



GEF-6 GEF SECRETARIAT REVIEW FOR FULL-SIZED/MEDIUM-SIZED PROJECTS THE GEF/LDCF/SCCF TRUST FUND

GEF ID:	9165		
Country/Region:	Regional (Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Chad)		
Project Title:	Enabling Implementation of the Regional SAP for the Rational and Equitable Management of the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System (NSAS).		
GEF Agency:	UNDP	GEF Agency Project ID:	4736 (UNDP)
Type of Trust Fund:	GEF Trust Fund	GEF Focal Area (s):	International Waters
GEF-6 Focal Area/ LDCF/SCCF Objective (s):	IW-1 Program 1; IW-2 Program 3;		
Anticipated Financing PPG:	\$150,000	Project Grant:	\$3,990,000
Co-financing:	\$17,730,000	Total Project Cost:	\$21,870,000
PIF Approval:	March 15, 2016	Council Approval/Expected:	April 19, 2016
CEO Endorsement/Approval		Expected Project Start Date:	
Program Manager:	Astrid Hillers	Agency Contact Person:	Vladimir Mamaev

PIF Review			
Review Criteria	Questions	Secretariat Comment	Agency Response
Project Consistency	1. Is the project aligned with the relevant GEF strategic objectives and results framework? ¹	The project is aligned with the GEF IW objectives 1 and 2 and addressing increased cooperation between countries to address the shared groundwater resources AND conjunctive management of surface and groundwater.	
	2. Is the project consistent with the recipient country's national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions?	Yes, the project is consistent with national policies and plans. During project preparation/design please expand on the alignment with NAPAs	

¹ For BD projects: has the project explicitly articulated which Aichi Target(s) the project will help achieve and are SMART indicators identified, that will be used to track the project's contribution toward achieving the Aichi Target(s)?

PIF Review

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		and with specific policies in the agriculture, water resources and water supply side in more detail including the link to national development and poverty reduction strategies.	
Project Design	3. Does the PIF sufficiently indicate the drivers ² of global environmental degradation, issues of sustainability, market transformation, scaling, and innovation?	<p>Overall yes. The project is addressing the management of a massive fossil aquifer in the region. While the transboundary impacts of withdrawals at this point are negligible, the low transmissivity of the aquifer leads to some local significant to severe drawdowns that can lead to local depletion of the aquifer along with predicted increase in its use for e.g. irrigation and development. The project is therefore aiming at strengthening the joint regional institution, support better understanding of the aquifer behavior and devising strategies for wise water use and reuse and understanding impacts of drawdown e.g. on oasis ecosystems.</p> <p>Please explain more clearly the emphasis of impacts of climate change on the NSAS which effectively has extremely low recharge in very limited edges of the aquifer. The impacts of climate change are therefore to be seen as</p>	

² Need not apply to LDCF/SCCF projects.

PIF Review

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		<p>indirect due to expected increase in the use of groundwater to make up for expanded water uses and limitation of surface water in futures. Please expand.</p> <p>(8/13/2015): Comment addressed and emphasis on indirect impacts (i.e. though greater expected use of groundwater in future) confirmed.</p>	
	<p>4. Is the project designed with sound incremental reasoning?</p>	<p>Yes, the project addresses the incremental reasoning for GEF support for transboundary cooperation in this context (see 3 above).</p>	
	<p>5. Are the components in Table B sound and sufficiently clear and appropriate to achieve project objectives and the GEBs?</p>	<p>Component 1: - Study of climate impacts on oasis ecosystems: as mentioned earlier, please expand on the projected climate change impacts on NSAS. The project now seems to focus efforts on projected impacts of climate change on the biodiversity oasis ecosystems. Given the limited data both on the NSAS systems and limited hydromet information in the involved countries to assess climate change impacts the rational for this effort in this specific project seems weak. An emphasis to study the impact of aquifer drawdown/overuse on oasis ecosystems appears to be the more logical link to the project objectives.</p>	

