

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project
“Support to the Integrated Program for the Conservation and
Sustainable Development of the Socotra Archipelago, Yemen,
and GEF ID 5347”
(2016 – 2025)



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The evaluation consultants hope that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project, formulation of any next phases and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

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About the Evaluation

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ABSTRACT: This report is a Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project: “Support to the Integrated Program for the Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Socotra Archipelago, Yemen, and GEF ID 5347”, implemented between 2016 and 2025. The project's overall goal was to strengthen governmental and non-governmental capacities sustainably to manage and protect the Socotra Archipelago WHS through Biodiversity (BD) conservation, IAS management and Sustainable Land Management (SLM). The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine the sustainability of its results. The evaluation has two primary purposes: accountability and learning. Data collection methods included: field observations, in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions and document reviews. Data analysis was based on applying triangulated data to assess performance against a reconstructed Theory of Change and its causal pathways. The project achieved an overall Moderately Satisfactory performance. The project demonstrated strong strategic relevance and adaptive management continuity despite protracted conflict, a change of Executing Agency, and COVID-19 disruptions. At output level, the project delivered core biodiversity and protected area management (BD-PAM) strategy including four operationalized Protected Area Management Plans and an updated Conservation Zoning Plan. At outcome level, stakeholders endorsed biodiversity, invasive species, and land management strategies, and the revised CZP and SLM became embedded within EPA Yemen and local governance systems, informing licensing and resource–use decisions, while the IAS strategy guided decision-making and coordinated action at the community level. However, operationalization through functioning management structures and Integrated conservation management framework (ICMF) coordination, and institutional capacity gains, and knowledge-based environment management remained only partially realized, while sustainable financing mechanisms outcomes were not achieved as relevant output was cancelled. The findings indicate promising sustainability, supported by strong community ownership and a follow-on UNEP/GEF project approval; however, this was constrained by the absence of long-term financing mechanisms and persistent political instability. The main recommendations to UNEP are to embed gender-responsive frameworks into future project design, strengthen EPA Socotra's institutional mandate, and improve outcome-oriented monitoring systems. Implementing parties are advised to scale conservation-compatible livelihoods initiatives and establish a locally hosted knowledge-management platform to sustain biodiversity programming beyond project closure.

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Source(s) of Funding by Institution Type:

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Private Sector	No
UN Body	No
Multilateral Fund	Yes
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List of acronyms and abbreviations

BD	Biodiversity
BD-PAM	Biodiversity and Protected Area Management
CABI	Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International
CB	Capacity Building
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDP	Capacity Development Plan
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CZP	Conservation Zoning Plan
EE	Enabling Environment
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSP	Full-Size Project
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEM	Gender Equality Marker
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
ICMF	Integrated Conservation Management Framework
KII	Key Informant Interview
LD	Land Degradation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PA	Protected Area
PAM	Protected Area Management
PAD	Project Approval/Appraisal Document
PoW	Programme of Work
PRC	Project Review Committee
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
RBGE	Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
RSCN	Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature
SA	Socotra Archipelago

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGN	Senckenberg Gesellschaft für Naturforschung (Senckenberg Society for Nature Research) / Senckenberg Institute
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
ToRs	Terms of References
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
WHS	World Heritage Site

Project identification table

Table 1 Project Identification Table

GEF Project ID/SMA ID:	GEF ID 5347/ SMA 26286		
Type of GEF Project:	Child: N	Global Coordinating Project:	N
	If yes, provide GEF Programme ID: N/A	Medium-Size Project or Full-Size Project:	FSP
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	UNEP Ecosystems Division, GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit	Executing Agency: <i>(indicate if internally executed)</i> :	The Royal Society for The Conservation of Nature (RSCN) (since 30 June 2020) ¹ Ministry of Water and Environment (MOWE) / Environment Protection Authority (EPA)
Sources of Funding (Co-finance):	Country: Yemen • National Government EPA, Yemen • Local Government Governorate of Hadramaut, Yemen • Local Government Local District Councils Socotra, Yemen		Institution Name/Type ² : • GIZ, Germany • The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) • Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE/CMEP), UK • Institute of Evolutionary Biology (CSIC-UPF), Spain • La Sapienza University, Rome, Italy • Mendel University, Brno, Czech Republic • Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux International (CABI) • OSME-Birdlife International • SRI/BIK • GEF Agency UNEP/ Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI)/ Terrestrial Ecosystems Unit (TEU)

¹ The Senckenberg Institute (Until 30 June 2020)

² The institution lists are based in co-financing table in Annex VIII provided by UNEP FMO. Co-financing from the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), OSME-Birdlife International, SRI/BIK were not planned at the project design.

Relevant SDG(s):	Goal 14: 14.2 and 14.5 Goal 15: 15.1, 15.3, 15.5, and 15.8 Goal 15: 15.1, 15.3, 15.5, and 15.8		
MTS (at approval):	MTS 2014-17/ Ecosystem Management		
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022): OR POW Output(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022)	POW Output: POW 2014-2015, Project Document (ProDoc) Output 312: Tools, technical support and partnerships to improve food security and sustainable productivity in agricultural landscapes through the integration of the landscape approach; and the UN Environment Marine and Coastal Strategy, particularly the Ecosystems for Humanity Strategy.	POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022):	MTS 2025 Outcome: N/A POW Expected Accomplishment (POW 2014-2015, ProDoc) EA (a) Use of ecosystem management approaches in countries to maintain ecosystem services and sustainable productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems is increased
Sub-programme:	PoW 2018-2019 Subprogram 3: Healthy and productive ecosystems	Programme Coordination Project (if relevant):	Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity
UNEP approval date:	2015-02-23	GEF approval date:	2015-02-23
GEF Operational Programme #:	GEF-5	GEF Strategic Priority:	Biodiversity (BD) 1 (outcome 1.1 and 1.2), BD 2 (outcome 2.3), Land Degradation (LD) 3 (outcome 3.2)
Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity, Land Degradation		
Expected start date:	2016-02-18	Actual start date:	2016-02-18
Planned completion date:	2020-07-31 The latest revised date for technical completion: 2025-3-31	Actual operational completion date:	2025-09-30
Planned project budget at approval:	GEF grant allocation: USD4,854,566		
	Expected co-financing: USD15,042,521 Cash: Nil, In-kind: USD15,042,521		
	Total Planned Budget: USD 19,897,087		

Actual expenditures reported:	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 31 March 2025: USD 3,838,810.92 ³		
	Actual co-financing 31 March 2025: <i>Cash: NIL</i> <i>In-kind: USD15,224,496</i>		
	Total actual expenditures reported as of 31 March 2025: USD19,063,307		
No. of formal project revisions:	1 revision	Date of last approved project revision:	2020-07-22
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	5	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	2025-01-27
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (<i>required or not required</i>):	UNEP requirement:	Y	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation actual date: 2019-04-30
	GEF requirement:	Y	
Terminal Evaluation (<i>planned date</i>):	2023-12-30	Terminal Evaluation actual date:	2025.05-2026.03
Coverage – Country:	Republic of Yemen	Coverage - Region(s):	West Asia
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	A new project (GEF 11408) that includes Socotra has been endorsed in Dec 2025

³ RSCN: USD1,202,482; SGN: USD2,614,405; UNEP Direct Expenditure USD21,923.92

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Background

1. The project was implemented by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Ecosystems Division, Biodiversity and Land Branch, Global Environment Facility (GEF) Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit in the Socotra Archipelago, Yemen, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site of exceptional global biodiversity value. It received GEF financing through UNEP, complemented by in-kind and financial co-financing from national and international partners.
2. The project aimed to enhance the conservation of Socotra's unique terrestrial and marine ecosystems. The project's rationale was to safeguard Socotra's globally significant biodiversity from escalating pressures, including uncontrolled development, unsustainable harvesting, waste pollution, overgrazing, and increasing tourism—while improving the enabling environment for conservation.
3. Its objective was to improve the resilience of Socotra's ecosystems and the sustained provision of biodiversity and ecosystem services for local communities and global heritage. The project had four components: i.e., a) Biodiversity Conservation / Protected Area (PA) Management; b) Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Management; c) Sustainable Land Management (SLM); and d) creating enabling environment:
4. The project collaborated with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of the government of Yemen and two Executing Agencies - the Senckenberg Institute (Until 30 June 2020) and the Royal Society for The Conservation of Nature (since 30 June 2020). Approved by GEF on 22 February 2015, the project commenced in February 2016 with an initial completion target of July 2020. Due to implementation delays linked to conflict and security constraints, the COVID-19 pandemic, and change of the Executing Agency (EA), project completion was extended to March 2025. The total project budget was USD 19,897,087, comprising GEF financing of USD 4,854,566 and planned co-financing of USD 15,042,521 (in-kind).

This Evaluation

5. The terminal evaluation assessed the project's performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency) and determine sustainability of the results. It assessed performance against nine criteria⁴, using UNEP's standard six-point rating scale⁵. It served dual purposes: (i) accountability for the use of GEF resources, and (ii) learning to inform future programming in Socotra and similar fragile ecosystems.
6. The evaluation applied a mixed methods approach, including remote and in-country interviews, site visits, focus group discussions, stakeholder consultations, document reviews, including PIRs and final technical report. A reconstructed Theory of Change guided assessment of causal pathways from outputs to outcomes and likely long-term

⁴ (1) Strategic Relevance, including Complementarity; (2) Quality of Project Design; (3) Nature of External Context; (4) Effectiveness (incl. availability of outputs; achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact); (5) Financial Management; (6) Efficiency; (7) Monitoring and Reporting; (8) Sustainability and (9) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues.

⁵ The six-point scale is as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU). The ratings against each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability.

impacts. Evidence was triangulated across stakeholder groups, documents, and observational data.

7. Special attention was given to understanding the effects of Yemen's security and institutional context and changes in executing agencies. Cross-cutting considerations—human rights, gender equality, environmental and social safeguards, and country ownership, were assessed throughout.

Key Findings and Performance Ratings

8. **Strategic relevance:** The project was fully aligned with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW), particularly in relation to biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and resilience. It directly addressed threats to Socotra's globally significant biodiversity and responded to Yemen's obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity and relevant SDGs (13, 14, and 15). The project was strongly aligned with GEF BD-1–3 strategic priorities and remained relevant throughout implementation despite changing circumstances. Complementarity with other biodiversity initiatives was evident, though coordination during the early implementation phase was limited. Overall, strategic relevance is rated as **Highly Satisfactory**.
9. **Quality of project design:** The project design was technically sound and logically structured, with a robust results framework focused on conservation design, for instance, protected area management, invasive alien species control, and community engagement. The project design, however, was relatively weak in several key areas, including sustainability planning and gender integration. It also underestimated the implications of political fragility, access constraints, and institutional capacity limitations. The logframe was ambitious relative to available resources, time and challenging field context, articulated at design stage. Overall, the quality of project design is rated **Satisfactory**.
10. **Nature of external context:** The project was implemented in a highly challenging environment characterized by protracted conflict, restricted access, political fragmentation, inflation and COVID-19-related disruptions. These conditions significantly affected supervision, field operations, and institutional continuity. Despite these constraints, implementation continued through adaptive measures and strong local engagement. The external context is rated **Unfavourable**.
11. **Effectiveness:** Most planned outputs were delivered with acceptable quality, including biodiversity assessments, IAS studies, species action plans, protected area tools, training activities, and awareness campaigns. Some outputs, particularly related to sustainable financing, enhancing policing and academic capacity, and digital knowledge management⁶, were delayed, scaled down, or cancelled largely due to external constraints. Outcome achievement was mixed: core biodiversity conservation and IAS management outcomes were achieved, while sustainable land management and institutional strengthening outcomes progressed more moderately. Community stewardship improved, and institutional understanding of conservation priorities increased, but consolidation of outcomes remains incomplete. The effectiveness is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory**.
12. **Likelihood of impact:** The project established critical technical baselines, protected area management, strengthened local capacities, and enhanced community engagement, providing a foundation for longer-term biodiversity outcomes. While institutional and

⁶ The knowledge portal was at technical operational at the time of the data collect but its sustainability was constrained by lack of long-term hosting arrangements and resources.

community uptake indicates a potential for sustained influence, the impact pathways for IAS prevention and SLM interventions are more uncertain. In addition, realization of impact depends on continued external support, functional governance arrangements, and stable financing. The likelihood of impact is assessed as **Moderately Likely**. Overall effectiveness is considering the whole project period rated **Moderately Satisfactory**.

13. **Financial management:** Financial management performance improved significantly over the project lifecycle. Early weaknesses under the initial EA were addressed following the transition to a new EA, RSCN, nominated by the Government of Yemen, with strengthened internal controls and improved compliance with UNEP financial policies. Financial information was generally complete and verifiable, although documentation gaps were noted in the early years. Overall financial management is rated **Satisfactory**.
14. **Efficiency:** Efficiency was affected by prolonged delays resulting from conflict, access limitations, partner transitions, and remote management requirements. While adaptive management after 2020 improved implementation pace and resource use, extended timelines and repeated adjustments reduced overall cost-effectiveness. Efficiency is rated **Moderately Satisfactory**.
15. **Monitoring and reporting:** Monitoring and reporting systems became functional and increasingly effective after 2020. Participatory monitoring and community-based monitoring mechanisms at the PA level effectively supported adaptive decision-making. Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) and audits were submitted regularly. However, early weaknesses in baseline data, outcome-level indicators, and field verification limited the robustness of performance evidence. Overall monitoring and reporting are rated **Satisfactory**.
16. **Sustainability:** Socio-political sustainability is assessed as Likely (L), supported by strong community awareness, local ownership, and engagement of EPA and local institutions, albeit constrained by ongoing national instability. Financial sustainability is Moderately Likely (ML), as no sustainable financing mechanism is operational and continued external funding is required. Institutional sustainability is Moderately Likely, with strengthened structures and capacities that remain fragile without stable policy and budgetary support. In overall, sustainability is rated **Moderately Likely**.
17. **Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues:** Project management and supervision by UNEP and the Implementing Agency-RSCN- were responsive and adaptive, particularly under remote conditions, and are rated Satisfactory. Performance of the EA improved substantially after 2020, following a weak initial period caused mainly by security constraints that restricted the first EA's easy access to the project sites. Stakeholder participation strengthened over time and is rated Satisfactory. Gender integration was partial and largely activity-based, rated Moderately Satisfactory. Environmental and social safeguards were applied without adverse impacts, rated Satisfactory. Country ownership remained strong despite institutional fragility, rated Satisfactory. Communication and awareness activities were effective. The use of the digital knowledge platform, however, remained a challenge. Performance in this area is rated Moderately Satisfactory.

Table 2 Summary of project ratings

Criterion	Rating
Strategic Relevance	HS
Quality of Project Design	S
Nature of External Context	U

Criterion	Rating
Effectiveness	MS
Financial Management	S
Efficiency	MS
Monitoring and Reporting	S
Sustainability	ML
Factors Affecting Performance	S
Overall Project Performance Rating	MS

Conclusions Summary:

18. Overall, the project performed at a **Moderately Satisfactory** level under unfavourable contextual conditions (Table 2). Key achievements included strengthened protected area governance, improved invasive alien species management, enhanced community-based land management, and increased local stewardship for biodiversity conservation. Strong performance was observed in adaptive management, stakeholder coordination, community engagement, and the application of ecological knowledge to planning and decision-making. Weaker performance areas included sustainable financing, outcome-level monitoring, gender responsiveness, and institutional continuity, largely attributable to protracted conflict, access limitations, and national capacity constraints. Sustainability is assessed as Moderately Likely, underpinned by community ownership and strengthened institutional capacities, but constrained by persistent political instability and the absence of operational long-term financing mechanisms.

Findings of the Key Strategic Questions

19. The evaluation Terms of Reference included a set of strategic questions of interest to UNEP, and the status of these questions are as follows.
20. **Biodiversity conservation and PA management:** The project strengthened biodiversity management through updated baselines, revised zoning, and four operational PA plans. Community stewardship improved, though limited access and security constraints restricted full verification and consolidation of results.
21. **Strengthening local institutions:** Targeted training, regulatory tools, and RSCN's adaptive support enhanced EPA and community institutional capacity. However, structural constraints such as low public budgets, turnover, and weak enforcement, limited deeper institutional reform and long-term operational effectiveness.
22. **IAS monitoring, inventory, and management:** IAS monitoring foundations improved through updated checklists, pathway mapping, strategy development, and community pilots. Yet operational gaps and a non-functional quarantine facility limited sustained prevention and effective response capacity.
23. **Awareness campaigns and community involvement:** Awareness and participation initiatives increased knowledge and stewardship, especially among youth and fishers. Behavior change was evident, though sustaining engagement requires institutionalized citizen science and expanded community enforcement roles.
24. **Conservation–SLM–livelihood integration:** Integrated zoning, SLM pilots, and community enterprises aligned conservation with livelihoods. Benefits emerged, but scaling requires stronger financing, diversified value chains, and broader support for climate-resilient, conservation-compatible livelihoods.

25. **Influence of gender integration:** Gender integration remained partial largely due to the absence of robust gender responsive approaches at project design stage, which subsequently constrained monitoring efforts including the assessment of traditional practices and prevailing gender role in the project areas. Nonetheless, results demonstrate strong potential, underscoring the need for more deliberate gender-responsive design and reporting in future interventions.

Lessons Learned

26. Lesson 1. Adaptive management and strong local ownership were decisive for performance in a fragile, conflict-affected context. Context-aware execution, flexible planning, and partner familiarity enabled recovery from disruptions.
27. Lesson 2. Participatory governance and co-management translated technical plans into practical conservation actions when communities shared decision-making power and received tangible livelihood and stewardship benefits.
28. Lesson 3. Long-term sustainability depended less on technical outputs and more on institutional anchoring, financing continuity, and systematic inclusion.
29. Lesson 4. Weak gender analysis including insufficient attention to deep-rooted traditional belief systems and prevailing gender roles in Socotra, reduced empowerment outcomes despite improved participation of women. This highlights culturally informed gender strategies and context-tailored livelihood approaches that address structural constraints.
30. Lesson 5. Monitoring systems focused mainly on outputs limited adaptive learning; future ecosystem projects require outcome-oriented M&E that tracks behavioral change, post-handover functionality, and emerging risks.

Recommendations

31. **Recommendation 1: Strengthen community capacities through a continuous, applied learning cycle aligned with UNEP's community engagement principles:** Adopt an end-to-end capacity development approach combining participatory needs assessments, gender capacity gap analysis, tailored training, mentoring, and post-handover support. Emphasis should be placed on building skills for beneficiary livelihoods, managing community enterprises, and co-management of natural resources, ensuring participation, inclusivity, and accountability.
32. **Recommendation 2: Strengthen EPA Socotra as the central coordination authority:** Invest in EPA Socotra's institutional, technical, and convening capacity for biodiversity management including PAs management and formalize its mandate as the coordination hub for all biodiversity initiatives, including leadership of a multi-partner platform to harmonize planning, implementation, monitoring, and resource allocation.
33. **Recommendation 3: Scale conservation-friendly livelihoods through community empowerment:** Scale up proven conservation-compatible livelihoods, including community-managed ecotourism, native nurseries, and sustainable resource use, by strengthening CBO governance, financial management, and market access to secure local ownership, income generation, and conservation outcomes.
34. **Recommendation 4: Future UNEP projects must systematically integrate a rights-based and gender-responsive framework that is sensitive to local cultural context.** In line with UNEP's gender framework, future projects should embed participatory gender analysis, including examining traditional belief systems, gender roles, and structural barriers, into project design to support gender equality and women's empowerment. This must be followed by inclusive consultation and sustained support for women's

associations through culturally appropriate, need-based interventions, post-training coaching, and linkages to markets and decision-making platforms.

35. **Recommendation 5: Strengthen monitoring, knowledge management, and learning:** Develop M&E systems to track outcomes, behavioral change, sustainability, and gender inclusion, and establish a simple, locally hosted knowledge platform to capture lessons, support adaptive learning, and inform future island-level and national biodiversity programming.

1 THE PROJECT

1.1 Context

1.1.1 Intervention context

Synopsis of the Problem and Situational Analysis

36. The project addresses the rapid degradation of the unique ecosystems of the Socotra Archipelago (see Image 1), a UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) renowned for its globally significant biodiversity and high endemism, and fragile island ecology. Increasing pressure from unsustainable resource use, overgrazing, invasive alien species, unregulated development, and weak land-use planning have accelerated habitat degradation and reduce ecosystem resilience. Geographic isolation, limited government presence, and the impacts of political instability have further constrained environmental governance and service delivery.
37. The underlying causes stem from population pressures, poverty, limited sustainable livelihood opportunities, weak institutional and technical capacity for conservation management, fragmented policy implementation, and insufficient integration of biodiversity considerations into local development planning.
38. Climate variability and recurrent extreme weather events have intensified water scarcity, soil erosion, and ecosystem stress. These pressures have contributed to the decline of endemic species and ecosystem services, undermining food security, income sources, and the long-term well-being of Socotra's natural resource-dependent communities.
39. The project aimed to prevent the irreversible loss of the unique ecosystems, biodiversity, and natural resources of the Socotra WHS (globally significant biodiversity and cultural heritage), which are threatened by:
 - Invasive alien species,
 - Land degradation and overuse of resources,
 - Weak governance and institutional capacity,
 - Lack of sustainable financing for conservation.
40. The project seeks to strengthen institutional frameworks, promote sustainable livelihoods, and integrate ecosystem management into local governance.

