economic assessment of ecotourism
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			Plans of targeted PAs.	the designation of 83,000 ha of Tallymerjen IBA as a national refuge. The project will continue to support the legal designation of these national refuges (IUCN cat. IV). Additionally, project experts will finalise a study on Muskinata IBA, a small tugai forest and floodplain ecosystems on the left bank of Amudarya river, The area was reported to have lost its IBA status and trigger species due to limited water availability and decline in bird nesting habitat. For evidentiary documents, please refer to 1) ToR avifauna baseline study and justification (Ind19_Ev3_ToR Ornithologist_EoD_eng_revised June) 2) ToR ungulates baseline study and justification (Ind19_Ev4_ToR Zoologist_EoD_eng_revised June)	potential in new and existing PAs is yet to take place
Indicator 25: Existence of capacity building events and information sharing, for environmental inspectors and border officials, PAs staff in Biodiversity management trainings and local community	0	8 trainings delivered to environmental officials and PAs staff	15 trainings and outreach events (30 % female participants) 2 cross border study visits for joint environmental	The project is below the mid-term target number for training events, mostly due to operational constraints the project faces since its inception. An initial Training Needs Assessment (TNA)	Progress: The project reports 12 training events since its inception (80% of the EoP target) and one cross-border study visit (50 % of the EoP target). 268 individuals were trained, including 104 women (39%) Based on the MTR recommendations, the Training Needs Assessments (TNA) for

training on eco-tourism and arts and crafts;		3 trainings delivered to local communities	programming and work on wild ungulates migration corridors (Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan)	for the Kaplankyr staff was conducted as reported last year and re-visited in the current reporting period in view of UNESCO WH nomination in 2023. A Training needs assessment for Amudarya Reserve was finalized in the reporting period. For the reporting period 2 trainings for officials and PAs staff; 2 trainings for boarders; 2 trainings for local officials and local communities have been conducted as follows: - Workshop on strengthening biodiversity conservation and effective management of protected areas was held in Lebap (13.06.24) and Dashoguz project (20.06.24) regions - A round table with employees of the Amudarya and Kaplankyr nature reserves and key experts on biodiversity was held in Lebap project region (14.06.24) - Training on compliance with environmental legislation by local authorities and the local community was held in Lebap (16.11.23) and Dashoguz (28.11.23) project regions As reported last year, a plan for establishment of a training center in the Amudarya state nature reserve was	the both pilot reserves have been updated. During the reporting period, the following capacity building events were convened: July 30, 2024 – Round table to discuss issues of regulatory governance of nature management in buffer zones of state nature reserves, with participation from staff of Amudarya and Gaplangyr nature reserves, MOEP, and key biodiversity experts in Ashgabat. August 14, 2024 – Training on management planning for staff of the Amudarya reserve, where the content and structure of the management plan, requirements for baseline data, and planning objectives were discussed in accordance with modern best practices. December 10, 2024 – Round table on regulatory frameworks and their practical application for buffer zones and ecological corridors. May 7-8, 2025 – Experience exchange among staff of Turkmenistan's nature reserves. A total of 35 employees from Amudarya, Repetek, and Köpetdag reserves were trained. May 22, 2025 – Round table on improving the effectiveness of PA management capacity and evaluation of current environmental legislation of Turkmenistan regarding ecological corridors. March 14, 2025 – Training dedicated to
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			approved. The purpose is to train employees of PAs and other environmental institutions and improve their qualifications in areas such as BD conservation and patrolling, ecotourism development, anti-poaching efforts, creation of ecological corridors for animal migration, and application and enforcement of environmental legislation on the ground. With the creation of this training center, it will be possible to conduct trainings for employees and administration of the Koytendag, Repetek and Amudarya state nature reserves (130 individuals). The premises were allocated by the reserve and repair works financed by the project. Technical and operational capacity building is underway. A resource and information center is planned to be created in the Gaplangyr Nature Reserve to consolidate and concentrate various resources for training and professional development of specialists and agricultural producers. The facility will serve multiple purposes: as a visitor center, a space for engaging with the community, children and youth, and as a venue for partner events, for which the reserve could charge fees. Additionally, it can function as a mini-hotel for tourists. The creation of a training center in the Amudarya State Nature Reserve and a Resource Center in the Kaplankyr State Nature Reserve will contribute to the	SMART patrolling Evidence: Ind25_Ev1_Analytical report _Management plan _14 Aug 2024 Ind25_Ev2_Minutes_Round_Table_ 30.07.24 Ind25_Ev3_BD Round table_10 Dec 2024_Minutes Ind25_Ev4_Minutes_State Reserves Experience exchange _7-8.05.25 Ind25_Ev6_Minutes_BD Round table_22 May 2025 Ind25_Ev7_Brief_BD_World rangers Day_31.07.24 Ind25_Ev7_account of capacity building events
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				achievement of the goals of the National Program of Turkmenistan for the Aral Sea for 2021-2025. For evidentiary documents, please refer to 1) Summary of PA monitoring visits July 2024 (Ind20_Ev1_BTOR Component 2 July 2024) 3) Ref: Based on the lessons learned from past UNDP projects, the government supports the idea of creating resource centres to strengthen the capacity of agro-producers and for the sustainable development of project regions the (03_Minutes_1st_PBM_12.04.23; National Aral Program of Turkmenistan 2021-2025, point#67)	
Indicator 26 (GEF Core Indicator 4, Sub-indicator 4.1): Area under Improved agricultural practices benefiting biodiversity, on the basis of agreements with local communities, on PAs buffer zones and ecological corridors (ha).	0	Community outreach and participation approaches agreed with the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection Round table meetings and	A total area of 292,607 ha secured by agreements with local communities/authorities at around PA buffer zones and endangered IBAs/KBAs as follows: Total area of approx. 79,906	The mid-term target achieved, as the proposed strategy for project work under Outcome 2 outside the core PA areas was developed and appraised by the stakeholders (Project Board). However the project is not able to demonstrate notable progress with the mid-term target of stakeholder consultations and preliminary agreements secured with representatives of local authorities, daikhan associations, farmers and private entrepreneurs. The project progress with EoP sub-targets is	Progress: The mid-term target achieved, as the proposed strategy for project work under Outcome 2 outside the core PA areas was developed and appraised by the stakeholders (Project Board). However the project is not able to demonstrate notable progress with the mid-term target of stakeholder consultations and preliminary agreements secured with representatives of local authorities, daikhan associations, farmers and private entrepreneurs. The project progress with EoP sub-targets

		preliminary agreements secured with representatives of local authorities, daikhan associations, farmers and private entrepreneurs	ha supported by 3 local community endorsed ecological corridors around Amudarya State Nature Reserve • Total area of approx. 167,701 ha community based sustainable pasture management agreement and biodiversity conservation at Tallymerjen IBA/KBA • Total area of approx. 45,000 ha of community based sustainable pasture management agreements and biodiversity conservation around Goyungirlan IBA connected to Zengibaba and Tarymgaya biodiversity hotspots	presented below. -EoP sub-target 1: 3 local community endorsed ecological corridors around Amudarya State Nature Reserve (total area of 79,906 ha): Outside the perimeter of Amudarya State Nature Reserve along the Pitnyak-Kabakly-Nargiz route, the area is proposed to protect the migration of Tugai deer (<i>Cervus elaphus bactrianus</i>) and the ecological integrity of tugai habitats. Assisted natural regeneration of tugai, at Kabakly site will be supported by the project (within the framework of Output 1.2) to patch up tugai corridors. Status: So far, the project was focusing on baseline assessment and consultations. The baseline status is that the buffer zone of the reserve was nominally defined and will continue being a “paper PA” without practical steps towards regimented agricultural land use in accordance with the detailed methodologies and regulations. It was agreed with the key stakeholders that the planned agreements on sustainable agricultural practices should be legally grounded; the regimented use of agricultural lands should be based on the respective national regulations; the limitations in the land use should be clearly defined in accordance with those regulations. Buffer zones should be defined according to a clear methodology. There should be references to them in other laws and regulations, and consequently in the lease agreements. This also applies to the creation of ecological corridors.	is presented below. -EoP sub-target 1 definition: 3 local community endorsed ecological corridors around Amudarya State Nature Reserve (total area of 79,906 ha): Outside the perimeter of Amudarya State Nature Reserve along the Pitnyak-Kabakly-Nargiz route, the area is proposed to protect the migration of Tugai deer (<i>Cervus elaphus bactrianus</i>) and the ecological integrity of tugai habitats. Assisted natural regeneration of tugai, at Kabakly site will be supported by the project (within the framework of Output 1.2) to patch up tugai corridors. Status: The boundaries and configuration of ecological corridors have been determined by project specialists together with the reserve staff. The project assists in the legal formalization and regulation of the buffer zone regime of the reserve and ecological corridors. The project engages a lawyer to prepare recommendations on the Model Regulation on buffer zones and ecological corridors. The project's next steps include a justification package for ecological corridors. This involves consultations and coordination with government bodies to obtain official status and secure the corridors legally. Further procedures include demarcating the corridors for deer
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				The project discussed the possibility of organizing corridors between the clusters of the reserve and the two zakazniks, to ensure successful migration and habitats for wild ungulates and birds. The project works with hakimlyaks (local authorities) and local communities to increase the level of understanding of the value of tugai forests.. The project ICTA has developed a concept paper clarifying the existing regulatory gaps for the establishment and actual functioning of buffer zones and corridors and setting limitations on agricultural use of lands to support biodiversity. EoP sub-target 2: Community based sustainable pasture management agreement and biodiversity conservation at Tallymerjen IBA/KBA (167,701ha): The baseline situation analysis confirms that one third of the IBA area, or 83,000 ha were justified for an enhanced protection status as a nature refuge “Tallymerjen”; the justification was based on the pre-project studies and assessments. According to the proposed zonation and management plan, non-depletory regimented grazing will be ensured for the “core” territory of the refuge (once established); the territory will be monitored by the Koitendag Nature Reserve’s staff and capacities enforced with the acquisition of the UNESCO WH status. No regulation of grazing is mentioned for the buffer zone.	and wild boar in the field to clearly mark boundaries and secure the territories. An important part of the work is engaging with the local community and stakeholders to inform them of upcoming activities and gain their support. On December 10, 2024, and May 22, 2025, the work began with two roundtable discussions involving representatives from scientific organizations, authorities, and the local community. As part of BD assessments work carried out by two international experts for avifauna, ungulates and predators, recommendations have been obtained for creating ecological corridors for protection of stopover sites (floodplains, lakes, fields) and connections among wintering grounds, nesting sites, and resting areas for migratory avifauna species. The project plans regular monitoring to track the ecological corridors identified. Data collected will be analyzed to assess corridor effectiveness and identify any problematic areas. Joint planning and management with stakeholders are also planned to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of these territories. These activities will help validating the identified ecological corridors in legislation, and ensure the long-term conservation of species threatened with extinction.
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				The project impact with Tallymerjen area has been limited to the updated assessment of BD value and threats. As the next step, the project experts will review the regulations of the wildlife sanctuary and the current legislation to: a) Assess the grazing load and the carrying capacity of the pastures; b) Based on the condition of the pastures and carrying capacity, justify restrictions on pasture use in the sanctuary depending on the season, near watering holes and migration corridors of wild ungulates, near nesting sites and congregation areas of migratory birds, depending on the degree of degradation and specifics of restoration of specific pastures, etc. The remaining two-thirds of the IBA territory will not have the legal status of a sanctuary. This territory partially falls within the Aral region. Agricultural plots with winter crops are located to the south, outside the sanctuary, but within the IBA. They serve as the main foraging habitat for wintering waterfowl, in particular geese and the common crane. In autumn, they sometimes serve as a roosting site for part of the sociable lapwing population, and bird congregations during autumn. Plowing also attract the saker falcon. For this area the project will use GEF resources to focus on the consultations with the local resource users and secure agreements on sustainable agricultural practices on the pasture areas surrounding	EoP sub-target 2 definition: Community based sustainable pasture management agreement and biodiversity conservation at Tallymerjen IBA/KBA (167,701ha): Status: As reported previously, the baseline situation analysis confirms that one third of the IBA area, or 83,000 ha were justified for an enhanced protection status as a nature refuge “Tallymerjen”; the justification was based on the pre-project studies and assessments. According to the proposed zonation and management plan, non-depletory regimented grazing will be ensured for the “core” territory of the refuge (once established); the territory will be monitored by the Koitendag Nature Reserve’s staff and capacities enforced with the acquisition of the UNESCO WH status. No regulation of grazing is mentioned for the buffer zone. The project impact with Tallymerjen area has been limited to the updated assessment of BD value and threats. As the next step, the project experts will review the regulations of the wildlife sanctuary and the current legislation to: a) Assess the grazing load and the carrying capacity of the pastures; b) Based on the condition of the pastures and carrying capacity, justify restrictions on pasture use in the sanctuary depending on the season, near watering holes and migration corridors of wild ungulates, near nesting sites and
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				and/or overlapping this IBA. The project will engage local khakimliks and communities into awareness activities, and will make the micro-grants programme available for demonstration of sustainable practices. Sub-target 3: Community based sustainable pasture management and Tarymgaya biodiversity hotspots (45,000 ha) agreements and biodiversity conservation around Goyungirlan IBA connected to Zengibaba: The areas were included into the planned “Zengibaba” refuge (sanctuary, IUCN cat.IV). During this reporting period, the project experts were responsible for preparing the justification package and coordinating with MOEP for its submission to the Cabinet of Ministers. For evidentiary documents, please refer to - Ind26_Ev1_Explanatory note_Buffer zones and corridors	congregation areas of migratory birds, depending on the degree of degradation and specifics of restoration of specific pastures, etc. The remaining two-thirds of the IBA territory will not have the legal status of a sanctuary. This territory partially falls within the Aral region. Agricultural plots with winter crops are located to the south, outside the sanctuary, but within the IBA. They serve as the main foraging habitat for wintering waterfowl, in particular geese and the common crane. In autumn, they sometimes serve as a roosting site for part of the sociable lapwing population, and bird congregations during autumn. Plowing also attract the saker falcon. For this area the project will use the GEF resources to focus on the consultations with the local resource users and secure agreements on sustainable agricultural practices on the pasture areas surrounding and/or overlapping this IBA. The project will engage local khakimliks and communities into awareness activities, and will make the micro-grants programme available for demonstration of sustainable practices. Sub-target 3 definition: Community based sustainable pasture management and Tarymgaya biodiversity hotspots (45,000 ha) agreements and biodiversity conservation around Goyungirlan IBA connected to Zengibaba:
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				Status: The areas were included into the planned “Zengibaba” refuge (sanctuary, IUCN cat.IV). The project experts delivered a comprehensive BD assessment that supported a revised justification package for the establishment of this PA that is now under MOEP’s consideration. To continue the work, considering that this issue is sensitive in land-use planning, it was decided to engage an international legal expert for buffer zones and ecological corridors as reported above. The project continues expert consultations aimed at identifying migration routes of key biodiversity species, such as the Bukhara deer and wild boar. As part of the development of transboundary corridors, the project maintains an active dialogue by involving other international initiatives (OSCE), including the Barsakelmes Nature Reserve (Kazakhstan). This issue was discussed within the framework of the Central Asian Commission on Environmental Protection (CACEP), and a series of meetings were held with the participation of MOEP and representatives of the reserve, including delegations from both sides. As a result of these activities, a platform for information exchange and coordination of actions was established, and the dialogue on the development of this
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					direction continues with the aim of strengthening cooperation and ensuring biodiversity conservation in transboundary regions. Evidence: Ind26_Ev1_Explanatory note_Buffer zones and corridors_2025 Ind26_Ev2_Amudarya ungulate corridor
Indicator 27: Farmers /producers' net income (differentiated by gender) from sustainable products (livestock, hay, seeds, dried fruits, medicinal plants, handicrafts) resulted from biodiversity friendly agricultural practices in PA buffer and production zones	Baseline to be determined in the first year of project implementation. Net Income men: \$ X Net income women: \$ X Net income of at least 80% of participating farmers (male/ female) documented at project inception (year 1)	Net Income men: \$X + 10% Net income women: \$X + 10% Participating farmers show at least 10% increase based on year 1 estimate.	Net Income men: \$X + 20% Net income women: \$X + 20% Participating farmers show 20% increase based on year 1 estimate.	The project held a series of meetings with local authorities and project beneficiaries to analyze existing households--2623 in Lebap pilot regions (Gengeshlik Lebap, Kabakly, Isbaz) and 2764 in Dashoguz pilot regions (d/a Ashik Aydyn and d/a Ashir Kakabayev)--to determine the number of residents by sex (about 6634 female and 6448 male in Lebap pilot regions and 10513 female and 10145 male in Dashoguz pilot regions), the area of irrigated land, the number of farmers, the cost of growing products, etc. Agro-business leaders (farmers) were also identified, including those who entered the National Program for the Protection of the Aral Sea (Darganata etrap). The project also met with groups of farmers around the mapped buffer zones to identify their needs and promising areas for alternative income. During the reporting period up to 34 women were trained on alternative source of income; an analysis was carried out for two areas at the level of pilot regions (production of felt	Progress: The project organized a series of capacity building interventions aimed to increase local income from horticulture, sustainable fish farming, bee keeping, and wool processing, and is reporting net income figures associated with the new sustainable livelihood opportunities below. According to project experts, measurement of project impact as % net income raise may not be reflective of project impact as it depends on any external factors and requires a substantive array of financial data for individual households that proved to be unobtainable during first two years of project implementation. In the absence of thorough financial baseline and taking into account that the increase in individual incomes may be affected by many factors outside the project scope of impact, an adaptive change for this indicator will be discussed before the next reporting period. The indicator could be reformulated to make it more specific and reflective of the project's direct impact from sustainable livelihood capacity