PIF Review

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		<p>- National monitoring stations: GEF resources should be incremental to national efforts and are well placed in designing a regional monitoring network and supporting modeling of the shared aquifer system. In order to assure sustainability national budget provisions and national co-finance should be provided to support the long time operation of national monitoring stations. Please confirm.</p> <p>Component 2:</p> <p>- During project preparation and implementation a strategy for future finance of the envisioned joint modeling centre needs to be devised. Please confirm/mention in PIF.</p> <p>- Can you please confirm that the 'Data\$ Information Protocols' mentioned include a protocol for the sharing of information to underpin the joint modeling efforts.</p> <p>Component 3: Groundwater is largely a hidden resource and its governance often lags far behind surface water resources.</p> <p>In the project's aim to be 'ahead of the curve' and take preemptive</p>	

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		<p>approaches, we recommend that the project should designate some resources and efforts to sensitize policy makers and the public, including the private sector (incl. e.g. privately operated agricultural schemes), of the extent and benefits of uses of groundwater in their country and the impacts of the overuse of groundwater.</p> <p>It therefore should also aim to analyze the framework for groundwater governance and management in each country and strengthen national policy provisions and capacities. The GEF Global Groundwater Governance Project Framework for Action provides a valuable basis to guide action.</p> <p>The respective output (bullet 2 (of 3) page 14) needs more specific commitments what the project is expected to achieve in this regard.</p> <p>Component 4:</p> <p>Please include clearer criteria for selection of pilot interventions. While most can be found in the SAP, criteria should be clear in linking the expected impacts of the selected pilots to the sustainable use and/or</p>	

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		<p>protection of NSAS resources.</p> <p>The use of the 'proof of concept' terminology so loosely is unclear unless criteria for the selection of pilots are clearly aiming for innovative measures in the specific country context.</p> <p>Component 5:</p> <p>Suggest to consider hosting a donor meeting towards the end of the project to raise awareness of progress on transboundary cooperation on NSAS and the work of the JA and with the aim for raising finance for the implementation of priority actions. Some limited funds would need to be set aside for this from project side combined with national co-finance.</p> <p>Comments above addressed at PIF stage. During project design please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expand on the CSO and private sector/agriculture sector inclusion (PIF mentions that a strategy will be developed during project design) and mainstream such interaction throughout the component designs. - During project design, please specify the targeted national policy reforms and other SAP targets listed 	

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		<p>under component 3 which are to be achieved by the project and how and when these will be achieved (see comment above).</p> <p>- Include under criteria for selection of pilots (component 4) the clear link of expected impacts of the selected pilots to the sustainable use and/or protection of NSAS resources.</p> <p>-</p>	
	<p>6. Are socio-economic aspects, including relevant gender elements, indigenous people, and CSOs considered?</p>	<p>Overall yes and the PIF outlines the importance of NSAS resources on national development. There is no mention though on outreach to the public including CSOS and the private sector on the significance and need for cooperation and action on sustainable and conjunctive management of surface and groundwater.</p> <p>Gender aspects are outlined in the specific section and the use of the WWAP gender indicators is appreciated. Please more clearly mainstream gender aspects in the relevant components during project design.</p> <p>Page 11 mentions indigenous people - please clarify what indigenous groups are in the area and how the specific needs of such indigenous people will be addressed by the project.</p>	

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		(8/13/2015). Addressed. Agency clarified that PPG phase will see the development of a draft communication / outreach strategy and plan to actively engage all relevant stakeholder groups (including CSOs, NGOs, farmers associations, nomadic representatives, institutes, government representatives, etc.). It was also clarified that the mention of 'indigenous populations' does not imply the strict definition of 'indigenous people' , but refers to groups such as pastoralists common to these countries.	
Availability of Resources	7. Is the proposed Grant (including the Agency fee) within the resources available from (mark all that apply):		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The STAR allocation? 	N/A	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focal area allocation? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LDCF under the principle of equitable access 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focal area set-aside? 	<p>Yes, the resources are within FA resources for IW.</p> <p>Please note that Table A needs revision. Please fold project management costs proportionally into IW 1 and IW 2. Thank you.</p>	

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		(8/13/2015): The comment above has been addressed.	
Recommendations	8. Is the PIF being recommended for clearance and PPG (if additional amount beyond the norm) justified?	Not yet. Please address comments above and resubmit. (8/13/2015): The comments have been addressed. The Program Manager recommends CEO PIF clearance.	
Review Date	Review		
	Additional Review (as necessary)		
	Additional Review (as necessary)		

CEO endorsement Review			
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Project Design and Financing	1. If there are any changes from that presented in the PIF, have justifications been provided?	(11/3/2017) The overall concept and finance per component is consistent with the PIF. There is some step-back from commitments compared to the PIF such as on actual adoption and	