Socio-economic, Political, and Environmental Context

41. The Socotra Archipelago faces socio-economic challenges characterized by high poverty, dependence on subsistence livelihoods (pastoralism, fishing, small-scale agriculture), and limited access to markets and services. Politically, decentralization has progressed slowly, and institutional arrangements for biodiversity management remain weak. Environmentally, the islands are highly vulnerable to climate variability, invasive species, and unregulated tourism. Limited coordination among national and governorate institutions impedes integrated ecosystem management.



Image 1 Project sites

1.1.2 Institutional context

42. The project was implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) under the UNEP Ecosystems Division, Biodiversity and Land Branch, GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit⁷, within the Ecosystem Management Sub-programme, contributing to Expected Accomplishment (EA) (a): “Use of ecosystem management approaches in countries to maintain ecosystem services and sustainable productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems is increased”.
43. Execution was led by the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE)/Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Yemen, with international coordination and technical backstopping initially provided by the Senckenberg Society for Nature Research (SGN), later , the Royal Society for The Conservation of Nature (RSCN) (since 30 June 2020). A Project Management Team (PMT) and on-site Project Management Unit (PMU) oversaw operations in collaboration with the Governorate of Socotra and local councils.
44. The project partners included CABI, La Sapienza University (Italy), Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (UK), Mendel University (Czech Republic), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Yemen, among others, providing thematic and technical support.
45. The project document was signed on 23 February 2015 between the GEF and UNEP. UNEP’s Ecosystems Division/Biodiversity and Land Branch supervised implementation and ensures compliance with GEF and UNEP policies.

Project Duration

46. The project commenced in February 2016 with an initial completion target for July 2020. Due to implementation delays linked to conflict and security constraints including the COVID-19 pandemic, completion was extended to March 2025, with operational closure scheduled for September 2025 (Table 1).

Project Budget and Evaluation Status

47. The total project budget was USD 19,897,087, comprising GEF financing of USD 4,854,566 and co-financing of USD 15,042,521 (in-kind). The Mid Term Review (MTR) of the project was conducted in 2019.

⁷ Previously Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI), Terrestrial Ecosystems Unit (TEU) at CEO endorsement.

1.2 Results Framework

Project Results Hierarchy

48. The project's results framework provided a coherent and logically structured hierarchy that links its overall objective 'to improve resilience of Socotra's ecosystems and sustained provision of biodiversity and ecosystem services for local communities and global heritage' with a set of four interlinked components, each addressing specific drivers of biodiversity loss and institutional weakness.
49. The objective combined biodiversity conservation, IAS management, and SLM within an Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF). The framework was built upon previous GEF and UNDP-implemented projects on Socotra, focusing on institutional strengthening, community engagement, and sustainable financing.
 - **Component 1 (Biodiversity Conservation / Protected Area Management):** contributed outcomes 1.1 and 1.2 by updating conservation data, revising the Socotra Conservation Zoning Plan (SCZP), and operationalizing a biodiversity strategy to improve the PA network.
 - **Component 2 (Invasive Alien Species Management):** contributed outcomes 2.1 and 2.2 by generating baseline data on IAS, establishing early detection and rapid response systems, and mainstreaming IAS control within local and national governance frameworks.
 - **Component 3 (Sustainable Land Management):** aligned with outcomes 3.1 and 3.2, fostering community-based SLM strategies and piloting land-use and erosion control measures that integrate into the ICMF.
 - **Component 4 (Enabling Environment):** underpinned outcomes 4.1–4.3, focusing on institutional capacity, knowledge management, and financing mechanisms such as the Socotra Trust Fund to ensure long-term sustainability of conservation management.
50. Each component's output contributed directly to the project's central goal of sustaining ecosystem integrity and livelihoods through ecosystem-based management. The results hierarchy demonstrated internal logic, with outputs leading to measurable outcomes and the objective contributing to GEF BD 1, BD2, and LD 3 strategic objectives, and UNEP's Expected Accomplishment (a) under the Ecosystem Management Sub-programme.

Project Structure and Delivery Mechanism

51. The project's structure was designed to ensure integrated delivery of outcomes through four interdependent components. Components 1–3 address thematic priorities, biodiversity, IAS, and SLM, while Component 4 (Enabling Environment) provides cross-cutting institutional, financial, and knowledge infrastructure essential for achieving results (Table 3).
52. The PMU on Socotra, supported by the Senckenberg Society for Nature Research and later RSCN, coordinated field execution, stakeholder engagement, and knowledge exchange. UNEP's Ecosystems Division (Biodiversity and Land Branch) provided overall supervision, ensuring coherence with UNEP's Programme of Work and GEF requirements.
53. This integrated structure ensured vertical and horizontal linkages among components, reinforcing national ownership and aligning project outcomes with long-term conservation and sustainable development goals for the Socotra Archipelago.

Table 3 Summary of project's latest approved results framework

	Results Statement
Project objective	To strengthen governmental and non-governmental capacities sustainably to manage and protect the Socotra Archipelago WHS through

	Results Statement
	Biodiversity (BD) conservation, IAS management and Sustainable Land Management (SLM).
Project outcome(s)	• Outcome: 1.1 A BD-Protected Area Management(PAM) strategy is developed, incl. an updated conservation data baseline and a revised Conservation Zoning Plan (CZP). • Outcome: 1.2 The BD-PAM strategy is operational, incl. improved management and expansion of the PA network, and coordinated with the ICMF (see 4.1.3). • Outcome: 2.1 A community-based management strategy to control IAS in the Socotra WHS is devised, incl. an updated IAS data baseline. • Outcome: 2.2 The IAS management strategy is operational and coordinated with the ICMF (see 4.1.3). • Outcome: 3.1 A community-based strategy for SLM in the Socotra WHS is devised, underpinned by an SLM data baseline. • Outcome: 3.2 The SLM management strategy is operational and coordinated with the ICMF (see 4.1.3). • Outcome: 4.1 Institutional, organizational and individual capacities are strengthened to better manage the environment on Socotra. • Outcome: 4.2 Information and knowledge supports environmental management. • Outcome: 4.3 A suite of financing mechanisms sustains the implementation of the ICMF of the Socotra WHS in the long-term.
Outputs	• Output 1.1.1 The existing PAs and their management are evaluated • Output 1.1.2 Baseline studies and analyses on BD and PA conducted • Output 1.1.3 Revision of the Conservation Zoning Plan (CZP) • Output 1.2.1 Management plans of existing and new PAs reviewed/developed and implemented • Output 1.2.2 Special management plans aimed at targeted terrestrial and marine species conservation and resource management developed and implemented • Output 2.1.1 All existing invasive and potentially invasive species are identified, including their direct or potential impacts on PA and BD management and ecosystem services. • Output 2.1.2 A community-based IAS management strategy is developed, incorporating guidelines for policy, legal and institutional frameworks. • Output 2.2.1 Pathways for IAS are identified and measures for priority prevention and control are developed and implemented. • Output 3.1.1 Land degradation status and threats of current land management are identified and mapped, including existing or projected impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services. • Output 3.1.2 A community-based SLM strategy developed, incorporating guidelines for policy, legal and institutional frameworks. • Output 3.2.1 Priority sustainable land management measures developed and implemented.

	Results Statement
	• Output 4.1.1 A strategic capacity development plan (CDP) for environmental management is prepared. • Output 4.1.2 An ecosystem services framework informs management and sustainable financing schemes. • Output 4.1.3 Recommendations for an integrated conservation management framework (ICMF) for the Socotra WHS are developed (closely linked to the BD-PAM, IAS and SLM strategies and the capacity development plan). • Output 4.1.4 Capacity development measures implemented for key administrative partners. • Output 4.1.5 Special programmes for long-term enhancement of policing and academic capacities planned and launched. • Output 4.1.6 Field schools for community-based environmental management are established and operational. • Output 4.2.1 An information management strategy is developed. • Output 4.2.2 A communication and awareness strategy is developed. • Output 4.2.3 Results-based project management and M&E is established. • Output 4.3.1 A comprehensive Socotra WHS sustainable finance plan is developed. • Output 4.3.2 A Socotra Trust Fund is established. • Output 4.3.3 At least two local income generating mechanisms are developed.

(Source: the Project Document – log frame revised in 2020)

1.3 Project Implementation Structure and Partners⁸

54. The project followed the standard UNEP/GEF execution modality, with UNEP serving as the Implementing Agency (IA) responsible for overall project supervision, financial oversight, and reporting to the GEF (Figure 1). Implementation was managed under the Ecosystems Division (formerly DEPI), GEF Biodiversity and Land unit. UNEP was responsible for the overall project oversight and supervision to ensure GEF policies and procedures are adhered to and that the project meets its objectives and achieves expected outcomes. UNEP also monitored the project activities implementation and reviewed and approved the substantive and technical reports and transmitted the financial and progress reports to GEF.
55. The Executing Agency (EA) during inception and early implementation (2016–2020) was the Senckenberg Society for Nature Research (SGN, Germany⁹), selected for its scientific

⁸ Sources : Project Document, Section 4, pp.104–107 ; Section 7, p.114; UNEP PIRs 2018–2024.

⁹ The selection of the Senckenberg Institute (SGN) as the initial executing agency was instrumental in securing GEF approval for the project. Given the sensitive geopolitical context and the need for a technically robust institution, SGN's global reputation, scientific expertise, and proven research presence on Socotra provided essential credibility and assurance of implementation capacity. Without SGN's commitment at the outset, the project would likely not have been endorsed. However, SGN faced substantial operational impediments once implementation began. Severe security restrictions, sanctions affecting fund transfers, lack of government-provided facilities, military occupation of EPA premises, and difficult team dynamics hindered delivery. Tensions between the project team and government authorities, combined with high turnover in local leadership and escalating security risks for international staff, ultimately led SGN—following its internal risk assessments—to discontinue its role.

leadership in biodiversity research on Socotra. SGN coordinated technical delivery, maintained international liaison, and supported the establishment of the PMU in Hadiboh.

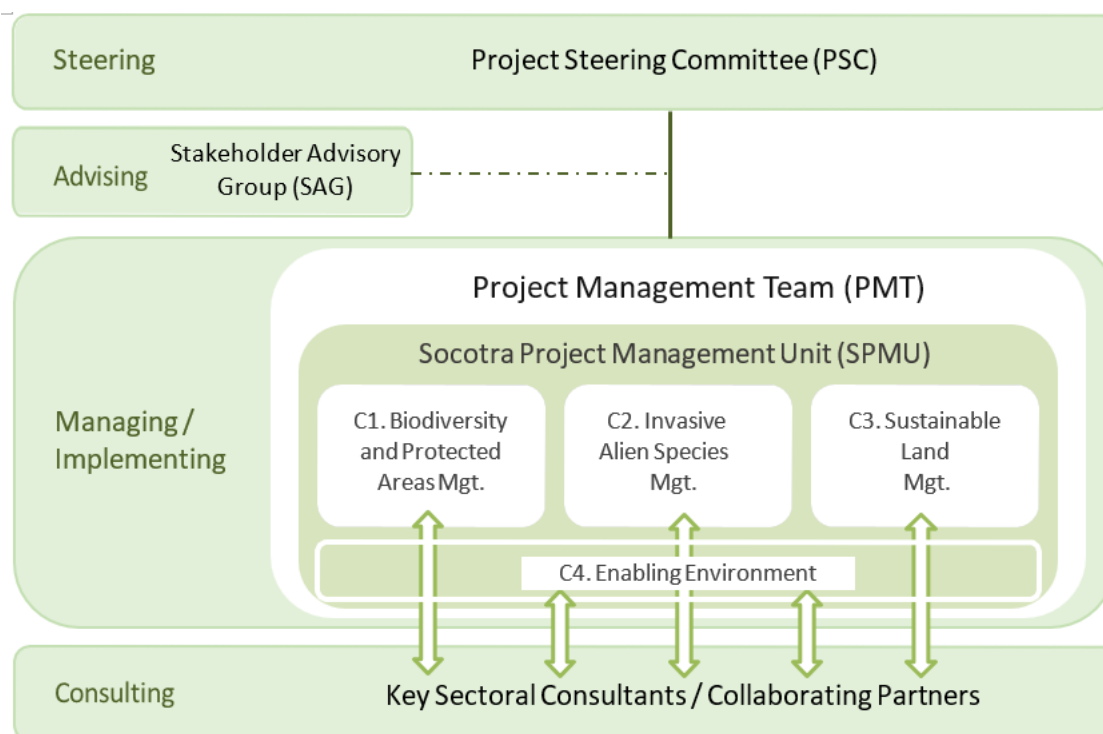
56. Following SGN's withdrawal in Feb 2020¹⁰ due to security and logistical constraints, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN¹¹, Jordan) assumed execution responsibilities, focusing on capacity building, local institutional support, and finalization of field activities. The executing agency was responsible to UNEP for ensuring that all technical and financial aspects of the project are executed and converted into the intended outcomes, including coordinating, managing, and administering the project¹².
57. Early implementation under RSCN was challenging: the project team, facilities, and assets had to be maintained and transferred during active conflict; budgets required major revision due to high initial expenditures; and RSCN faced internal transitions while assuming commitments made by its predecessor (see table 5 for budget allocation for the two EAs). Initial tensions also emerged with some scientific partners resisting RSCN's revised coordination role. Despite these constraints, RSCN provided strong leadership and quickly stabilized implementation.
58. National execution was led by the EPA under the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), which acted as the principal national counterpart and host of the PMU. The Governorate of Socotra and district councils supported coordination and local stakeholder engagement. The project steering committee (PSC) was responsible for providing project oversight and guidance, reviewing and supervising overall project progress, and monitoring and evaluating reports.
59. Key international and scientific partners—CABI, La Sapienza University (Italy), Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (UK), Mendel University (Czech Republic), and Senckenberg Research Institute—provided thematic expertise in invasive species management, ecological monitoring, and sustainable land management. The UNDP/GEF Socotra Governance and Biodiversity Project (SGBP) and GIZ contributed complementary co-financing and policy coordination.
60. Overall, this multi-tiered structure combined UNEP's strategic oversight with strong scientific and local execution capacity, enabling effective technical delivery despite Yemen's protracted conflict.

¹⁰ The SGN mentioned that 'due to the increasingly deteriorating security situation on the Island of Socotra in the Yemeni civil war, it is no longer possible for us to carry out our contractual obligations on site in the desired and agreed manner' (a letter sent by SGN on 23.12.2019 and termination memorandum from UNEP on 21.02.2020).

¹¹ The government selected RSCN (revision signed 22–23 July 2020), ensuring national ownership of the decision.

¹² For instance, RSCN is responsible for the delivery of the project-based activity coordination, communications between stakeholders, technical, financial, and administrative backstopping for day-to-day implementation, and sub-contractor management. In addition, the executing agency's responsibilities include coordinating the development of annual work plans, overseeing implementation of all project activities, coordinating monitoring and evaluation activities and reports for UNEP and GEF, and managing the project execution arrangements.

Figure 1: Organigram of the project with key project stakeholders



Source: ProDoc Appendix 10 Organigram phase II_revised_RSCN_final_23052020

1.4 Stakeholders¹³

61. The project's document (ProDoc) includes a stakeholder analysis, providing a comprehensive overview of the local groups and institutions affected by the project's activities and how they participate and benefit from the project. The project confirmed that the main beneficiaries are the local communities in the project areas, whose livelihoods depend on biodiversity and natural resources. The project also conducted stakeholder analysis, identifying major challenges and opportunities related to natural resource management in conflict situations. However, it is unclear at this point what role and input the targeted communities, including women's groups, had in the design and implementation of project activities.
62. Stakeholders are categorized¹⁴ into 4 different categories to specify their level of power and interest as illustrated below (Table 4):

Table 4 Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder	Interest/influence	Role/contribution	Benefits
Type A (High Power / High Interest)			
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) – the duty-bearers with authority, accountability for project	High interest in successful conservation and sustainable development; high influence through	Provide policy framework, oversight, allocate national staff, co-financing and	Improved institutional capacity, strengthened mandate, access to

¹³ Source: section 5 of the project documents, PIRs, and field analysis

¹⁴ Source: section 5 of the project documents and PIRs

Stakeholder	Interest/influence	Role/contribution	Benefits
oversight and funding. (Inception report, para 6-9) Environment Protection Authority – Yemen (EPA Yemen) under the Ministry of Water and Environment – Yemen – national counterpart overseeing policy, permits, enforcement and institutional uptake of the project. (ProDoc, Chapter 5; Inception report). Senckenberg Institute (2017-2020) Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (from RSCN, 2020–2025) Governorate-level authorities (Socotra Governor, EPA Yemen) Sectoral line departments (Agriculture Office; Fisheries Office; Cleaning & Improvement Fund; and Education)	policy, regulation and resources.	mainstream project outcomes. Project implementation, improvement and documenting learning	international frameworks. Service Delivery
Type B (High Power / Low Interest)			
Sub-national authorities: the Governorate of Socotra, local councils (e.g., Hadiboh, Qalansiyah) – significant local authority but possibly lower interest in technical biodiversity details. UNESCO & World Heritage Committee	High influence on implementation; moderate to low interest in everyday community concerns unless engaged.	Technical execution, coordination, capacity-building, reporting to UNEP.	Strengthened institutional experience, network, research outputs.
Type C (Low Power / High Interest)			
Local communities in Socotra including women's groups, farmers, youth, people with disabilities, and marginalized groups such as the Muhamasheen community. Civil society & NGOs working on environmental issues Community-Based Organizations & PA Committees	High interest – their livelihoods depend on natural resources and ecosystem services. Influence is relatively low but can be empowered.	Participate in community-based management (protected areas, invasive species control, SLM), provide local knowledge, and adopt sustainable practices.	Improved livelihoods, capacity, access to benefits from conservation & sustainable use, inclusion in decision-making. Gender/under-represented groups: The project made explicit reference to

Stakeholder	Interest/influence	Role/contribution	Benefits
			ensuring inclusive mechanisms for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. (Inception report).
Type D (Low Power / Low Interest)			
Some NGOs, civil-society actors, and perhaps remote service providers who are not central to day-to-day implementation but may offer complementary support. (Inception report)	Low influence (they are not the main decision-makers), lower interest in the core project goals unless mobilized.	Monitoring, advocacy, peripheral engagement, raising awareness.	Network building, potential future involvement, indirect benefits via improved environment.

63. This stakeholder mapping highlights the layered engagement strategy required: keeping high-power actors (Type A & B) actively involved, while empowering and including high-interest but lower-power groups (Type C), especially women, youth, disability-inclusive and marginalized groups, so that the project is equitable and sustainable. The project documentation emphasises community-based strategies and capacity development for local actors.

1.5 Changes in Design during Implementation¹⁵

64. Since the project inception, the project underwent several revisions to adapt to Yemen's protracted conflict, restricted field access, and operational challenges. Although the project's overall objective and results framework remained unchanged, multiple amendments and one major change in the EA were made to sustain implementation and safeguard achievements.
65. UNEP brought the RSCN on board after SGN's withdrawal, following a structured assessment of potential executing agencies in consultation with the Government of Yemen. The scope of the project was again assessed and further defined based on the achievements made during that period.
66. Subsequent no-cost extensions were approved to accommodate delayed fieldwork, pandemic-related restrictions, and the need for post-conflict adaptive measures—first to 31 December 2024, and finally to 31 March 2025 (PIR 2024, PIR 2025; UNEP project team).
67. Despite these adjustments, no fundamental revision was made to the project's logical framework or objectives. Instead, the changes reflected adaptive management—extending timelines, reallocating activities, and adjusting delivery modalities—to protect intended outcomes under exceptionally difficult operating conditions.

¹⁵ UNEP PIRs 2017–2024; Evaluation Inception Report 2024; Project Team Communications

1.6 Project Financing

68. The overall budget of the project is USD 19,897,087. As per the CEO endorsement document, GEF provided a grant of USD 4,854,566 whereas co-financing was proposed from 11 organizations to the value of USD 15,042,521 in-kind. The UNEP agency fee was USD 461,183.
69. Table 5 below shows the project's planned versus actual expenditure per component as of 10 July 2025¹⁶. The financial report indicates that SGN and RSCN used approximately 56% and 42% of the project budget, respectively, while UNEP directly implemented about 2%, primarily for external evaluations. Staff and personnel costs represented the largest expenditure category at 41%, followed by contractual services (23%) and travel (16%).
70. An analysis of expenditure data reveals significant deviations across individual budget lines, although total spending aligns with the overall approved budget. Key programmatic areas show under-execution; notably, Contractual Services (budget line 2161) utilized only 69% of its allocation. Conversely, Staff costs (budget line 1161) exceeded their planned budget by 7%, becoming the single largest expense item.
71. The expenditure distribution is skewed toward management costs, which constitute 57% of total spending across staff and personnel (1161) and travel (1561). This disparity between the planned program allocation and the actual management-heavy expenditure profile suggests a need to rebalance resources toward direct project outputs in future financial planning.