				products and development of horticulture) Due to the lack of qualified expertise locally, and the operational limitations for the project to engage national or local experts, the baseline data collection was fragmentary (mostly on horticulture and wool processing sectors), and the sex-disaggregated data on current net income is not available. The project made a targeted assessment on possible increase in incomes associated sustainable horticulture and wool production. The project involved the local households leaders, mostly women, in trainings and practical seminars on BD-friendly horticulture development in arid climate. For evidentiary documents, please refer to: - Analysis of an alternative source of income (wool production) - Analysis of an alternative source of income (horticulture production)	building and the implementation of the Small Grants Programme. Instead of calculating an average change in net income for farmers selected using an area-based approach, it is proposed to assess the financial effectiveness of the project's direct investment in targeted capacity building and small grants. Status: Horticulture: In Dashoguz Velayat, 25 households are involved in the project as direct beneficiaries, of which 16 are headed by women and 9 by men; in Lebap Velayat, 59 households are involved, of which 15 are headed by women and 44 by men. These beneficiaries have received training under the project, received consultations, were provided with demonstration and training video materials on practical gardening prepared by the project in Dashoguz, as well as practical instructions. All of them have confirmed that they are using the acquired knowledge and skills in managing their household plots. Data on profit estimates for direct beneficiaries: Dashoguz Velayat: Average net profit per plot: 8,120 – 9,280 manat per year Total profit of 25 households: 203,000 –
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					232,000 manat per year Of which, women (16 households): 129,920 – 148,480 manat per year Lebap Velayat: Average net profit per plot: 8,960 – 10,240 manat per year Total profit of 59 households: 528,640 – 604,160 manat per year Of which, women (15 households): 134,400 – 153,600 manat per year Sustainable fish farming: The number of project beneficiaries involved in fish farming and who have enhanced their potential amounts to 32 people, of whom only 2 are women. These beneficiaries received training within the project framework, obtained consultations, and were provided with demonstration and instructional video materials on practical fish farming in Lebap province, as well as practical guidelines. All of them confirmed applying the acquired knowledge and skills in working at their pond farms. The total profit of fish farmers—project beneficiaries—amounts to 445,246.15 manat (, with men's share of the profit totaling 446,869.35 manat. Despite the small number of women among the beneficiaries, their contribution to the total
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					profit is significant—the profit earned by women fish farmers amounts to 8,376.8 manat. This indicates that even a small group of women fish farmers can generate substantial income, highlighting the importance of their participation and the potential for further development of their activities within the project or the industry as a whole. The project organized trainings and ensured local capacity building through development of targeted training materials, guidelines and methodologies, and provided the potential beneficiaries with legal and regulatory professional consulting support. This year, the project experts commissioned a guide with an adapted methodology for sustainable carp fish farming that involves methods of returning collector waters for secondary use. The "Adapted Methodology for Carp Fish Breeding for the Arid Conditions of Lebap Province" was made available for individual households and khakimliks. As a side-impact, the project attempts to address regulatory barriers associated with the recent privatization of Turkmenistan's fish industry and its negative impact on the private sector industry from the short-term allocation of plots for fish farming. The project identified regulatory gaps and, in cooperation with the FAO, involves international expertise to develop
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					recommendations for addressing these gaps. Bee keeping: Lebap: - Beneficiaries: 15 incl. 6 women. - Average number of bee colonies per one bee keeper: 35 - Average income per one bee keeper: 28 669 manat - Total profit: 430 035 manat Dashoguz: - Beneficiaries: 7 incl. 1 woman - Average number of bee colonies per one bee keeper: 30 - Average income per one bee keeper: 24 000 manat - Total profit: 168 000 manat The project outreached to the Beekeepers Society of Turkmenistan, and an assessment of local community interest in developing this sector has been carried out. A beneficiary database has been created, and an initiative group of beekeepers consisting of 7 people,
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					including 2 women, has been formed. Wool processing: Lebap: - Beneficiaries: 3 incl. 1 woman. - Average number of sheep per one keeper: 245 - Average annual income from wool processing: 612,5 manat - Total profit: 1837,5 manat - Female profit: 900 manat Dashoguz: - Beneficiaries:44 incl. 1 woman - Average number of sheep per one keeper: 428 - Average income per one keeper: 1071,3 manatr - Total profit: 47137,5 manat - Female profit: 202,5 manat The beneficiaries have acquired theoretical knowledge and practical skills in wool processing and production technologies, as well as the basic methods and tools for working with this
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					material. Group leaders have been engaged to support and disseminate the knowledge gained among their communities, which contributes to more effective use of wool and, consequently, increased profits. For evidentiary documents, please refer to Ind27_Ev1_income from horticulture_LB_DZ Ind27_Ev2_Income from fish farming_LB Ind27_Ev3_Income from beekeeping Ind27_Ev4_Income from wool craft
The progress of the objective/outcome can be described as:	On track				
Evidence uploaded:	YES				
Outcome 3					
Component 3: International knowledge sharing and cooperation for the Aral Sea Basin					
Outcome 3: Strengthened and better-informed engagement of Turkmenistan in implementation of regional cooperation under the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) for improved management and restoration of Aral basin land and water resources, as evidenced by:					
- Turkmenistan is represented at key regional fora and events supporting the restoration of the Aral Sea					

- Support provided to international dialog and cooperation on IFAS					
Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target level	End of project target level	Level at Jun 30, 2024	Cumulative progress since project start as of Jun 30, 2025
Indicator 28 (KM): Number of events strengthening national capacity to participate into regional cooperation programmes in the Aral Sea Basin	There are no events strengthening the national capacities to engage in regional negotiations	2 Water Diplomacy Seminars 1 IFAS meeting attended	5 Water Diplomacy Seminars supported by IFAS and the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) 3 IFAS meetings attended by Turkmenistan delegation contributing to IFAS decisions	The project exceeds its mid-term target for this indicator. In addition to two (2) Water Diplomacy seminars and one (1) IFAS meeting reported last year, in the reporting year the project: - Organised one (1) Water Diplomacy seminar in Ashgabat (April 2024); - Supported one (1) IFAS meeting (Kazakhstan, March 2024). The Water Diplomacy Seminar was organized in collaboration with the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) and the Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development (SIC ICSD). The seminar underscored the necessity of regional cooperation and the development of coordinated strategies to address the complex water issues in Central Asia. It aimed to foster a collaborative environment for sustainable water resource management, benefiting all participating countries, including Turkmenistan. The seminar focused on the critical importance of water diplomacy in the Central Asian region, emphasizing the region's heavy reliance on	Progress: Mid-term target surpassed, 63% of the EoP target level achieved, comprised of the following elements: a) Out of five (5) Water Diplomacy Seminars planned as EoP target, the project organized three (3), thus achieving 60% of the EOP target. b) Since its start, the project also supported two (2) out of three (3) IFAS meetings set as EOP target, thus achieving 66% of the EoP target. The project continues to fulfill its incremental role in regional Water Diplomacy by supporting regional dialogue and building knowledge to inform the national position in negotiations on water resource allocation in the region. In the reporting period, the project shared experience at the Regional Dialogue on Water Diplomacy: Challenges, Solutions, and Partnership, organized by the Ministry of Ecology of the Republic of Uzbekistan, UNDP Uzbekistan, and the GEF on June 4, 2025. The Project Manager delivered a presentation on the Project's water diplomacy activities, highlighting its efforts to: strengthen

				transboundary water resources. The seminar brought together representatives from various ministries and agencies of Turkmenistan, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, State Committee for Water Management, Academy of Sciences, Local administrations of Dashoguz and Lebap regions, Turkmen Agricultural University. The workshop speakers included the representatives of IFAS, the Caspian Environment Programme, and the specialists of the “sister” UNDP-GEF project in Uzbekistan. For evidentiary documents, please refer to 1) Water Diplomacy Workshop Proceedings, April 20204 (Ind28_Ev1_Water Diplomacy Workshop Proceedings_09.04.24) 2) IFAS meeting BTOR (Ind28_Ev2_ICS-DIFAS_meeting_Trip_report_25-29.03.24_Astana_Eng)	Turkmenistan's role in regional cooperation regarding the Aral Sea; support the participation of decision-makers on regional and international platforms; promote the development of water diplomacy; provide a national platform for facilitated dialogue and participatory learning on various topics; document and disseminate lessons learned among partners and stakeholders; facilitate the implementation of national programs. The project is planning the next national Water Diplomacy event in September 2025 in close consultation with the MFA and the UNDP CO. One of the key objectives of this event is to bring together all initiatives and organizations operating in the Turkmen Aral Sea region to ensure synergy and coordination in achieving the region's sustainable development goals. Evidence: Ind4_Ev1_Minutes_LDN WG Meeting_(Act 1.1)_27.11.24_Final Ind28_Ev1_Uzbek Water Diplomacy Concept and Agenda Workshop final http://sic.icwc-aral.uz/releases/eng/574.htm In February and June 2025, the project actively participated in a dialogue aimed at strengthening national capacity to engage in regional cooperation programs for the environmental restoration of the
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					Aral Sea transboundary basin. A particular cooperation programme supported by the project is focused innovative approaches to water and land resources in five Central Asian countries, is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy (MAECI), the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), and Sogesid – an internal company of the Italian state administration. Our project served as a crucial bridge, connecting the interests of international partners with those of local stakeholders in Turkmenistan. The project support to this initiative included: • A concise analysis of water resources in the Turkmen Aral Sea region. This provided a foundational understanding for discussions. • Targeted outreach and information sharing with local administrations (hyakimliks) and water management organizations. This ensured local priorities were heard and understood. • Collection and articulation of concrete project ideas and regional priorities. These were precisely formulated for inclusion in the conceptual framework for a new regional cooperation program. The project support successfully channeled an international cooperation
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				opportunity and significantly facilitated local access to potential Italian Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding. By justifying our regional priorities for external funding and building the capacity of local partners to articulate their needs, the project helped to shortlist these "our" regions for inclusion in the donor-funded program. Evidence: Ind28_Ev2_Minutes Italiyan delegation_rus_eng_October_2024 The project actively engaged a wide array of stakeholders in Lebap and Dashoguz velayats throughout all stages of integrated water resources management planning on irrigated lands. These key partners included water user associations (WUAs), water user groups (WUGs), daikhan associations, private entrepreneurs, representatives from local branches of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS). During a study tour to Uzbekistan from June 20-28, the project also established active cooperation with the Middle Amu Darya Basin Water Organization "Amudarya," including its head office in Urgench, which monitors water resource distribution at the regional level. An agreement on cooperation was reached between the parties. This valuable event allowed our national partners to directly
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					observe and learn from regional innovations, significantly strengthening their capacity to participate effectively in future regional cooperation programs within the Aral Sea Basin. Through this, we identified possible joint activities to be pursued under the new agreement. At the project's initiative, a meeting was organized in Tashkent on June 24 with the Head of the Department of Flora and Fauna of the Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan and the biodiversity focal point, who was also in Tashkent. At the early stages of implementation, the "sister" GEF 7 Amudarya projects in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan had limited cooperation opportunities. The study tour in July 2025 provided an opportunity for both projects to discuss "parallel" activities and directions of project interventions, such as LDN assessments and Water Diplomacy. It was agreed that issues in the focus of both projects and both Ministries, such as Water Diplomacy and Amudarya Basin-Level Water Management can be raised and discussed within the agenda of bi-lateral cooperation between two sectoral ministries in two countries. Evidence: letter of support from Basin Water Organization "Amudarya" Ind28_Ev3_Letter_BVO Amudarya
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Indicator 29 (KM) Number of national priorities embedded in IFAS led programmes and initiatives, supported by the project.	National priorities that are identified in the regional IFAS facilitated programmes are not implemented.	2 national priorities embedded in regional initiatives put forward by Turkmenistan are supported by the project	5 national priorities embedded in International and regional initiatives put forward by Turkmenistan to address problems of the Aral Sea Basin are supported by the project.	The project reported the achievement of this indicator's mid-term target last year, as follows: The project supported consultations aimed to incorporate the two initiatives of Turkmenistan on REP4SD and ASBP-4 in the resolution of respective conferences. The 79th session of Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP, May 15-19, 2023 Bangkok) adopted a Resolution "Consideration of conditions for the establishment of a United Nations Special Program for the Aral Sea Basin" (Resolution ESCAP/79/L9). Two project-born initiatives were included in the final resolution of the International Conference in Dushanbe on 5-7 June, 2023 that calls for joint efforts of all prospective and interested donors in implementation of these Regional Programs (Resolution of the IFAS conference).	Progress: achievement of 100% MTR level and 40% of the EoP target level: 2 national priorities embedded in regional initiatives put forward by Turkmenistan are supported by the project (previously reported) The Project continues to actively contribute to the national follow-up on the resolution of the 79th ESCAP session that called for a feasibility assessment for the establishment of a UN Special Program on the Aral Sea Basin, As part of these efforts, the Project participated in the Regional Consultative Meeting on the Feasibility and Conditions for the Establishment of a UN Special Programme for the Aral Sea, held from 30 November to 1 December 2024. The consultative meeting discussed modalities for creating a dedicated UN Special Programme for the region. The Project Manager contributed to the discussions by sharing key experiences and lessons learned from the implementation of integrated water resources management activities in Turkmenistan's Aral Sea region. This engagement supports the alignment of national actions with broader regional efforts, promoting water security and LDN-based sustainable land management across the basin. Evidence: Ind29_Ev1_Analytical paper on water diplomacy_rus_01_08_25
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					In the reporting period, the project contributed to another regional initiative that is not directly linked to the Aral crisis region but is highly relevant to the project work beyond the production landscape: biodiversity assessments and expert proposals for conservation measures within ecological corridors for transboundary migration of flagship and rare species, serving as input to support the national implementation of the Plan of Action under the Memorandum of Understanding on Wildlife Conservation on the Ustyurt Plateau, which was signed by Turkmenistan in 2024 jointly with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Evidence: Ind24_Ev1_BD assessment report EoD
Indicator 30 (KM). Number of awareness raising events and targeted KM products on water, LD and BD issues in the Aral Sea Basin	Limited awareness raising on biodiversity, land and water management in Aral Sea Basin	- Communication Plan finalized, communications needs of the key stakeholders identified and Communication Plan refined and under implementation 10 Awareness	20 awareness raising events 20 Radio Talk Shows for farmers with a segment for women farmers - Available LDN/SLM/biodiversity training/information materials and	The project is implementing its awareness raising events and activities in accordance with the M plan updated on a yearly basis. Apart from trainings, roundtables, orientation workshops and other events aimed to raise stakeholder awareness and competence on specific aspects in the project focus (reported above for three project Components), in the reporting period the project organized 6 awareness-raising events targeting broader audience, general public and specific groups – youth and women. Two rounds of intellectual “Brain Ring” game were held targeting the youth audience, one in	Mid-term targets achieved. 40% of the EoP level achieved, assessed as follows: 60% of the EoP target for awareness raising events achieved. 20% of EoP target for radio talk shows achieved The following elements of knowledge sharing are yet to take place: -Commissioning and distribution of knowledge products, specifically analytical technical reports on integrated water-land resources to inform regional

		raising events • Radio Talk Shows • Available LDN/SLM/biodiversity training/information materials	country-specific knowledge shared on UNCCD/ WOCAT platform; CACILM II platform; CAREC platform; Adaptation Fund project platform • Project-video Documentary • Analytical technical reports on integrated water-land resources to inform regional programming under IFAs • Project Sustainability Strategy presented and endorsed by project Board and MAEP	December 2023 in Dashoguz, and one in March 2024 in Ashgabat. An infographics competition “Forests and Innovation” was organised in May-June, 2024. The project reports two radio programs dedicated to 1) the International Day for Saving Aral on 26 March 2024, and 2) the World Environment Day on 5 June, 2024. The project reports on the following knowledge products commissioned by project experts in the reporting period: • Analysis of the legal and institutional potential of the country to look for the possibilities to implement conceptual LDN approaches for pastures and irrigated agriculture land use • Assessment of existing scientific and research potential, and institutional capabilities in the country to develop and introduce a system of land resources indicators in pastures and in irrigated agriculture land use • Analysis of the state of biodiversity in the Zengibaba area of the Dashoguz velayat and Pitnyak in the Lebap velayat as potential sites for creation of specially protected natural areas. Given the importance of these regions for the conservation of rare species, particularly animals, recommendations were prepared and submitted to MOEP. These recommendations specifically include a justification for incorporating the Tyarimgay	programming under IFAS (initiated); - LDN/SLM/biodiversity training/information materials and country-specific knowledge shared on UNCCD/ WOCAT platform; CACILM II platform; CAREC platform; Adaptation Fund project platform (initiated); - Project video-documentary (not initiated); - Project Sustainability Strategy (not initiated) The project is implementing its awareness raising events and activities in accordance with the KM plan updated on a yearly basis. Since its start, the project organized 40+ events that included awareness raising as key objective. In order to avoid double counting, the project will introduce conservative reporting approach where one event is not reported for different indicators. With this approach, the project reports 14 awareness raising events and 7 radio talk shows targeting broader audience, general public and specific groups – youth and women (i.e. apart from trainings, roundtables, orientation workshops and other events aimed to raise stakeholder awareness and competence on specific aspects in the project focus reported above for three project Components). The project distributed LDN/SLM/biodiversity training/information materials for the training and awareness raising events.
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				escarpments and the saxaul forest located between the Zengibaba lakes and the Tyarimgay escarpments (covering a total area of about 34,000 hectares) into the future Zengibaba refuge. • The technical review and f recommendations on the feasibility of concluding a Memorandum of Cooperation on the conservation of wildlife on the Ustyurt Plateau (between the relevant structures of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan), within the framework of the Convention for Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). Following the review, justified recommendations were provided to the relevant authorities in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, advising them to enter into a formal agreement to cooperate on the conservation of wildlife species and their habitats in the Ustyurt Plateau region. • The baseline analysis of the current state of environmental flow assessment in the country.	The Project is actively working on promoting alternative sources of income for women farmers. As part of these efforts, a series of seminars was conducted to train beneficiaries on income-generating activities and entrepreneurship. To support beneficiaries in accessing markets, a fair was held as part of the "Ecology of Culture" festival on November 10, 2024, in Dashoguz with active participation of women. The event was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dashoguz city administration, the American Corner, UNESCO, and local NGOs "Ecodurmush" and "Yashyl Shohle." The project participated in the National Local Conferences of Youth on Climate Change (LCOY), held in Balkanabat, Turkmenabat, Ashgabat, and Dashoguz in September 2024. These events reached 1,376 students, serving a crucial role in raising youth awareness about the project's objectives and the core values it promotes. In addition to its participation in the LCOY, the project conducted thematic lectures to raise awareness among students about key environmental and social challenges. Held at leading universities in Turkmenistan, these sessions highlighted the role of gender in sustainable development and emphasized the importance of environmental stewardship
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					in the context of the Aral Sea Basin. The following KM products were developed during the reporting period. 1) Methodology for restoration of tugai forests https://sic-icsd.com.tm/ru/databases/ecosystems-and-biodiversity 2) Methodology of ungulate species census https://sic-icsd.com.tm/ru/databases/ecosystems-and-biodiversity 3) Guidelines on Artificial Reproduction of Carp Fish Species https://sic-icsd.com.tm/ru/databases/ecosystems-and-biodiversity 4) The Methodology of Irrigating Saline Lands https://sic-icsd.com.tm/ru/databases/water-resources-management 5) The Methodology for Installation of Water Accounting Systems https://sic-icsd.com.tm/ru/databases/water-resources-management 6) Analyses of the legal regimes of
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					Protected Areas https://sic-icsd.com.tm/ru/databases/ecosystems-and-biodiversity The project operates in remote areas of the country, where radio is often the primary source of information. To raise awareness about the importance of preserving biodiversity and ecosystems, the project develops and broadcasts radio programs. During the reporting period, five new programs were aired to enhance public understanding. 1) Radiocast on radiochannel "Char tarapdan", "Conservation and Sustainable Management of Land Resources and Ecosystems of High Natural Value in the Aral Sea Basin" on 24 December, 2024; 2) Radiocast on radiochannel "Watan", "Conservation and Sustainable Management of Land Resources and Ecosystems of High Natural Value in the Aral Sea Basin". 3) Radio broadcast dedicated to Earth Day was aired on the "Char Tarapdan" radio channel on April 25. 4) and 5) Two broadcasts, featuring representatives from the Amudarya and Gaplanyr State Nature Reserves, coincided with International Biodiversity Day. Airing on the Turkmen radio channel "Char Tarapdan," on May 22 and May 23. A documentary film on Ecosystems in
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					Turkmenistan was produced, featuring the Aral Project with a particular focus on the Amudarya and Gaplangyr Nature Reserves. The film was successfully broadcast on the national Turkmenistan TV channel on June 5, in celebration of World Environment Day. A nationwide contest for informational shields titled "The Importance of Biodiversity Conservation in Turkmenistan's Specially Protected Natural Areas." was held from April 17, 2025 to May 22, 2025, aimed to raise awareness and engage local communities living near the Amudarya and Gaplangyr State Nature Reserves. Evidence: Indicator 30_Ev1_account of awareness events
The progress of the objective/outcome can be described as:	On track				
Evidence uploaded:	YES				
Outcome 4					
Component 4					
Monitoring and Evaluation					
Outcome 4.1					