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		<p>implementation of certain measures that were indicated at PIF stage. While some of differences are part of and unavoidable in project design, a few of these need addressing (see below).</p> <p>(i) The establishment of the Joint Modeling Center (year 2 of project) - see PIF. This has been maintained in the component description (noted and agreed), yet the results framework and table B (GEF datasheet) use much less 'committed' language and mention a 'proposal for the establishment of the joint modeling center'.</p> <p>(ii) ".. regular contributions and sustainable national financial contributions by year 4" (see PIF component 3). This has been dropped and no clear commitment to develop and adopt a sustainable financing strategy for the JA by end of project (either via national contributions or other finance streams). This calls the sustainability of the JA in question and needs to be addressed before endorsement !</p> <p>(iii) NAPs - the PIF is more clear what is to happen with the NAPs (PIF: four NAPs developed ,</p>	

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		<p>approved and under implementation by National Authorities by year 3). Please comment and enhance ambition in the current document in this regard/in the component description.</p> <p>There are other areas that have fallen into the same category (e.g, in terms of the PIF ambitions of "updated national and regional legislation and policies") but it is understood that the PIF may have been somewhat too ambitious in the extend what reform will be initiated and which will be indeed be adopted by countries during the lifetime of the project.</p> <p>(12/20/2017). All comments with exception of one have been satisfactorily addressed: Joint Authority - sustainability remains a concern as the project's ambition remain at the assessment of the JA funding by midterm and formulation of funding "proposal" by end of the project. This by itself does not indicate commitments of countries to ramp up national financial commitments to the JA core costs over the lifetime of the project.</p> <p>(4/18/2018) The revisions included in the prodoc and annex on management</p>	

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		arrangements are appreciated and address the comment. Cleared.	
	2. Is the project structure/ design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs?	<p>(11/3/2017)</p> <p>The project document is overall well outlining what the project aims to achieve.</p> <p>(11/3/ 2017) Please address comments below:</p> <p>1. The above comments (lower commitments of the project/question 1) may also originate from the circumstance that these commitments have to be taken by the Joint Authority or the countries, while UNESCO is the sole executing agency of the project (and hence cannot take on these commitments).</p> <p>We would like to see and to be considered that the Joint Authority as well as the national focal agencies become co-executing partners (in some role). This will both strengthen the JA in the long run and show commitments by the countries.</p> <p>2. Strengthen and operationalization of the Joint Authority: Please (see also previous STAP comments) add</p>	

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		<p>some text on how the JA is currently functioning and/or was envisioned to operate at this point.</p> <p>Please also consider to add capacity building activities that deal with running such an office , i.e. to build basic functions including staffing plans and internal policies (if not existing), financial management and M&E functions, etc. This way the end of project situation will leave the JA offices in a much stronger position to apply for receive and manage funds in future.</p> <p>3. Please comment why the PCU will not necessarily be co-located with the JA offices.</p> <p>4. The Prodoc indicates substantial groundwater uses e.g. in greater Khartoum area 50 % of water is supplied by the NSAS. At the same time Khartoum is still listed by ICLEI as among the top 100 fastest growing cities. There is no indication to work with city government to address associated risks for long term water supply due to likely increasing pumping costs and resource limitations. Could this be added/considered?</p>	

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		<p>5. Please mention the IW-learn activities (and budget allocation) also within the project component description and results framework (and not only in 3.7 under S-S cooperation.</p> <p>6. The description on the Inter-ministerial Committees (pg 12 of prodoc) indicates an uneven situation which in some countries does not allow for effective involvement of key ministries/major water users. Can the project enhance these arrangements ?</p> <p>(12/20/2017) Most comments have been satisfactorily addressed. Please address the one remaining concern:</p> <p>Please indicate the role of the JA in the regional governance and management arrangements (section 7) including the organogram. It appears to only be on level of the PSC. What is the relation between the JA and the regional PMU in terms of project management/implementation ? - see also our comment of considering of co-location of the PMU in one of the national JA branches. The locations/countries are not all</p>	