Table 5 Project financial plan and expenditure¹⁷ by the end of the project

UNEP Budget Line (UMOJA)		UNEP approved budget (\$)	Expenditure by SGN (\$)	Expenditure by UNEP (\$)	Expenditure by RSCN (\$)	Cumulative expenses (\$)
1161	Staff and other personnel costs	1,861,500	1,280,473		714,000	1,994,473
1561	Travel	805,000	439,226		330,000	769,226
2161	Contractual Services	1,613,066	659,641		454,000	1,113,641
2261	Transfer and Grant to Counterparts		-		225,000	225,000
4161	Supplies, Commodities, Materials	50,000	34,412		-	34,412
4261	Equipment, Vehicles and Furniture	140,000	125,507		36,000	161,507
5161	General operating and other direct costs	315,000	188,307		298,000	486,307
5881	External Evaluations (mid-term and final)	70,000	-	70,000	-	70,000
99	GRAND TOTAL	4,854,566	2,727,566	70,000	2,057,000	4,854,566

(Source: UNEP /FMO, as of July 2025)

72. The project's co-financing target of USD15.042 million (as per the FMO record, see Annex VIII) was not achieved due to donor withdrawals and partnership disagreements. Consequently, a significant portion of the planned cash contributions was substituted with in-kind professional services from the executing agencies (see Table 6). The financial report suggested that in-kind support of USD 15.224 M from various organizations. This suggests that the total actual in-kind contribution exceeded the planned amount; however, supporting documentation for these valuations was not submitted to the evaluation team.

¹⁶ Shared by FMO, 2026

¹⁷ As of the draft evaluation report (Dec 2025), the final financial reports submitted by the partners are under review. Once the financial reports have been verified, the final figures will be released.

73. The reported in-kind support consisted primarily of expertise in management planning and technical assistance. The project document was formally revised¹⁸ to reflect this adjusted, predominantly in-kind co-financing structure, which allowed for continued implementation. This arrangement, however, represents a substantial deviation from the original financial partnership model based on cash contributions. Further details on project co-financing are provided in Annex VIII.

Table 6 Project co-finance

Co-financing (Type/ Source)	UNEP own Financing (\$1,000)		Government (\$1,000)		Other (\$1,000)		Total (\$1,000)		Total Disbursed ¹⁹ (\$1,000)
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,681,716.00
Loans	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Credits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Equity investments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
In-kind support	300	425	5,500	7,031.5	9,242.521	7,767.996	15,042.521	15,224.496	-
Other (*)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals								15,224.496	4,681,716.00

(Source: UNEP /FMO/ Project Team)

18 According to PIR 2025: The total amount of co-finance was revised when the project was transferred to the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature as the new executing agency. An updated version of the project document was developed to reflect this change, taking into account the period and activities implemented prior to RSCN's involvement, including the associated co-financing contributions. This adjustment was necessary as the project had already undergone three years of implementation before RSCN assumed responsibility.

19 The final amount disbursed was not provided by the FMO at the draft of the report. The figure cited refers to the amount reported in the PIR 2025.

2 EVALUATION METHODS

2.1 UNEP's Evaluation Approach

74. In line with UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual, the evaluation was undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned.
75. The main target audiences for the evaluation findings are UNEP, GEF, EPA in Yemen, the Ministry of Water and Environment of Yemen, executing agencies, local councils, NGOs/CBOs and the local communities.
76. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy, the UNEP Programme Manual and the Guidelines for GEF Agencies in conducting Terminal Evaluations, the evaluation has been carried out using a set of 9 commonly applied evaluation criteria which include: (1) Strategic Relevance, (2) Quality of Project Design, (3) Nature of External Context, (4) Effectiveness (incl. availability of outputs; achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact), (5) Financial Management, (6) Efficiency, (7) Monitoring and Reporting, (8) Sustainability and (9) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues (see Annex II: Evaluation Framework for more details on each evaluation criterion).
77. Most evaluation criteria are rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU), and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU). The ratings against each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability.
78. The UNEP Evaluation Office has developed detailed descriptions of the main elements required to be demonstrated at each level (i.e. Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory) for each evaluation criterion. The evaluation team has considered all the evidence gathered during the evaluation in relation to this matrix to generate evaluation criteria performance ratings.
79. In addition to the 9 evaluation criteria outlined above, the evaluation addresses some strategic questions that were formulated in the Terms of Reference. These questions were posed by the UNEP Evaluation Office in conjunction with members of the Project Team. Evaluation findings related to the 5 topics of interest to the GEF are summarised in Annex X. As per the GEF CEO Endorsement and Approval documents, the 5 topics are: i) performance against GEF's Core Indicator Targets; ii) engagement of stakeholders; iii) gender-responsive measures and gender result areas; iv) implementation of management measures taken against the Safeguards Plan and v) challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach.
80. This evaluation adopted a participatory approach, consulting with project team members, partners and beneficiaries at several stages throughout the process. Central to the evaluation was the analysis and reconstruction of the project's Theory of Change. Consultations were held during the evaluation inception phase to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how the project intended to drive change and what contributing conditions ('assumptions' and 'drivers') would need to be in place to support such change. The reconstructed Theory of Change, supported by a graphic representation and narrative discussion of the causal pathways, was discussed further with respondents during the data collection phase, and refined as appropriate. The final iteration of the Theory of Change is presented in this final evaluation report and has been used throughout the evaluation process.

2.2 Data Collection

81. The selection of evaluation methods and respondents for robust data collection was guided by the evaluation questions, stakeholder relevance, and the geographic scope of project interventions. This approach ensured the inclusion of relevant institutional roles, technical expertise, and individuals with direct involvement in project design, implementation, or oversight.
82. Purposive sampling was employed to deliberately engage information-rich participants, facilitating in-depth insights, contextual understanding, and the efficient use of resources—particularly where the objectives were learning, explanation, and data triangulation.
83. Participatory tools, including Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted both online and in-person and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), were utilized to enhance coverage, flexibility, and inclusiveness. This balanced efficiency with the need for depth, rapport, and contextual understanding. The concurrent use of qualitative and quantitative analysis enabled triangulation, strengthened validity, and captured both measurable outcomes and their contextual explanations. This mixed-methods approach allowed the evaluation to assess not only what changed but also how, why, and for whom.

Primary data sources

84. The evaluation employed multiple data collection methods, including stakeholder interviews including both remote and in-person interviews, focus group discussions, and site visits. The survey instruments were developed and used for KII and FGDs. Altogether, 73 people were consulted i.e., 38 KIIs were (35 male and 3 female) and five FGDs (23 male and 12 female) (see Table 7 and Annex III).
85. Due to security reasons, the principal evaluator could not travel to the project sites. The field mission was carried out by the evaluation specialist who were already based in Yemen from 6th to 13th November 2025. The country mission itinerary is presented in Annex V.
86. The following subsections outlined the methods and tools used.

Key Informant Interviews

87. KIIs were conducted with stakeholders possessing extensive project knowledge. Virtual interviews were primarily led by the principal evaluator, while the Evaluation Specialist joined sessions to provide Arabic language support. An in-person KII was also conducted during the country field mission. Respondents were identified from UNEP, government agencies, EAs, and local partners in consultation with project management, who provided coordination and logistical support. The number of KIIs conducted exceeded the initial plan. This adjustment was necessary because the information available during the inception phase regarding the project's scope and stakeholder landscape was not sufficient²⁰. Interviews, which included project team members and government authorities, lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Focus Group Discussions

88. To gain deeper community-level insights, FGDs were conducted with beneficiaries, such as community-based organizations. The Evaluation Specialist carried out FGDs in four locations, with key considerations including clear objectives, equal speaking opportunities, and a safe environment. Logistical factors like location, question design, and confidential data recording were prioritized.

²⁰ Inception report: Once the evaluation team visited the project sites, a clearer understanding of the operational context and the range of relevant actors (such as partner agencies from the government, NGOs and CSOs) emerged, prompting the inclusion of additional, information-rich participants to ensure a comprehensive assessment.

Table 7 Type of Evaluation respondents

Stakeholders - Individuals			A. Total number involved (M/F)	B. Number contacted (M/F)	Sample size (% B/A) ²¹	C. Total number responded Total (M/F)	Response rate (% C/B) ²²
Project Team	Project Team (with management responsibilities e.g. Project Management Unit)	Implementing agency	5 (1 F/4 M)	5 (1 F/4 M)	100%	10 (9/1)	>100%
		Executing agencies including consultants	2 (0 F / 2 M)	2 (0 F / 2 M)	100%	8 (8/0)	>100%
Government	EPA, Ministries, Local Councils, etc. (Project oversight or as beneficiary)		20 (3 F/17 M)	10 (3 F/7 M)	50%	11 (10/1)	>100%
Beneficiaries	Direct Beneficiaries: (e.g. duty bearers, gatekeepers, training participants, etc.)		Not known	- 4 FGDs		Five FDGs carried out (35 people met : 23 male/12 female)	-
	Indirect Beneficiaries: (e.g. household members, civil society representatives, group members, etc.)						
Stakeholders - Entities			A. Total number involved	B. Number contacted	Sample size (% B/A) ²³	C. Total number responded	Response rate (% C/B) ²⁴
Partners	Project implementing/ executing partners (receiving project funds)		6	3	50%	8	>100%
	Project collaborating/ contributing partners ²⁵ (not receiving project fund)						
Field Visits		Region / country / locality ²⁶	A. Total number sites	B. Number sites visited	Sample Size (%B/A) ²⁷		
		West Asia Socotra Archipelago (Yemen)	4 Rosh Marine PA. DiHamri Marine PA. Firmhin forest PA (dragoon blood tree). Homhil Forest, PA (frankincense tree).	4 1. Rosh Marine PA. 2. DiHamri Marine PA. 3. Rirmhin area 4. Qalansiyah district.	100%		

Strategies for inclusivity

89. The evaluation team ensured the consultation of various stakeholders, including women, men, girls, boys, and marginalized and underserved groups, as necessary to collect their feedback and different perspectives. The FGDs were designed to ensure inclusive representation, with a

²¹ Percentage of people involved in the project who were contacted.

²² Percentage of people contacted who responded.

²³ Percentage of entities involved in the project who were contacted.

²⁴ Percentage of entities contacted who responded.

²⁵ Contributing partners may be providing resources as either cash or in-kind inputs (e.g. staff time, office space etc.).

²⁶ In case of a global project, the unit of analysis is 'region'. In case of a regional or multi-country project, the unit of analysis is 'country'. In case of a single country project, the unit of analysis is 'locality', which could refer to a city, town, village, etc.

²⁷ Percentage of total number project sites in each region, country or locality that were visited.

balanced number of female and male participants. Particular attention was given to creating safe, respectful, and comfortable spaces that encouraged active engagement and open discussion, particularly for women and vulnerable participants, ensuring their feedback was adequately reflected in the evaluation findings.

90. In addition, the evaluation team captured diverse perspectives through the purposive selection of Key Informant Interviewees, including representatives of women-led associations, local community organizations, protected area management associations and committees, and relevant sectoral government offices. Women's perspectives were integrated through both FGDs and KIIs, including interviews with women leaders engaged in community development, livelihoods, and environmental activities supported by the project. Respondents were selected based on their roles, experience, and direct involvement in project activities to ensure the relevance and depth of insights.

Secondary data sources

91. The evaluation consultants conducted a comprehensive desk review of project documents, including the proposal, results-oriented monitoring review reports, progress reports to the donor, final deliverables, and other relevant materials required and available for the review (Annex IV).

2.3 Data Analysis

92. At the end of the data collection process, data cleaning and analysis were undertaken. All information collected during desk reviews and interviews was triangulated to ensure accuracy. For qualitative data, the evaluator prepared an evidence matrix, applied thematic coding, and conducted content analysis based on the research questions. Where needed, varied responses from stakeholders were discussed with the project team through the evaluation manager to clarify inconsistencies. This process helped identify key factors that influenced or contributed to the project's outputs and outcomes, in line with the programme logic.
93. Findings were validated through further triangulation, and project progress and performance were assessed by comparing planned targets against actual achievements. Trends across the project's extended timeframe were reviewed to understand the effects of delays, extensions, and external disruptions on the delivery of results. In addition, contribution analysis was applied to assess the plausible role of the project in observed outcomes and intermediate states.
94. All data were synthesized into evidence-based findings, structured around UNEP's evaluation criteria. Each criterion was rated using the UNEP Evaluation Office's six-point scale, ensuring consistency and comparability with other UNEP Terminal Evaluations.
95. After completing the field mission, the evaluation team presented preliminary findings to the project team and relevant key stakeholders to validate emerging results and address any factual corrections at the stage of drafting the main report.
96. The draft report has been submitted to the evaluation manager following the presentation of preliminary findings to the project team. Feedback from the project team and other stakeholders was incorporated into the final version and captured in Annex I once available.

2.4 Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

97. The evaluation team reviewed the PIRs, it was, however, difficult to secure adequate KIIs during the implementation period from 2016 to 2020. No response received from the SGN side to

participate in the evaluation process²⁸. This is one limitation in triangulating the information of that period of project implementation. To mitigate this, the team relied on comprehensive document analysis (PIRs) from the SGN period and qualitative data from the country mission to contextualize performance.

98. Ongoing conflict prevented the principal evaluator from visiting the project site, which created challenges in conceptualizing the project context and collecting primary data. This limitation was mitigated through field visits by an in-country evaluation specialist with strong evaluation expertise and knowledge of the country context. Where possible, the principal evaluator conducted and participated in online meetings/interviews with English-speaking stakeholders.
99. The evaluation encountered a notable limitation in achieving fully balanced demographic representation, particularly in the direct engagement of women during site-level consultations in certain locations. This constraint stemmed primarily from intersecting socio-cultural norms and logistical factors affecting women's availability. To mitigate this potential perspective gap and enhance the robustness of findings, the evaluation relied on methodological triangulation, cross-verifying insights across multiple data sources, including key informant interviews, document reviews, and group discussions.
100. In addition, baselines and targets of outputs and outcomes in the result framework are not explicitly presented in a quantitative way. Although several quantitative targets exist in the result framework- such as those for outcome, output 3.2.1 and 4.1.6 exist – are included in the framework, the reports did not provide clear quantitative data or information substantiate the reported achievements. To address these gaps, the evaluation assessed progress by triangulating other sources of evidence, including qualitative data from key informant interviews, focus group discussions.
101. As the project commenced in 2016 and formally concluded several months before the evaluation, some interventions had been implemented years earlier. This timeline created recall limitations among community members and stakeholders, which could affect the accuracy and detail of their responses. To mitigate this, the evaluation team carefully identified relevant and knowledgeable participants with support from project partners and triangulated information across multiple data sources.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

102. Throughout the evaluation process and in the compilation of the Final Evaluation Report, efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalized groups. Data were collected with respect for ethics and human rights issues. All pictures were taken, and other information gathered after prior informed consent from people, all discussions remained anonymous, and all information was collected according to the UN 'Standards of Conduct'.
103. Open-access AI tools were used for specific, limited tasks, including drafting summaries, checking grammar, and analysing patterns in text data. All AI-generated outputs were thoroughly reviewed, fact-checked, and contextualized by the evaluation team, who maintain full responsibility for the final content and its accuracy. The use of AI served to enhance efficiency while ensuring that professional human judgment remained central to all analytical conclusions.
104. Data analysis was conducted with strict adherence to protocols for protecting the confidentiality of all collected information. Data were securely stored on password-protected computers, and any shared files, such as Excel datasets, were encrypted to prevent

²⁸ The evaluation team sent an email on 10 November 2025, but there was no response. In addition, the Evaluation Office shared the draft report with SGN via email on 20 March 2026 for their review and feedback. As of April 2026, no feedback on the report has been shared.

unauthorized access. Access to raw data was restricted to the evaluation team and the directly involved UNEP evaluation manager.

105. In addition, participants were informed of the objective of the terminal evaluation and the voluntary nature of their participation. Prior consent was obtained before collecting any information or visuals. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and the information was used solely for the terminal evaluation. Results and findings were presented in an aggregated manner to protect individual identities.

3 THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

106. While the project's initial design and mid-term review did not include a formal Theory of Change, an original results framework was established at the outset to outline key objectives and outcomes.
107. In line with evaluation requirements, the evaluation team reconstructed a ToC at the inception of the terminal evaluation in accordance with UNEP glossary of results definitions. The development was based on available project documents to articulate the causal logic, linking assumptions, inputs, and outputs to intended outcomes and long-term impact and consultation with stakeholders. This reconstructed ToC was subsequently discussed and verified with project personnel.
108. The reconstructed ToC provides a structured narrative of the project's causal pathways, outlining how outputs are expected to contribute to outcomes (Table 8). These outcomes include improved protected area management, strengthened institutional and community capacities, operational strategies for invasive species and sustainable land management, and enhanced knowledge and awareness systems.
109. This narrative illustrates the logical pathway through which project activities are expected to enhance the resilience of Socotra's ecosystems and sustain the provision of their services. It clarifies how outputs lead to outcomes, how these outcomes combine to create transformative intermediate states, and how these states collectively contribute to achieving the project objective.
110. The reconstructed ToC also explicitly incorporates drivers and assumptions absent from the original logframe. Drivers include a) commitment of the government, UNEP and project partners to community participation and inclusiveness; b) increased awareness and policy environment for gender responsive approaches; c) strengthened institutional leadership of EPA as the national focal entity for BD conservation, protected areas management; and d) increased funding and co-financing commitments from international development partners. Some of the major assumptions include political stability, donor alignment, and the willingness of communities and institutions to remain engaged, which are described further in the following chapters.

Table 8 Justification for reformulation of results statements

Formulation in original project document(s) – (Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC)	Formulation for reconstructed ToC at evaluation inception (RTOC)	Justification for reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes on the interpretation ²⁹ of the result
(Long lasting) Impact		
To strengthen governmental and non-governmental capacities sustainably to manage and protect the Socotra Archipelago WHS through biodiversity conservation, invasive alien species management and sustainable land management.	'Resilience of Socotra's ecosystems is improved with sustained provision of biodiversity and ecosystem services for local communities and global heritage'.	Reformulated as the original statement in the original document covers the narrow scope of the project with no long-term effects on a system, community, or environment. The revised statement is prepared to align with UNEP's definition of impact as long-term environmental and human well-being benefits.
Intermediate States		

²⁹ In some instances, the results statement may not need to be reformulated, but implied meanings need to be made explicit or understanding clarified. In other cases, it may be necessary to specify the stakeholder, etc.

Formulation in original project document(s) – (Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC)	Formulation for reconstructed ToC at evaluation inception (RTOC)	Justification for reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes on the interpretation ²⁹ of the result
NA	Effective and participatory mechanisms ensure coordinated biodiversity conservation, invasive species management, and sustainable land use. Understanding: The intermediate state includes all mechanisms, including financing mechanisms, towards coordinated management.	Statement is expressed as a state that has improved (i.e. desirable measures increased). Intermediate States were not included in the original project logframe. They are an essential step from outcomes needed to achieve the expected impact in mapping a logical, causal pathway of change.
NA	Institutional and community capacities strengthened for conservation and sustainable resource management.	
Outcomes		
1.1: BD-PAM strategy developed, including updated conservation data baseline and revised Conservation Zoning Plan <i>Indicators: i) Baseline dataset for PA and BD updated and analysed. ii) CZP revised. iii) Strategy document prepared, guiding the implementation of the CZP.</i>	1.1: Stakeholders have developed and endorsed the BD-PAM strategy, including updated conservation data baseline and revised Conservation Zoning Plan Understanding: Stakeholders (public and community actors) develop and endorse the strategy.	The reformulation aims to make the outcome state clear. The envisaged change is that 'efforts' to develop the strategy are reflected in its endorsement. 'Endorsed' (weakest outcome verb in normative work), requires a political representative to publicly associate themselves with the project's outputs) e.g. in a speech, meeting, foreword in publication, etc.
1.2: The BD-PAM strategy operational, including improved management and expansion of PA network, and coordinated with the integrated conservation management framework. <i>Indicators: i) Number of existing PAM plans revised, and new PAM plans prepared. ii) Number of (co)management committees established. iii) Sea and land surface area of managed PA expanded by at least 4,100 ha (sea/coastal) and 2,500 ha (land). iv) Recommendations provided for the coordination of the BDPAM strategy with the ICMF</i>	1.2: Stakeholders have made the BD-PAM strategy operational, including improved management and expansion of PA network, and coordinated with the integrated conservation management framework. Understanding: Stakeholders make the strategy operational and coordinated in its implementation.	The reformulation aims to make the outcome state clear. The envisaged change is that the strategy made operational and implemented by stakeholders in order to improve management and coordination.
2.1. A community-based management strategy to control IAS in the Socotra WHS is devised, including an updated IAS inventory <i>Indicators : i) Baseline dataset for IAS updated and analysed. ii) IAS strategy /policy document prepared and accepted by stakeholders.</i>	2.1: Stakeholders have endorsed a community-based management strategy to control IAS in the Socotra WHS, including an updated IAS inventory. Understanding: Stakeholders (public and community actors) develop and endorse the strategy.	The reformulation aims to make the outcome state clear. The envisaged change is that 'efforts' to devise the community-based management strategy are reflected in its endorsement.
2.2. The IAS management strategy is operational and coordinated with the integrated conservation management framework	2.2. Stakeholders have made the IAS management strategy operational and coordinated with the integrated	Reformulated to make the stakeholder engagement clear.