Project results properly monitored and evaluated					
Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target level	End of project target level	Level at Jun 30, 2024	Cumulative progress since project start as of Jun 30, 2025
Indicator 31 Monitoring and Evaluation reports Evaluative knowledge available to project partners	N/A	- Midterm evaluation report - M&E activities	- Reports with monitored and evaluated project results (GEF midterm and final reports) - Quarterly monitoring activities (UNDP)	Inception workshop was held in November 2022 and Inception Report summarizing key findings of the inception phase, proposed changes and recommendations was prepared and submitted to RTA for review and endorsement in February 2023. The PB endorsed the Inception report in April 2023. The project team reassessed its M&E plan and updated timeline for regular monitoring of field level activities by the project and UNDP CO management. PM regularly convenes monitoring field visits to the targeted region of the project. PM prepares quarterly updates on project progress. The project has completed its second PIR in this reporting period. Project Mid-Term Review is planned for October 2024 – April 2025 with a field trip in February 2025.	Project Mid-Term Review took place in January-April 2025 with a field trip in February 2025 as originally planned. The MTR Management Response with key actions is ready. The MTR recommendations center on enhancing the strategic, operational, and institutional effectiveness of the project. Specifically, the review urges the development of a comprehensive enabling framework for integrated land and water use planning (ILUP), creation of a detailed roadmap to improve protected area (PA) management, and strengthening monitoring of project impacts through better-designed surveys. It calls for increased project visibility, proactive knowledge sharing with regional projects, and greater gender mainstreaming. To address delays and maximize impact, the MTR recommends a possible 18-month, no-cost extension (conditional on institutional commitment), development of results-oriented workplans and budgets reflective of current realities and updated financial planning. The project management has largely accepted these recommendations and is undertaking steps—including hiring experts, developing adaptive

					management measures, revising survey methodologies, enhancing knowledge management, and updating the gender action plan—to ensure timely and effective implementation within the evolving project and institutional context. The GEF MTR Risk Assessment completed. Mid-Term Co-financing Table completed. Mid-Term GEF Core Indicator Worksheet completed Indicator Worksheet completed. Evidence: 6463 TKM Aral_risk log Quantum and GEF for MTR GEF8_Core_Indicator_Reporting_Template_PIMS6463 Turkmenistan Amudarya MTR METT_scorecards_PIMS6463_Amudarya_Turkmenistan_mid-term_rev UNDP TKM Management Response_GEF Amudarya GEF PIMS 6463_UNDP Turkmenistan Aral Project_co-financing template for MTR Project MTR report_Final
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The progress of the objective/outcome can be described as:	On track
Evidence uploaded:	YES

G. Finance/Co-Finance

Finance/Co-finance

Please provide a brief update on co-financing for this project. How has expected co-financing changed during implementation? How has co-financing contributed to achieving expected results? (This question will not be submitted to the GEF.)	
Co-financing remains a concern, particularly with regard to expected contributions from the Government. While the project team continues to engage with government stakeholders and NGO partners to monitor both financial and in-kind contributions, reporting from the Government remains limited. The Country Office believes that the pledged Government co-financing, mainly sourced from ongoing Government programmes, is being implemented through those programmes. However, it is challenging to verify the extent and percentage of project-related co-financing that has been realized. Written requests from the CO to the Government for confirmation of actualized co-financing have yet to receive a response. In contrast, co-financing commitments from NGOs are being actively fulfilled. The co-financing materialized and confirmed with evidence represents 7% of the target, or USD 4,007,047 as reported to the MTR.	
Cumulative GL delivery against total approved amount (in prodoc):	27.35%
Cumulative GL delivery against expected delivery as of this year:	30.64%
Cumulative disbursement as of Jun 30, 2025: <i>*Disbursement for the FY 2025 period is an estimate as books for UNDP Q2 2025 are not yet closed.</i>	1,253,655

Key Financing Amounts

PPG Amount	120,000
GEF Grant Amount	4,583,196
Co-financing	57,528,000

H. Implementation Progress

Project Manager: Please provide comments on delays with outputs/activities during the period 1 July 2024 through 30 June 2025. If there were no delays, please indicate 'not applicable'.

No significant delays with outputs/activities occurred during the reporting period. The project, however, lags behind with the regional LDN target setting and ILUP preparation for the pilot regions. The previously reported delays with Output 1.3. have been partially compensated; the demo activities for restoration of abandoned irrigated farmland and degraded pastures await the complex procurement planned for 2025.

CO Programme Officer: Please include specific measures to manage the project's implementation performance

To manage the project's implementation performance, the UNDP CO will build on the progress made in resolving the major operational delays experienced during 2023–2024, such as staffing gaps and RP onboarding issues. Although budget execution currently stands at 27.35% of the GEF grant, key procurement and implementation packages are being prepared, positioning the project for accelerated delivery in the second half of 2025 and into 2026. To ensure this momentum is sustained, the UNDP CO will strengthen coordination with RP to improve the timeliness of implementation and co-financing tracking. In addition, regular progress reviews tied to key procurement and disbursement milestones will be introduced to promptly identify and resolve emerging bottlenecks.

BPPS RTA: Please include specific measures to manage the project's implementation performance.

- Implement a procurement acceleration package (address scarcity of the market/low-quality bids) and stricter specs especially for complex field works
- Execute the approved Budget Revision and launch the next BR (Quantum/PIMS+) to reallocate toward implementation-ready lines.
- Tie disbursement to delivery bundles (ILUP adoption packs; sanctuary dossiers; restoration/irrigation lots) and track them in monthly reviews led by CO/RP (as flagged in PIR IP measures).
- Strengthen co-finance realization/verification: keep co-financing as an active risk in the log; send/track formal MFA request letters confirming Government co-finance under state programmes and report semi-annually.
- Maintain RP capacity-building and pipeline readiness (now in place) to recover delays

I. Project Governance

1) Please enter the dates of Project Board meetings during the reporting period (1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025)
2024-07-31
2024-12-10
3rd Project Board_31.07.2024_Rus.pdf 4th Project Board_10.12.24_Rus_final.pdf

Project governance questions

Has project oversight been exercised effectively via the Project Board meetings during this reporting period?
Yes
Please briefly expand on your response.
The Project Board convened twice during the reporting period, with active participation from key Government ministries and local authorities from the project's pilot regions. Members were engaged in reviewing progress and planning future activities. They also took an active role in budget discussions, including the reallocation of funds from underutilized lines to areas where they saw greater need—sometimes diverging from the project's original objectives. As the oversight agency, UNDP CO, with support from the BBPS RTA, continues to ensure that the project remains aligned with its intended outcomes, while balancing the donor-approved budget with the evolving priorities of the Government and community-level beneficiaries.

J. Ratings and Overall Assessments

Role	2025 Development Objective Progress Rating	2025 Implementation Progress Rating
UNDP BPPS Technical Advisor	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory

Role	2025 Overall Assessment
UNDP BPPS Technical Advisor	Overall Assessment This is the third PIR for this five-year project aimed at promoting LDN and restore/improve land and water enhancing the sustainability and resilience of livelihoods and globally significant ecosystems in Turkmenistan's Amudarya watershed, using a NIM-assisted modality. The implementation progress trend is positive since last year, with important milestones namely: (i) Responsible Party contracted (Mar 2025) and trained on NIM; (ii) Market assessment and adjusted procurement strategies to counter limited domestic supplier capacity; (iii) Technical baselines (LDN, biodiversity, restoration designs) largely finalized to enable field expenditures (iv) Stakeholder structures (local steering, TWGs) reinforced; (v) SGP redesigned to catalyze community uptake/co-finance. At the objective level, the project tracks its progress against three indicators. The MTR assessed that the objective indicators currently report 90% progress against mid-term targets. As reported by the project, the ongoing efforts of the project are expected to start yielding visible results in the field in the next reporting period, allowing for a more accurate assessment of progress towards the EoP targets indicators. The project continues to strengthen its institutional architecture, align policies, and prepare field-level interventions, while piloting early adoption of sustainable land and water practices. Progress is consistent with MTR recommendations, especially the call to: (i) run ILUP and field measures in parallel, (ii) update co-financing and results framework (RF), (iii) strengthen local MRV systems, and (iv) invest in international technical expertise. However, a recurring challenge is the lag between readiness (designs, plans, policies) and field works and verified hectares or outcomes on the ground. DO Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS). Clarification: The MS rating reflects strong institutional progress and early implementation of MTR corrective actions but limited field results to date (which are critical to reaching DO). Verified hectares across restoration, pasture, and irrigated land indicators are still pending, meaning tangible impacts are not yet measurable. Sustained momentum and faster translation of plans into verified

results will be essential to move towards a Satisfactory (S) rating in 2026.

Objective level progress

Under Indicator 1 – GEF CI-1: Terrestrial Protected Areas Created/Under Improved Management: As of 30 June 2025, the project has achieved 90% of its mid-term target under this indicator. Improved management covers 1,077,554 hectares across existing protected areas. The creation of new protected areas remains pending, as Government approval is still awaited for the proposed Pitnyak Sanctuary (~40,000 ha) and Zengibaba Sanctuary (~20,000 ha). Significant preparatory work has been completed: field inventories and habitat mapping informed both strengthened management of existing sites and the dossiers for the proposed sanctuaries. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) was updated at MTR, showing early improvements: +4 points in Gaplangyr Reserve and +3 points in Amudarya Reserve above baseline, progressing towards EoP values.

Evidence: PA area scope confirmation, inventories and habitat maps, and sanctuary submission packages.

MTR Guidance: Maintain a balanced delivery between policy and site-level work, and ensure timely formal submissions for new PAs.

Under Indicator 2 – GEF CI-4: Landscapes Under Improved Practices (Excluding PAs) Progress under this indicator reflects ongoing planning and preparatory activities, with 75% of mid-term targets achieved. The project is advancing with planning for the hectares under improved management through: On-farm water and soil conservation measures, Establishment of pasture-rotation systems, and Introduction of biodiversity-friendly buffer and corridor regimes.

In line with MTR recommendations, the revised Results Framework formula is applied to avoid double counting: CI-4 = Ind.12 (irrigated hectares) + Ind.11 (pasture hectares) + 50% of Ind.26 (buffers/corridors).

Evidence: maps, shapefiles, and adoption surveys stored in the KM repository.

Next Steps: Attribute contributions clearly to sub-components and ensure polygons/figures are systematically filed in the evidence folder.

Looking ahead, the EoP target includes: 500,000 ha of pastureland (Output 1.4), 100,000 ha of irrigated land (Output 1.3), and 146,303 ha of ecological corridors and buffer zones (Output 2.3). I advised the project team to select or validate these areas according to the LDN hierarchy and “counterbalancing mechanism” and proximity to KBAs/PAs within the broader ILUP framework- however, since the ILUPs development is delayed and as recommended by the MTR both field works and ILUP development are going in parallel at the moment. The project has achieved its mid-term target by finalizing the scope and content of interventions the next step is to put these into practices and preparing demonstration sub-projects on sustainable pasture and water management. Regulatory gaps in buffer zone and corridor management have been identified, and the project plans to establish practical mechanisms for agricultural land-use limitations to support biodiversity.

Indicator 3 – GEF CI-11: Direct Beneficiaries (Sex-Disaggregated)

By 30 June 2025, the project has reached 4,383 direct beneficiaries, of whom 34% are women. Beneficiaries include public officials, local users and producers, and protected area staff; media audiences are excluded from the count. This figure surpasses mid-term target of 4,150 beneficiaries (1,245 women, 2,905 men). Most beneficiaries to date have participated in training sessions, awareness-raising, and knowledge management activities.

Next Steps: Expanded outreach is expected through the small grants mechanism and demonstration activities under Outcome 1, with a stronger focus on local farmers, communities, NGOs, and female activists.

Overall Component-Level Progress

Across components, the project has achieved 54% of mid-term targets. Ten indicators show progress above 60%, with five nearing full achievement at ~80%. All other indicators report progress above 40%, confirming that while some are behind schedule, they remain on track to meet their targets (source: MTR assessment)

Outcome 1 – Strengthened LDN Baselines, Policies, and Planning

The institutional framework has advanced considerably since last year. The LDN Working Group (Indicator 4) is operational, with national and local baselines and methodologies defined (evidence: WG minutes, baseline memos). LDN-relevant policies and regulations (Indicator 5) are prioritized and prepared in line with the NAPCD update with LDN integration (evidence: Land Code amendment package/TORs draft NAPCD)

On Integrated Land Use Planning (ILUP, Indicator 6), packages covering mapped priorities, LDN compliant governance steps, and draft datasets to promote an LDN compliant landscape approach (new in Turkmenistan) are prepared. In response to the MTR recommendation that ILUP and field measures must proceed in parallel due to time limitation, the project will be (i) hiring international LDN/ILUP expertise (Aug 2025) and (ii) validating an LDN-based ILUP roadmap for four etraps (Sept 2025) (evidence: TORs, draft maps/datasets). This is a critical step toward accelerating integration of field pilots into official spatial plans during the next reporting period.

Documentation for Voluntary LDN targets and MRV systems (Indicator 7) have been prepared in 4 provinces Darganata and Danev etrab in Lebap and Ruhubelent and S.Turkmenbashi in Dashoguz velayats with provincial/local services, aligned to national methods and data-sharing responsibilities (evidence: maps and expert reports).

Trend since last year: In 2024, ILUP and baselines were at design stage; by mid-2025, the LDN voluntary targets and justification is established, nearing adoption. The trend is positive, showing institutional consolidation and responsiveness to

MTR recommendations. Next step: it is critical that LDN targets and ILUPs are officially adopted in order to provide the enabling framework for progress towards LDN.

RTA Recommendations:

- Fast-track the adoption of policy amendments alongside NAPCD
- Ensure international expertise is mobilized on schedule (Aug 2025) to finalize the LDN and ILUP roadmap.
- Anchor LDN voluntary targets in provincial/national decrees to formalize commitment.
- Expand provincial-level training to ensure LDN compliant ILUPs are usable in practice.
- Explore UNCCD-endorsed LUP4LDN software feasibility for land use planning and identify ways for upscaling ILUP

Under Indicator 8, Preparation for SLM and NnS related approaches is nearing finalization, though verified results are pending. Arable land restoration (Indicator 8) has finalized designs and business cases for 38 ha ready for implementation, with verified hectares to follow post-2025 season checks (evidence: methodologies, plot files, QA/QC sheets).

Aprox 4700 ha LDN hotspots – mapped and technical solutions identified. Forest restoration (Indicator 9) designs and logistics for saxaul and tugai are complete: 8 ha tugai restoration plot implemented including a tree planting campaign; a methodology for forest restoration was approved by the ministry and an 8h demo plot was planted with seedlings to restore a fire-impacted forest ecosystem; with hectares to be verified at season end (evidence: nursery/seedling records, survival-rate monitoring) .

Pastureland restoration (Indicator 10) areas identified (127,237 ha of pasture identified under a costed plan) LDN hotspots mapped and assessed awaiting operationalization for hectare claims (evidence: field logs).

The MTR recommendation to advance pilots and field delivery in parallel to planning is partially reflected here: while designs are advanced, lagging hectare verification shows that implementation is slower than envisioned.

Trend since last year: In 2024, most restoration measures were in conceptual or preparatory stages. By 2025, technical readiness is complete, but progress to verified hectares remains limited.

RTA Recommendations:

- Prioritize and strictly monitor procurement of of equipment and works, field works verification post-2025 season to demonstrate tangible restoration results. Explore possibility to replicate the demo plots and advocate for the official approval and operationalization of water management plans/ILUPs and pastures management plans in order to scale up SLM/NbS.

- Design NbS according to IUCN NbS Global Standard, ensure that design is anchored into cost effectiveness; document before/after photo/evidence.
- Institutionalize monitoring into ILUP/MRV systems as advised by the MTR.
- Address risks such as seedling survival by embedding contingency measures into monitoring protocols.
- Engage local communities in pasture management to prevent overgrazing and strengthen compliance.

Further on, under Indicator 11, Progress on sustainable practices is consolidating. Sustainable pasture management planning is under way for 1,001,185 ha of pastures managed by Dovardarchylyck state agricultural enterprise this would be beyond the target at EoP (Indicator 11) . However I advise the project team to check the LDN “degradation counter balancing mechanism” within the broader ILUP context, in order to ensure the supported SLM in the target areas is compliant with the LDN hierarchy : prevent, reduce, restore.

Irrigated arable land under improved water management (Indicator 12) baseline finalized and the project is progressing with the irrigation regimes for crops and hydro modules zoning and establishment of differentiated water regimes according to specific areas- partnerships with Scientific Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (new partner). A next step will be that the demonstrations and KM products are being deployed, supported by two nationally approved methodologies (Chipolletti water accounting and irrigating saline lands) (evidence: approvals, farm surveys).

Institutional capacity is strengthening. Two WUGs (Indicator 13) are now functional (50% of EoP), with ~20% membership growth at Mortokay Yap. This exceeds the MTR-revised mid-term target of 1 WUG, showing strong local uptake (evidence: membership lists, site notes). Practices for resilient crops against salinization (Indicator 14) are introduced, with measurement protocols for salinity reduction and humus improvement scheduled for 2025. Hectareage remain at baseline level (evidence: baseline ranges, monitoring plan).

Trend since last year: In 2024, WUG functionality and sustainable practices were in early pilot stage. In 2025, institutional achievements (2 WUGs, methodologies nationally endorsed) represent a marked improvement. Verification of hectares, however, still lags behind institutional readiness.

RTA Recommendations:

- Accelerate water management planning and deployment of demo field works and water management for reduced salinization (10,000 ha) works to translate practices into quantified hectares.
- Scale up WUG replication using the Mortokay Yap experience.
- Link land degradation and salinization monitoring to broader GHG and climate resilience tracking.
- Provide farmers with incentives and market linkages to sustain adoption.

The GHG mitigation framework (Indicator 15) is defined, with calculations to follow once verified hectares are consolidated, using IPCC-aligned factors (evidence: calculator, method notes, area verification).

Knowledge management systems are advancing. Irrigation information tools (Indicator 16) are defined, with inventories, analytics, and allocation tools ready; usage statistics will be logged in the KM repository as tools go live (evidence: tool specs, hosting links). ILUP/SLM guidelines (Indicator 17) are under review with MAEP and partners, with titles and posting locations to be added in the KM plan (evidence: draft guidelines, circulation lists).

Capacity building (Indicator 18) is on track: targeted training events have been delivered with materials curated for reuse. In line with the MTR recommendation, ex-ante and ex-post survey templates were updated in July 2025 to track learning and behavioral change (evidence: participant lists, survey summaries).

Trend since last year: In 2024, KM tools and guidelines were being designed, and training was ad hoc. In 2025, tools are ready for deployment, guidelines are in peer review, and capacity-building has incorporated feedback and monitoring. Evidence of actual usage and behavioral change, however, remains to be captured.

RTA Recommendations:

- Align GHG computations with hectare verification timelines to ensure consistency.
- Systematically track and publish KM tool uptake to demonstrate use beyond development.
- Finalize ILUP/SLM guidelines and ensure broad dissemination.
- Use survey findings to fine-tune training curricula and institutionalize learning outcomes.

Outcome 2

Project Outcome 2 focuses on the conservation of critical biodiversity through increased management effectiveness of target PAs and the creation of new PAs. According to the MTR, a progress rate of 84% across its ten indicators, with two indicators (20 and 25) exceeding their targets.

The trend is positive since the last reporting period under this complex outcome:

New PA creation (Indicator 19): Legal creation remains at baseline, while the technical documentation is complete: species censuses, habitat maps, and revised sanctuary packages for Pitnyak (~40,000 ha) and Zengibaba (~20,000 ha) (with Tallymerjen in revision) now embed buffers/corridors and OECMs, and

are aimed for Cabinet resubmission by end-summer 2025 (evidence: explanatory notes, inventories, round-table minutes). In response to the MTR call for a Component-2 roadmap, the project is advised to linking investments to specific METT sub-scores and clarifying the sequence for new-PA creation (buffers/corridors/OECMs included); a Monitoring Plan reassessment (Sept 2025) and PA capacity/METT training (Oct 2025) are scheduled.