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		<p>unworkable/insecure locations (by UN standards). Location in a UNESCO office (or other UN offices) is not easily suited to create ownership by governments and also does not allow easy access by all stakeholders (due to UN security in UN building the access is formal and not conducive/easy for civil society to access). The exit strategy of the project needs to be to leave behind a functional core of a JA.</p> <p>(4/18/2018). The revisions incl. revision of organogram and confirmation of location of the regional PMU in one of the JA offices is appreciated. Cleared.</p>	
	<p>3. Is the financing adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objective?</p>	<p>(11/3/ 2017) The finance of the project appears adequate to achieve the indicated results and is consistent with the PIF.</p>	
	<p>4. Does the project take into account potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, and describes sufficient risk response measures? (e.g., measures to enhance climate resilience)</p>	<p>(11/3/ 2017)</p> <p>1. Please update the risk table indicating the risk of lack of national support for the JA , which includes financial support. Unless you have firm commitments indicated by the countries already, the risk rating should be at least M (not L-M (text) or at P2 - see Annex). Please comment on the countries voiced commitment and</p>	

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		<p>current contributions versus expected/anticipated budget needs.</p> <p>2. Please address the remaining STAP comment - see below.</p> <p>(12/20/2017) Cleared.</p>	
	5. Is co-financing confirmed and evidence provided?	<p>(11/3/2017) All but the Sudan co-financing letter have been submitted and in fact co-finance somewhat increased since endorsement.</p> <p>Comment: Please provide the one missing letter.</p> <p>(12/20/2017) Thank you for submitting the letters of co-finance. Please note two points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The letter from Sudan does not indicate an amount (USD 2 million ?). - the letter from IAEA is still missing. <p>(4/18/2018). The revised letter from Sudan was submitted. We welcome the continued support and engagement of IAEA and understand that the TC project will be prepared based on requests from countries and is anticipated to support the efforts on isotope studies.</p> <p>Cleared.</p>	

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	6. Are relevant tracking tools completed?	<p>(11/3/ 2017)</p> <p>Yes, the tracking tool has been provided.</p> <p>Please revise entry with regard to Nexus in TDA/SAP rating. It appears that the NSAS TDA/SAP did look at water-food nexus dimensions and the rating should be 2 not 1.</p> <p>(12/20/2017) Cleared.</p>	
	7. <i>Only for Non-Grant Instrument:</i> Has a reflow calendar been presented?	N/A	
	8. Is the project coordinated with other related initiatives and national/regional plans in the country or in the region?	<p>(11/3/ 2017)</p> <p>Yes, the project lists a number of relevant related activities. Please also note relevant projects presented in the upcoming GEF work program, such as the Sahel Groundwater project which will strongly build on and engage in further dissemination of the results of the Global Groundwater Governance project and development of a voluntary code of conduct for sustainable groundwater use, as well as interaction with the SADC groundwater project and lessons emerging from this as well as benefits from the center of excellence established there. Interaction with these initiatives could be explored in</p>	

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		the inception phase. (12/20/2017) Cleared.	
	9. Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?	(11/3/ 2017) Yes, a budgeted M& E plan has been provided.	
	10. Does the project have descriptions of a knowledge management plan?	(11/3/ 2017) Yes, the project components and prodoc are outlining a knowledge management plan. Comment: Please more clearly reflect the scope of the KM and outreach and communication strategies and actions in the results framework. (12/20/2017) addressed in response. prodoc and RF. Cleared.	
Agency Responses	11. Has the Agency adequately responded to comments at the PIF ³ stage from:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEFSEC 	<p>The following PIF comments need further explanation:</p> <p>1. Please expand on the pilots and comments with regard to:</p> <p>- will these only fund innovative pilots and therefore be truly "proof of concept" This is not entirely clear as there are many criteria and none that is overriding in this regard.</p>	

³ If it is a child project under a program, assess if the components of the child project align with the program criteria set for selection of child projects.