Formulation in original project document(s) – (Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC)	Formulation for reconstructed ToC at evaluation inception (RTOC)	Justification for reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes on the interpretation ²⁹ of the result
Indicators: i) Strategy with strong community participation operational. ii) Recommendations provided for the coordination of the IAS strategy with the ICMF.	conservation management framework Understanding: Stakeholders make the strategy operational and coordinated in its implementation.	
3.1: A community-based strategy for SLM in the Socotra WHS is devised, underpinned by an SLM data baseline Indicator: i) Baseline dataset for SLM established and analysed. ii) SLM strategy. Strategy/policy document prepared and accepted by stakeholders .	3.1 Stakeholders have endorsed a community-based strategy for SLM in the Socotra WHS, underpinned by an SLM data baseline. Understanding: Stakeholders (public and community actors) develop and endorse the community-based SLM strategy.	The reformulation aims to make the outcome state clear. The envisaged change is that 'efforts' to devise the community-based SLM strategy are reflected in its endorsement.
3.2: The SLM management strategy is operational and coordinated with the integrated conservation management framework. Indicators: i) SLM management framework established through strong Community participation and operational . ii) Recommendations in place for the coordination of the SLM strategy with the ICMF.	3.2: Relevant authorities made the SLM strategy operational and coordinated with the integrated conservation management framework. Understanding: Stakeholders make the strategy operational and coordinated in its implementation.	Reformulated to make the stakeholder engagement clear.
4.1: Institutional, organisational and individual capacities are strengthened to better manage the environment on Socotra Indicators: i) Technical and physical capacities of stakeholders substantially enhanced. ii) Number of agencies joining in an interagency agreement on sustainable management of the Socotra WHS. iii) An integrated conservation management framework (ICMF) developed.	4.1: Stakeholders' capacities at institutional, organisational and individual levels have been strengthened to better manage the environment on Socotra	Reformulated to make the stakeholders' capacities clear.
4.2: Information and knowledge support environmental management Indicators: i) Information management and awareness strategy developed. ii) Data sharing agreement between key stakeholders. iii) Results-based project monitoring system set up.	4.2: Information and knowledge have strengthened environmental management	The reformulation is made to make the outcome state explicit (i.e. information and knowledge are strengthening environmental management).
4.3: A suite of financing mechanisms sustains the implementation of the Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF) of the Socotra WHS in the long-term. Indicators: i) Socotra WHS Trust Fund (TF) is established. At least two individual financing schemes conceived, piloted and tested.	4.3: A suite of financing mechanisms has strengthened the implementation of the Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF) of the Socotra WHS in the long-term.	The reformulation is made to make the outcome state explicit (i.e. financing mechanisms are strengthening the implementation of the ICMF).
Outputs		

Formulation in original project document(s) – (Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC)	Formulation for reconstructed ToC at evaluation inception (RTOC)	Justification for reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes on the interpretation ²⁹ of the result
Output 1.1.1 The existing PAs and their management are evaluated <i>(Indicator: The existing PAs (terrestrial and marine) and community involvement in their management are assessed/ evaluated.)</i> Output 1.1.2 Baseline studies and analyses on BD and PA conducted <i>(Indicator: Basic data on BD and PAs are collected or updated and analysed.)</i> Output 1.1.3 Revision of the Conservation Zoning Plan (CZP) <i>(Indicator: The CZP is revised based on outputs of 1.1.2 and linked to the integrated framework (4.1.3) and the other strategies to be developed by the project (2.1.2, 3.1.2).)</i> Output 1.2.1 Management plans of existing and new PAs reviewed /developed and implemented <i>(Indicator: The Management plans of both existing and newly selected terrestrial and marine PAs are prepared and linked to the integrated framework (see 4.1.3). Community-based management committees reviewed or established. PA plans implemented)</i> Output 1.2.2 Special management plans aimed at targeted terrestrial and marine species conservation and resource management developed and implemented <i>(Indicator: Priority species- and resource-specific management plans are prepared, including selected fishery resources (matching exploited key terrestrial resources). Targeted species conservation and resource management implemented.</i> 2.1.1 All existing invasive and potentially invasive species are identified, including their direct or potential impacts on PA and BD management and ecosystem services. <i>(Indicator: Basic data on IAS is collected or updated and analysed. Socotra's IAS interventions informed by comprehensive IAS lists, including data on distribution, and biological and socioeconomic impact of priority IAS.)</i> 2.1.2 A community-based IAS management strategy is developed, incorporating guidelines for policy, legal and institutional frameworks. <i>(Indicator: A community-based strategy for IAS management developed, with links to the revised CZP, the SLM strategy and the integrated framework (see 4.1.3). IAS</i>	Output 1.1.1 No change Output 1.1.2 No change Output 1.1.3 No change Output 1.2.1 Management plans of existing and new PAs reviewed/developed and implemented by community-based management committees and other stakeholders Output 1.2.2 Special management plans aimed at targeted terrestrial and marine species conservation and resource management developed and implemented by PA management authorities, local communities, etc. 2.1.1 No change 2.1.2 A community-based IAS management strategy is developed and available to local communities and stakeholders, incorporating guidelines for policy, legal and institutional frameworks. 2.2.1 Pathways for IAS are identified and measures for priority prevention and control are developed and implemented by local communities and stakeholders.	Some of the outputs are reformulated to make tangible deliverables at the minimal level to meet the criteria of UNEP Glossary of result definition. The ownership of the results was added for clarification, based on scenario summary (Page 6-8), the key stakeholders identified in the CEO Endorsement (Page 9), and result indicators.

Formulation in original project document(s) – (Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC)	Formulation for reconstructed ToC at evaluation inception (RTOC)	Justification for reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes on the interpretation ²⁹ of the result
engagement is integrated into other relevant sectors (e.g. local trade, transport and travel sectors). 2.2.1 Pathways for IAS are identified and measures for priority prevention and control are developed and implemented. <i>(Indicator: IAS management plans prepared, including prevention and control measures. Proportion of legally imported species that are subject to Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) including assessment of environmental risks. Lessons on 'best IAS management' practices captured and disseminated).</i> 3.1.1 Land degradation status and threats of current land management are identified and mapped, including existing or projected impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services. <i>(Indicator: Basic data on LD and SLM are collected or updated and analysed.)</i> 3.1.2 A community-based SLM strategy developed, incorporating guidelines for policy, legal and institutional frameworks. <i>(Indicator: A community-based strategy for SLM management developed, with links to the revised CZP, the IAS strategy and the integrated framework (see 4.1.3). SLM measures are integrated into other relevant sectors.)</i> 3.2.1 Priority sustainable land management measures developed and implemented. <i>(Indicator: SLM plans prepared. Lessons on best SLM practices captured and disseminated.)</i> 4.1.1 A strategic capacity development plan (CDP) for environmental management is prepared. <i>(Indicator: technical and physical capacities are assessed and training needs analysed. A strategic Capacity Development Plan (CDP) is prepared and coordinated with other donors.)</i> 4.1.2 An ecosystem services framework informs management and sustainable financing schemes. <i>(Indicator: Ecosystem services framework developed. Trade-off and vulnerability assessments conducted. Linkages to sustainable funding options explored (e.g. PES).</i>	3.1.1 No changes 3.1.2 A community-based SLM strategy developed and made available to relevant authorities and local communities, incorporating guidelines for policy, legal and institutional frameworks. 3.2.1 Priority sustainable land management measures developed and implemented by relevant authorities and local communities. 4.1.1 A strategic capacity development plan (CDP) for environmental management is prepared and available. 4.1.2 No change 4.1.3 Recommendations for an integrated conservation management framework (ICMF) for the Socotra WHS are developed and endorsed by relevant agencies and stakeholders (closely linked to the BD-PAM, IAS and SLM strategies and the capacity development plan). 4.1.4 No change	

Formulation in original project document(s) – (Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC)	Formulation for reconstructed ToC at evaluation inception (RTOC)	Justification for reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes on the interpretation ²⁹ of the result
4.1.3 Recommendations for an integrated conservation management framework (ICMF) for the Socotra WHS are developed (closely linked to the BD-PAM, IAS and SLM strategies and the capacity development plan). <i>(Indicator: Recommendations for an inter-agency framework agreement on sustainable management of the Socotra WHS are endorsed by relevant agencies. Increased reference in sectoral strategies to BD conservation, IAS and SLM aims and tools promoted by the project.)</i> 4.1.4 Capacity development measures implemented for key administrative partners. <i>(Indicator: administrative capacity of relevant cooperating agencies is enhanced. Training programmes prepared and implemented (relevant to e.g. BD-PAM, IAS, SLM, livelihoods, and sustainable financing).)</i> 4.1.5 Special programmes for long-term enhancement of policing and academic capacities planned and launched. <i>(Indicator: Programme for a Ranger Force prepared and launched. Academic education programme for Socotris prepared and launched.)</i> 4.1.6 Field schools for community-based environmental management are established and operational. <i>(Indicator: Field school (FS) programmes developed for SLM, Sustainable Fisheries, IAS and BD.)</i> 4.2.1 An information management strategy is developed. <i>(Indicator: Project database established, incorporating BD, IAS, SLM data and traditional management practices.)</i> 4.2.2 A communication and awareness strategy is developed. <i>(Indicator: Increase of stakeholder awareness in related activities as measured against baseline.)</i> 4.2.3 Results-based project management and M&E is established. <i>(Indicator: Project reporting and M&E system operational and on time.)</i> 4.3.1 A comprehensive Socotra WHS sustainable finance plan is developed.	4.1.5 No change 4.1.6 No change 4.2.1 An information management strategy is developed and available. 4.2.2 A communication and awareness strategy is developed and available. 4.2.3 Results-based project management and M&E is established and operational. 4.3.1 A comprehensive Socotra WHS sustainable finance plan is developed and used. 4.3.2 A Socotra Trust Fund is established. 4.3.3 At least two local income generating mechanisms are developed and functional.	

Formulation in original project document(s) – (Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC)	Formulation for reconstructed ToC at evaluation inception (RTOC)	Justification for reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes on the interpretation ²⁹ of the result
(Indicator: Sustainable finance plan in place and used to guide resources input into the STF and other sustainable financing schemes) 4.3.2 A Socotra Trust Fund is established. (Indicator: A functioning trust fund providing initial set of grants) 4.3.3 At least two local income generating mechanisms are developed. (Indicator: Two sustainable financing mechanism identified in the sustainable finance plan are established and generating income)		

111. The evaluation team also assessed the assumptions and drivers necessary to support transitions between results levels (i.e., from Outputs to Outcomes, Outcomes to Intermediate States, and Intermediate States to Impact) and rephrased and categorized them accordingly. The following table shows these reformulations and additions (Table 9).

Table 9 Justification for reformulation/expansion of drivers and assumptions

Formulation in original project document(s) – Source (Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC)	Formulation for reconstructed ToC at evaluation inception (RTOC)	Justification for reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes on the interpretation ³⁰ of the driver or assumption
DRIVERS		
Commitment to community participation and inclusiveness.	Commitment of the government, UNEP and project partners to community participation and inclusiveness.	Reconstructed as Driver to reflect Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA). (relevant in achieving outputs and outcomes)
Gender considerations	Increased awareness for gender responsive approaches	Reconstructed to reflect gender mainstreaming and considerations. (relevant in achieving outputs and outcomes)
Strengthening EPA as the national focal institution.	Strengthened institutional leadership of EPA as the national focal entity for BD conservation and Management	Institutional strengthening is under project influence. (relevant in contributing outcomes and intermediate states)
Funding and Co-Financing	Increased funding and co-financing	Financial commitment documented in PAD and CEO request; internal driver. (relevant in contributing outcomes and intermediate states)
ASSUMPTIONS- Source (source: Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC)		
Sustainable development and environmental management remain	The stakeholders, including the communities and stakeholders, are	The project logframe consisted of too many assumptions, and

³⁰In some instances, the drivers or assumptions may not need to be reformulated, but implied meanings need to be made explicit or understanding clarified. In other cases, it may be necessary to add drivers and assumptions that were not previously identified in the original TOC or results framework.

Formulation in original project document(s) – Source (<i>Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC</i>)	Formulation for reconstructed ToC at evaluation inception (RTOC)	Justification for reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes on the interpretation ³⁰ of the driver or assumption
high on the Socotri peoples' and agencies' priority list. The emerging governance structures and leading stakeholders and individuals on Socotra are supportive of the project objective. The concerned communities are or can be convinced of site-specific measures and participate actively. Donor and stakeholder coordination mechanisms can be successfully put in place. Institutions and communities agree on CZP revision. Stakeholders understand the need to improve PA management and to conserve BD in new PAs. Local communities' reservations against the establishment of new PAs can be overcome. IAS remain a relevant topic for agencies and communities. Agencies and communities are willing to work together for IAS management. All stakeholders are interested in collaborative efforts for an SLM strategy. Issues of overlapping mandates and responsibilities between agencies and community bodies can be overcome, and agencies and communities are willing to work together. Issues of overlapping mandates and competing responsibilities can be overcome. Willingness of stakeholders from the national and international development and science community to enter into an agreement to share data and analyses. Yemeni and Socotri agencies, incl. the Governor's office agree on the need for a Trust Fund and to the concepts of other funding measures. The communities, management bodies and authorities are willing to take part in the PA evaluation process. Relevant stakeholders agree to share and pool data needed for baseline analysis. Stakeholders agree to the urgent need for a CZP revision and for a Conservation Strategy to improve BD conservation and PAM.	willing to participate/support and get benefits from the project interventions. (mainly applicable to output level) The political unrest and conflict do not pose any challenges. (applicable to output, outcome and intermediate state levels) The government of Yemen and particularly the Socotri local authorities, and sectoral departments continue to prioritize sustainable development and biodiversity conservation in their policy framework and will provide the necessary support for long-term implementation through robust institutions. For example, stakeholders, including the government stakeholders and the community highly prioritize the SLM and are willing to contribute to strategy development. (mainly responsible at outcome and Intermediate state levels) Coordination and collaboration among UNEP, donors, the Yemeni governmental bodies, and implementing partners will be effective and overcome overlapping mandates and competing responsibilities to enhance efficiency. (mainly at output and outcome levels) Individual and institutional capacities will remain available to undertake surveys and carry on the work. (mainly at output and outcome levels) The Yemeni Government, Socotri authorities will agree on and remain committed to establishing sustainable financing plan. (mainly at output, outcome and intermediate state level)	even though almost all of them were clear assumptions and needed no formulation, the evaluation consultants thought to consolidate into six thematic groups in order to ensure clarity, evaluability, and alignment with terminal evaluation standards.

Formulation in original project document(s) – Source (<i>Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC</i>)	Formulation for reconstructed ToC at evaluation inception (RTOC)	Justification for reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes on the interpretation ³⁰ of the driver or assumption
Stakeholders agree to the urgent need for a CZP revision and for a Conservation Strategy to improve BD conservation and PAM. Communities and other stakeholders show consent to the need for local species- and resource specific management plans. Selection of species and resources and related baseline information, and proposed management prescriptions can be jointly agreed upon. Communities are willing to contribute to data collection. IAS remain a relevant topic for agencies and communities. Political and community stakeholders are willing to contribute to strategy development. Sufficient capacity to implement revised risk analysis procedures. Sufficient information available on the distribution of invasive species in each country. Risk management actions can be enforced. SLM remains high on the political agenda. SLM remain a relevant topic for agencies and communities. Political and community stakeholders are willing to contribute to strategy development. Capacity building needs of e.g. EPA and the evolving governorate's administration can be sufficiently assessed. Drafting or amendment of sectoral strategies allows for input by the project. Key donors agree on how to share tasks and responsibilities with regard to capacity building. International state-of-the-art ES methods can be adapted and operationalized in a cost-effective manner. The concepts can be translated into a commonly understandable language. Sectoral agencies are willing to cooperate with the project and with each other. Issues of overlapping mandates and competing responsibilities can be overcome. Key beneficiaries participate in the preparation and execution of the programmes.		

Formulation in original project document(s) – Source (<i>Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC</i>)	Formulation for reconstructed ToC at evaluation inception (RTOC)	Justification for reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes on the interpretation ³⁰ of the driver or assumption
Physical capacities of partner agencies are maintained.		
Line ministries and law enforcement authorities agree to a new police force.		
Academic institutions agree to participate in the scheme, and academic credentials and requirements can be harmonized.		
Communities are willing to participate in Field Schools.		
Governmental agencies and parastatal stakeholders are supportive.		
Data that is currently scattered and partially not available on the island can be integrated into a common and accessible database.		
Collaborating agencies actively participate in information and awareness campaigns.		
M&E system can be established early on in project implementation.		
The Socotri Government and other stakeholders agree to the need for a sustainable finance plan.		
The Socotri Government and other stakeholders agree to the need for a TF		
The Socotri Government and other stakeholders agree to the need for sustainable financing mechanisms		

112. The project aims to enhance the resilience of Socotra's ecosystems and sustain biodiversity and ecosystem services through evidence-based management, participatory governance, and sustainable financing mechanisms. From the above, analysis following logics are established by creating a ToC that contributed to the project objectives (also see Figure 2).

113. The project's ToC was premised on strengthening institutional, community, and ecological capacities for integrated ecosystem management in the Socotra Archipelago. At completion, the project demonstrated moderately satisfactory progress toward this change pathway, grounded in the delivery of most planned outputs and the operationalization of key strategies on biodiversity conservation IAS management, and SLM.

Outputs to Outcomes: The Foundation

114. Across its four components, the project produced technically sound, evidence-based outputs that laid a good foundation for outcome achievement. Under Component 1, baseline ecological studies, updated PA assessments, and a revised Conservation Zoning Plan provided the analytical basis for informed decision-making. These outputs directly supported the application of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BD-PAM) strategy and the development of PA management plans, which were implemented in priority PAs, resulting in strengthened site-level management, improved visitor facilities, and increased tourism revenue.

115. Under Components 2 and 3, mapping of IAS and land degradation established critical diagnostic information for developing community-based IAS and SLM strategies. These

strategies were adopted by local institutions and communities and informed pilot eradication and rehabilitation measures. The construction of a quarantine facility, establishment of nurseries, and implementation of pathway-specific interventions advanced awareness and prevention capacities, although the system remains only partially operational.

116. Component 4 provides the enabling environment through capacity development, knowledge systems, and cross-sector coordination. The Capacity Development Plan improved skills across EPA and community organizations, while the ICMF enhanced joint planning. However, the sustainable finance mechanism, central to enabling long-term continuity, was not operationalized due to political instability and, therefore, cancelled the proposed activities.

Outcome to Intermediate States: The Transformation

117. Collectively, these outcomes contributed to emerging intermediate states. Improved PA management, enhanced IAS and SLM practices, and strengthened institutional capacities and fostered more participatory and responsive resource governance. Community engagement deepened, with evidence of proactive stewardship, increased reporting of IAS, and improved compliance with sustainable fishing and land-use practices. The informal operationalization of the ICMF demonstrated progress toward integrated governance, though gaps in financing, enforcement, and institutional continuity remain.

Intermediate States to Project Objective: The Ultimate Change

118. These intermediate states strengthened the systemic conditions needed to achieve the project objective of building institutional and community capacities for the sustainable management of Socotra's ecosystems. They enhanced ecological resilience, enabled habitat recovery in targeted sites, and supported biodiversity-friendly livelihoods. However, persistent political instability, institutional turnover, and the absence of sustainable financing limited the project's ability to transition toward fully self-sustaining impacts.

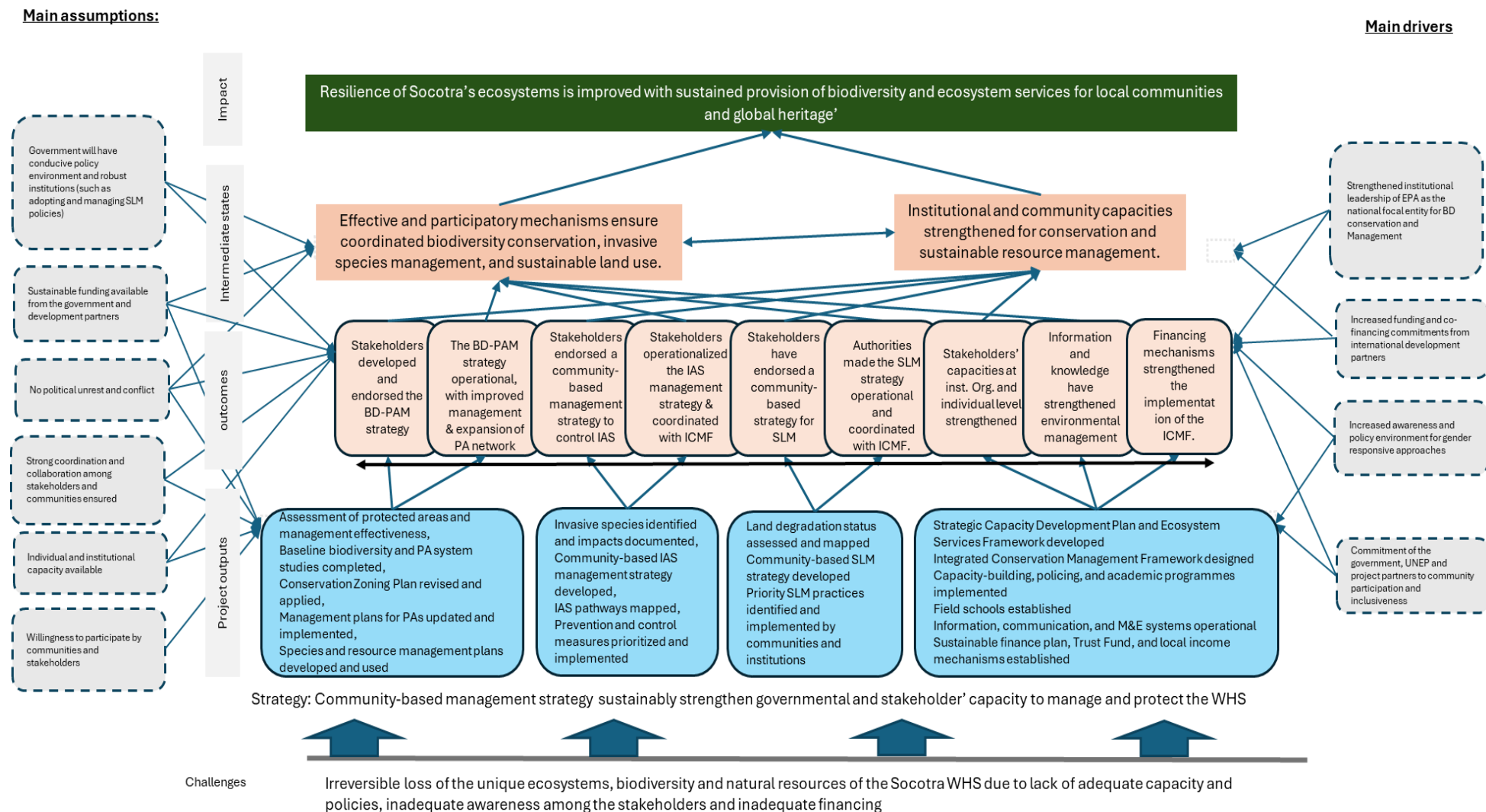
Assumptions and Drivers

119. Progress was facilitated by strong local ownership, EPA leadership, UNEP's technical support, and the RSCN's adaptive management and field presence post-2020. Key assumptions—such as political stability, continuous access, adequate financing, and institutional commitment—did not consistently hold. External shocks, including conflict, COVID-19, and logistical constraints, significantly affected implementation pace, coordination, and sustainability prospects.