Existing PAs under improved management (total area) (Indicator 20).

The PA scope is confirmed at 1,077,554 ha—Kaplankyr SNR (incl. Sarygamysh), Shasenem S., and Amudarya SNR (incl. Kelif SNR)—with flora/fauna inventories informing day-to-day management and the next Red Book update (evidence: area confirmation; inventory references). The MTR asks to tie budgeted investments to named METT elements and maintain an annual PA management roadmap.

PA management capacity (METT) (Indicator 21)

Positive movement is anticipated from recent enforcement/monitoring investments; baseline → current METT deltas will be recorded in annexed scorecards for auditability (evidence: METT forms; delta table). MTR follow-up: specify which METT criteria each investment targets; keep the Sept 2025 Monitoring Plan reassessment and Oct 2025 METT training on track.

Status of global biodiversity in new PAs (Indicator 22).

2024–25 inventories provide species baselines for priority taxa that will serve as the post-designation reference once sites are gazetted (evidence: inventories; baseline sheets). The MTR stresses costing and scheduling post-designation monitoring.

Status of biodiversity in existing PAs (Indicator 23)

Indicator-species monitoring is aligned with updated PA programs; 2024–25 baselines will anchor trend tracking; first deltas will be entered as available (evidence: monitoring plans; baseline tables).

Updated/accessible environmental data on IBAs/KBAs/PAs (KM) (Indicator 24): Updated datasets/analyses for planning/reporting are compiled; per MTR recommendations on KM visibility, products will be housed in a dedicated repository and coordinated with SIC IFAS (target Oct 2025) (evidence: repository index; upload logs). Capacity building for biodiversity enforcement (border/PA staff) (Indicator 25). Targeted trainings were delivered; reporting will include #events, #participants, % women, with participant lists and agendas attached for verification (evidence: training records). MTR follow-up: link training to enforcement outcomes and periodic skills-retention checks.

Buffer/corridor hectares under biodiversity-friendly regimes (Indicator 26). A regulatory methodology for buffers/corridors is under development; draft agreements under consultation will unlock hectare accounting upon approval. When compiling CI-4 at Objective level, count 50% of buffer/corridor hectares to

avoid double-counting (evidence: methodology note; draft agreements; maps).

Farmers/producers' net income (by livelihood) (Indicator 27). Positive net incomes are reported across horticulture/greenhouses, beekeeping, and aquaculture; for auditability, provide per-household averages and % change vs baseline (evidence: livelihood accounting sheets).

RTA Recommendations (Outcome 2).

- Finalize a joint submission calendar (technical → legal → Cabinet) for Pitnyak/Zengibaba,
- Convene MoEP–MoF round tables in order to align co- financing and convert budget plans into commitments to scale up LDN compliant SLMs .
- Link livelihood micro-grants explicitly to KBA/PA buffer/corridor polygons and gender outcomes to demonstrate biodiversity co-benefits. Start to document gender-sensitive NbS, ensure that they are designed aligned with IUCN Global Standard for NbS, cost-effectiveness and evidence to make the case for NbS as an integrated model to address land/water/biodiversity solutions in the field

Outcome 3 – Regional Cooperation and Knowledge for the Aral Sea Basin

Capacity for regional cooperation (events) (Indicator 28): National participation in regional fora (IFAS/water diplomacy) advanced; events delivered with agendas/minutes on file; additional seminars scheduled (evidence: event files). The MTR urges clearer results statements per event and participant tracking.

National priorities embedded in IFAS initiatives (Indicator 29) Priority themes have been tabled in IFAS-led programmes; document which items enter regional workplans and keep a traceable reference trail (evidence: IFAS workplan excerpts/notes).

Awareness events and KM products (water/LD/BD) (Indicator 30): Events and KM products were produced; totals and estimated reach will be added as dissemination continues (evidence: product list; media metrics). According to the MTR, the project team is advised to deploy ex-ante/ex-post survey templates (updated July 2025) and stand up a KM repository/web space with SIC IFAS (target Oct 2025) so uptake and learning can be measured.

Trend since last year (Outcome 3).

From participation to positioning and measurable influence: steady seminar cadence, clearer articulation of national priorities in IFAS fora, and KM moving from production to tracked dissemination.

RTA Recommendations (Outcome 3).

- Follow up on water diplomacy concept and seminars, promote the approach;
- Organize two targeted knowledge exchanges (one on LDN/ILUP MRV, one on PA connectivity) with neighboring countries to anchor scaling.

Outcome 4 – M&E and Adaptive Management

M&E reports / evaluative knowledge (Indicator 31). The Mid-Term Review (fieldwork Feb 2025) is complete; the Management Response is approved and priority actions are sequenced (evidence: MTR Final). The MTR rates Components 1–2 Moderately Satisfactory, Components 3–4 Satisfactory; barriers include procurement/market offer scarcity in terms of expertise, legal/policy/financial enabling frameworks, and staffing continuity.

RTA Recommendations (Outcome 4).

- Add a risk-vs-procurement dashboard to AWP of the team and track procurement
- Keep the co-financing risk live, with semi-annual stock-takes and formal letters confirming counterpart investments.

The project team is encouraged to align with MTR recommendation and Link each spend/investment to specific METT sub-scores, and lay out the sequencing for new PA creation, including buffers/corridors. The Management Response accepts this; actions are initiated with LDN/ILUP experts recruitment (Aug 2025) and a validated roadmap (Sept 2025); a Monitoring Plan reassessment (Sept 2025) and PA/METT training (Oct 2025) are on the calendar. This gives the team a delivery acceleration for the next reporting period for 2025–26.

IP

The IP is rated Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Clarification: The IP is rated MS and trending upward since the adaptive management is active (MTR completed, Management Response integrated into AWP), delivery across outcomes have progressed steadily and risks are being managed (SES/SEP updates), with strong stakeholder and gender engagement. However, disbursement and co-financing realization remain below plan, and co-financing is difficult to track; in addition, procurement/market scarcity continues to slow execution. To reach Satisfactory by the next PIR, the project must close delivery gap and unlock ILUP adoption packages, PA designation dossiers, field works with verified restoration/pasture/irrigation hectares, convert preparatory

work into audited results (CI-3/CI-4 hectares and CI-6.1 tCO₂ e), accelerate procurement and obtain semi-annual co-finance confirmations—while keeping the MTR action tracker on schedule to progress towards EoP targets.

IP narrative

Following MTR (2025), implementation accelerated. The Responsible Party was contracted (March 2025) and trained in NIM; a market assessment informed procurement reprioritization; LDN and biodiversity baselines plus restoration designs were finalized, enabling field-level packages for H2-2025. Stakeholder structures (local steering, TWGs) were reinforced; the grant mechanism is being redesigned to catalyze community uptake and co-financing. Procurement risks remain due to limited market response and bid quality (Quantum ERC), that needs to be further mitigated through improved packaging, clearer specs (considering the complexity of the field works), and buffered timelines.

Delivery during this reporting period depended on refreshed partnerships: MAEP and the State Committee on Water Resources with SIC-ICWC for hydro-module and irrigation regimes; Institute of Desert, Flora & Fauna and international experts for saxaul/tugai restoration; cross-border learning with Uzbekistan; and local NGO Ecodurmush and women/youth groups near PAs for inclusive engagement.

Financial delivery: budget execution currently stands at 27.35% of the GEF grant, key procurement and implementation packages are being prepared, positioning the project for accelerated delivery in the second half of 2025 and into 2026. The cumulative delivery for this year stands at approx.. 30% (an estimate since the UNDP Q2 books are not closed yet). To ensure this momentum is sustained, I advised the project team to strengthen coordination with RP to improve the timeliness of implementation and co-financing tracking as well as strengthen procurement monitoring of milestones and deliverables- to promptly identify and resolve emerging bottlenecks.

Gender : The project is rated GEN2, with gender equality treated as a significant cross-cutting objective built into design and monitoring. A gender analysis and concise Gender Action Plan were completed at preparation; sex-disaggregated indicators are tracked as a GEF Core Indicator. In 2025 the team brought in an international gender expert to refresh the GAP and embed gender in policy work—adding gender-sensitive dimensions to LDN integration, draft legal amendments/bylaws, and integrated land and resource-use planning (ILUP). Governance measures aim to keep women at the table across decision making platforms (Project Steering/Board, PA management bodies and local mechanisms), with continuous requirements for balanced participation in trainings, consultations and local decision-making. The Gender Section of this PIR is detailing the multiple entry points for gender mainstreaming across components.

Risks and Safeguards: Overall risk remains Low, with active management of institutional capacity, stakeholder coordination, climate variability, and social/labor

risks through SESP/ESMF instruments and stakeholder platforms (Park Management Committees, PUUs/PUAs, PFM committees). Actions agreed for next year include (i) SES activity-level screening update (international consultant, June 2025), (ii) quarterly review of risk log vs. procurement calendar, and (iii) climate-proofing of PA and restoration designs.

Reaching the DO (substantive challenges)

- Institutional fragmentation: The split of the former MAEP into MOEP/MOA complicated lines of authority for ILUP and data/MRV stewardship; without an endorsed ILUP mandate and clear provincial responsibilities, adoption can stall despite strong technical products.

- Legal/regulatory pacing: PA designation requires multi-layered clearances; while studies/baselines are ready, formal gazetting (Pitnyak, Zengibaba) is time-sensitive for realizing CI-1/1.1 outcomes. Community resource agreements and buffer/corridor regimes also need accelerated socialization and approvals.

- Co-financing materialization: With ~7% of the USD 57.5m envelope documented at MTR, under-delivery risks limiting the scale of restoration, monitoring infrastructure, and enforcement upgrades envisaged at design.

Implementation Performance (operational challenges).

- Procurement market scarcity: Limited domestic supplier capacity; re-bids and compliance clarifications extend timelines and overall are slowing down implementation

- The period without an RP and the onboarding curve for NIM/Quantum contributed to early-period under-delivery and historic delay;

- Inflation and dual exchange rates: Post-COVID price spikes and currency duality inflated costs for imported goods and technical services, forcing re-scoping and budget revisions.

- Staff turnover at PMU, lengthened onboarding and delayed RP contracting, complex outputs; this is gradually stabilizing with the recruitment of SES, GIS, ILUP, and grants expertise (according to the previous PIR follow up) and RP fully on board.

UNDP Country Office Programme Officer	The GEF Project “Conservation and Sustainable Management of Land Resources and High Nature Value Ecosystems in the Aral Sea Basin for Multiple Benefits” aims to support the sustainable and climate-resilient management of land and water resources across Dashoguz and northern Lebap provinces in Turkmenistan. The project targets land degradation neutrality (LDN), biodiversity conservation, and community resilience, with strong attention to integrated land use planning and protected area management. Following the Mid-Term Review (MTR), this 2025 reporting period reflects notable progress across all project components, despite previous operational delays and institutional constraints. Objective-Level Indicator on Protected Areas under Improved Management - Progress on this indicator accelerated in 2025, particularly through biodiversity assessments and preparatory work for new protected area (PA) establishment. Comprehensive field studies were completed for the proposed sanctuaries at Pitnyak, Zengibaba, and Tallymerjen, totaling 60,000 hectares. These included habitat mapping and updated species inventories, developed with the support of international expertise. A 5-year management plan for Amudarya Nature Reserve (NR) and Kelif State Nature Sanctuary is now in development, alongside a biodiversity monitoring programme involving systematic flora and fauna surveys. While delays were noted in material capacity investments (e.g., observation towers), patrolling and scientific research equipment have been procured, enabling initial implementation of the monitoring plan. The Gaplangyr NR’s existing management plan remains in force, although financing remains limited to basic operational needs. Key regulatory support was initiated through the development of model regulations for buffer zones and ecological corridors, with stakeholder consultations underway. A Small Grants Programme (SGP) consultant was engaged in 2025 to refine criteria and assess cost-effectiveness of pilot SLM grants for communities surrounding protected areas. Despite these gains, stakeholder consultations and resource use agreements outside core PAs have yet to meet mid-term targets. Objective-Level Indicator on Landscapes under Improved Practices - Substantial groundwork was laid in 2025 for integrated land use planning (ILUP), despite persistent institutional and regulatory constraints. LDN assessments have now been completed and validated for both Dashoguz and Lebap, establishing national and regional baselines and contributing directly to UNCCD reporting. The methodology for ILUPs in four pilot districts has been adapted to suit existing administrative frameworks and land user types (daikhan associations, WUGs, pasture groups), with the additional technical support of an international ILUP consultant is expected soon. Notably, over 172,000 hectares of degraded pastureland were prioritized for restoration based on field assessments and satellite analysis, with pasture rotation planning initiated through two established pasture user groups. Restoration activities are underway on arable and tugai forest lands, with demonstration efforts exceeding initial targets. Innovative techniques for dryland forest restoration, developed in collaboration with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, in partnership with the Institute of desert, flora and fauna, were piloted on saxaul sites. Hydro-module zoning, crop-specific irrigation regimes, and participatory water use planning were developed for over 77,000 hectares. Two Water User Groups are now fully operational, with one (Mortokay Yap system) implementing integrated water resources management (IWRM) principles on 479 ha. FAO tools

(CROPWAT, REQWAT, EX-ACT) are being used to optimize irrigation scheduling and assess GHG emissions reductions potential.

Objective-Level Indicator on Number of People Benefiting - Capacity-building and awareness-raising continued to expand during 2025. While updated training figures were not included in the current assessment, the reporting indicates substantial institutional involvement across pilot regions. Key engagements included integrated water and pasture planning workshops, biodiversity monitoring trainings, and legal/policy roundtables related to buffer zone management and LDN mainstreaming.

Regional cooperation was further reinforced under Outcome 3, with support to cross-border dialogue, including two Water Diplomacy Seminars, IFAS meetings, and participation in a new regional cooperation programme led by Italy. The project played a crucial role in articulating Turkmenistan's priorities and channeling them into donor-supported frameworks.

A June 2025 study tour to Uzbekistan catalyzed new bilateral cooperation between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan's Ministries of Nature Protection at this project level, including shared planning on LDN and water diplomacy. Additionally, the project updated its Gender Action Plan, Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and SES assessments in line with UNDP standards, and began work on a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) for policy interventions supported by the project.

Outcome 1 remains the most technically and institutionally complex part of the project, and in 2025, the project achieved good progress along several areas. The national and regional LDN baselines have now been fully established for both Dashoguz and Lebap provinces, aligning with UNCCD methodology and enabling national reporting on SDG 15.3. This milestone addresses a key Mid-Term Review (MTR) concern on the lack of measurable LDN indicators and places Turkmenistan among the countries with a scientifically grounded LDN monitoring system. The project made significant efforts in integrating the LDN concept into national frameworks. The updated National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCD) now includes LDN principles and practical measures. Consultations with stakeholders, especially within the Ministry of Agriculture and the separated Ministry of Environmental Protection (MOEP), led to targeted proposals for amending the Land Code and other relevant regulations to support LDN implementation.

Although a formal ILUP enabling environment is still lacking, the project adapted its strategy to work through Local Steering Committees (LSCs) in four pilot districts and support land use planning at sub-district levels (e.g., Water User Groups, Daikhan Associations). A GIS-based ILUP tool is under development, drawing from international best practices, and will inform water, pasture, and agricultural land planning. The concept of ILUP remains institutionally novel in Turkmenistan, but technical and community-level readiness is increasing.

In terms of Demonstration and Restoration Activities, restoration designs and procurement packages are ready for 4,700 ha of degraded farmland identified as LDN hotspots. This target, a mid-term milestone, has been achieved. 172,237 ha have been prioritized for sustainable pasture rotation across Dashoguz and Lebap. Two initiative groups have been established and are implementing participatory plans. The project exceeded targets for tugai forest restoration, planting in the Kabakly section of Amudarya Reserve and supporting regeneration of 300 ha, mainly through creation of seedling nursery with subsequent production of seedlings and developing a methodology for reforestation. Pilot restoration without large-scale irrigation is being tested in

	collaboration with Chinese and Turkmen scientific institutions. The project developed hydro-modules and updated irrigation regimes for over 77,000 ha using FAO tools like CROPWAT. Two Water User Groups are now operational, implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) on pilot sites. A full cycle of participatory planning, modeling, and implementation has begun in Mortokay Yap and will be replicated in Khan Yap. Though actual emission reductions have not yet been quantified, the project initiated the development of a GHG accounting methodology tailored to its LDN and water management work. The FAO EX-ACT tool is planned for use in upcoming calculations to meet this cross-sectoral indicator. Overall, Outcome 1 is on track, with technical groundwork mostly complete and demonstration interventions commencing. Full-scale implementation is expected to accelerate towards the end of 2025 and in 2026. Outcome 2 saw continued strengthening in PA management and preparatory work for new PA designation, although progress on formal creation remains pending. While the legal designation is still in process, the project finalized species inventories and habitat mapping for Zengibaba, Pitnyak, and Tallymerjen, totaling 60,000 ha. These biodiversity assessments have elevated the sites' profiles within national conservation strategies and are now under review by the MOEP and MFA. Supporting documentation, including ecological importance, proposed boundaries, and species data, was submitted in line with GEF and national requirements. METT scores for Amudarya and Gaplangyr reserves showed a 50% improvement post-MTR. Field equipment, monitoring protocols, and biodiversity monitoring programmes were implemented to enhance research and enforcement. Delays in infrastructure (e.g., observation towers) occurred due to procurement complexities and location sensitivities, but other material support proceeded as planned. The project drafted Model Regulations to define buffer zone legal regimes and ecological corridor principles. These were shared with MOEP and will form the basis for expanded PA management strategies. Community agreements and sustainable use models are under development but face delays in formalization and stakeholder buy-in. An initial analytical report was completed on ecological flow needs for both production landscapes and natural habitats. An international expert-led study is underway to assess how water regime changes affect ecosystems. Three biodiversity monitoring campaigns were conducted in 2025, with results submitted to MOEP for reporting under CBD and other conventions. Despite delays in PA creation and some challenges in external stakeholder agreements, Outcome 2 is progressing well, particularly in terms of technical and policy readiness. Outcome 3 continues to demonstrate strong delivery and tangible results across multiple fronts. 3 out of 5 targeted Water Diplomacy Seminars have been completed, achieving 60% of EOP targets and 2 of 3 planned IFAS coordination meetings were held, achieving 66% of that EOP target. The project actively supported Turkmenistan's participation in a regional programme led by Italy, providing local analysis, outreach, and project scoping. This secured donor interest and positioned pilot regions for ODA funding. A study tour to Uzbekistan in June 2025 led to a cooperation agreement with the Middle Amu Darya Basin Water Organization and enabled high-level discussions between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan ministries on biodiversity and LDN. The project continued extensive coordination with daikhan associations, water and pasture users, private sector actors, and civil society groups in both velayats.
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Updated Stakeholder Engagement, Gender Action, and Knowledge Management Plans were implemented, with new focus areas based on MTR and RTA guidance. An international SES expert is conducting screenings for priority activities under Outputs 1.1, 1.3, and 1.4. This includes assessing regional LDN targets, water and pasture plans, and national policy changes. A civil engineer was engaged to ensure compliance with SES in community-led infrastructure activities.

With 63% of EOP indicators achieved and expanding cooperation at both national and regional levels, Outcome 3 is rated as Satisfactory.