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		<p>- how are these pilots being implemented and build on national implementation structures in order to allow replication elsewhere ? If these would be mostly delivered on a 'contract ' basis sustainability and replication is very often challenged.</p> <p>2. The PIF stated that a private sector engagement strategy would be developed during project design. While private sector actors are clearly identified in the project document , their role and an engagement model remains unclear. While some of detail can be moved into inception phases, the greatest user of groundwater are irrigators and their engagement should be part of project design.</p> <p>(12/20/2017) The alignment and strengthening of the implementation of the pilots with country specific implementation structures as well as engagement models for e.g. irrigators in the project implementation is not clear at this point and there is no commitment to such outlined in the agency response. Please provide assurance that this will be addressed during project inception and implementation and reported in PIRs and evaluated specifically in the</p>	

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		<p>MTR.</p> <p>(4/18/2018) This was confirmed in the agency response. Cleared.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAP 	<p>Please note the STAP response and please address comment with regard to risk of adequate stakeholder involvement (in the risk table):</p> <p>STAP communication: November 2, 2017</p> <p>FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND GEF PROJECT ID: 9165 PROJECT DURATION: 4 years COUNTRIES: Regional (Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Chad) PROJECT TITLE: Enabling Implementation of the Regional SAP for the Rational and Equitable Management of the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System (NSAS). GEF AGENCIES: UNDP OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: UNESCO/IHP, IAEA GEF FOCAL AREA: International Waters</p> <p>The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel reviewed the PIF for this project on March 14, 2016 and advised that the project proposal was well prepared from a scientific</p>	

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		<p>perspective. However, from a technical perspective, STAP provided an advisory response of Major Issues to be considered during project design.</p> <p>The issues raised concerned the need to: i) reassess the risk matrix to take account of the high risk of implementation failure due to security and governance deficits; ii) conduct a governance and institutional baseline assessment; iii) develop a knowledge management strategy; iv) conduct pilot projects only in areas where they have a lasting chance to be well implemented and monitored.</p> <p>i) Implementation risks. STAP advised in its screening report that engagement of local stakeholders was one of the high risk issues. This aspect was not addressed in UNDP's response. However, in UNDP's Prodoc the importance of the full engagement of local stakeholders, particularly from the private sector, has been emphasized, but the high risk of poor engagement, particularly in the longer term, should also be reflected within the risks table of the Prodoc explicitly.</p> <p>ii) Governance issues. Satisfactorily addressed</p> <p>iii) Knowledge Managenent. Satisfactorily addressed</p>	

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		<p>iv) Pilot project targeting. Satisfactorily addressed The UNDP has provided responses to the above issues raised and STAP is pleased to confirm that, provided further attention is paid to the specific improvements recommended above, UNDP has provided a satisfactory report of the action agreed and taken regarding each of the issues identified. Therefore STAP advises that it has no objection to the CEO's endorsement of the project for implementation.</p> <p>(12/20/2017). STAP confirmed that comments have been satisfactorily addressed. Cleared.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEF Council 	<p>(11/3/ 2017)</p> <p>The U.S. comments have mostly been addressed. Please just add more clarity on two aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please be explicit on the question of MEA targets (which) addressed as the project clearly has BD and LD co-benefits. 2. See comments of GEFSEC under 5. above with regard to KM and outreach and awareness within the wider stakeholder groups which mirror the comments of the U.S. 	

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		<p>Council member in this regard. Please be more clear on the scope of these efforts and reflect this in the results framework.</p> <p>(12/20/2017) The agency response on naming e.g. relevant AICHI targets is appreciated. Can you please confirm that BD and other MEA co-benefits will be captured and quantified during project implementation, and therefore also reported at MTR and in the final project evaluation and in the TT at midterm and project closure.</p> <p>(4/18/2018) This was confirmed in the agency response. Cleared.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention Secretariat 	N/A	
Recommendation	12. Is CEO endorsement recommended?	<p>(11/3/ 2017)</p> <p>The project is not yet recommended. Please address the remaining comments and resubmit. Please also assure that LOEs reflect current OFPs.</p> <p>We would be happy to discuss any comments provided if clarification is needed.</p> <p>(12/20/2017) Thank you for swiftly addressing the majority of comments.</p> <p>Please address the few remaining concerns/comments and missing co-</p>	

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		<p>finance letter (IAEA) or information in the letter (Sudan).</p> <p>(2/20/2018). Thank you for clarifying that this resubmission (one letter of co-finance and draft response matrix only) is missing some additional documents and came to GEFSEC incomplete. Looking forward to the receiving the actual resubmission and seeing the project moving forward. Best regards.</p> <p>(4/18/2018) Comments have been addressed and the projects is technically cleared and recommended for endorsement.</p>	
Review Date	Review	November 03, 2017	
	Additional Review (as necessary)	December 20, 2017	
	Additional Review (as necessary)	February 20, 2018	