Overall Assessment

120. The project established a solid foundation for long-term conservation and community benefits, demonstrating viable models of localized governance and participatory resource management. Advancing toward durable impact now depends on renewed financing, strengthened institutional mandates, and sustained political stability.

Figure 2 Theory of Change at evaluation



4 EVALUATION FINDINGS

121. The analysis³¹ in this report relies most heavily on information from the project period from 2020 to 2025, where data availability and stakeholder accessibility were significantly greater, thus providing a more complete picture of project performance from that point forward.

4.1 Strategic Relevance

4.1.1 Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities³²

122. The alignment of the project to the UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities is presented below (Table 10).

Table 10 Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW), and Strategic Priorities

UNEP Strategic Document	Alignment with UNEP's Mandate and Thematic Priorities	Level of Alignment
MTS (year-year) ³³ (2024-17)	The project aligns closely with UNEP's MTS under the Ecosystem Management Sub-Programme, contributing directly to Expected Accomplishment (a): <i>"Use of ecosystem management approaches in countries to maintain ecosystem services and sustainable productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems is increased"</i> (para 285 of the ProDoc). It supports UNEP's cross-cutting priorities on resilience, sustainable use of biodiversity, and ecosystem-based adaptation, particularly in fragile and post-conflict contexts such as Yemen. The project's integrated conservation and land-management approach also contributes to the Environmental Governance and Climate Change sub-programmes by enhancing policy coherence and adaptive management capacity.	Full
POW (2014-2015) ³⁴	The project is directly linked to the Ecosystem Management PoW 2014-2015 outputs 312 'tools, technical support and partnerships to improve food security and sustainable productivity in agricultural landscapes through the integration of the landscape approach' (para 285 of the ProDoc). Through its work on the Socotra ICMF and SLM pilots, the project contributed to PoW indicators for improved ecosystem condition and management effectiveness.	Full
Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building	No specific reference is available in the Project document. The project appeared to support the Bali Plan's objectives by strengthening institutional and individual capacities for environmental management. It delivers technology support through training and data systems, enhancing the Environment Protection Authority's capacity.	Partial

³¹ Refer to the TOR for descriptions of the nature and scope of each criterion.

³² (Sources: UNEP Project Document 2014, Sections 1.6 and 4; PIRs 2017–2024, including 2024 § Strategic Relevance and UNEP Linkages.)

³³ Refer to the MTS under which the project was approved.

³⁴ Refer to the POW under which the project was approved.

UNEP Strategic Document	Alignment with UNEP's Mandate and Thematic Priorities	Level of Alignment
South-South Cooperation	The project did not have any plan on this during the design phase, but when RSCN was identified as an executing agency, RSCN and its network helped to leverage the collaboration – mostly with Jordan. The stakeholders reported that there was a good level of sharing information and expertise on protected-area management and biodiversity monitoring. This reflects UNEP's strategic aim to foster knowledge exchange and capacity-building across developing countries.	Partial

123. Overall, the project shows a very good strategic coherence with UNEP's mandate and frameworks although there the project did not prioritize adequately Bali Strategic Plan and South-South Cooperation during the project design.

Rating for Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities: Satisfactory

4.1.2 Alignment to GEF Strategic Priorities³⁵

124. The alignment to GEF 5 Strategic Priorities is briefly presented below (Table 11).

Table 11 Alignment to GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities

GEF priority areas	Alignment with donor or partner strategic priorities	Level of alignment
Biodiversity Focal Area – BD-1: Improve sustainability of protected area systems	Fully aligned: the project strengthens Socotra's protected area network, updates the Conservation Zoning Plan, and enhances management effectiveness across key biodiversity sites.	Full
Biodiversity Focal Area – BD-2: Mainstream biodiversity into production landscapes/seascapes	Addresses biodiversity integration into local land-use and development planning through the ICMF and participatory governance.	Full
Biodiversity Focal Area – BD-3: Prevent and control invasive alien species (IAS)	Strongly aligned with GEF objectives on IAS management; supports inventories, risk assessment, and capacity building for detection and control.	Full
Land Degradation – LD-3: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses	Promotes SLM practices and ecosystem restoration, consistent with GEF's Land Degradation focal area.	Full

Rating for Alignment to GEF Strategic Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

³⁵ Sources : UNEP Project Document 2014 ; UNEP PIR 2024. Project Document (Sections 1.3–1.6, 3.4) and PIR 2024.

4.1.3 Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities³⁶

125. The project is highly relevant to global, regional, and national environmental priorities, contributing to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and Yemen's Yemen National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) goals. It advances biodiversity conservation, invasive species control, and sustainable land management, while promoting regional cooperation in the Red Sea and Arab region through ecosystem-based, community-driven conservation approaches (Table 12).

Table 12 Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

Strategic document or agreement	Alignment with global, regional, sub-regional, and national environmental priorities	Level of alignment
Global Biodiversity Framework / Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	Global Biodiversity Framework / Convention on Biological Diversity: The project directly contributes to CBD objectives on conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use, and equitable benefit-sharing. Its focus on the Socotra World Heritage Site and IAS control supports Aichi Targets 5, 9, 11, 15 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Goals A & B).	Full
UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	Activities under the SLM component address land degradation and promote ecosystem restoration in dryland ecosystems, consistent with UNCCD Strategic Objective 1.	Full
Yemen National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan II ³⁷ and Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (2010-2014 ³⁸)	Fully aligned with national goals on conserving unique biodiversity, strengthening EPA capacities, and integrating conservation with community livelihoods, particularly on Socotra.	Full
'National Strategy for Environmental Sustainability' (2005-2015) and 'National Environmental Action Plan' (2005-2010 ³⁹)	The project also supports these strategy and plan' by linking environmental health with poverty reduction through tackle critical issues like land degradation, biodiversity loss, and coastal/marine management.	Full
The National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA, 2009 ⁴⁰)	The project supports the NAPA, 2009 which identified critical climate change vulnerabilities, particularly water scarcity, and droughts, and prioritized community-level projects in sectors like water, agriculture, and coastal zones to build resilience.	Full

126. Local priorities related to conservation and livelihoods nexus were addressed through community-specific interventions, such as solar energy installations, water access

³⁶ The Project Document (Sections 1.3–1.6 & 4) and PIR 2024.

³⁷ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ye/ye-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>

³⁸ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ye/ye-nr-05-en.pdf>

³⁹ https://climate-laws.org/documents/national-strategy-for-environmental-sustainability-2005-2015-and-national-environmental-action-plan-2005-2010_afb0

⁴⁰ <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/projects/yemen-national-adaptation-programme-action-napa>

improvements, and support for women's associations, which are vital for economic stability. The project's focus on environmental education in schools and awareness-raising campaigns about invasive species directly responded to local demands for knowledge and resource management.

Rating for Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

4.1.4 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence⁴¹

127. The complementarity with the existing interventions or coherence is briefly presented below (Table 13).

Table 13 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

Other initiatives by UNEP or other organisations	Complementarity (including collaboration, coordination and overlap or duplication)	Level of Alignment
Previous GEF, UNDP, and GIZ interventions while aligning with UNEP's regional and thematic programmes	The project demonstrated coherence with ongoing and past initiatives, such as GEF, UNDP, and GIZ interventions while broadly aligning with UNEP's regional and thematic programmes. Coordination with EPA Yemen and regional partners optimized synergies, reinforced institutional capacity, and avoided duplication, ensuring a complementary and integrated approach to ecosystem management on Socotra. However, complementarity remained largely conceptual rather than operational. Evidence of structured coordination mechanisms, joint planning, or formal collaboration with other development partners was limited. Information exchange with parallel initiatives was ad hoc, and opportunities for co-financing, joint implementation, or scaling through partner programmes were not systematically pursued.	Partial
UNDP/GEF Socotra Governance and Biodiversity Project (SGBP, 2014–2019),	The project built on the achievements of the project, particularly in local governance and biodiversity planning. It coordinated with EPA Yemen and UNEP to advance operationalization of the ICMF and the Socotra Zoning Plan. No duplication of activities was reported.	Full
National Strategy for Environmental Sustainability (2005–2015), the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP 2005–2010), and Yemen's NBSAP Phase II and III.	The project also coordinated with the national plans and strategies while implementation. This was done through close collaboration with EPA Yemen and local councils, the project complemented ongoing government-led efforts and supported national priorities related to biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and community livelihoods.	Full

⁴¹ The Project Document (Sections 3.4, 4, 5) and PIRs 2018–2024.

128. Coherence improved significantly after RSCN assumed project implementation in 2020. The project strengthened coordination with ongoing and planned initiatives, building on earlier and on-going GEF-funded interventions including infrastructure and community systems, while aligning with UNEP's regional and thematic programmes. Collaboration with EPA Yemen helped optimize synergies, reinforce institutional capacity, and avoid duplication, resulting in a more integrated approach to ecosystem management on Socotra.
129. Nevertheless, coherence challenges persisted in the broader operating context. Ongoing conflict, and weak EPA-led coordination mechanisms limited effective oversight, allowing uncoordinated activities by multiple research groups and organizations operating in the same thematic and geographic areas in Socotra. The evaluation field mission further indicated that some international research groups operated outside formal coordination arrangements, at times bypassing EPA procedures and entering under tourist visas, thereby undermining regulatory oversight and national ownership. This fragmented environment, undermined a unified conservation approach and highlighted a systemic gap in island-wide coordination and harmonization. The evaluation noted that coordination challenges primarily reflected systemic and island-wide governance limitations rather than weaknesses in project-level coherence. This situation underscores the need for a formal research coordination protocol with defined roles for EPA at central and local levels, consistent with project lessons on governance.

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Satisfactory

Findings Statements on Strategic Relevance and Complementarity

130. The project demonstrates strong strategic relevance and coherence, fully aligning with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy, Programme of Work, and GEF-5 biodiversity and land degradation priorities. Its integrated approach to biodiversity conservation, invasive species management, and sustainable land use directly responds to Yemen's national priorities and global commitments under the CBD and UNCCD.
131. The project effectively leveraged complementarities with ongoing GEF, UNDP/FA, building on existing governance and ecosystem management frameworks while avoiding duplication. Its adaptive collaboration with the EPA and regional partners, including RSCN, enhanced technical synergies and sustained engagement under fragile conditions. It was, however, noted that the level of coherence with other externally funded projects could have been enhanced.
132. Overall, the project's strategic relevance and coherence are rated **Highly Satisfactory**, reflecting robust design alignment, effective coordination, and strong responsiveness to both global and national environmental priorities, even under complex operating conditions.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities: Satisfactory

Rating for Alignment to GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Satisfactory

4.2 Quality of Project Design

133. The assessment of the project's design aimed to inform a robust Theory of Change (Table 14). Its key strengths included a well-articulated problem analysis, strong strategic alignment with global and national priorities, and an integrated approach linking biodiversity conservation, IAS, with sustainable land management. The project technical design was robust, appropriate and logically structured to achieve its outputs and outcomes. The governance structure leveraged UNEP's expertise and local partnerships, while the design emphasized sustainability, replication potential, and participatory principles.
134. However, considerable weaknesses were also identified. The design could have been significantly improved by incorporating stronger sustainability planning and gender integration by further emphasizing the conservation-livelihoods nexus. In addition, the project has too many outputs and outcomes which are arguably ambitious considering the size of the project and the country socio-political context. The results framework was process-heavy with non-SMART indicators, weakening the causal pathway.
135. Furthermore, the project monitoring plans lacked clear responsibilities and data/information collection mechanisms to feed into the decision-making process, and financial planning ignored long-term costs. Concrete mechanisms for ensuring inclusiveness were lacking. In addition, a clear exit strategy was absent. The project designs were also top-down driven, predominantly driven by experts with a focus on knowledge generation, and noted that the design process was not adequately consulted with communities and local institutions.
136. The risk analysis was incomplete, overlooking critical political, financial, and social risks, including fund transfer challenges to Yemen and monsoon-related disruptions.
137. Overall, while the project's logic was sound for short-term outputs, its effectiveness and long-term impact were limited by these design omissions.

Table 14 Summary of quality of project design assessment ratings

	SECTION	RATING (1-6)	Summary Assessment
A	Project Preparation	0.5	Robust problem analysis and costed workplan exist. However, stakeholder inclusion of marginalized groups is weak, and procurement planning lacks detail.
B	Risk identification and Safeguards	0.4	A structured risk log covers political and climate risks. It lacks social/economic risks and specific implementation threats like fund transfer challenges. In addition, there was also weak articulation of environmental footprint reduction measures from the project interventions.
C	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	0.5	A multi-stakeholder governance structure is identified. However, roles and accountability mechanisms are unclear, especially within the fragile political context.
D	Partnerships	0.5	Strong technical and multi-stakeholder partnerships are leveraged. Yet capacity assessments for local partners are limited, risking overlooked local gaps.
E	Strategic Relevance	0.24	Strong alignment with UNEP, GEF, and national priorities. However, integration of South-South cooperation and the Bali Strategic Plan is weak.
F	Logical Framework and Causality	0.6	Programme logic is coherent, but the framework is overly complex. Outcomes are activity-based, and indicators lack SMART criteria and baselines.

	SECTION	RATING (1-6)	Summary Assessment
G	Financial Planning	0.32	The budget is comprehensive with co-financing. However, plan for tracking the use of co-financing was not available.
H	Efficiency	0.2	Builds on existing efforts to avoid duplication. Lacks explicit cost-effectiveness strategies and data on synergies with other donor programs.
I	Monitoring	0.32	Resources for M&E are allocated. However, methods, responsibilities, frequency, and data disaggregation for vulnerable groups are not well-defined.
J	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	0.6	Sustainability risks are identified with some institutional support. Exit strategy and long-term financial sustainability are underdeveloped.
K	Learning, Communication and Outreach	0.32	Knowledge management is noted as important. The strategy is vague, lacking clear channels or targeted community outreach plans.
	Total (Weighted) Score:	4.5 (Satisfactory)	<i>The project's design is strategically strong and well-aligned but has operational weaknesses in risk management, stakeholder inclusion, monitoring, and financial sustainability, requiring refinement for long-term effectiveness.</i>

Rating for Quality of Project Design: Satisfactory

4.3 Nature of the External Context

138. Based on interviews with stakeholders, project team members, and focus group discussions at project sites, the evaluation identified the following challenging external factors encountered during project implementation.
139. The project operated in an extremely challenging external context, marked by Yemen's protracted conflict, political instability, and a severe humanitarian crisis. These conditions severely restricted mobility, disrupted governance, and constrained access. The fragmentation of national institutions and frequent staff turnover within the EPA weakened implementation continuity and national ownership.
140. Exchange rate volatility, as part of the broader financial instability in the country, impacted project budgeting, procurement, and implementation. Fluctuations in currency value created challenges in maintaining cost estimates, managing local expenditures, and securing goods and services at consistent rates. Furthermore, systemic challenges like international banking restrictions caused significant delays in fund transfers to Yemen, which stakeholders widely reported as a primary cause for phased implementation and payment holdups to workers and suppliers.
141. Logistical and climatic barriers were pervasive. A four-month monsoon season annually halted all sea shipments, occasional delay in channelizing fund from UNEP, creating major delays in material procurement. In addition, the project faced significant contextual and operational challenges. Increased political insecurity following the start of implementation led to limited law enforcement, delayed the establishment of a ranger force, and hindered access to remote project areas.
142. Despite these adverse conditions, the project demonstrated notable adaptability. It leveraged remote coordination and partnerships with regional institutions by RSCN for technical execution. Ultimately, while the unfavourable external environment constrained efficiency and limited field-level delivery, particularly for nationwide institutional embedding, adaptive management and strong community facilitation enabled gradual progress toward core biodiversity outcomes.

Rating for Nature of the External Context: Unfavourable

4.4 Effectiveness

143. The effectiveness of the project was assessed by the extent of tangible output delivery, achievement of outcomes and how those deliverables have been taken up by intended users, and what impacts (both positive and negative) were witnessed from the project interventions in the project sites. The assessment was based on various sources, such as primary data (interviews, FGDs, and direct observation) and secondary sources, including the ToC and Logical Framework from the ProDoc, PIRs (2017 to 2025), technical completion reports, and other various reports/documents/materials related to projects.

4.4.1 Availability of Outputs

144. The achievements of the project outputs are presented below (Table 15).

Table 15 Availability of outputs

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
Output 1.1.1: The existing PAs and their management are evaluated. Indicator: The existing PAs (terrestrial and marine) and community involvement in their management are assessed/evaluated.	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The project delivered a management effectiveness assessment covering major terrestrial and marine protected areas. The study identified four PAs (Dihamri, Rosh, Homhil, Firmhin) with high success potential and generated lessons on governance, capacity, and community engagement. The assessment was technically sound and directly informed prioritization decisions. Although it is a very small area, coverage was incomplete as Abdul Kori and Samha islands could not be assessed due to political conflict⁴², limiting archipelago-wide representativeness. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was mostly met, as assessment was conducted. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Partially delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Primary owner is EPA Yemen (Socotra branch). Intended users include UNEP, future GEF projects, local PA authorities, and development partners for PA prioritization and investment planning.	Project reports (including knowledge portal: https://socotra.senckenberg.de/socotra-demo/) and PIRs, Interviews with project team, Stakeholder consultations, Field observations (where accessible)
Output 1.1.2: Baseline studies	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> Baseline biodiversity and PA information was consolidated through establishment of a	Interviews with UNEP and

⁴² PIR 2025, page 52

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
and analyses on BD and PA conducted. Indicator: Basic data on BD and PAs are collected or updated and analyzed.	digital knowledge portal (https://socotra.senckenberg.de/socotra-demo/) and species monitoring initiatives. This created a centralized baseline for planning, monitoring, and future assessments. Timeliness and quality: The baseline data and portal represent a valuable technical output; however, long-term functionality is uncertain due to unresolved hosting, ownership, and financing arrangements⁴³. Technical sustainability risks undermine utility over time. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was met, as data was collected, updated, and analyzed. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Fully delivered in terms of output creation, but with sustainability risks. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Intended owner is EPA Yemen, though ownership arrangements remain unclear. Intended users include government agencies, research institutions, NGOs, and future conservation projects for evidence-based planning and monitoring.	executing agencies - Review of knowledge portal documentation, project technical reports, PIRs (2024–2025)
Output 1.1.3: Revision of the Conservation Zoning Plan (CZP). Indicator: The CZP is revised based on outputs of 1.1.2 and linked to the integrated framework (4.1.3) and the other strategies to be developed by the project (2.1.2, 3.1.2).	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The terrestrial and marine Conservation Zoning Plans were revised through a participatory process, informed by baseline data. Priority areas (Firmhin, Homhil, Maalah) were identified and the revised CZP informed development of the draft ICMF, IAS, and SLM strategies. KIs in the project sites confirm the revised zoning plan supported improved community understanding of conservation, particularly marine protection linkages. However, increasing tourism and environmental pressures are already creating a need for updates, highlighting challenges in maintaining relevance. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was met, as the CZP was revised and linked to other frameworks and strategies. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Fully delivered, though requiring ongoing adaptation. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Owner is EPA Yemen, with use by local councils, community committees, planners, and future development and conservation initiatives to guide land and marine use decisions.	Project reports and planning documents, Field visits and observations, FDGs with community members, Interviews with local authorities

⁴³ It was reported that for update into the appropriate interface and revision may require 50 to 60 K USD.