Despite challenges encountered in earlier reporting periods, the project's risk profile has improved in 2025, with several major bottlenecks addressed, particularly those related to implementation delays and financial disbursement. A significant operational risk identified in the 2024 PIR, the lack of a contracted Responsible Party (RP), was resolved as of March 2025. The project now benefits from a fully onboarded RP with enhanced operational and financial delivery mechanisms. The RP has received tailored capacity building in UNDP's National Implementation Modality (NIM), including training on procurement, reporting, safeguards, and budgeting procedures. The project continues to face cost inflation, especially for imported goods and services. Budget estimates set pre-COVID-19 have proven inadequate in today's market, with major price hikes affecting the feasibility of planned activities, particularly capital-intensive restoration interventions and monitoring infrastructure. To address this, the UNDP CO conducted a market assessment to guide procurement re-prioritization and help the RP and project team negotiate better delivery strategies. Where necessary, technical designs were revised to improve cost-efficiency without compromising quality.

The reorganization of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection into two separate entities has complicated inter-ministerial coordination. The absence of a unified institutional home for ILUP remains a risk. The project mitigates this through LSCs, decentralized engagement with local administrations, and technical working groups. However, policy and legal harmonization efforts will require further support and sustained advocacy beyond 2025. Engagement with communities and local authorities in buffer zones and outside PA boundaries continues to lag behind expectations. While progress has been made in technical design and planning (e.g., ILUPs, pasture agreements), formal resource use agreements and co-financing commitments remain limited. This presents a moderate delivery risk to expected socio-economic outcomes and sustainability of interventions post-project.

The project proactively addresses potential SES-related risks by engaging an international expert and initiating a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) for relevant policies and plans. The inclusion of a national civil engineer to support safeguards during infrastructure implementation further reduces compliance risks.

As of this reporting period, the project has utilized approximately 27% of the total GEF grant budget of \$4,583,196, which is still low given the project's timeline. However, this figure reflects legacy challenges, including staffing gaps and RP delays, rather than current delivery capacity. With the RP in place, procurement packages underway, and technical baselines finalized, the project is now positioned for significant acceleration in expenditure during the second half of 2025 and into 2026. A proportion of expenditures are tied to restoration works, demonstration activities, and some infrastructure investments, most of which are procurement-ready. However, co-financing remains a concern. The co-financing materialized and confirmed with evidence represents 7% of the target, or USD 4,007,047 as reported to the MTR. While the project team is actively engaging

government stakeholders and NGO partners to track in-kind and financial contributions, reporting remains limited.

The Small Grants Programme, a key delivery modality for community-level investments, is now undergoing revision by an international consultant. Once finalized, this mechanism is expected to catalyze both co-financing and socio-economic impact tracking.

The resolution of major operational risks, notably the RP issue, and the readiness of procurement and implementation packages indicate that the project is well-positioned to accelerate delivery and spending in the next reporting period. However, inflationary pressures and coordination challenges persist and require ongoing management attention. Co-financing tracking, stakeholder engagement outside PAs, and monitoring of SES compliance will be essential to sustaining project momentum into 2026.

Overall Assessment

The project has entered a critical turning point in 2025, with notable momentum building across its three core outcome areas following the resolution of earlier operational bottlenecks. The onboarding of the RP in March 2025 and the finalization of key technical baselines have laid a strong foundation for accelerated implementation and delivery in the coming period.

Across Outcome 1, the project made good technical progress on LDN planning, including the establishment of national and regional baselines, target setting, and integration of LDN concepts into the upcoming National Action Programme to Combat Desertification. Participatory planning processes for pastureland, irrigated areas, and degraded farmland were initiated with strong local engagement. Although formal ILUP mechanisms remain underdeveloped nationally, the project adapted its strategy to work within local governance frameworks, showing flexibility and responsiveness to Turkmenistan's institutional landscape. The identification of LDN hotspots, restoration-ready sites, and procurement packages puts the project in a strong position for visible field-level impact in 2026.

In Outcome 2, the project continued to advance preparatory work for new PAs, completing biodiversity assessments and habitat mapping for three priority sites. Monitoring and management systems were enhanced within pilot reserves, with METT scores showing a positive trajectory. While formal PA establishment is still pending and community engagement outside core reserves has not met all targets, the development of model regulations, community consultation roadmaps, and integration of biodiversity considerations into policy frameworks shows solid progress. The project's focus on bridging regulatory gaps and strengthening scientific baselines reflects a strategic approach to long-term biodiversity conservation.

Outcome 3 showed consistent and meaningful progress, with achievements in regional cooperation, capacity building, and gender and stakeholder engagement. The project actively facilitated Turkmenistan's participation in regional dialogues, including water diplomacy initiatives and cross-border learning with Uzbekistan. The update of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Action Plan, and Knowledge Management strategy reflects responsiveness to MTR and RTA feedback and aligns the project more closely with best practices in inclusive development and transparency.

From an operational perspective, in 2025 the Country Office has overcome the most significant delays, directly addressing the core shortcoming identified in previous reporting periods, namely, low implementation rates and under-delivery. The most critical operational risk, the absence of a contracted RP, was fully

	resolved in March 2025, enabling the project to overcome longstanding delays in recruitment of national experts, procurement, and financial disbursement. The newly onboarded RP underwent targeted capacity-building in UNDP's NIM procedures and is now actively implementing procurement and implementation packages. In parallel, the project finalized key technical baselines, including LDN targets, biodiversity assessments, and restoration designs, which had previously impeded tangible progress. These milestones have enabled the PMU to prepare a number of field-level activities and expenditures that are set to drive accelerated delivery in the latter half of 2025 and into 2026. Furthermore, the Country Office proactively conducted a market assessment to mitigate inflation-related risks and reprioritized procurement strategies to ensure cost-effective implementation. Stakeholder engagement structures were reinforced through local steering committees and technical working groups to address institutional coordination gaps. The Small Grants Programme is currently being revised to serve as a catalytic tool for community engagement and co-financing mobilization. Collectively, these corrective actions will enable the project for accelerated delivery moving forward. ----
Project Manager/Coordinator	This is the third PIR for the project that follows the Mid-Term Review(MTR). The assessment of progress against the Results Framework Indicators this year (DO Progress Section of the PIR) followed the approach suggested by the Mid-Term review and derived from the PIR guidance to come up, as much as possible, with a quantitative assessment: we did our best to provide a quantitative assessment of progress in % of the EoP target; where no quantitative EoP target is available or the target is complex, our assessment of progress is based on individual milestones weighted as a percentage of the overall roadmap for achieving the target indicator values. The narrative below is aimed to analyse progress, trends, and identify issues and constraints for the subsequent DO progress assessment by the UNDP CO and the UNDP-GEF RTA. For Outcome 1, the project achieved considerable progress with the regional LDN target setting and LDN integration in national policy and regulatory framework. It took time for the national experts and the relevant sectoral stakeholders to bridge the UNCCD guidance and the local context. This year the project finally reports the LDN assessments completed to substantiate the regional LDN baseline collection and target setting. The baseline values for LDN indicators have been established at both national and regional (Lebap and Dashoguz velayats) levels. This work provides a scientifically robust baseline for LDN monitoring in the project regions and contributes to the national dataset required for UNCCD reporting and national policy alignment with SDG target 15.3. Addressing the RTA's concerns associated with the novelty of the LDN concept and lack of integrated land use planning and management in the country, the project is engaging international capacities and national expertise in LDN to support the work reported above. The project is working on LDN integration into the new version of the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification in Turkmenistan (NAPCD), so that it includes the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) dimension and relevant practical LDN-compatible solutions. The national capacity building and stakeholder engagement here is vital: the LDN Working Group, established as an institutional enabler, fosters intersectoral coordination to mainstream the LDN agenda into the national policy frameworks. The project supported the development of a landscape-based approach to integrated land use planning in the project regions. Mapping of land degradation

hotspots in Dashoguz and Lebap velayats was completed, along with classification of land use types and assessment of sustainable land management (SLM) potential. A registry of sustainable land use models and decision-making tools based on LDN targets is being developed as part of the updated National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCD).

While on-the-ground implementation of integrated land use planning (ILUP) activities is still pending, the project has made substantial progress in laying the technical, institutional, and analytical groundwork for ILUP in Turkmenistan, where no enabling environment for such planning exists.

Establishing an Integrated land use planning working group under the chairmanship of the State Land Management Service under the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Protection (MAEP) set up was planned in the prodod but did not materialize: changing the enabling environment and moving away from a highly centralized, rigid and strictly sectoral approach to land use planning is only possible for the private land users at the local level. Besides, the re-organisation of the former MAEP into two separate ministries for agriculture and environment protection makes it impossible to organize ILUP work under a single ministry umbrella. Instead, the project supported the work of two Local Steering Committees in order to facilitate the discussion around the integrated land use planning in four pilot districts.

The concept of integrated land use planning is not recognized in national legislation, which significantly limits the scope for direct implementation. Institutional capacities remain low, and cross-sectoral coordination is not sufficient. Additionally, limited national experience with ILUP, along with the absence of enabling regulatory frameworks, has delayed full-scale deployment. Technical support and modelling tools are under preparation to address these gaps, but operationalization requires further institutional engagement and capacity building.

Addressing the RTA's concerns regarding the level of ILUP approval and their impact coverage [2024 PIR], the following arrangement to maintain the declared ILUP impact area is currently proposed. ILUPs covering the agricultural lands will be prepared at the level of daikhan associations (non-private farmer associations in Dashoguz, an initiative group of private farmers in Darganata, and a Water Users Group in Deinau supported by the project) in four pilot regions. ILUPs covering pastureland will be prepared separately for state-management and privately-managed (Lebab) pastureland. An integrated water management plan for state farming will be prepared at the level of local water management authorities. An integrated water management plan for Mortokay Yap will be covering private land users in Deinau etrap and reflect the basin management approach. Finally, specific land use recommendations will cover forest land use and regulate pasture use for the areas within PA buffer zones and ecological corridors, and will be channeled through the national Forestry Management Programme 2026-onward and the local forestry committees. The PA management plans will be expanded to include the buffer zones; community agreements for the buffer zones and ecological corridors will be included as nature-based solutions outside PAs. Once developed and agreed with the respective management authorities, these ILUPs will be submitted for the endorsement to local khyakimliks. Local khyakimliks are the end use of the ILUPs and will need improved technical and human capacities to ensure practical implementation and monitoring of ILUPs. The project will commission a modelling and an open-source GIS-based tool, utilizing and adapting the Armenian Sevan project and similar experiences. The project will attempt an application of this tool for the Water Management Committee (for irrigation water limits assessment) and Ministry of Agriculture (planning of irrigated land use and sustainable pasture

use). The project engages an international ILUP consultant to validate the proposed strategy or suggest an alternative.

During the reporting period, the priority areas for immediate LDN action ("LDN hot spots"), including degraded and abandoned arable lands, severely degraded pastureland and threatened desert forest areas in the two target regions have been mapped using Trends.Earth GIS module analysis, medium-resolution space images analysis, ground truthing, analysis of soil sampling results. Many of the proposed SLM practices for LDN hot-spots are not unique and have been included in WOCAT database. However, their feasibility and effectiveness for specific conditions in the Aral region of Turkmenistan should be demonstrated in order to ensure sustainability, upscale and further integration into resource use framework. Some of the proposed SLM measures (or their elements) are innovative for Turkmenistan and should be tested for efficiency and sustainability and then recommended as best LDN-based SLM practice for the region. The project will engage an international LDN expert ToR for guiding the application of the LDN "avoid-minimize-reverse" response hierarchy and the counterbalancing principle (i.e.balancing degradation with restoration efforts, "like for like" compensation within a specific land type) for final confirmation of demo sites for restoration of degraded lands.

As reported previously, 4,700 ha of LDN hotspots of degraded and abandoned arable lands in the two target regions have been identified and mapped based on LDN assessments and UNCCD recommended methodologies: 2,300 ha in Dashoguz and 2,400 ha in Lebap. The mid-term target for restoration of degraded arable lands is therefore achieved; further progress depends on appraisals for proposed technical solutions and procurement. The project is ready with a comprehensive package for procurement of equipment and on-land works. The package includes technical solutions and engineering designs for reclamation works and restoration of the irrigation infrastructure; optimized management scenarios for efficient water use and installation of metering equipment; and crop management plans. The project invested more time in packaging the restoration solution than originally planned, primarily due to extensive stakeholder consultations and analyses of technical options and scenarios aimed at selecting cost-effective and replicable approaches.

The project exceeded its target by 60% for tugai forests restoration, with 8 ha of tree seedlings were planted in the Kabakly section of the reserve to restore a fire-affected demonstration area and provide regeneration capacity for 300 ha of tugai forest ecosystem. The methodology for restoring fire-damaged tugai forests was updated for use in the Amudarya Reserve and approved by MOEP.

The adaptive management scenarios for saxaul forest restoration applied by the project are meant for the GEF resources to be strictly incremental to the mainstream forest restoration activities carried out within the National Forest Programme. The GEF increment focuses on testing and demonstrating innovative, low-cost, and regionally appropriate methods for cultivating desert plants, including seed sowing and irrigation techniques that do not require expensive infrastructure. To address the major challenge of irrigation, the project established collaboration with the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, focusing on the cultivation of desert vegetation under arid conditions. This initiative has been supported by the Desert Research Institute of Turkmenistan, with which the project signed a 2025 work plan outlining research cooperation and technical expertise support. As part of this effort, the project identified a pilot site for sustainable saxaul restoration and initiated the testing of non-irrigation-based restoration methods. In parallel, innovative small-scale irrigation solutions, including the use of a mobile water tank trailer for post-planting care, were piloted. The feasibility and effectiveness of

these methods are being documented for potential replication within national reforestation programs targeting LDN hot-spots.

During the reporting period, a detailed costed plan was developed to ensure sustainable impact in degraded pasture restoration on an area of 172,237 ha. The GIS expert filed a report that links the original mapping of pasture restoration pilots with the LDN hot-spots identified through application Quantum GIS Trends.Earth analysis produced by an international LDN expert group in November 2024, and confirmed the targeted areas for pasture restoration: 83100 ha in Dashoguz and 89137 ha in Lebap pilot regions. The project experts developed a draft concept for pasture rotation and had it appraised with the pasture users in the pilot districts of Ruhubelent and Deinau. Two initiative pasture users' groups, namely Dovdarsylyk state enterprise in Ruhubelent and private pasture users' association (chekene) in the Gabaklı gengeshlik in Deinau have been established and supported for pasture rotation planning and implementation.

In the reporting period, the project identified key hotspots of pasture degradation through field-based assessments and satellite data. A series of consultations was conducted with local authorities and representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture to identify regulatory and institutional gaps in pastureland management.

At the community level, awareness-raising activities and capacity-building sessions were carried out to emphasize the importance of restoring desert ecosystems and maintaining pasture rotation systems. Two pasture user groups were established in the project target areas, where demonstration sites were set up to pilot sustainable pasture management practices. Geobotanical study is ongoing for sites to monitor vegetation recovery and inform adaptive management for the project increment related to degraded pastureland.

The reporting period is marked by a long-awaited progress with water management planning. The project focuses on enhancing water management in the Dashoguz region of Turkmenistan. S.Turkmenbashi etrap through developing hydro-module zoning and tailored irrigation regimes for agricultural crops across a 77,032 ha area. This involves creating a detailed local database of soil, meteorological, and hydrological data, mapping soil types and salinity to define hydro-modules, and establishing updated water consumption norms and scientifically based irrigation schedules using FAO methodologies and tools like CROPWAT and REQWAT. The project is supported by the Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (SIC ICWC) in Uzbekistan in the comprehensive intra- and inter-farm water use planning, knowledge management tool development, and installation of water-regulating structures such as the Chipolletti system to improve water savings and availability. Training and practical demonstrations have been conducted to promote new water-saving technologies, with plans to develop guidelines for effective drip irrigation suited to arid conditions, thereby balancing stable agricultural productivity, water conservation, and environmental sustainability. To institutionally support the planned work on integrated water management, the project has two Water User Groups established and is fully functional.

The project has begun the practical implementation of the principles of integrated water resources management (IWRM) and the basin management approach on a site of 479.01 hectares of arable land. This area is used by 33 members of the Initiative Group of Water Users, who operate the Mortokay Yap irrigation system. The essence of the approach promoted by the project lies in supporting comprehensive water distribution planning within a single irrigator, taking into account agro-meliorative, climatic, and social factors, with this planning being carried out by the farmers themselves. The project provides methodological support in developing an intra-farm water use plan and supports consultations

among the members of the water user group aimed at the efficient and equitable distribution of water among them. The water management plan will also include recommendations on applying methods to increase water use efficiency, aimed at reducing soil salinity, minimizing water consumption through the introduction of water-saving technologies, cultivating salt-tolerant crops adapted to current climatic conditions, optimizing intra-farm water distribution and improving the efficiency of irrigation systems, and increasing the participation of farmers and local water users in water resource management. The project will replicate this experience on irrigated plots connected to the Khan Yap irrigator and will collaborate with the Lower Amu Darya Basin Water Organization in the city of Dashoguz.

With no progress reported on Project Indicator on GHG emissions mitigated (tCO₂ -eq), the following comments are due. The project recognizes the cross-sectoral nature of this indicator and its dependence on robust methodology, reliable baseline data, and technical capacity. During the reporting period, the project engaged with a group of national experts working under the UNFCCC processes to seek guidance on defining an appropriate approach for estimating carbon mitigation potential in the context of sustainable land and water management. As a valuable resource, the project is referring to the methodology developed under the UNDP “Sustainable Cities” project, which offers a standardized and locally adapted framework for CO₂ emissions calculation across major sectors of the national economy. This methodology is currently being reviewed for its applicability to the land degradation neutrality (LDN) and ecosystem restoration interventions supported by the project.

In parallel, a literature review was conducted to assess international experience in carbon sequestration in dryland and irrigated ecosystems. These materials are being analyzed for the development of a context-specific estimation methodology for the project’s target landscapes. The project will certainly use the FAO’s EX-ACT (Ex-Ante Carbon-balance Tool) for calculating GHG emissions and carbon sequestration potential in agricultural and land-use interventions, to make the current assessment compatible with the baseline and target setting methodology. The EX-ACT tool is particularly relevant for assessing changes in soil organic carbon, land-use change, and sustainable pasture management promoted by the project. In the upcoming period, the project aims to prepare a roadmap for establishing a GHG accounting framework aligned with national and international best practices and aligned with the priorities of Turkmenistan’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

For Outcome 2, the quantitative target for newly created terrestrial PAs for conservation and sustainable use remains at the baseline level. The PM would like to echo the MOEP’s National Project Coordinator’s assessment [2025 PIR Overall Assessment by National Implementing Partner] that the collection of detailed species data and biodiversity assessments commissioned by qualified international experts outside the GEF budget has been crucial in strengthening the justification package for establishing three new protected areas—Zengibaba, Pitnyak, and Tallymerjen state sanctuaries. Through comprehensive fieldwork, the project carried out extensive species inventories and habitat mapping that clearly demonstrate the ecological importance of these sites. These biodiversity assessments formed the foundation for refining official documentation submitted to the Ministry of Environment Protection (MOEP) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), guiding the proposed boundaries and identifying critical zones needing protection. The availability of robust species data, combined with backing from the GEF, has elevated the priority of these areas within national conservation plans. This solid basis paves the way for timely progress toward the formal establishment of the new protected areas as originally scheduled.

Bridging the gaps in PA management effectiveness, the project went beyond its direct impact with the two pilot PAs, Amudarya and Gaplangyr nature reserves, and cooperates with the MOEP developing regulations to the Law "On Protected Areas" aimed at defining the legal regime of PA protected/buffer zones. The project experts will develop a draft Model Regulations on the PA buffer zones and for ecological corridors, which will establish the basic principles of the legal status and management regime in the buffer zones and ecological corridors, including the principles for definition of buffer zone size and the configuration of ecological corridors, and the legal regime for land and water use, including relevant restrictions and limitations to be imposed on economic activities within the buffer zones and ecological corridors.

In parallel with this work, an international expert will analyze examples and practices of amending standard regulations on nature reserves and state wildlife sanctuaries to introduce special measures of non-depleting nature use for ecosystem preservation (controlled livestock grazing and haymaking, fire prevention activities, organization of forest plant nurseries). Practical examples of securing nature use restrictions in agreements with resource users in the PA buffer zones will be proposed. An analytical note on the possibilities and prospects of ensuring the legal regime of buffer zones of state reserves and sanctuaries in Turkmenistan will be prepared for the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

Project experts, together with staff from pilot reserves, developed a biodiversity monitoring program that includes systematic monitoring of the specified territories. This program aims at regular tracking of ecosystem conditions, species composition, and natural processes, which supports strengthening scientifically based measures for the protection and sustainable use of natural resources. According to the developed monitoring program and to enhance the capacity of scientific research, monitoring, and patrol activities in the project's pilot reserves, field equipment and gear were procured. This facilitated the conduct of three biodiversity monitoring campaigns (monitoring of ungulates and key mammal species, two seasonal bird monitoring sessions) to confirm the inventory of flora and fauna. The monitoring materials were handed over to the MOEP for further use in regular reporting under international conventions (CBD, CMS, AEWA, Ramsar, CITES).

Work is underway to study ecological flow related to assessing the ecological flow requirements both for the productive landscape and valuable ecosystems outside the production zone. A roundtable was organized for broader discussion of problems and seeking possible solutions. The first analytical assessment of the situation was prepared by an international expert, which provided additional data on the state of ecosystems and their biodiversity.

The country currently lacks sufficient scientific capacity to conduct a comprehensive analysis of ecological flow, which affects the quality of impact assessment on ecosystem conservation. Therefore, the project involves international specialists and experts to conduct the necessary independent expertise and ensure a high level of scientific assessment of the situation.

This year, the project reports the MTR METT where the progress with PA management capacity improvement is assessed at 50% (evident through METT score increment for both reserves); material capacity investment for monitoring (field equipment and observation towers) have been delayed due to lengthy procurement process and complex decision-making regarding observation tower placement nearby border zones. Otherwise, project investments in upgrading the material capacity of the two pilot reserves followed a yearly procurement plan in accordance with UNDP CO process framework.

	Addressing the MTR concerns, the project team performed capacity needs re-assessments for pilot PAs and developed a capacity building roadmap as part of 2025 year workplan. The proposed strategy for project work under Outcome 2 outside the core PA areas was developed and appraised by the stakeholders (Project Board). However, the project is still unable to demonstrate notable progress with the mid-term target of stakeholder consultations and preliminary agreements secured with representatives of local authorities, daikhan associations, farmers and private entrepreneurs. Addressing the UNDP-GEF RTA's and the MTR's concern regarding the delay with tangible results outside the production landscape and the PA estate, a roadmap was developed for the projects' work in the buffer zones, sustainable pasture management mechanisms, community engagement, international experience in PA public councils' work. The project has planned future interventions targeting sustainable agricultural practices in the buffer zones of the two reserves and identified existing regulatory gaps for establishing and effectively managing PA buffer zones and corridors. However, the project has not been able to demonstrate notable progress with the mid-term target of stakeholder consultations and preliminary agreements with representatives of local authorities, daikhan associations, farmers and private entrepreneurs, with regards to sustainable use of resources outside the core PA territory. Project impact on community based sustainable pasture management is yet to be demonstrated. Small Grants Programme (SGP) international consultant (hired as of April 2025) will review and propose revisions to the small-grants mechanism elements already developed by the project specialists, including eligibility criteria, grants selection criteria and draft Regulations document; provide guidance on socio-economic benefit analysis of the SLM measures eligible for financing under small grants mechanism; and develop a mechanism for quality check on the cost-effectiveness of the proposed small grants. The project progress with Outcome 3 is assessed as "Satisfactory" by both the project team and the MTR. The project reports 63% of the EoP target level for Indicator 28, comprised of the following elements: a) Out of five (5) Water Diplomacy Seminars planned as EoP target, the project organized three (3), thus achieving 60% of the EOP target. b) Since its start, the project also supported two (2) out of three (3) IFAS meetings set as EOP target, thus achieving 66% of the EoP target. As advised by UNDP-GEF RTA, the project will continue to fulfill its incremental role in regional Water Diplomacy by supporting regional dialogue and building knowledge to inform the national position in negotiations on water resource allocation in the region. The UNDP Country Office, in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), advises that the project should not, by any means, be regarded as the driving force for fostering and promoting Water Diplomacy; this role rests with the MFA. Interaction with the MFA will be ensured by CO Management. In February and June 2025, the project actively participated in a dialogue aimed at strengthening national capacity to engage in regional cooperation programs for the environmental restoration of the Aral Sea transboundary basin. A particular cooperation programme supported by the project is focused innovative approaches to water and land resources in five Central Asian countries, is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy (MAECI), the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), and Sogesid – an internal company of the Italian state administration.
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Our project served as a crucial bridge, connecting the interests of international partners with those of local stakeholders in Turkmenistan. The project support to this initiative included:

- A concise analysis of water resources in the Turkmen Aral Sea region. This provided a foundational understanding for discussions.
- Targeted outreach and information sharing with local administrations (hyakimliks) and water management organizations. This ensured local priorities were heard and understood.
- Collection and articulation of concrete project ideas and regional priorities. These were precisely formulated for inclusion in the conceptual framework for a new regional cooperation program.

The project support successfully channeled an international cooperation opportunity and significantly facilitated local access to potential Italian Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding. By justifying our regional priorities for external funding and building the capacity of local partners to articulate their needs, the project helped to shortlist these "our" regions for inclusion in the donor-funded program.

The project actively engaged a wide array of stakeholders in Lebap and Dashoguz velayats throughout all stages of integrated water resources management planning on irrigated lands. These key partners included water user associations (WUAs), water user groups (WUGs), daikhan associations, private entrepreneurs, representatives from local branches of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS).

During a study tour to Uzbekistan from June 20-28, the project also established active cooperation with the Middle Amu Darya Basin Water Organization "Amudarya," including its head office in Urgench, which monitors water resource distribution at the regional level. An agreement on cooperation was reached between the parties. This valuable event allowed our national partners to directly observe and learn from regional innovations, significantly strengthening their capacity to participate effectively in future regional cooperation programs within the Aral Sea Basin. Through this, we identified possible joint activities to be pursued under the new agreement.

At the project's initiative, a meeting was organized in Tashkent on June 24 with the Head of the Department of Flora and Fauna of the Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan and the biodiversity focal point, who was also in Tashkent. At the early stages of implementation, the "sister" GEF 7 Amudarya projects in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan had limited cooperation opportunities. The study tour in July 2025 provided an opportunity for both projects to discuss "parallel" activities and directions of project interventions, such as LDN assessments and Water Diplomacy. It was agreed that issues in the focus of both projects and both Ministries, such as Water Diplomacy and Amudarya Basin-Level Water Management can be raised and discussed within the agenda of bi-lateral cooperation between two sectoral ministries in two countries.

The project Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Action Plan, Knowledge Management and Communication Plans have been updated and introduce changes in the overall approach to KM component based on RTA's recommendations.

An international SES expert is on board to perform the detailed activity-level screenings of potentially significant social and environmental risks for selected project activities, and the SESP update. The project prepared detailed workplans

	for the scoped Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) that will evaluate the potential social and environmental effects of the project's supported policies and plans as follows: (i) regional LDN targets and integrated LDN compatible land use plans in the four (4) pilot districts (Output 1.1.) (ii) support to national policy and regulatory framework development (Output 1.1) (iii) Sustainable Water Management Plans (Output 1.3); (iv) Sustainable Pasture management plans (Output 1.4). A detailed list of planned regulatory framework interventions has been completed. A list of LDN-based and nature-based project activities with planned direct impact has been also prepared for SESA. The project team will ensure active involvement of local coordinators and the SGP support team to support the SES revision and re-assessment of SES risks associated with local communities In addition, in response to this requirement, the project has also developed Terms of Reference (ToR) for a national civil engineer, who will work closely with local communities and local technical specialists. This expert will play a key role in ensuring community participation in project activities and will support compliance with national standards and regulations during the design and implementation of infrastructure-related tenders. This approach contributes to the alignment of project activities with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES) and supports the effective implementation of the SESP/ESMF. The project has no critical or high risks. The major risk of operational delays due to the absence of Project Responsible Party was successfully removed as of March 2025. The project team is ensuring the capacity building for the Third Party engaged to support project implementation, in NIM implementation procedures, formats, templates and reporting requirements. ----
GEF Operational Focal point	----
Project Implementing Partner	As the National Coordinator of the project representing the National Implementing Partner, the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan, I would like to highlight several aspects of the work of the UNDP-GEF Aral Project that are particularly important in supporting the implementation of state environmental protection measures in Turkmen Aral Sea region. The project has succeeded in attracting extra budgetary funding for conducting fieldwork to support the justification of three new protected natural areas (PAs) — future state sanctuaries Zengibaba, Pitnyak, and Tallymerjen. The project conducted an inventory of species composition and habitat mapping that confirm the significance of creating these three new PAs. The biodiversity assessments of these areas served as the basis for refining documents justifying their establishment for MOEP and MFA, the proposed configuration, and the arrangement of areas requiring protection. The availability of these data and support at the GEF level have increased the priority level of these areas in the national plans for establishing PAs. There is every reason to believe that the creation of these PAs will proceed according to the previously planned schedule. The analysis of the population status of flagship species in the two pilot PAs for

	the project, the Amudarya and Gaplangyr reserves, will be used in management planning for the PAs and will form the basis for discussions on possible changes in reserves' operations in response to the changing situation regarding migration routes and ecological corridors, changes in nesting and concentration sites of flagship species, and water supply of wetlands. The project's efforts to ensure the actual functioning of buffer zones of PAs and ecological corridors are fully supported by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and will be developed through joint drafting and subsequent adoption of the relevant regulatory framework. I would like to especially note the project's efforts to integrate the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) objectives in the implementation of the country's national commitments under the Convention to Combat Desertification. Currently, a new version of the National Action Program to Combat Desertification (NAPCD) is being prepared in the country, and the UNDP-GEF project acts as the main support element for this work. We expect that the new National Action Program will include tasks to improve the legislative framework, identify and disseminate best practices in sustainable land management, become a programmatic document for preventing degradation of natural pastures and irrigated lands, for forest restoration under climate change conditions, and will meet the country's international commitments in combating desertification and land degradation. The role of the UNDP-GEF project in this process is difficult to overestimate: it provides access to knowledge and existing experience in integrating the tasks of achieving LDN into national planning tools; supports the platform for discussion of NAPCD preparation issues among the expert community, ministries, and agencies; and supports the direct participation of highly qualified specialists in forming the set of solutions to ensure land degradation neutrality within the NAPCD framework. Another critically important aspect of the project's work is water diplomacy: on behalf of the Ministry, I would like to confirm the importance of the UNDP-GEF project's efforts to support regional dialogue and the creation of a knowledge base to shape the national position in negotiations on fair distribution of water resources in the region. As the project National Coordinator, I highly appreciate the contribution of the UNDP-GEF project to addressing national priorities and supporting national plans for the creation of new PAs, organization of work in the two pilot reserves, combating desertification and land degradation, ensuring access to knowledge and practices in sustainable use of irrigated and pasture lands, forest restoration, and sustainable water resources management. I would also like to separately commend the work of the Project Manager and her team in ensuring coordination between project activities and the work of the National Implementing Partner, sectoral and local stakeholders, ensuring synergy in implementing regional initiatives and providing for additionality for the GEF investment for solving priority tasks in the Turkmen Part of the Aral Sea region. Rustem Nuryyev, Project National Coordinator, Head of Flora and Fauna Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan. ----
Other Partners	----

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K. Minor Amendments

Minor amendments are changes to the project design or implementation that do not have significant impact on the project objectives or scope, or an increase of the GEF project financing up to 5% as described in Annex 9 of the GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy Guidelines.

CO Programme Officer: Please mark each category for which a minor amendment occurred during this reporting period (1 July 2024- 30 June 2025).

For each category that is marked, please provide a brief description of the change that occurred in the associated text box. You may attach supporting documentation, as appropriate.

The purpose of this section is to capture adaptive management and measure project proactiveness, an indicator outlined in paragraph 70 of the GEF-8 Policy Directions available here.

Other
Yes
A) Results Framework
No
Provide a description of the change(s) to the 'Results framework'
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
B) Components and cost
No
Provide a description of the change(s) to 'Components and cost'
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
C) Institutional and implementation arrangements
No
Provide a description of the change(s) to 'Institutional and implementation arrangements'
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
D) Financial management
No
Provide a description of the change(s) to 'Financial Management'
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
E) Implementation schedule
No
Provide a description of the change(s) to 'Implementation schedule'
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>

F) Executing Entity
No
Provide a description of the change(s) to 'Executing Entity'
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
G) Executing Entity Category
No
Provide a description of the change(s) to 'Executing Entity Category'
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
H) Minor project objective change
No
Provide a description of the change(s) to 'minor project objective change'
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
I) Safeguards
No
Provide a description of the change(s) to 'Safeguards'
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
J) Risk Analysis
No
Provide a description of the change(s) to 'Risk Analysis'
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
K) Increase of GEF project financing up to 5%
No
Provide a description of the change to GEF project financing up to 5%
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
L) Co-financing
No
Provide a description of the change(s) to 'Co-financing'
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
M) Location of project activity
No

Provide a description of the change(s) to project location activity
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
Please provide a description of other types of minor amendments that do not fall under any of the above categories. For example, minor changes to the project's Gender Action Plan and/or gender activities can be captured here.
During the previous reporting period, the project was rated Moderately Unsatisfactory for Implementation Progress by the BPPS Regional Technical Adviser. This rating was primarily due to delays stemming from two challenges: (i) the complex engagement of a private sector entity as a Responsible Party, an arrangement being piloted for the first time not only in the country but across the RBEC region; and (ii) the limited availability of qualified national experts in the domestic market, which hindered timely recruitment of key component leads. In response, the UNDP CO introduced a set of adaptive management measures to address bottlenecks and accelerate delivery. Regular monthly calls were instituted between the project team, the RTA, and the CO to systematically review challenges and agree on solutions. To mitigate capacity gaps, the project expanded collaboration with research institutes and NGOs and tapped into Russian experts through an on-demand programme, ensuring access to both national and international expertise. With the support of the RTA and regional colleagues, the CO successfully resolved the Responsible Party engagement issues and adopted an accelerated implementation action plan, guided by the IRH Desk Officer and the RTA. These adaptive measures have already improved the project's ability to deliver and are expected to substantially increase implementation momentum in the upcoming reporting period, helping to recover lost progress and achieve a Satisfactory rating for Implementation Progress.
Upload any supporting documentation related to responses in this section.
<i>(Uploaded files will be kept internal and not submitted to the GEF.)</i>
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>

L. Gender

Progress in Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

1) Please review the project's Gender Analysis and Action Plan. If the document is not attached or an updated Gender Analysis and/or Gender Action Plan is available please upload the document below or send to the Regional Programme Associate to upload in PIMS+. Please note that all projects approved since 1 July 2014 are required to carry out a gender analysis and all projects approved since 1 July 2018 are required to have a gender analysis and action plan.
GAP_Turkmenistan_rev_Final.pdf
Quantum Gender Marker Rating
GEN2: Gender equality as significant objective
2) Please indicate in which results areas the project is contributing to gender equality (you may select more than one results area, or select not applicable):
Contributing to closing gender gaps in access to and control over resources: Yes
Improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance: Yes
Targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women: Yes
Not applicable: No
3) Please specify results achieved this reporting period that focus on increasing gender equality and the empowerment of women.
Please explain how the results reported addressed the different needs of men or women, changed norms, values, and power structures, and/or contributed to transforming or challenging gender inequalities and discrimination.
According to the UNDP Gender Marker Rating, the project is categorized as GEN2. The GEN 2 projects consider gender equality as a significant objective; while not focusing specifically on gender, the project has gender as a cross-cutting issue and gender mainstreaming and sex-disaggregated indicators as principal project design features. The project conducted a gender analysis at the preparatory phase, and a concise gender action plan was prepared as part of the project design. According to the UNDP expectations from the GEN 2-rated project, the project team is making a continuous effort to promote gender equality in a consistent way and implement activities where gender issues can and should be mainstreamed; project monitoring and evaluation design includes indicators to measure/track a change related to gender equality/women's empowerment and presents gender-disaggregated data on project beneficiaries as a GEF Core Indicator. There are numerous ways in which gender dimensions are relevant to the Aral Sea project. The project addresses multiple types of agricultural land use, all of which have important gender dimensions, as they relate directly to the sustainability of local livelihoods. The project will ensure that project activities relating to improved land management, such as local trainings and local decision-making mechanisms have appropriate and adequate gender representation. The project is working on improving management of protected areas, and will ensure the engagement of women in decision-making bodies related to protected areas, such as local management boards. The project also works to ensure appropriate gender equality and women's empowerment in project implementation

mechanisms, such as on the Project Steering Committee, and amongst the project team of national experts and consultants involved in implementation.

In response to the recommendations in last year's PIR and acknowledging the limited number of gender specialists in Turkmenistan, the project decided to hire an international gender expert to review the project's Gender Action Plan and provide recommendations for integrating gender aspects into project implementation. As a result, an international expert was engaged and developed several recommendations in this area. Contributions included: Guidance on integrating gender considerations into LDN projects, proposing gender-sensitive dimensions for draft policies, legal amendments, regulations and bylaws, developing recommendations for gender mainstreaming in the project's work on integrated land and resource use planning. During the reporting period, gender mainstreaming efforts focused on ensuring the involvement of women professionals, local farmers, and entrepreneurs in project consultations and planning processes. The project promoted active participation of women in all project activities, including seminars, trainings, and Project Board meetings. Several mechanisms were developed to enhance women's engagement in project activities, including:

- Strengthening partnerships with local civil society organizations to reach women in the pilot regions (e.g., Eco-Durmush in Dashoguz and Taze Zaman in Lebap);
- Developing a Communication Plan for 2025, with a strong focus on women's participation in many planned activities;
- Organizing radio programs aimed at building the capacity of rural women;
- Involving female representatives of local Gengesh offices in project events and consultations related to the formation of community initiative groups in the pilot areas.

The analysis of gender-disaggregated data on project participants shows a significant increase in women's involvement compared to the previous reporting period. Women's participation reached 33% in Lebap province and 41% in Dashoguz province of the total number of participants.

In the reporting period, the main focus of the gender mainstreaming work was to ensure the involvement of women professionals, as well as local farmers and entrepreneurs in events to discuss the project activities and plans. The project called for active participation of women in all project activities: women participated in seminars, trainings and in the Project Board meetings.

Several examples of events directly targeting gender aspects are given below:

On November 10, 2024, an ecological festival titled "Ecology of Culture" was held in Dashoguz with strong participation from women entrepreneurs, students, and community leaders. Co-organized with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, UNESCO, local NGOs (Ecodurmush, Yashyl Shohle), and other partners, the event celebrated environmental awareness while highlighting the role of women in sustainable development. It provided a platform for women to showcase eco-friendly products, crafts, and student-led research, blending cultural heritage, environmental values, and women's empowerment.

The festival expanded the Project's outreach and deepened collaboration with CSOs like Ynanch Vepa, reinforcing women's leadership in the green economy. Sessions addressed the Aral Sea crisis, sustainable agribusiness, and gender-responsive climate resilience. Interactive components—such as games, films, and workshops—engaged women and youth in environmental education.

The Project promotes a gender-equitable approach to sustainable development, empowering women farmers through trainings on income generation, entrepreneurship, and market access. A dedicated fair enabled women to present their products and build business linkages. On June 13, 2025, a practical seminar in Lebap focused on alternative livelihoods under climate change, particularly for women and youth. Topics included horticulture, fisheries, and access to technical and financial resources. Gender-responsive approaches were integrated throughout.