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
Output 1.2.1: Management plans of existing and new PAs reviewed/developed and implemented by community-based management committees and other stakeholders. Indicator: Management plans of both existing and newly selected terrestrial and marine PAs are prepared and linked to the integrated framework. Community-based management committees reviewed or established. PA plans implemented.	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The project successfully developed and operationalized management plans for four priority PAs (Rosh, Dihamri, Firmhin, Homhil). Plans were not only prepared but actively implemented through infrastructure upgrades and strengthened community-based management arrangements. Given that protected area management was a new practice for Yemen, the project was also successful in establishing and managing these areas. An official conservation and development association in Firmhin was formally established, and Dihamri emerged as a “model” PA, demonstrating effective translation of planning into on-ground management. Improved zoning clarity and upgraded visitor facilities enabled better visitor management and increased community income. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was met, including preparation, linkage to broader frameworks, and implementation. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Fully delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Primary ownership rests with EPA Yemen (Socotra branch) and PA management committees. Intended users include local communities, PA authorities, tourism operators, and future conservation projects seeking replicable PA management models.	Field visits and observations - FDGs with PA committees and community members, Interviews with project and EPA staff, project reports and PIRs
Output 1.2.2: Special management plans aimed at targeted terrestrial and marine species conservation and resource management developed and implemented. Indicator: Priority species- and resource-specific management plans are prepared and implemented.	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The project developed priority species management plans for the Loggerhead turtle, Egyptian vulture, and Abdul Kori Sparrow, alongside a marine ecotourism framework. These plans are being applied by local authorities and communities. A notable achievement was the operationalization of the turtle conservation plan through a structured monitoring system involving trained coastal volunteers reporting on mortality and environmental threats. This demonstrates practical uptake beyond planning. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was partially met, as implementation was uneven across species and long-term local monitoring capacity remained limited. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Partially delivered.	Interviews with marine and field staff, FDGs with community volunteers, stakeholder interviews, project technical reports

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
	<u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Intended owners are EPA Yemen, local PA authorities, and community conservation groups. Intended users include species conservation practitioners, local volunteers, and future biodiversity projects. Limited institutionalization constrains sustained use.	
Output 2.1.1: All existing invasive and potentially invasive species are identified, including their direct or potential impacts on PA and BD management and ecosystem services. Indicator: Basic data on IAS is collected or updated and analyzed; comprehensive IAS lists including distribution and impacts inform Socotra's IAS interventions.	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The output was achieved through collaboration with CABI, resulting in an updated invasive species checklist, identification of invasion pathways, and publication of guidelines for 50 high-priority invasive plant species. This represents a comprehensive technical baseline for IAS management on Socotra. Outputs were technically robust and contextually relevant. Dissemination was effective, as evidenced by increased community awareness and voluntary reporting of new infestations by residents. This indicates successful translation of technical knowledge into community-level vigilance. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was met, with data collected, analyzed, and actively informing IAS interventions. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Fully delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Ownership lies with EPA Yemen, Agriculture Office, and local authorities, with technical reference value for CABI and other partners. Intended users include PA managers, community monitors, and future IAS control programmes.	Interviews with project staff, FDGs with community members- Project reports and PIRs, CABI technical outputs
Output 2.1.2: A community-based IAS management strategy is developed and available to local communities and stakeholders. Indicator: Community-based IAS strategy developed and linked to CZP, SLM strategy, and integrated framework; IAS engagement	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The Socotra Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan (SISSAP) was developed through a participatory process involving government counterparts, local authorities, and communities. The strategy provides a structured framework for prevention, early detection, and control of IAS. The strategy was widely disseminated and supported awareness campaigns and community-led removal efforts. Field evidence confirms high awareness and early operationalization at community level. However, cross-sectoral institutionalization remains limited. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was partially met, as community uptake was strong but integration into policy enforcement was incomplete.	Interviews with EPA and local authorities, FDGs with community groups, Project reports and strategy documents

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
integrated into relevant sectors.	<u>Level of delivery:</u> Partially delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Primary ownership rests with EPA Yemen and local government authorities, with communities as frontline implementers. Intended users include community groups, sectoral agencies, and development partners supporting IAS control.	
Output 2.2.1: Pathways for IAS are identified and measures for priority prevention and control are developed and implemented by stakeholders. Indicator: IAS management plans prepared; prevention and control measures implemented; Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) applied to legally imported species; lessons disseminated.	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> Pathways for IAS introduction were identified, and a major preventive infrastructure investment, the island's first dedicated plant quarantine facility, was constructed. Stakeholders were actively involved in planning and construction, and local authorities recognized the facility as a critical biosecurity milestone. While construction was completed, the facility was handed over without equipment, laboratory tools, supplies, or a dedicated operational budget. As a result, it remains non-functional. Continued arrival of invasive species shipments confirms that effective prevention and control are not yet achieved. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was not fully met, as implementation stopped at infrastructure provision without operationalization, enforcement, or sustained control measures. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Partially delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Intended ownership lies with the Agriculture Office and EPA Yemen, with users including customs authorities, quarantine officers, and biosecurity agencies. Lack of operational readiness severely limits utility.	Interviews with Agriculture Office and local authorities, Stakeholder consultations, Project reports, Field observations
Output 3.1.1: Land degradation status and threats of current land management are identified and mapped, including impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Indicator: Basic data on LD and SLM are collected	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The output was delivered through the Assessment of Climate Change and Mapping of Soil Erosion, which generated baseline data on land degradation and sustainable land management. The study applied recognized analytical tools (RUSLE and WEQ models) to map soil erosion risks and inform the master land use planning process. The assessment provided a technically sound and scientifically credible baseline on land degradation drivers. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was met, as LD and SLM data were collected, analyzed, and documented.	Interviews with project technical staff, Field observations, Project technical reports, Land degradation assessment study

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
or updated and analyzed.	<u>Level of delivery:</u> Fully delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Ownership lies with EPA Yemen, land-use planning authorities, and local government institutions. Intended users include SLM planners, PA managers, and future land restoration programmes.	
Output 3.1.2: A community-based SLM strategy developed and made available to relevant authorities and local communities. Indicator: Community-based SLM strategy developed and linked to CZP, IAS strategy, and integrated framework; SLM measures integrated into other sectors.	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The Socotra Sustainable Land Management Strategy and Action Plan (SSLMSAP) was developed through stakeholder consultations and shared with government authorities. The strategy addressed major threats such as land fragmentation and soil erosion and provided a coherent planning framework for SLM. Project consultations with stakeholders confirm partial uptake of strategy elements, including home gardening and sustainable agricultural techniques. However, participatory planning faced challenges due to political instability and tensions between traditional land-use practices and proposed data-driven SLM approaches. Importantly, no formal policy, legal, or institutional guidelines were developed to support scaling up or replication across the island. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was partially met, as the strategy was developed and disseminated but not fully institutionalized or integrated across sectors. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Partially delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Primary ownership rests with EPA Yemen and local authorities, with communities as intended implementers. Intended users include agriculture offices, community groups, and development partners supporting SLM.	Interviews with government counterparts, FDGs with community members, project reports and SSLMSAP document
Output 3.2.1: Priority sustainable land management measures developed and implemented by relevant authorities and local communities.	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> Priority SLM measures were implemented, most notably through the establishment of three nurseries for Dragon Blood, Frankincense, and Mangrove species. Thousands of seedlings were produced and transferred to restoration sites, generating visible ecological and awareness-raising outcomes. Cross-learning activities were also conducted within the project. As per the project progress reports, some technologies such as rotational grazing systems and fodder cultivation in garden were introduced. The measures were technically appropriate and well received by communities. However, water scarcity repeatedly constrained seedling survival,	Project reports, Field visits and observations, Interviews with community members and local authorities / KIs

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
Indicator: SLM plans prepared; lessons on best SLM practices captured and disseminated.	scale-up, and long-term impact. Lessons on best practices were shared informally but not systematically documented or disseminated for wider replication. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was partially met, as implementation occurred but sustainability and lesson dissemination were limited. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Partially delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Primary ownership rests with EPA Yemen and local authorities, and nursery operators, with intended users including SLM practitioners, restoration initiatives, and future land rehabilitation projects.	
Output 4.1.1: A strategic capacity development plan (CDP) for environmental management is prepared and made available. Indicator: Technical and physical capacities are assessed and training needs analyzed. A strategic Capacity Development Plan (CDP) is prepared and coordinated with other donors.	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The project delivered a comprehensive Strategic Capacity Development Plan (CDP) for environmental management, covering both physical and technical capacities. The CDP was developed through a multi-phase needs assessment and targeted government institutions, women's groups, and fisheries CBOs. The plan was operationalized by EPA through the implementation of numerous tailored training programmes addressing financial management, reporting, and enterprise development. The CDP was technically sound, context-specific, and responsive to identified institutional and community-level capacity gaps. Training activities were implemented in a timely manner and demonstrated practical relevance. However, the CDP did not include coordination mechanisms with other donors, limiting its strategic alignment and potential for harmonized capacity investments. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was partially met. Capacity assessments and a CDP were completed and applied, but coordination with other donors, as required by the indicator, was not achieved. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Partially delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> The primary owner is the EPA Yemen – Socotra branch. Intended users include EPA directorates, community-based organizations (women's and fisheries groups), UNEP, and future donor-funded programmes supporting institutional strengthening and environmental governance on Socotra.	Interviews with project team and EPA staff, Interviews/FGDs with women's and fisheries CBOs, Field observations, project reports and PIRs, Training records and needs assessment documentation

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
Output 4.1.2: Ecosystem services framework informs management and sustainable financing schemes. Indicator: Ecosystem services framework developed. Trade-off and vulnerability assessments conducted. Linkages to sustainable funding options explored (e.g. PES).	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The project delivered an ecosystem services framework for the Socotra Archipelago. A technical report was produced, including baseline data, spatial maps, clear indicators, and analytical guidance to support ecosystem valuation, trade-off analysis, and integration into management decision-making. The framework was technically robust and well-aligned with ecosystem services assessment standards. It provides an analytical foundation for future sustainable financing mechanisms and ecosystem-based planning. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was partially met, as the ecosystem services framework and analytical tools were developed. Exploration of linkages to sustainable financing options remained conceptual rather than operational. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Partially delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> The primary owner is EPA Yemen (Socotra branch). Intended users include EPA technical units, UNEP, national planners, and future GEF or donor-supported projects seeking to operationalize ecosystem valuation, trade-off analysis, and sustainable financing mechanisms.	Ecosystem services framework report, Project reports and PIRs, Interviews with technical staff, Review of planning and strategy documents
Output 4.1.3: Recommendations for an integrated conservation management framework (ICMF) for the Socotra WHS are developed and endorsed by relevant agencies and stakeholders. Indicator: Recommendations for an inter-agency framework agreement on sustainable management of the Socotra WHS are endorsed by relevant agencies.	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The project delivered key components intended to underpin an ICMF, including protected area management plans, the IAS strategy, and the SLM strategy. These instruments were developed and shared with relevant stakeholders, creating functional linkages across biodiversity, IAS, and land management domains. While technically sound and relevant, the output was constrained by political instability and governance challenges. A single, consolidated ICMF document and formal inter-agency endorsement were not achieved. Nevertheless, the individual components were of good quality and aligned conceptually, resulting in a de facto integrated framework. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was partially met. Strategic components were developed and referenced across sectoral instruments, but a formally endorsed inter-agency framework agreement was not finalized.	Project reports and PIRs, Strategy documents (PA, IAS, SLM), Interviews with EPA and project staff, Stakeholder consultations (KIIs)

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
Increased reference in sectoral strategies to BD conservation, IAS and SLM aims and tools promoted by the project.	<u>Level of delivery:</u> Partially delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> The primary owner is EPA Yemen (Socotra branch), in collaboration with relevant sectoral authorities. Intended users include government planning bodies, PA authorities, UNEP, and future development partners seeking an integrated approach to managing the Socotra World Heritage Site.	
Output 4.1.4: Capacity development measures implemented for key administrative partners. Indicator: Administrative capacity of relevant cooperating agencies is enhanced. Training programmes prepared and implemented (relevant to BD-PAM, IAS, SLM, livelihoods, and sustainable financing).	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The project delivered extensive capacity development support, implementing more than 27 targeted training programmes based on structured needs assessment. Capacity development focused on women's groups, fisheries CBOs, and relevant government directorates, covering administrative, financial management, reporting, and technical skills linked to biodiversity conservation, IAS, SLM, and livelihoods. The training programmes were targeted and responsive to identify gaps. Field consultations confirm improvements in administrative performance, financial reporting quality, and employability of trained individuals, indicating effective knowledge transfer and practical utility. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was fully met, as capacity enhancement activities were implemented and resulted in demonstrable institutional strengthening. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Fully delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> The primary owner is EPA Yemen (Socotra branch), with shared ownership by trained government directorates and community-based organizations. Intended users include EPA, local authorities, CBOs, and future conservation and livelihood initiatives requiring strengthened administrative and management capacity.	Project reports and PIRs, Training records and materials, Interviews with project team and trainees, Field observations, FDGs with CBO members
Output 4.1.5: Special programmes for long-term enhancement of policing and academic capacities planned and launched. Indicator: Programme for a	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> This output was not delivered. Planned activities related to establishing a ranger force and launching academic education programmes were formally cancelled during implementation. The cancellation was driven by contextual constraints, including lack of government financial resources, institutional limitations, and broader political instability, which made implementation unviable within the project period.	Project reports and PIRs, Implementation status updates, Interviews with project management (KIIs)

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
Ranger Force prepared and launched. Academic education programme for Socotris prepared and launched.	<u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was not met, as neither the ranger programme nor the academic enhancement programme was prepared or launched. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Not delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> No ownership or user group was established due to cancellation. Potential intended users would have included EPA, enforcement authorities, academic institutions, and future generations of Socotri environmental professionals.	
Output 4.1.6: Field schools for community-based environmental management are established and operational. Indicator: Field school (FS) programmes developed for SLM, Sustainable Fisheries, IAS and BD.	<u>Nature and scale of outputs:</u> The project established and piloted FS approaches focused primarily on home gardening, agriculture, and community-based environmental management. These initiatives provided hands-on learning platforms and were integrated into project monitoring processes. The FS approach was moderately effective. Training activities were delivered and appreciated by participating communities. However, as a relatively new intervention in the local context, there was limited time and resources to consolidate learning, systematically refine methodologies, or expand coverage across all thematic areas (IAS, fisheries, BD). <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was partially met. Field school programmes were developed and piloted, but full thematic coverage and institutionalization were not achieved. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Partially delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Primary ownership rests with EPA Yemen (Socotra branch) and participating community groups. Intended users include local farmers, fishers, CBOs, extension services, and future projects seeking to scale community-based environmental learning models.	Project reports and PIRs, Training and FS documentation, Interviews with community participants, Field observations
Output 4.2.1: An information management strategy is developed and available. Indicator: Project database	<u>Nature and scale of outputs:</u> The project developed a functional information management system, including a digital data portal integrating biodiversity, IAS, and SLM datasets, complemented by an offline archive transferred to national authorities. This provided a consolidated repository of technical and traditional knowledge relevant to conservation and land management in Socotra and handed over to EPA.	Interviews with community participants, KIIs, Field observation, project reports and PIRs, project

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
established, incorporating BD, IAS, SLM data and traditional management practices.	The portal and database met core technical requirements and were reportedly functional at project completion. However, the long-term quality and utility of the system are uncertain due to unresolved issues related to hosting, public accessibility, and the absence of a formal sustainability and handover plan. Conflicting information exists regarding the current operation and use⁴⁴ of the online platform by the government agencies and other stakeholders to take relevant decisions. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was mostly met, as a project database was established and handed over to EPA, but long-term accessibility and operational continuity were not fully secured. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Mostly delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Primary ownership rests with EPA Yemen (Socotra branch). Intended users include government authorities, UNEP, research institutions, future GEF projects, and development partners requiring access to baseline and monitoring data for planning and decision-making.	information portal
Output 4.2.2: A communication and awareness strategy is developed and available. Indicator: Increase of stakeholder awareness in related activities as measured against baseline.	<u>Nature and scale of outputs:</u> The project produced and disseminated a wide range of communication and awareness materials, including biodiversity atlases, species guides, posters, and educational resources. These materials were distributed through schools, communities, and stakeholder events, reaching diverse target groups across the island. Field consultations confirm that the materials were timely, context-appropriate, and well received. Field level FDGs also showed improved environmental knowledge was observed among school children, fishers, and community members, indicating effective awareness-raising. The project indicated that communication and awareness strategy was developed but it was also noted that their use and applicability could have been improved. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was partially met. Stakeholder awareness increased, but the strategic framework guiding communication activities	Interviews with community participants, KIIs, Field observation, project reports and PIRs, project information portal

⁴⁴ No authoritative confirmation could be obtained regarding whether the portal is currently functional or being used for decision-making. The evaluation team noted the absence of a long-term knowledge management system, including clear arrangements for hosting, updating, and sharing data. To date, the portal remains hosted outside the country.

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
	was not produced and there was no such information available to know the level of increase of awareness. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Partially delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Ownership lies primarily with EPA Yemen (Socotra branch) and local education and community institutions. Intended users include schools, local communities, CBOs, PA managers, and future conservation initiatives seeking to build on existing awareness materials.	
Output 4.2.3: Results-based project management and M&E is established and operational. Indicator: Project reporting and M&E system operational and on time.	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> The project established an M&E system from the design stage, supported by regular PIRs, annual reporting, and a final report. The system enabled systematic tracking of activities and outputs throughout implementation. Reporting was largely timely and compliant with UNEP requirements, and the quality of reporting improved over time. However, the M&E system focused primarily on output delivery, with limited outcome-level indicators, insufficient quantitative data, and weak gender-disaggregated analysis. This constrained learning on behavioral change and longer-term impact. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was mostly met, as reporting and monitoring systems were operational, but results-based management at outcome and impact levels remained limited. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Mostly delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Primary ownership lies with UNEP and the Project Management Unit, with shared use by EPA and executing partners. Intended users include UNEP, GEF, national authorities, and future projects seeking to draw lessons on implementation performance and adaptive management.	
Output 4.3.1: A sustainable finance plan is in place and used to guide resource inputs into the STF and other sustainable financing schemes.	<u>Nature and scale of outputs:</u> No sustainable finance plan was developed or implemented under the project. Preparatory discussions were held during early implementation, but no tangible planning outputs were produced. While the output and associated activities were included in the revised result framework, the PIRS and final technical report addressed that they were formally cancelled; however, the relevant documentation for formal cancellation was not shared with the evaluation team.	Project reports and PIRs, Interviews with UNEP and project management, Legal and fiduciary assessments

Output and Performance against Indicators and Target(s)-based on Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC	Narrative Assessment (nature, scale, quality, ownership, level of achievement) based on the project site consultations (KIs, FDGs, site observations) and project progress reports	Sources of Information / Evidence
Indicator: Sustainable finance plan in place and used to guide resource inputs into the STF and other sustainable financing schemes.	<u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was not met, as no sustainable finance plan was produced or applied. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Not delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Intended ownership would have rested with national government institutions; however, no ownership arrangements were established due to the cancellation of the output.	
Output 4.3.2: A functioning trust fund providing an initial set of grants. Indicator: A functioning trust fund providing initial set of grants.	<u>Nature and scale of output:</u> This output was not delivered. No trust fund was established, and no grants were issued. The output was formally cancelled as part of a strategic decision taken by UNEP and project partners. Not applicable, as implementation did not proceed. The cancellation was driven by high fiduciary risks, weak national financial management capacity, and UN Charter Chapter VII restrictions requiring continued UN or international oversight beyond project closure. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Not delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Intended beneficiaries would have included protected area authorities and local conservation initiatives. However, no ownership or management arrangements were established due to non-implementation.	Project reports and PIRs, Interviews with project management
Output 4.3.3: Two sustainable financing mechanisms identified in the sustainable finance plan are established and generating income. Indicator: Two sustainable financing mechanisms established and generating income.	<u>Nature and scale of outputs:</u> This output was not achieved, as it was contingent on the development of the sustainable finance plan and establishment of the trust fund, both of which were cancelled. Consequently, no sustainable financing mechanisms were identified, established, or operationalized. <u>Performance against indicator and target:</u> The indicator was not met, as no sustainable financing mechanisms were established or generating income. <u>Level of delivery:</u> Not delivered. <u>Ownership and intended users:</u> Intended users would have included protected area management authorities and conservation stakeholders. No ownership arrangements were made due to the formal cancellation of the output.	Project reports and PIRs, Interviews with UNEP and project team

Summary of output availability

145. The project performed relatively well across biodiversity, IAS, SLM, and capacity-building components, achieving most planned outputs despite Yemen's fragile context. Protected areas were reassessed, zoning and management plans updated, and IAS and SLM strategies implemented with broad community participation.



Image 2 Eco-friendly Tourist facility in a PA (Source: Evaluation team, 2025)

146. No unintended effect was noted during the evaluation. Capacity-building including the Socotra Biodiversity Information System, strengthened institutional capability. However, the planned sustainable financing mechanism (Output 4.3) was not implemented, leaving long-term financial sustainability uncertain.
147. Overall, the project demonstrated a good level of technical achievement and adaptive management, though enduring impacts depend on future resource mobilization and institutional continuity under Yemen's challenging governance environment.

Rating for Output Delivery: Satisfactory

4.4.2 Achievement of Project Outcomes

148. The achievements of the project outcomes are presented below (Table 16).

Table 16 Achievement of project outcome

Outcome 1.1: Outcome 1.1: Stakeholders have developed and endorsed a Biodiversity–Protected Area Management (BD-PAM) strategy including an updated conservation data baseline and revised Conservation Zoning Plan (CZP).

Assessment	
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s) Indicators and targets: i) Baseline dataset for PA and BD updated and analyzed. ii) CZP revised. iii) Strategy document prepared, guiding the implementation of the CZP.	All three indicators were substantially met. The project updated and consolidated the biodiversity and protected area baseline data, revised the Conservation Zoning Plan through a participatory process, and prepared a BD-PAM strategy to guide CZP implementation. While conflict-related constraints affected data collection, the core strategic and planning outputs were completed and operationalized.