To engage youth—especially young women—the Project supported the National Local Conferences

of Youth on Climate Change (LCOY) in four cities in September 2024, involving 1,376 students. The events emphasized inclusive participation and gave young people space to discuss climate solutions and gender equity.

The Project also contributes to gender equality through educational outreach. On April 22, 2025, it delivered a lecture on gender equality for students at the Institute of International Relations, followed by a second event on June 5 at the State Institute of Economics and Management. Both sessions emphasized the importance of gender-responsive environmental action.

In addition, the Project provides expert support to local CSOs, helping identify socio-economic benefits for women and strengthening platforms for gender-focused initiatives. A national billboard design contest—launched for the International Day for Biological Diversity—raised awareness of biodiversity in protected areas. Special emphasis was placed on youth and gender inclusion: 12 girls from the Dashoguz Art School participated through Ecodurmush, with three winning top prizes. Their success highlighted the creative leadership potential of girls in biodiversity advocacy. These efforts illustrate the Project's commitment to inclusive, gender-sensitive environmental action and to building a new generation of women leaders in climate and biodiversity efforts across Turkmenistan.

4) Please describe how work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment enhanced the project's environmental and/or resilience outcomes.

The project integrated gender equality and women's empowerment as cross-cutting priorities, recognizing their critical role in achieving long-term environmental sustainability and community resilience. By intentionally creating inclusive spaces and opportunities for women and girls to participate, lead, and benefit from project activities, the initiative has strengthened both social and ecological outcomes in the Aral Sea Basin.

A key example is the project's focus on alternative livelihoods for women farmers, including hands-on seminars that equipped participants with entrepreneurship and climate-resilient income generation skills. These activities not only supported women's economic empowerment but also contributed to reducing pressure on degraded ecosystems by promoting sustainable practices in horticulture and fisheries. Women's increased economic autonomy enabled more active engagement in land stewardship and climate adaptation at the community level.

Additionally, the youth and gender-focused biodiversity awareness contest, launched in connection with the International Day for Biological Diversity, showcased the leadership of 12 girls from the Dashoguz Art School, three of whom won top prizes. This initiative, implemented in partnership with the local NGO Ecodurmush, helped foster a sense of environmental responsibility among young women, while strengthening the social fabric that supports biodiversity conservation near protected areas.

The project also engaged in gender-sensitive education and advocacy, such as organizing a lectures on gender equality for students of the Institute of International Relations and a session on gender and environmental sustainability for students of the Turkmen State Institute of Economics and Management. These efforts helped build awareness among future leaders of the interlinkages between gender, climate, and sustainable development.

Furthermore, by supporting Local Conferences of Youth on Climate Change (LCOY) in four regions of Turkmenistan, the project reached 1,376 students, ensuring balanced participation of young women and men. These inclusive platforms encouraged youth—particularly girls—to become agents of change in climate action, contributing to stronger community resilience through informed, gender-responsive engagement.

The project held regular informal consultations with women's initiative groups in Dashoguz (12 women) and Lebap (31 women) provinces to explore alternative livelihoods and promote women's involvement in project activities. Women proposed environmentally friendly and resilience-building initiatives such as poultry breeding (chickens, turkeys, ducks), household gardening, beekeeping, and

greenhouse farming. Additional ideas included opening a sewing and carpet (felt) workshop and a beauty salon, supporting economic diversification. During these sessions, women-participants also received information about available grant programs, enabling them to seek financial support for their initiatives. These efforts not only enhanced women's economic empowerment but also contributed to sustainable land use and strengthened local adaptive capacity to climate impacts.

Through these interventions, the project demonstrated that advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls not only contributes to social equity, but also amplifies the impact of environmental interventions, ensures broader community ownership, and enhances the sustainability of resilience-building efforts.

5) Please describe any experiences or linkages (direct or indirect) between project activities and gender-based violence (GBV). This information is for UNDP use only and will not be shared with GEF Secretariat.

(Question #5 was not included in the PIR submission to the GEF)

(Gender-based violence (GBV) is a catch all term referring to violence, abuse and discrimination directed at someone because of their gender. It can take many forms, including child or forced marriage, denial of inheritance or education, intimate partner violence, female genital mutilation, rape, infanticide, transactional sex trafficking, sex slavery or killing in the name of family 'honour'. It is a result of entrenched structural inequalities which threaten sustainable development, undermine democratic governance and deepen vulnerabilities and social fragmentation. Because women and girls traditionally have less power and status, fewer resources and less education, income and decision-making power than their male counterparts, they are more likely to experience this kind of violence. However, men and boys can also experience GBV, including, for example, rape, mass conscription, castration, sex-selective massacre or homophobic abuse. For more information on please visit UNDP's portal on Gender-based Violence (GBV) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).)

n/a

M. Risk Management

A) Overall Risk Management

BPPS RTA: Please discuss the risks flagged in the Quantum project Risk Register and the VF Risk Dashboard in PIMS+ with the CO and then provide an assessment of project risk management undertaken during the reporting period. Document actions, agreed with the CO, to address all project risks in the coming year.
Overall risk remains Low, with active management of institutional capacity, stakeholder coordination, climate variability, and social/labor risks through SESP/ESMF instruments and stakeholder platforms. It is recommended to keep several “moderate” items under active monitoring : institutional capacity for PAs/pasture/forest governance; coordination among tenure/rights holders; climate risks (desertification and ecosystem shifts); and social risks around access changes or labor practices. Management measures are anchored in SESP/ESMF and stakeholder engagement. Together with the SES consultant and SES TA the project should closely monitor the actions agreed for next year include (i) SES activity-level screening update (international consultant, June 2025), (ii) quarterly review of risk log vs. procurement calendar, and (iii) climate-proofing of PA and restoration designs.
Project Manager: Please upload evidence of actions taken to mitigate risks
6463 TKM Aral_risk log Quantum and GEF for MTR.xlsx

B) SES Implementation

<u>1) SESP</u> 1a) Select status
Revisions planned for later
1b) If revisions to the SESP are/were needed, please explain
An international consultant was contracted in June 2025 to perform a detailed activity-level screenings of potentially significant social and environmental risks for selected project activities and update the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure for the project.
2) Stakeholder Engagement Plan 2a) Select status
Revised
2b) Provide an update on progress, challenges and outcomes related to stakeholder

engagement based on the description in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval.

The Project is continuously strengthening day-to-day cooperation with the Ministry of Environment Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture, the State Committee on Water Resources, and local governance authorities in Dashoguz and Lebap. Regular technical workshops and roundtables are convened to ensure that Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), sustainable land and water management priorities, and practices directly inform upcoming national policy revisions (e.g., amendments to the Land Code, pasture by-laws).

Two multi-stakeholder mechanisms—the inter-sectoral LDN Working Group and the regional Water Users Group in Lebap, along with Pasture Users Groups in Ashgabat, Lebap, and Dashoguz—continued their activities, meeting regularly to review technical solutions proposed by the project, sustainable land management (SLM) practices, methodologies, and baseline studies. These groups help ensure that technical decisions are grounded in a participatory and widely supported process.

Engagement with IFAS, ICSD, the UNDP-GEF sister project in Uzbekistan, and the Scientific Information Centre of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia (SIC ICWC) was significantly strengthened through key regional events: the IFAS Board session in Kazakhstan (March 2024), the Water Diplomacy Seminar in Ashgabat (April 2024), and a study tour to Uzbekistan (June 2025). IFAS and the project have established a shared information platform, positioning Turkmenistan as an active contributor to Aral Sea basin knowledge exchange.

This year marks a new cooperation not originally envisioned in the project document. The collaboration between the UNDP Turkmenistan project and the Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (SIC ICWC) aims to develop irrigation regimes for major crops and hydro-module zoning, which are essential elements for subsequent work on developing integrated water use plans for pilot regions in the context of climate change. To achieve this goal, two key tools are being developed and implemented:

A methodology for the operational adjustment of hydro-module district boundaries

Calculation of irrigation regimes for agricultural crops

The work is based on the collection and analysis of data on soils, groundwater levels, and salinity, as well as on the creation of digital maps and diagrams, which will allow for more precise hydro-module zoning and ensure accurate water use planning. This will increase the efficiency of water resource use and the resilience of agro-systems under climate change conditions.

The cooperation also involves organizing trainings and practical workshops to enhance the technical capacities of local specialists and stakeholders, including government representatives, farmers, and local communities. The implementation of this partnership, approved by both parties, will not only improve water and land management in the region but also lay the foundation for scaling up successful practices and further regional cooperation.

3) SES Frameworks**3a) Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), if relevant:**

Summarize implementation progress and challenges during the reporting period and outline any actions planned in the next reporting period. Any related monitoring reports should be uploaded as evidence under Section A above, 'Overall Risk Management'

Preliminary analysis and screening conducted during the project development phase via UNDP's Social and Environment Screening Procedure (SESP) identified several potential social and environmental risks associated with project activities. The project falls under Moderate Risk category and the identified potential social and environmental risks' impacts are manageable through identified mitigation measures detailed in the Screening Template, included in Annex 5 to the UNDP/GEF Project Document. An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been developed on the basis of the risk screening during SESP to specify the processes that will be undertaken by the project for the additional assessments of potential impacts and identification and development of appropriate risk management measures, in line with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES). An international consultant was contracted in June 2025 to perform a detailed activity-level screenings of potentially significant social and environmental risks for selected project activities and update the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure for the project.

3b) Other SES Frameworks, if relevant:

Are there any other SES Frameworks in place for the project? (e.g. Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework, Resettlement Action Framework, Livelihood Action Framework)

No

If yes, please list and briefly describe those documents below, their status, progress, and challenges. Any related monitoring reports should be uploaded as evidence under Section A above 'Overall Risk Management'.

(not set or not applicable)

4) Social and Environmental Assessments/Management Plans**4a) Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), if relevant:**

Briefly describe the scope of application and status of the SESA, and summarize progress and challenges.

n/a

4b) Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs)/Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs), if relevant:

Based on the project's ESMF and/or SESP, please list any ESIAs/ESMPs required during project implementation with a brief summary of which project activities they apply to and the status of each (i.e. under implementation, draft, or planned).

n/a

For the ESIAs/ESMPs under implementation during this reporting period, provide an update on progress and challenges. Any related monitoring reports should be uploaded as evidence

under Section A above, 'Overall Risk Management'.

n/a

4c) Targeted Assessments/Plans, if relevant:

Based on the project's ESMF and/or SESP, please list any targeted assessments/plans required during project implementation with a brief summary of which project activities they apply to and the status of each (i.e. under implementation, draft, or planned).

An international consultant was contracted in June 2025 to perform a detailed activity-level screenings of potentially significant social and environmental risks for selected project activities) and update the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure for the project. The following activities are subject to the detailed screening:

- o Activity 1.1.3. Support to mainstreaming LDN into policy framework through LDN-sensitive revisions to the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification.
- o Activity 1.1.4. LDN target setting at regional level, in Dashoguz and Lebap provinces.
- o Activity 1.1.5. Integrated land use planning in the priority districts of Dashoguz and Lebap provinces (Turkmenbashi and Ruhubelent /Deinau and Darganata) using the bio-physical factors that have been analyzed during the LDN target setting and integrating LDN “neutrality mechanism” into the land use planning.
- o Activity 1.3.1. Development of Integrated Water Management Plans and practical recommendations for improved water allocation among multiple water users for approximately 100,000 ha of irrigated areas, based on climate risk vulnerability assessments, aligned with LDN principle.
- o Activity 1.3.3 Demonstration of best practices in irrigation technology and horticulture measures.
- o Activity 1.4.1. Pasture Management Plans, Pasture Law amendments and supported bylaws.
- o Activity 1.4.2 Restoration of 50,000 ha of degraded pastures
- o Activity 1.4.3 Demonstration of sustainable pasture management and reduced pasture degradation
- o Activity 2.1.1. Development of the Amudarya State Nature Reserve Management and Business Plan, improved zoning in PAs using multi stakeholders' participatory approaches to reconcile multiple uses and users' interests.
- o Act. 2.2.2 Biodiversity/PAs including: preparatory works for new PAs designation
- o Activity 2.3.1 identification of community-supported ecological corridors
- o Activity 2.3.2 Supported sustainable agricultural practices and sustainable income generation in production zones.

A template for the so-called “upstream” activities – support to elaboration of development planning or legal documents; and for the “downstream” activities – identification and implementation of the site-specific sub-projects listed above.

The screening shall be based on the UNDP SES Screening Checklist and / or on the so called 'SES Aide-mémoire' – an internal working tool that supports the SES application in the RBEC region based

on the SESP Social and Environmental Risk Screening Checklist (SESP Appendix 1). The project team and experts are filling in the questionnaires based on the level of detail available at the current state of project implementation and planning. Based on the results of this exercise, the SES international expert will: 1. Review the screening results for all sub-projects within the project activities that were prepared by the project team. The consultant shall ensure that the screening of sub-projects correctly determines the significance of their SES risks and prescribes adequate SES risk treatment measures based on the UNDP SES requirements, 2. Update the SESP for the project, 3. Determine the scope and implementation modalities of any further assessments (should screening of sub-projects identify any Substantial- or High- SES risks).
For the Targeted Assessments/Plans under implementation during this reporting period, provide and update on progress and challenges. Any related monitoring reports should be uploaded as evidence under Section A above, 'Overall Risk Management'.
n/a
5) Project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)
5a) Select status
operational
If designed but not yet operationalized, please describe challenges and plans to operationalize
n/a
If operational, please describe challenges and progress and explain how the GRM has been communicated to stakeholders, including project affected people.
Project-level grievance redress mechanism was established at the project inception to address concerns promptly through dialogue and engagement, using an understandable and transparent process that is culturally appropriate, rights-compatible, and readily accessible to all stakeholders at no cost and without retribution. The Local Steering Committee at district level functions as project-level Grievance and Redress Mechanisms (GRM) reporting to the Project Board. Registered grievances will be reviewed and managed by the Project Board. The TOR for project-level GRM was developed during the project inception phase. No grievances have been registered since the project inception.
5b) Have there been any concerns or complaints about the social and/or environmental impacts of the project? If yes, please describe in the text box.
No
If 'Yes', please describe
(not set or not applicable)

5c) Please provide a hyperlink to the project's GRM. Other evidence of the project's GRM should be uploaded above in section 'A) Overall Risk Management'

n/a

C) Social and Environmental Standards (SES) Support

SES Technical Advisor

What category of SES support does this project need? (choose one and provide justification in the text box) This information will be used internally and will not be submitted to the GEF.

B. Enhanced SES TA oversight (prioritized for proactive SES TA support)

If (A) is selected, what is the level of this new Risk Dashboard risk?

(not set or not applicable)

Provide justification for the above selection.

Provide justification for the above selection.

The project is closely coordinating with the SES TA and has hired its international SES consultant. The PIR has provided a very solid report on its implementation of the SES-related activities. The project should contact the SES TA and double-check the quality of targeted screenings that will be conducted and agree on the GRM details. Since the GRM establishment may be difficult for some projects in the country, the project may use e.g. an example of recent GRMs used by the UNDP in the same settings: <https://www.undp.org/turkmenistan/projects/provision-medicines-necessary-prevention-and-treatment-non-communicable-diseases-and-maternal-and-child-health-turkmenistan>

N. Knowledge Management & Communications

The **Project Manager** must complete the three questions below.

1) Please provide progress on the implementation of the project's Knowledge Management approach approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval. If there is no KM approach/strategy, please comment on how the project is capturing and disseminating best practices and lessons learned.
During the reporting period the project Knowledge Management Plan has been further detailed updated reflecting the key stakeholders to be engaged, the knowledge products and implementation arrangements, and highlighting activities to be carried out in 2025 . During this reporting period, the project successfully conducted 40 events, including meetings, trainings, workshops, round tables, and consultations engaging a total of 912 individuals (343 women or 37.6%, and 569 men or 62.4%) in various awareness-raising and capacity-building activities. Note: These figures exclude indirect beneficiaries, such as radio listeners and television viewers. The project actively coordinates its activities with other projects, stakeholders and initiatives aimed at disseminating new and successful practices and experience, sharing knowledge and pushing boundaries, introducing innovations and developing new approaches. The project has fostered robust partnerships, exemplified by several key collaborations that aim to bolster sustainable development and climate resilience in the Aral Sea Basin. Key partnerships include collaboration with the sister UNDP-GEF Project in Uzbekistan on water diplomacy, engagement with IFAS agencies for coordinated Aral Sea Basin efforts, and cooperation with local CSOs for community-based actions. The project also aligned with FAO initiatives on agriculture and food security, partnered with Conservation X-LAB to apply innovative technologies, and worked with GIZ and other UNDP projects on climate issues. Joint work with ICSD advanced hydro-module zoning. A study tour to Uzbekistan further strengthened the capacity of Turkmen specialists in sustainable irrigation and climate-resilient agriculture, fostering knowledge exchange and best practice transfer. These diverse partnerships are instrumental in ensuring a comprehensive and collaborative approach to addressing the complex environmental and socio-economic challenges of the Aral Sea Basin. The project continues to implement its Knowledge Management (KM) approach, consistently aligning with the strategy approved at CEO Endorsement and updating the KM Plan annually. During this reporting period, activities have strategically focused on learning from and sharing insights gained from relevant projects, programs, initiatives, and evaluations, all designed to enhance the project's overall impact and long-term sustainability. Awareness-Raising and Outreach Activities In line with the KM plan, the Project conducted a wide range of outreach events to promote awareness and knowledge-sharing on sustainable land and ecosystem management: • Stakeholder-Oriented Events: Numerous capacity-building activities, such as trainings, orientation workshops, and roundtables, were implemented across all three project components to enhance stakeholder awareness and competencies. Under Output 1.1, the project advanced integrated landscape planning in Dashoguz and Lebap provinces by organizing several knowledge-sharing, awareness raising and capacity-building events focused on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN):

- LDN Workshop (Nov 26, 2024): Built capacities of national and local authorities on LDN target setting and planning. Introduced the revised NAPCD and the roadmap for integrating LDN into national strategies.
- LDN Working Group Meeting (Nov 27, 2024): Facilitated knowledge exchange and reviewed progress on indicators, targets, and legislative needs for LDN under the Scientific and Public Council on Desertification.
- Roundtable on NAPCD (June 17, 2025): Promoted integration of LDN into national planning. Emphasized GIS, satellite tools (e.g., Trends.Earth), and synergies with drought and sandstorm strategies.
- Field Knowledge Sessions (Jan & Apr 2025): Conducted in four pilot areas to demonstrate restoration practices—sustainable irrigation, saxaul planting, rotational grazing, GIS mapping of water points, and pasture restoration.
- On-Site Sessions in Kabakly & Isbaz (Apr 24, 2025): Focused on soil restoration, water-saving technologies, salt-tolerant crops, protective planting, and alternative income sources.

Under Output 1.3, the project promoted efficient water management in four priority districts through several knowledge-sharing activities:

- Roundtable (June 23, 2025): Held jointly with Uzbekistan's Research Center for Irrigation and Water Management to analyze irrigation norms and adapt recalibrated regimes for pilot areas.
- Study Tour to Uzbekistan (June 20–28, 2025) strengthened the capacity of Turkmen specialists in climate-resilient irrigation, salt-tolerant crops, and integrated land-water management.
- Training Sessions on Water User Groups (April 18 & 23, 2025): Conducted in Dashoguz and Lebap for local authorities, water managers, and farmers. Focus areas included WUG functionality, saline land reclamation, land and water legislation, explored adaptive measures, and practiced designing efficient local water use strategies. and modern irrigation methods like geomembrane canal lining and IWRM principles.

These activities enhanced local capacities and stakeholder coordination for climate-resilient water management and sustainable agriculture.

Output 1.4: Pasture Restoration and Sustainable Use

- Fieldwork and knowledge-sharing sessions on pasture restoration, including saxaul planting and pasture management planning, were conducted in Danev etrap.
- A roundtable on January 31, 2025, reviewed draft grazing plans, mapped water sources, and coordinated with Pasture Users Groups on artificial reforestation near the "Serdar" farm.
- Planting activities with local herders and the Amudarya Nature Reserve were carried out on February 13, 2025, sowing 1,050 kg of saxaul seeds across 33 ha of degraded land.

Output 2.1: Protected Areas Management

- On August 14, 2024, a PA management training was conducted for staff of Amudarya State Nature Reserve, covering planning tools, monitoring, and integration of sustainable activities.
- Roundtables held on December 10, 2024, and May 22, 2025, presented species monitoring results and migration models, discussed legislation, and identified capacity gaps based on METT assessments. Emphasis was placed on harmonizing conservation with sustainable land use.

Output 2.3: Biodiversity-Friendly Livelihoods

- A training workshop on June 13, 2025, in Lebap velayat introduced alternative income

opportunities—such as eco-tourism, agri-processing, and sustainable farming—promoting rural resilience and reducing pressure on natural ecosystems.

Output 3.1: Regional Cooperation & Water Diplomacy

- The project contributed to IFAS-led regional initiatives and participated in the UN Special Programme for the Aral Sea Consultative Meeting (Nov 30–Dec 1, 2024), aligning national actions with regional disaster risk and water management strategies.
- Support was provided for Turkmenistan’s delegation to the CACCC 2025 (May 13–15), fostering regional climate dialogue and advancing shared resilience goals.
- On June 4, 2025, the project team joined a Water Diplomacy Seminar in Tashkent, presenting Turkmenistan’s contributions to integrated water management, regional cooperation, and participatory dialogue.

Output 3.2: Knowledge Management

- A series of KM products were developed and officially approved, enhancing practical tools for ecosystem restoration and sustainable resource use:
- Methodology for Tugai Forest Restoration – tailored for Amudarya Reserve and endorsed for use in pilot PAs.
- Ungulate Census Methodology – for biodiversity monitoring in Gaplangyr and Amudarya reserves.
- Guidelines on Carp Fish Reproduction – supporting biodiversity and circular water use in agriculture.
- Irrigation of Saline Lands – improving water efficiency using locally adapted practices.
- Water Accounting Systems – detailed national guide for precise water data and management.
- Legal Review of Protected Areas – analysis of PA legislation prepared by the project legal expert.
- Additionally, five radio programs and a TV documentary aired in 2024–2025, raising awareness on environmental conservation and project activities among rural communities.

The project hired a Communications Specialist and Communication plan for 2025 was developed to implement project activities and maximize project impact and efficiency. The Project uses government-owned printed media (the only media available in the country as a means of outreach for the national audience) and UNDP web-site (<https://www.undp.org/turkmenistan/>) . International social network platforms outlets such as LinkedIn is used where possible to inform the global audience about the Project’s plans and activities.

2) Please provide URLs specific to this project in the relevant field below. Please categorize the URLs appropriately (for example: project websites, social media sites, media coverage, etc.)

1. Media coverage of the RT on World Rangers Day, July 31 2024

<https://www.newscentralasia.net/2024/08/01/the-ministry-of-environmental-protection-of-turkmenistan-hosted-a-round-table-dedicated-to-world-ranger-day/>

<https://turkmenistan.gov.tm/index.php/en/post/86228/turkmenistan-celebrates-world-ranger-day>

2. Media coverage of the LCOY. Working Group 3: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Turkmen Aral Sea Region Considering Climate Change

<https://www.turkmenportal.com/en/blog/82261/the-first-lcoy-meeting-was-held-in-the-northern-region-of-turkmenistan>

3. Media coverage LSC on LDN on scientific public council on desertification problems and Seminar on practical use of LDN , 26-27 November 2024:<https://centralasiacclimateportal.org/undp-and-turkmenistan-are-promoting-the-concept-of-land-degradation-neutrality-in-the-turkmen-part-of-the-aral-sea-basin-to-address-desertification-issues/>

<https://www.undp.org/turkmenistan/press-releases/undp-and-turkmenistan-are-promoting-concept-land-degradation-neutrality-turkmen-part-aral-sea-basin-address>

4. Round table on Results of the research conducted in the territories of the Amudarya and Gaplankyr Nature Reserve, 10th of December, 2024:

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1007510238084890&id=100064777686749

<https://www.newscentralasia.net/2024/12/23/turkmen-environmentalists-focus-on-biodiversity-conservation-in-amudarya-and-kaplankyr-reserves/>

5. Media coverage of the Round table with employees of the Amudarya and Gaplankyr nature reserves and key experts on biodiversity, 14 June, 2024:

<https://turkmenistan.gov.tm/en/post/84950/turkmenistan-prioritizes-biodiversity-conservation#:~:text=18.06.2024,population%20analysis%20were%20also%20identified>

https://greencentralasia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/doc_1719478797.pdf

6. Media coverage of the Workshop for employees of the Amudarya State Nature Reserve on development a management plan for protected, 14 August, 2024 areas

<https://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/en/post/86582/seminar-management-features-protected-natural-areas-was-held-turkmenistan>

<https://turkmenportal.com/en/blog/81547/a-seminar-on-the-management-of-specially-protected-natural-areas-was-held-in-the-city-of-seydi>

7. Media coverage of the LCOY, Working group 2-3: Sustainable management of water and land resources in the Turkmen Aral Sea region taking into account climate change, Turkmenabat, 9-11 September, 2024

<https://turkmenportal.com/en/blog/82460/youth-from-the-eastern-region-of-turkmenistan-discussed-climate-challenges-at-lcoy>

<https://www.newscentralasia.net/2024/09/13/youth-conference-in-turkmenabat-contribution-of-youth-to-climate-change-issues/>

8. Media coverage of the Forest tree planting in Amudarya reserve, 29 November, 2024

<https://turkmenistan.gov.tm/en/post/90141/innovative-method-mixed-restoration-tugai-forest-ecosystems-has-been-tested>

9. Media coverage of the LCOY Working Group 3: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Turkmen Aral Sea Region Considering Climate Change in Dashoguz, 3rd September, 2024

<https://www.newscentralasia.net/2024/09/05/dashoguz-turkmenistans-youth-rallies-for-climate-action/>
<https://www.turkmenportal.com/en/blog/82261/the-first-icoy-meeting-was-held-in-the-northern-region-of-turkmenistan>

10. Media coverage of the Ecological festival in Dashoguz, November 10, 2024

<https://centralasiacimateportal.org/eco-festival-held-in-dashoguz/>

<https://www.undp.org/turkmenistan/press-releases/visit-undp-resident-representative-turkmenistan-dashoguz-velayat>

11. Media coverage of the Practical training seminar on effective water resource management, held in Dashoguz on 11 November, 2024

<https://turkmenistaninfo.gov.tm/news/8294>

12. Six KM products have already been uploaded to the SIC-ICSD database:

□ <https://sic-icsd.com.tm/ru/databases/ecosystems-and-biodiversity>

<https://sic-icsd.com.tm/ru/databases/water-resources-management>

13. Media coverage of the Practical seminar on use of water and land resources, 18 April, 2025, Dashoguz

<https://turkmenistan.gov.tm/en/post/94185/issues-development-integrated-plans-land-and-water-resources-use-discussed>

Обсуждены вопросы разработки комплексных планов использования земельных и водных ресурсов

<https://turkmenistan.gov.tm/index.php/ru/post/94176/obsuzhdeny-voprosy-razrabotki-kompleksnyh-planov-ispolzovaniya-zemelnyh-i-vodnyh-resursov>

https://www.instagram.com/p/DlvNO-oiPsb/?img_index=1

<https://www.facebook.com/undptm/posts/pfbid0Fe7ZEumHVKY4iY1cqHQmZB4fJVU2L7teMp2a8kcHDjToKaSUAQQPRQtDYJDL6S1il>

14. UNDP Turkmenistan Highlights the Role of Women in Climate Action on Earth Day

UNDP Turkmenistan Highlights the Role of Women in Climate Action on Earth Day | Society

<https://www.undp.org/turkmenistan/news/undp-turkmenistan-highlights-role-women-climate-action-earth-day>

UNDP Turkmenistan Highlights the Role of Women in Climate Action on Earth Day - News Central Asia (nCa)

<https://www.newscentralasia.net/2025/04/23/undp-turkmenistan-highlights-the-role-of-women-in-climate-action-on-earth-day/>

Experts from UNDP informed Turkmen students about the interconnectedness of gender equality and climate action Orient

<https://orient.tm/en/post/84384/experts-undp-informed-turkmen-students-about-interconnectedness-gender-equality-and-climate-action>

UNDP Turkmenistan Highlights the Role of Women in Climate Action on Earth Day THE ASHGABAT TIMES

<https://ashgabatimes.com/index.php/en/2025/04/undp-turkmenistan-highlights-the-role-of-women-in-climate-action-on-earth-day/?ysclid=metlgjmi82139499454>

UNDP Turkmenistan (@undp_turkmenistan) • Instagram photos and videos

https://www.instagram.com/p/Dlv9JXwCa1l/?img_index=1

□ В честь Международного дня Земли ПРООН в... - UNDP Turkmenistan | Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/undptm/posts/pfbid0UBfuV5orHadrhB9RqFMkpnZpc83xyhysqtKazys1inaKRnA8TaFCXNjcuDPDwzkqlnCA> Tariq (attached); Plus, IMO post

15. Media coverage of the seminar in Lebap on Sustainable management of water and land resources, 23-24 April, 2025

UNDP Turkmenistan (@undp_turkmenistan) • Instagram photos and videos

https://www.instagram.com/p/DI29QnYCeQx/?img_index=1

□ ПРООН усиливает устойчивость Лебапского... - UNDP Turkmenistan | Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/undptm/posts/pfbid025i8zrpPjqRo75DnURnKMktQJ3zepCNA5GrRuKRorFd1iJVLtiEmv6TGrKqQwhHvI>

16. Seminar and Exchange visit Amydarya, Repetek, Kopetdag reserve representatives, May 8, 2025

UNDP Turkmenistan (@undp_turkmenistan) • Instagram photos and videos

https://www.instagram.com/p/DJizB4aiTof/?img_index=1 □ Укрепление природоохранных усилий через... - UNDP Turkmenistan | Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/undptm/posts/pfbid0WHZQGSAYpa3hgKCvFTvKS61QbAUYSNkC1nMUUayaKDXCPgjzWQTmwYSRhx8kHbPplIMO> post

17. Round table on ecological corridor legislation, May 22, 2025

UNDP and GEF Support Turkmenistan in Enhancing Biodiversity Protection and Environmental Governance THE ASHGABAT TIMES

<https://ashgabatimes.com/index.php/en/2025/05/undp-and-gef-support-turkmenistan-in-enhancing-biodiversity-protection-and-environmental-governance/?ysclid=metnl07s1952574152>

В Ашхабаде обсудили дальнейшее совершенствование природоохранного законодательства | Общество

<https://turkmenportal.com/blog/91386/v-ashhabade-obsudili-dalneishee-sovershenstvovanie-prirodoohrannogo-zakonodatelstva>

ПРООН и ГЭФ поддерживают Туркменистан в укреплении охраны биоразнообразия и экологического управления - News Central Asia (nCa)

<https://www.newscentralasia.net/2025/05/23/proon-i-gehf-podderzhivayut-turkmenistan-v-ukreplenii-okhrany-bioraznoobraziya-i-ehkologicheskogo-upravleniya/>

Приаралье: Туркменистан усиливает защиту уникальных экосистем Orient

<https://orient.tm/ru/post/85545/un-turkmenistan-ecological-corridors-biodiversity>

UNDP and GEF Support Turkmenistan in Enhancing Biodiversity Protection and Environmental

Governance THE ASHGABAT TIMES

<https://ashgabatimes.com/index.php/en/2025/05/undp-and-gef-support-turkmenistan-in-enhancing-biodiversity-protection-and-environmental-governance/?ysclid=metntasywd248168874>

ПРООН и ГЭФ поддерживают Туркменистан в укреплении охраны биоразнообразия и экологического управления | United Nations Development Programme

<https://www.undp.org/ru/turkmenistan/press-releases/proon-i-gef-podderzhivayut-turkmenistan-v-ukreplenii-okhrany-bioraznoobraziya-i-ekologicheskogo-upravleniya>

□ ПРООН и ГЭФ усиливают охрану биоразнообразия... - UNDP Turkmenistan | Facebook

[https://www.facebook.com/undptm/posts/pfbid0paDTtyfYFkLDswRQLWTxqhffhsMpGf4XdrXva9sWrRa3NHwRFJof96CWeTNhZBjmlUNDP_Turkmenistan \(@undp_turkmenistan\) • Instagram photos and videoshttps://www.instagram.com/p/DJ_okAhiKfB/?img_index=1](https://www.facebook.com/undptm/posts/pfbid0paDTtyfYFkLDswRQLWTxqhffhsMpGf4XdrXva9sWrRa3NHwRFJof96CWeTNhZBjmlUNDP_Turkmenistan (@undp_turkmenistan) • Instagram photos and videoshttps://www.instagram.com/p/DJ_okAhiKfB/?img_index=1)

18. Aral Sea project specialist delivered lecture for Turkmen students on June 5, 2025:

5 июня — в День окружающей среды 2025 года —... - UNDP Turkmenistan | Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/undptm/posts/pfbid0hCSvibXEnYqg7cyWjwLouFD9S3Zyk6G4tmu2Ee2bTHcb953jcQ3nMHmpf9zT67CWlhttps://www.instagram.com/p/DKhw9B6odar/?img_index=1

19. Recognizing the winners of the visual materials contest on the theme:

“The Importance of Biodiversity Conservation in the Protected Areas of Turkmenistan”

<https://www.facebook.com/undptm/posts/pfbid0jXYLgXmZ24YN89z1NDweboUqkEzFrwumjWRMgf5zD85iKVEprgVfh7SJy8Nagr9SI>

https://www.instagram.com/p/DKrg5bpiTvc/?img_index=1

<https://x.com/UNDPTM/status/1932064106128834664>

19. Practical seminar on alternative sources of income, June 13, 2025:

https://www.instagram.com/p/DK9fHNeCn7Y/?img_index=1

В Туркменабате состоялся практический семинар... - UNDP Turkmenistan |

Facebook<https://www.facebook.com/undptm/posts/pfbid037ssJ26L7tQEJNiBHZ2Q7wB693BY47w8bgpbYqEhLbq8dj4oq8zXfJGhvnGiUHpsYI>

20. RT on Discussion on Concept of the COD on June 17, 2025

UNDP/GEF Project Supports the Advancement of Sustainable Land Management in Turkmenistan | Society

<https://www.undp.org/turkmenistan/press-releases/undp/gef-project-supports-advancement-sustainable-land-management-turkmenistan>

UNDP/GEF Project Supports the Advancement of Sustainable Land Management in Turkmenistan - News Central Asia (nCa)

<https://www.newscentralasia.net/2025/06/17/undp-gef-project-supports-the-advancement-of-sustainable-land-management-in-turkmenistan/>

<https://ashgabatimes.com/index.php/en/2025/06/undp-gef-project-supports-the-advancement-of->

sustainable-land-management-in-turkmenistan/

<https://asmannews.ru/news/8372/ashhabad-stal-ploshchadkoi-dlya-obsuzhdeniya-borby-s-opustynivaniem-i-zasuhoi>

В Ашхабаде проведен «Круглый стол» в честь Всемирного Дня борьбы с опустыниванием и засухой

<https://turkmenistan.gov.tm/ru/post/96098/v-ashhabade-proveden-kruglyj-stol-v-chest-vsemirnogo-dnya-borby-s-opustynivaniem-i-zasuhoj>

UNDP/GEF Project Supports the Advancement of Sustainable Land Management in Turkmenistan | United Nations Development Programme

<https://www.undp.org/turkmenistan/press-releases/undp/gef-project-supports-advancement-sustainable-land-management-turkmenistan> В рамках проекта ПРООН/ГЭФ по Аральскому морю... - UNDP Turkmenistan |

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/undptm/posts/pfbid0K1xV4knEpwDmNytzRSwDzWWPzN2FYJLfyimHLA8sKUDN5RKxfux5fJuAF4iadoY5I>

https://www.instagram.com/p/DK_fDKgCVW7/?img_index=

3) In the PIR platform, please upload any supporting files, including the project's Communications Strategy, photos, videos, stories and other communication/knowledge materials.

Aral Project Communications Plan for 2025_Final.pdf

O. Submissions

Role	Date of submission	Name	E-mail
Project Manager/Coordinator	Aug 28, 2025	Gozel Atamuradova	gozel.atamuradova@undp.org
UNDP Country Office Programme Officer	Aug 29, 2025	Mr. Farhat Orunov	farhat.orunov@undp.org
GEF Operational Focal point			
Project Implementing Partner	Aug 28, 2025	Rustem Nuryyev	nuryyewrustem2@gmail.com
Other Partners			
UNDP BPPS Programme Associate	Aug 29, 2025	Ms. Yeliz Oymen	yeliz.oymen@undp.org
UNDP BPPS Technical Advisor	Sep 2, 2025	Ms. Monica Liana Moldovan	monica.moldovan@undp.org
UNDP Country Office Deputy Resident Representative	Jul 23, 2025	Mr. Tomica PAOVIC	tomica.paovic@undp.org
UNDP BPPS SES Technical Advisor	Aug 28, 2025	Mr. Jiri DUSIK	jiri.dusik@undp.org

CO Programme Officer: Please enter the total number of hours you have spent on this PIR.

12

BPPS RTA: Please enter the total number of hours you have spent on this PIR.

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P. Annex - Ratings Definitions

Development Objective Progress Ratings Definitions

(HS) Highly Satisfactory: Project is on track to exceed its end-of-project targets by project closure. The project can be presented as 'outstanding practice'.

(S) Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure and any minor challenges are being addressed through an adaptive management plan. The project can be presented as 'good practice'.

(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure and minor challenges can be addressed if an adaptive management plan is promptly put in place.

(MU) Moderately Unsatisfactory: Project is off track and is expected to only partially achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure. Project results might still be achieved by project closure if adaptive management is undertaken immediately.

(U) Unsatisfactory: Project is off track and is expected to only partially achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure. Project results might be partially achieved by project closure if major adaptive management is undertaken immediately.

(HU) Highly Unsatisfactory: Project is off track and is not expected to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure and adaptive management is not expected to materialize.

Implementation Progress Ratings Definitions

(HS) Highly Satisfactory: Implementation is exceeding expectations. Implementation of all outputs/activities is fully on track, proceeding as planned, The implementation of the project can be presented as 'outstanding practice'.

(S) Satisfactory: Implementation is proceeding as planned with minor challenges that are being addressed. Implementation of all outputs/activities is on track with minor deviations The implementation of the project can be presented as 'good practice'.

(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Implementation is proceeding as planned with minor challenges that have not yet been addressed. Implementation of most outputs/activities is on track with minor deviations.

(MU) Moderately Unsatisfactory: Implementation is not proceeding as planned and faces implementation challenges. Implementation of many outputs/activities is off track Implementation progress could be improved if adaptive management is undertaken immediately.

(U) Unsatisfactory: Implementation is not proceeding as planned and faces major implementation challenges. Implementation of most outputs/activities is off track.

(HU) Highly Unsatisfactory: Implementation is seriously under-performing. Implementation of all outputs/activities is severely off track.