Sources of Information / Evidence:	Stakeholder consultations, Interviews with EPA Yemen (Socotra branch) and project staff, Field observations, Project reports, PIRs, and final report, knowledge portal (https://socotra.senckenberg.de/socotra-demo/)
Narrative Assessment:	The outcome is substantially achieved. The project assessed protected areas and developed the intended BD-PAM strategy, as evidenced by the participatively revised Conservation Zoning Plan and the digitized biodiversity data. This foundational work contributed to improved local understanding of marine protection and conservation objectives. The project supported a clear shift from ad hoc, site-based management toward more structured and data-driven conservation planning. The BD-PAM strategy, developed by the project, consolidated previously fragmented biodiversity information into a single operational framework integrating both terrestrial and marine ecosystems, strengthening the planning basis for conservation management. The revised CZP represents the project's key institutional deliverable. Its revision embedded spatial management principles within EPA Yemen and relevant local governance structures, with demonstrated influence on licensing decisions and resource-use planning. According to the field consultations during the evaluation mission, community consultations and stakeholder workshops increased awareness of ecological zoning and compliance requirements, indicating emerging behavioral change toward participatory conservation. The process progressed from technical preparation to inclusive validation, resulting in a technically sound and politically legitimized strategy capable of guiding future biodiversity protection. The challenge was the need to reconstruct and consolidate fragmented historical datasets, a necessary but resource-intensive task. Despite conflict-related delays and constraints on data collection, the strategy was being used to inform EPA Socotra's management decisions, demonstrating uptake and institutional ownership.
Level of Achievement:	Fully Achieved
Outcome 1.2: Stakeholders have made the BD-PAM strategy operational, including improved management and expansion of the PA network, coordinated with the Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF).	
Assessment	
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s) Indicators and targets: i) Number of existing PAM plans revised, and new PAM plans prepared. ii) Number of (co)management committees established. iii) Sea and land surface area of managed PA expanded by at least 4,100 ha (sea/coastal) and 2,500 ha (land). iv) Recommendations provided for the coordination of the BD-PAM strategy with the ICMF.	Indicators (i) and (ii) were substantially met. The project revised participatory management plans for three priority PAs (Rosh, Dihamri, and Homhil) and supported the establishment of a new protected area (Firmhin), including a management plan. Three PA management committees established and supported, strengthening local governance and co-management arrangements. Indicator (iii) was only partially met, as the physical expansion of the PA network was not fully documented. The PIR (2024), however, mentioned 4,100 ha as progress made. Indicator (iv) was partially met, as the project provided recommendations and practical coordination between EPA and local institutions, but the ICMF itself was not finalized.
Sources of Information / Evidence:	Interviews with EPA Yemen (Socotra branch), PA staff, and local authorities, Field visits and observations in project sites, Community consultations and FGDs with PA associations, Project reports, PIRs, and final report, PA management plans (Firmhin, Rosh, Dihamri, Homhil),

Narrative Assessment:	This outcome is partially achieved. The BD-PAM strategy has been operationalized and has led to measurable improvements in on-the-ground PA management. The project supported the establishment of the Firmhin PA and delivered updated, participatory management plans for three priority protected areas. These interventions strengthened management effectiveness and institutional arrangements at the site level. The project also supported four PA management committees, contributing to improved governance, stakeholder participation, and local ownership. Field consultations in the project sites confirm that the management plans are being applied in practice, with communities enforcing zoning rules, managing tourism activities, and undertaking conservation measures through functional PA associations. This demonstrates a clear shift from planning to implementation. The project further laid important groundwork for coordination with the Integrated Conservation Management Framework by strengthening collaboration between the EPA and local institutions, even though the ICMF was not fully developed or formally endorsed. However, the long-term operation of the strategy faces notable constraints. Implementation beyond the project period is limited by the absence of dedicated government budgets for patrols, equipment maintenance, and staff incentives. In addition, the planned physical expansion of the PA network was not fully achieved due to security constraints, and the ICMF was not finalized. As a result, while strategic and institutional arrangements are operational, financial sustainability and geographical coverage remain only partially achieved.
Level of Achievement:	Partially Achieved
Outcome 2.1 – Stakeholders have endorsed a community-based management strategy to control IAS in the Socotra WHS, including an updated IAS inventory.	
Assessment	
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s) Indicators and targets: i) Baseline dataset for IAS updated and analyzed. ii) IAS strategy/policy document prepared and accepted by stakeholders.	Performance: Both indicators were substantially met. The project updated and analyzed the IAS baseline dataset through extensive field inventories and documentation. It also prepared a comprehensive IAS management strategy, supported by guidelines in English and Arabic, a draft invasive pathways report, and documented best practices. These products were shared with and accepted by key stakeholders, including EPA Yemen and relevant local authorities.
Sources of Information / Evidence:	Project reports, PIRs, and final report, IAS related guidelines, Interviews with EPA Yemen officials and other government counterparts, Field visits and observations, Community consultations and KIIs
Narrative Assessment:	This outcome is substantially achieved. The project advanced from baseline IAS data collection to the preparation and dissemination of practical management guidelines, supporting the development and endorsement of a comprehensive, community-based IAS management strategy. Prior to the project, no coordinated framework or consolidated dataset existed to guide IAS prevention and control in Socotra. Evaluation field consultations and key informant interviews confirm that the establishment of the IAS management strategy resulted in a clear improvement in stakeholder knowledge and understanding of IAS risks and management approaches. Government officials at EPA Yemen and other counterparts highlighted that the strategy provided, for the first time, a standardized reference for prevention, early detection, and control measures.

Community groups trained in IAS identification and mitigation demonstrated increased vigilance and stewardship, particularly in coastal and agricultural areas, indicating positive behavioral change at the local level. Through participatory planning and field-based inventories, EPA Yemen and local councils are now applying the IAS strategy to guide decision-making and coordinated action.

Level of Achievement: Fully Achieved

Outcome 2.2 – Stakeholders have made the IAS management strategy operational and coordinated with the Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF)

Assessment

Performance against

Indicator(s) and Target(s)

Indicators and targets: i) Strategy with strong community participation operational. ii) Recommendations provided for the coordination of the IAS strategy with the ICMF.

Performance: The indicators were partially met. The IAS management strategy was operationalized at the community and site levels through removal campaigns, awareness-raising, and practical coordination between EPA, the project team, and community associations. However, systemic and institutional coordination with the ICMF was not fully achieved, and key preventive infrastructure remains non-operational.

Sources of Information / Evidence:

Interviews with EPA Yemen, agriculture office, and project staff, Community consultations and KIIs, Review of quarantine facility handover documentation, Project reports, PIRs, and final report, Field observations of IAS removal activities,

Narrative Assessment:

This outcome is partially achieved. The project initiated the operationalization of the IAS management strategy by establishing essential foundational mechanisms. Community-level IAS removal campaigns were implemented and increased public awareness resulted in voluntary reporting of infestations, demonstrating early adoption and behavioral change. Practical coordination among EPA, the project team, and community associations enabled the integration of IAS actions into site-level planning.

However, full operationalization was not achieved at the systemic level. A critical preventive measure—a plant quarantine facility—was constructed and handed over to the agriculture office but remains non-operational due to insufficient equipment and budget, creating a significant strategic gap.

In addition, shipments carrying invasive species, such as *Prosopis*, continue to arrive, leaving major introduction pathways largely unmanaged. While coordination occurred informally in practice, the formal institutionalization of IAS management within a multi-sectoral ICMF was not completed. Ongoing conflict and weak governance structures constrained effective cross-sectoral coordination and limited the integration of IAS interventions into a fully functioning ICMF.

Level of Achievement: Partially Achieved

Outcome 3.1 - Stakeholders have endorsed a community-based strategy for SLM in the Socotra WHS, underpinned by an SLM data baseline.

Assessment

Performance against

Indicator(s) and Target(s)

Indicators and targets: i) Baseline dataset for SLM established and analyzed. ii) SLM strategy / policy document prepared and accepted by stakeholders.

Both indicators were largely met. The project established and analyzed a comprehensive SLM data baseline and developed a fully consulted, community-based SLM strategy that was accepted by key stakeholders, including EPA Yemen and relevant sector authorities.

Sources of Information / Evidence: -	Community consultations, including women and youth groups, SLM strategy document and planning references, project reports, PIRs, and final report, Stakeholder consultations and KIIs with EPA, agriculture offices, and local councils,
Narrative Assessment:	The project established a comprehensive SLM data baseline and delivered a fully developed and consulted Sustainable Land Management strategy by 2025. The final strategy provides robust, multi-sectoral policy recommendations and directly contributes to achievement of the intended outcome. The outcome is mostly achieved. The project significantly strengthened stakeholder knowledge and practical understanding of SLM tools and approaches in the project sites. Government stakeholders indicated that, prior to the intervention, land degradation in Socotra was largely unmanaged and poorly documented. Through land degradation mapping and participatory planning processes, the project developed a community-based SLM strategy focused on soil conservation, watershed protection, and sustainable grazing. The process improved institutional coordination among EPA Yemen, agriculture offices, and local councils. Active community participation—including women and youth—demonstrated ownership of land restoration measures and increased awareness of ecosystem–livelihood linkages. The SLM strategy is now referenced by EPA Yemen in environmental licensing and planning decisions, indicating clear institutional uptake and use beyond the project period.
Level of Achievement:	Fully Achieved

Outcome 3.2 – Relevant authorities made the SLM operational and coordinated within the ICMF

Assessment	
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s) Indicators and targets: i) SLM management framework established through strong community participation and operational. ii) Recommendations in place for the coordination of the SLM strategy with the ICMF.	Indicator (i) was partially met. The project operationalized SLM practices at pilot sites through community-based implementation and demonstrated uptake. Indicator (ii) was partially met, as coordination with the ICMF occurred in practice but was not formalized through a consolidated, multi-sectoral framework.
Sources of Information / Evidence:	Field observations at pilot SLM sites, KIIs with EPA Yemen, agriculture offices, and local councils, community consultations with nursery groups and home-garden beneficiaries, project reports, PIRs, and final report,
Narrative Assessment:	This outcome is partially achieved. The project operationalized SLM practices at pilot sites through detailed threat analysis and the development of site-specific management packages. It established community-based nurseries for Dragon Blood Tree, frankincense, and mangrove species and delivered advanced technical training, resulting in tangible outputs and clear evidence of community adoption. Communities continued to maintain home gardens and apply sustainable land management practices beyond the training period. Environmental improvements were observed, including productive nurseries generating thousands of Dragon Blood Tree seedlings in and around protected areas. These results indicate meaningful behavioral change and a growing sense of local ownership over land restoration measures. However, no specific was carried out on the adoption of SLM strategy on agriculture, grazing and forest land.

	However, several structural constraints limited scale and sustainability. Persistent water scarcity—largely beyond the project’s control—restricted the survival and expansion of agricultural and reforestation activities. Logistical challenges and limited financial and institutional resources further prevented scaling successful practices beyond pilot sites. In addition, the multi-sectoral ICMF was not fully and formally developed due to ongoing conflict and weak governance conditions. As a result, while the project established a functional technical and institutional foundation for SLM, effective coordination within the broader conservation framework and long-term sustainability remain constrained.
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Level of Achievement: Partially Achieved

Outcome 4.1- Stakeholders’ capacities at institutional, organisational and individual levels have been strengthened to better manage the environment on Socotra

Assessment	
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s) Indicators and targets: i) Technical and physical capacities of stakeholders substantially enhanced. ii) Number of agencies joining in an interagency agreement on sustainable management of the Socotra WHS. iii) An integrated conservation management framework (ICMF) developed.	Indicator (i) was largely met, as significant capacity strengthening occurred at individual, organizational, and institutional levels. Indicator (ii) was partially met, as coordination among agencies improved in practice but was not formalized through a binding interagency agreement. Indicator (iii) was partially met, as ICMF components were developed and applied, but a consolidated and formally endorsed framework was not finalized.
Sources of Information / Evidence:	KIIS with EPA Yemen, local councils, and project staff, FGD with PA associations and women’s groups, Field observations of PA management and restoration activities, Project reports, PIRs, and final report
Narrative Assessment:	This outcome is partially achieved. The project strengthened technical and organizational capacities across EPA Yemen, local councils, and community groups. More than 250 individuals were trained in biodiversity monitoring, IAS management, SLM practices, and environmental governance, contributing to improved professional skills and institutional functioning. KIIs reported a clear improvement in the quality of reporting and technical outputs. Reports submitted by women’s associations to line ministries showed noticeable improvements, and EPA Socotra now applies standardized monitoring tools and data protocols introduced by the project. This has supported better coordination, evidence-based decision-making, and adaptive management. FGDs confirmed improved management capacity within PA associations, while community-based organizations—including women’s groups—actively participate in co-management of protected areas and restoration sites. This reflects a positive behavioral shift toward shared environmental responsibility and institutionalized community engagement. However, some capacity-building activities linked to livelihood support were less effective. Two women’s associations provided with sewing machines reported insufficient technical assistance to operate them effectively, resulting in limited livelihood benefits. FGDs highlighted the absence of adequate needs assessment, post-handover coaching, and support for production planning and market linkages, indicating design and follow-up gaps in livelihood pilots. Staff turnover within government institutions slightly reduced institutional continuity, yet capacity gains remain visible in routine government operations

	and planning processes, suggesting resilience and partial institutionalization of skills developed through the project.
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Level of Achievement:	Partially Achieved
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Outcome 4.2 – Information and knowledge have strengthened environmental management

Assessment	
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s) Indicators and targets: i) Information management and awareness strategy developed. ii) Data sharing agreement between key stakeholders. iii) Results-based project monitoring system set up.	Indicator (i) was partially met, as awareness materials and knowledge products were developed and disseminated, but a formally documented and verifiable information and awareness strategy was not fully institutionalized. Indicator (ii) was not met, as no formal data-sharing agreement between key stakeholders could be verified. Indicator (iii) was partially met, as a project-level M&E system was operational, but evidence of its integration into national or institutional systems was limited.
Sources of Information / Evidence:	KIs with EPA Yemen and project staff, FGDs with community members and PA associations, Field observations at campsites and community-managed areas, Project reports and PIRs (including 2024 PIR) - SGN knowledge portal (https://socotra.senckenberg.de/socotra-demo/)
Narrative Assessment:	This outcome is partially achieved. The project generated a range of knowledge products, including technical guidelines, species action plans, training manuals, and awareness materials. These were archived on the SGN website and shared with EPA Yemen, contributing to improved stakeholder awareness and knowledge at community and institutional levels. Targeted awareness materials increased environmental literacy among local youth⁴⁵. KIs reported that schoolchildren began expressing more positive attitudes toward nature, while FGDs noted improved campsite management and tourist experiences. These examples demonstrate application of project knowledge products in specific local contexts. However, these results represent intermediate progress rather than full outcome achievement. Evidence of systematic integration and formal institutionalization of knowledge into environmental management systems remains limited. Although the 2024 PIR reported that an awareness strategy was approved by the Ministry of Education and implemented in schools, no formal agreements on data sharing were available for verification. Similarly, claims of integrating a results-based monitoring system into the executing agency's M&E framework could not be substantiated due to the absence of supporting documentation. A major unresolved gap is the lack of a sustainable long-term knowledge management system, including clear arrangements for hosting, updating, and sharing data. The central data portal is currently not hosted within the country, and there is no documented evidence demonstrating how project-generated knowledge has strengthened broader environmental management systems beyond localized impacts.
Level of Achievement:	Partially Achieved

⁴⁵ An environmental awareness strategy was developed, approved by the Ministry of Education, and implemented in local schools.

Outcome 4.3 – A suite of financing mechanisms has strengthened the implementation of the Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF) of the Socotra WHS in the long-term.

Assessment	
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s) Indicators and targets: i) Socotra WHS Trust Fund (TF) is established. ii) At least two individual financing schemes conceived, piloted, and tested.	Indicator (i) was not met, as the Trust Fund was not established. Indicator (ii) was not met, as no financing mechanisms were piloted or became operational.
Sources of Information / Evidence:	Project reports and final reports, Key Informant Interviews with EPA Yemen and project management
Narrative Assessment:	This outcome was not achieved. The project was unable to implement the financing mechanisms originally envisaged to support the long-term sustainability of the Integrated Conservation Management Framework. Although a draft concept for a Socotra Conservation Trust Fund was prepared, it did not progress beyond the conceptual stage. Political instability, weak national financial governance systems, and the absence of enabling policy and legal conditions prevented the establishment of the Trust Fund. In addition, legal and fiduciary constraints associated with Yemen's broader governance context limited the feasibility of piloting or testing alternative financing mechanisms during the project period. As a result, long-term financing for protected areas and biodiversity management in Socotra remains uncertain and continues to depend on future donor-funded interventions. The lack of sustainable financing mechanisms represents a critical gap affecting the long-term viability of the ICMF and the durability of conservation outcomes achieved under the project.
Level of Achievement:	Not Achieved

Rating for achievement of the project outcomes: Moderately Satisfactory

4.4.3 Likelihood of Impact

149. The project's likelihood of impact, defined as improved resilience of Socotra's ecosystems and sustained delivery of biodiversity and ecosystem services, is assessed as Moderately Likely, based on the Theory of Change, KIIs and available field evidence. The causal pathways from outputs to outcomes were plausible and they were partially achieved. Biodiversity management strategies, practices have been adopted at both institutional and community levels, indicating genuine behavioural change and improvements in governance. There was, however, relatively weak impact pathways noted for IAS prevention and SLM interventions.

Revitalization of the Di Hamri Marine Protected Area:

This intervention directly benefited the local community and the Di Hamri Protected Area Association. The project rehabilitated and fully equipped a camp with a kitchen, solar power, and a water network, transforming it into a functional ecotourism hub. This created direct employment for community members as guards, cooks, and service staff, with salaries funded by tourism revenue. Stakeholders reported tangible results: a self-sustaining income stream from visitor fees, boat rentals, and snorkelling tours (economic); recognition of the association as a "model" for independently managed protected areas (institutional); and a powerful community-driven incentive to self-police and protect coral reefs from destructive fishing (environmental).

Box 1 - Good Practice: Example of Revitalization of the Di Hamri Marine Protected Area



Image 3 Nature shop at the Socotra Airport (Source: Evaluation team, 2025)

150. Progress toward intermediate states, including participatory mechanisms and institutionalized capacity, is evident but constrained by systemic factors. Financial sustainability and political continuity remain key risks. The assumption of stable governance and government co-financing only partially holds in Yemen's protracted conflict context, which continues to limit field access and institutional embedding. Nonetheless, enabling factors or drivers of change, such as strengthened EPA leadership, strong community ownership, and continued external partnerships, provide important resilience to these risks.

151. Some unintended positive effects were observed, including increased local eco-tourism initiatives. However, rapid

infrastructure development and unmanaged tourism may pose risks to longer-term impacts if not adequately regulated. The project demonstrates potential for replication in other fragile island ecosystems and aligns with SDGs 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water), and 15 (Life on Land), as well as UNEP's Ecosystem Management sub-programme. Overall, the evidence supports a moderate likelihood that project outcomes will translate into sustained ecosystem and community resilience, provided that financial and institutional drivers are maintained.

152. Table 17 below provide justification for the assessment of each of the factors (e.g., achievement of Outputs/Intermediate States, and status of drivers and assumptions) that influence the likelihood of the impact statement(s).

Table 17 Likelihood of impact

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification (based on ToC and project evidence)
Drivers to support transition from Outputs to Project Outcomes	Partially in place	Core drivers, i.e., strong EPA leadership, high levels of community participation (e.g., in PA management), and consistent technical support from RSCN, enabled the adoption of conservation strategies in the project sites. Field consultations and KIIs show training directly improved institutional performance and created livelihood incentives. External factors such as political conflict, however, negatively affected the project implementation.
Assumptions for the change process from Outputs to Project Outcomes	Partially hold	Assumptions of community willingness and institutional capacity were largely validated. Communities actively used project outputs (e.g., management plans, eco-tourism infrastructure) for tangible benefit, confirming their adoption. This however affected by weak institutional capacity and national funding affected the process.
Proportion of Project Outcomes fully or partially achieved	Some	Targeted outcomes were partially achieved while there has been emerging evidence of institutional and behavioural change. The sole major exception was Outcome 4.3 (sustainable financing), which was formally cancelled due to the political context.

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification (based on ToC and project evidence)
Drivers to support transition from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	Partially in place	An operational foundation for the conservation tools related such as PA and IAS exists and EPA has owned those tools with increased role of sectoral coordination. However, drivers for sustained financial and high-level policy backing remain weak. EPA leadership is strong but remains dependent on project-style support.
Assumptions for the change process from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	Partially Hold	The ToC assumes stable governance and financial commitment. Yemen's conflict and institutional fragility significantly hinder the long-term embedding, replication, and public financing of conservation efforts.
Proportion of Intermediate States achieved	Some	Institutional and community capacity is significantly strengthened, and participatory mechanisms are functional. However, sustainable finance is absent, and full policy integration into broader government planning remains nascent.
Drivers to support transition from Intermediate States to Impact	Partially in place	Drivers like high environmental awareness, gender-inclusive participation, and functional cross-sector collaboration exist. EPA has started taking leadership. However, the absence of overarching policy including a trust fund and the unpredictable political context severely limit the systemic transition to lasting impact.
Assumptions for the change process from Intermediate States to Impact	Partially Hold	The achievement of lasting ecosystem resilience assumes continued donor support and national political, institutional and policy stability -conditions that are only partially fulfilled.

Rating for Likelihood of Impact: Moderately Likely

Findings Statements on Effectiveness

153. The project's effectiveness is assessed as **Moderately Satisfactory**. Most planned outputs were delivered and contributed to meaningful improvements in ecosystem management across Socotra. Participatory development of technical strategies for biodiversity conservation, invasive species management, and SLM was complemented by on-the-ground actions, including protected area rehabilitation, nursery establishment, and community capacity building. Together, these interventions strengthened the enabling environment for integrated ecosystem management and established a sound foundation for longer-term outcomes.
154. The project generated tangible behavioural and institutional changes. Protected area management improved, contributing to increased tourism and associated local income opportunities. Communities demonstrated higher environmental awareness, actively engaging in invasive species monitoring and adopting more sustainable resource-use practices. Institutional capacities—particularly within EPA Yemen and local organisations—expanded substantially through targeted training and the emergence of a functional, though informal, Integrated Conservation Management Framework, which supported improved coordination and governance.

155. At the intermediate level, enhanced inter-institutional collaboration, stronger community engagement, and more systematic natural resource management practices indicate progress toward sustained ecosystem stewardship. However, critical constraints persist. The absence of an operational sustainable financing mechanism and Yemen's volatile political context limited the project's ability to fully secure long-term impacts, despite the solid technical and institutional foundations established.



Image 5 Training to beneficiaries in agricultural practices (source: Project report, 2024)



Image 4 Monitoring of marine habitat (source: Project report, 2024)

Rating for Effectiveness: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Satisfactory

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Achievement of Likelihood of Impact: Moderately Likely

4.5 Financial Management

4.5.1 Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

156. Adherence to UNEP's financial and administrative policies improved over the project lifecycle, despite compliance challenges during the initial implementation phase. Officials from RSCN and UNEP mentioned that there were no issues around the late approval and disbursement of fund from UNEP to the executing agencies.
157. Under the first Executing Agency, the Senckenberg Institute, financial management was relatively weak, although UNEP financial guidelines were generally followed. Key issues included occasional delays and incomplete financial reporting from the Senckenberg Institute, as well as difficulties in transferring financial information to the subsequent Executing Agency. These constraints hindered timely expenditure tracking.
158. Following the transition to the new executing agency, RSCN in 2020, financial management improved markedly. RSCN complied closely with UNEP fiduciary requirements, maintaining proper financial records, applying internal controls, and submitting regular financial and progress reports in line with UNEP and GEF standards. Annual budget revisions reflected unspent balances and adjustments to timelines, workplans, and priorities. Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions confirmed that financial management under RSCN was transparent and credible. Annual internal audits were conducted, all of which were unqualified, confirming compliance and transparent use of project funds. No management to the audit response exist.

159. Nonetheless, delays in submitting some financial and progress reports, as well as in the release of funds from UNEP persisted. Even with sound accounting systems, late reporting occasionally affected cash flow and implementation efficiency. These reporting delays are noted as resulting from contextual and operational constraints, not fiduciary risk. In fact, these challenges stemmed primarily from restrictive banking regulations in Socotra, compounded by logistical isolation and the project team's initial unfamiliarity with UNEP's financial systems.
160. The operating context, including the conflict in Yemen, restricted field access, the COVID-19 pandemic, and partners' inadequate familiarization with detailed UNEP procedures, further complicated financial monitoring. These issues did not, however, compromise the overall integrity or compliance of RSCN's financial management systems.
161. Adherence to UNEP's financial management procedures is rated Satisfactory, with strong compliance observed after 2020.

4.5.2 Completeness of Financial Information

162. The completeness of financial information is rated Satisfactory. Most required financial documentation—including legal agreements, budget tables, co-financing commitments, and expenditure reports—was available and consistent with UNEP reporting standards. The Fund Management Officer confirmed timely fund transfers and adherence to UNEP procedures (Table 18).
163. Some gaps were identified in early documentation from the first Executing Agency, and a limited number of procurement records could not be verified. Despite disruptions caused by political instability, access constraints, and COVID-19 restrictions, RSCN maintained consistent reporting and proper documentation. This supported effective expenditure tracking and ensured accountability in the use of project resources.

Table 18 Financial management

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's/GEF's policies and procedures:		S	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ⁴⁶ to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		No	No evidence of shortcoming after 2020 but issues were noted before that such as late or inadequate financial reporting
Was first disbursement carried out within 9 months of UNEP's project approval date.		Yes	First disbursement was made timely
Were the procurement policies of UNEP and the donor(s) followed? (<i>where applicable</i>)		Yes	FMO Reported that the UNEP procurement policies were followed.
2. Completeness of project financial information⁴⁷:			
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below)		MS	
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	Received.

⁴⁶ If the evaluation raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

⁴⁷ See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference.

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	Shared the documents
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	Available and shared
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes/	Shared
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	No	There was no requirement to prove or validate the co-financing by UNEP, so no proof of cofinancing is required. The co-financing was on in-kind. The FMO reported the amount of in-kind support.
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes	Available
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	Yes	
H.	Procure documents ⁴⁸ , including the approved requisition document and Source Selection Plan (<i>where applicable</i>)	No	It was reported that project related procurements were carried out by the EAs. Although relevant documents were not received for the review, both FMO and RSCN confirmed all processes were followed, and there was no comments received from the stakeholders during evaluation consultations.
I.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
Overall rating		S	

164. Overall, the project's financial management progressively improved, achieving strong compliance with UNEP's fiduciary and reporting standards under RSCN. Early weaknesses in documentation and delayed reporting by the previous executing agency were later rectified through robust controls, unqualified audits, and accurate records. Overall, financial accountability and transparency were maintained despite contextual challenges.

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory

Rating for Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures: Satisfactory

Rating for Completeness of Financial Information: Satisfactory

⁴⁸ Relevant for procurement action over USD 10,000 in value.

4.6 Efficiency

165. The analysis indicates improved management performance, more adaptive implementation approaches, and more effective use of resources after 2020, despite persistent delays, political instability, and operational constraints.
166. The field consultations with the government officials and local project staff indicated perceptions that during the initial implementation phase under the SGN, the project faced operational challenges. Stakeholder cited weak coordination with national partners, limited field access, and slow decision-making as factors that potentially constrained activity delivery⁴⁹. These perceptions, combined with the observations of delayed implementation, reflect the views of those consulted. Yemen's fragile operating context, particularly restricted mobility to Socotra Island, was widely acknowledged as an additional constraint.
167. Following the transition to new executing agency, RSCN in 2020, implementation efficiency improved noticeably. RSCN's regional presence, technical capacity, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and familiarity with the local context and language strengthened coordination with EPA Yemen, enhanced community engagement, and supported more timely delivery of activities. Adaptive and cost-saving measures—such as remote monitoring, use of local facilitators, and flexible work planning—enabled continuity during conflict, travel restrictions, and COVID-19 disruptions, helping to optimize available resources.
168. Both the project staff from UNEP and representatives from RSCN mentioned that the project also leveraged existing institutional and community networks, including lessons from previous UNEP and UNDP biodiversity initiatives. Although coordination with parallel donor-funded projects could have been stronger, the project generally maintained coherence and avoided major duplication. Increased reliance on local partnerships and reduced international travel further contributed to cost containment.
169. Evidence from Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions confirmed improvements in efficiency over time. However, efficiency was uneven across components, particularly in livelihood and capacity-building interventions. In several locations, sewing initiatives yielded limited results due to insufficient training, non-functional equipment, and unsuitable sites. Agricultural training was constrained by water scarcity, and benefits from diving training were limited by misaligned beneficiary selection. These issues suggest that while physical investments and activities were delivered efficiently, planning, risk assessment, and follow-up for “soft” components were inadequate.
170. The transition between executing agencies was inefficient. While SGN faced challenges with its international partners that reportedly hindered the formal transfer of key reports and datasets to RSCN, this nevertheless resulted in significant and avoidable duplication⁵⁰ of foundational activities. Stakeholder consultations also revealed that studies conducted by SGN were either not available for timely implementation or focused more on knowledge generation than on practical application. As the designated executing agency, it appears that SGN had contractual responsibility to manage partner relations and ensure deliverable handover. However, no evidence was found of these

⁴⁹ It should be noted that SGN was not available to provide its perspective during the evaluation, despite efforts by the evaluation team to reach out. As such, these findings are presented as stakeholder feedback rather than verified conclusions.

⁵⁰ The PIRs show clear duplication of core activities, including baseline consolidation and zoning plan revision. While SGN faced challenges with international partners that reportedly hindered data transfer, RSCN confirmed not receiving key reports. PIR 2024 explicitly states data were “rebuilt” rather than updated. As executing agency, SGN bore contractual responsibility for partner management and handover.

challenges were discussed at the PSC or documented in PIRs, limiting accountability and visibility into the transition process.

171. Consequently, foundational work, including baseline data collection, the revision of the Conservation Zoning Plan, and strategy development, was largely repeated rather than built upon. This consumed considerable time and resources that could have been allocated to advancing implementation, directly undermining the project's overall efficiency.
172. The project required several no-cost extensions (Table 19), which were primarily attributable to exogenous operational constraints. Key drivers included the protracted conflict and political instability in Yemen, as corroborated by KIs. These conditions caused high turnover among key government counterparts, including governors and EPA officials, disrupting governance continuity and hindering smooth implementation. Therefore, the extensions mainly reflected a rational adaptation to an unstable operating environment.

Table 19 Summary of the project revisions/amendments

Version	Type	Signed/Approved by UNEP	Entry Into Force (last signature Date)	Agreement Expiry Date	Main changes introduced in this revision
Amendment	Extension of agreement with EA	2020-02-24	2020-02-29	2020-05-31	no-cost extension
Amendment	Extension of agreement with EA	2020-05-28	2020-05-28	2020-07-31	no-cost extension
Change of the executing agency	Revision	2020-07-22	2020-07-23	2023-12-31	change of the executing agency
Amendment	Extension	2024-07-04	2024-07-04	2024-12-31	no-cost extension
Amendment	Extension	2024-12-24	2024-12-24	2025-03-31	no-cost extension

Source: PIR 2024 and the project team

173. The project efficiency rated **Moderately Satisfactory**, demonstrating adaptive management, prudent resource use, and improved performance after 2020. Despite early inefficiencies and contextual barriers, RSCN's effective leadership, community-based delivery, and remote coordination enhanced timeliness and cost-effectiveness. Collaboration remained modest but the project achieved strong value-for-money given Yemen's operational constraints.

Rating for Efficiency: Moderately Satisfactory

4.7 Monitoring and Reporting

4.7.1 Monitoring of Project Implementation

174. Monitoring of project implementation is rated **Moderately Satisfactory**. The Project Document included a clearly defined M&E plan aligned with UNEP and GEF requirements, specifying institutional roles, reporting schedules, and dedicated budgets of approximately USD 269,000 (GEF) and USD 223,000 (co-financing). Around 70 percent

of baseline data was available at inception, supporting initial planning. However, a key weakness was the absence of a formal revision of the M&E plan, despite significant changes in context and Executing Agencies.

175. During the early implementation phase, monitoring was irregular and largely desk-based due to security constraints, limited access, and Yemen's fragile context. UNEP was unable to conduct regular field missions, leaving most monitoring responsibilities with the Executing Agencies. Progress tracking relied on standardized templates and quarterly reporting, which supported verification of logframe indicators and data related to biodiversity and land management, but provided limited qualitative insight.
176. Following the transition to RSCN in 2020, monitoring became more structured and responsive. RSCN introduced participatory and community-based monitoring mechanisms in the selected sites. These monitoring tools were customized according to the community needs and implemented through regular site visits, solution-oriented supervision, and closer engagement with communities.
177. The monitoring plan generally followed the annual workplan and allocated funds were used for the implementation of monitoring activities. KIIs confirmed that frequent field visits, particularly by engineers, enabled real-time problem-solving and improved the quality of infrastructure delivery. The project also strengthened local monitoring capacity; FGDs confirmed that community groups received training in financial management and internal regulations, improving their ability to track income and expenditure.
178. Despite these improvements, monitoring of outcome sustainability and longer-term service use remained weak. Many beneficiaries reported limited or no follow-up after activity completion. Livelihood interventions, such as sewing initiatives, faced difficulties due to the absence of working capital and equipment maintenance. In addition, no standardized environmental monitoring system was applied to assess coral reef health or track longer-term ecological change. Monitoring cross-cutting issues, including gender and vulnerable groups, was also limited. After 2020, there are some improvements in getting gender related to data but no project level systematic disaggregated data available integrating vulnerable group and gender.
179. The Mid-Term Review provided important course correction, informing adjustments to supervision arrangements, monitoring practices, and activity planning. While monitoring data supported adaptive management and decision-making, the emphasis remained on physical output. The lack of systematic outcome- and sustainability-level monitoring reduced the overall effectiveness of the M&E system.

4.7.2 Project Reporting

180. Project reporting is rated **Satisfactory**. While PIRs, financial reports, and final technical reports were submitted, dedicated project field monitoring and donor reports were not available for review. This constrained assessment of reporting completeness and verification of on-the-ground performance.
181. A key strength was the quality assurance process. All reports prepared by the Executing Agencies were reviewed and cleared up by UNEP prior to submission to GEF, ensuring compliance with donor requirements and internal quality standards, particularly for financial reporting and PIRs.
182. Reporting relied on established platforms such as PIMS/IPMR to track results, with formal reporting on outputs and outcomes every six months. However, reports were stronger on output delivery than on outcome-level changes, such as institutional behavior, capacity development, or ecosystem improvements. Final technical reporting could have more clearly articulated end-of-project results and sustainability prospects.

183. Reporting quality varied over time. During the initial phase under SGN, reports were reported to be less consistent and analytical. After 2020, reporting improved under RSCN, with clearer structure, better explanation of challenges, and more systematic documentation of adaptive measures although there were some weaknesses noted in terms providing outcome level indicators and reporting against quantitative targets.
184. Risk reporting was consistently strong. Risk logs were regularly updated in PIRs, enabling timely responses to evolving challenges, including political instability, COVID-19 impacts, and logistical constraints. However, reporting on gender equality and engagement of vulnerable groups remained limited until improvements were introduced in later years.
185. Overall, the reporting system supported project oversight and donor accountability and contributed to results-based management. Nevertheless, gaps in field mission documentation and outcome-level analysis reduced its effectiveness for learning and sustainability planning.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Project Reporting: Satisfactory

4.8 Sustainability

4.8.1 Socio-political Sustainability

186. Socio-political sustainability is assessed as **Likely**. The sustainability of project outcomes has a high degree of dependency on social/political factors. Despite Yemen's fragile political context and ongoing conflict, the project achieved strong local ownership, institutional acceptance, and sustained community engagement. EPA Yemen and local councils have adopted and are applying key tools, including the Conservation Zoning Plan and sustainable land-use guidelines, in planning and decision-making. Community-based organizations trained in protected areas and resource management continue to implement conservation activities, indicating positive behavioral change and social uptake beyond the project period. For example, increased engagement of women and income generation for pottery design training, managing nature shop and operating the tourist camps by the Di Hamri Protected Area Association in a self-financing model.
187. The project effectively promoted community-based governance, eco-tourism initiatives, and youth environmental education, strengthening grassroots support for biodiversity conservation, even where formal government presence is limited. However, national-level policy endorsement remains weak due to political instability, and there are no formal mechanisms to secure long-term incentives or structured collaboration at regional or national levels. The absence of an operational sustainable financing system further constrains institutional continuity. Nonetheless, strong community commitment and local institutional engagement provide a durable basis for sustaining outcomes.

4.8.2 Financial Sustainability



Image 6 Community consultations (Source: Project report 2024)

188. Financial sustainability is assessed as **Moderately Likely**. While the project strengthened technical and managerial capacities, the cancellation of Output 4.3 significantly undermined the establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms. No conservation trust fund or enabling policy framework was put in place at the national level to support post-project conservation activities.

189. Key informant interviews indicated that revenue collection and allocation mechanisms at the national

level lack transparency and accountability, limiting their effectiveness, creating a critical gap in maintaining protected area infrastructure, ecosystem monitoring, and community engagement. The discussion with the EPA and project team, however, revealed that they already considered these challenges and started working to resolve these issues.

190. However, the evaluation identified positive indications at the local level regarding the creation and strengthening of fund generation and management initiatives to sustain good practices from the project. Key informant interviews revealed that there was potential for local revenue generation through eco-tourism. For example, the project supported infrastructure (such as tourist facilities, solar systems and water availability) in Dihamri, Rosh, Homhil and Firmhin and nature shops. These supports started generating supplemental income for communities. Focus Group Discussions confirmed that ecotourism-related infrastructure and services can generate income, with participants noting that continued tourism could help sustain activities. However, this revenue stream is seasonal, unpredictable, and highly vulnerable to political and economic shocks.
191. A new UNEP/GEF project (GEF Project ID 11408⁵¹) has since been approved. Building on lessons learned from this project, the Component 2 of the new project '*Conservation of Biodiversity in Socotra and Sustainable Management of Aden*' is approved to continue and scale up some key interventions. These include strengthening protected areas, replicating the protected area management model, supporting conservation-friendly livelihood activities with a gender focus, conserving endemic plants, sustaining a sea turtle conservation programme, and upscaling invasive alien species management. Preliminary estimates suggest that approximately USD 1 million has been allocated to these areas, indicating continued availability of external financing to sustain and build upon the project's achievements.
192. Core conservation functions—such as habitat restoration and species monitoring—remain dependent on external donor funding, which is uncertain in Yemen's fragile fiscal environment. Emerging initiatives, including the airport nature shop and marine reserve services, show early promise but remain small-scale and insufficient to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

⁵¹ Integrated Conservation and Sustainable Development in Socotra Archipelago and Aden Wetlands, Yemen (GEF Project ID – 11408). (<https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/11408>).

4.8.3 Institutional Sustainability

193. Institutional sustainability is assessed as **Moderately Likely**. The project strengthened institutional capacities, particularly within EPA Yemen and local authorities, through the development of policy and planning tools such as the ICMF, zoning plans, and biodiversity and invasive species databases. While the databases and tools alone do not constitute policy instruments, stakeholders reported that these tools are being used locally and inform planning and decision-making processes. Discussions with stakeholders also showed that EPA owned the outputs of the project and expressed their commitment to institutionalizing their systems.
194. The project also enhanced local governance through community empowerment, training, and support to community-based organizations, which continue to manage conservation activities and demonstrate ownership. However, institutional resilience remains constrained by limited financial resources, weak inter-ministerial coordination, and a well-documented cyclical challenge: projects often recruit EPA staff at inflated local salaries, leaving staff upon project closure to return to unpredictable, low government salaries or seek opportunities elsewhere using skills acquired.
195. While institutional foundations are in place, sustaining and updating knowledge systems, governance arrangements, and local capacities will require continued technical and financial support from external partners, alongside addressing salary disparities to retain trained personnel. Without such support, institutional gains risk gradual erosion.

Findings Statements on Sustainability:

196. Overall, sustainability is rated **Moderately Likely**. The project established strong socio-political and institutional foundations through community engagement, strengthened local governance, and adoption of key conservation tools. However, no exist strategy was prepared and financial sustainability remains the weakest dimension due to the absence of structured financing mechanisms. Emerging eco-tourism and small enterprise initiatives are insufficient to sustain core conservation functions. Long-term sustainability will depend on continued external support, strengthened financial systems, and sustained institutional collaboration.

Rating for Likelihood of Sustainability: Moderately Likely

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Likely

Rating for Financial Sustainability: Moderately Likely

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Moderately Likely

4.9 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

4.9.1 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

UNEP

197. The quality of project management and supervision provided by UNEP is assessed as **Satisfactory**. Despite persistent operational constraints—including restricted access to Socotra, political instability, and COVID-19 disruptions—UNEP ensured strategic continuity and effective oversight throughout implementation. Supervision relied largely on virtual engagements, regional workshops, and structured review processes

conducted outside Yemen, which enabled regular communication with the EAs and the EPA, as well as timely technical guidance and compliance with GEF requirements.

198. UNEP's facilitation of adaptive management was particularly evident following the MTR. Key recommendations were incorporated in a timely manner, including enhanced community engagement, revised work planning, and strengthened remote monitoring arrangements. UNEP also effectively managed the transition from the SGN to the RSCN, ensuring continuity of implementation and minimizing disruption to project momentum.
199. Where feasible, supervision missions, combined with systematic progress reviews and annual reporting, reinforced alignment with UNEP and GEF strategic priorities. UNEP further promoted innovation and capacity development through regional training events, webinars, and the integration of gender considerations, strengthening technical capacity within the implementation structure. Overall, UNEP demonstrated strong leadership, flexibility, and responsive coordination, contributing to efficient delivery of outputs and steady progress toward outcomes.

Executing Agency

200. The performance of the Executing Agencies is rated **Satisfactory**, with marked improvement following the transition from SGN to RSCN in 2020. According to KIIs, early implementation was constrained by slow progress, fragmented coordination, and limited contextual understanding during SGN's tenure. This was, however, not possible to verify from SGN as explained in the limitation section. Restricted access to Socotra and weak engagement with national partners reduced implementation momentum and constrained effective collaboration with EPA Yemen.
201. Following the handover to RSCN, project execution became more efficient, adaptive, and context responsive. RSCN re-established strong working relationships with EPA Yemen, national counterparts, local councils, and communities, and revitalized implementation through enhanced field presence, targeted capacity building, and regular stakeholder communication. The reactivated Project Steering Committee, meeting biannually, supported participatory decision-making, risk monitoring, and alignment with evolving priorities.
202. Focus Group Discussions confirmed significant improvements in the quality and timeliness of physical outputs, including community huts, water infrastructure, and shared facilities. Stakeholders reported that activities were implemented without major operational issues. Continued engagement of Local Conservation and Development Associations in Homhil, Rosh, and Dihamri, and the community committee in Firmhin, reinforced established stewardship arrangements and demonstrated coherence with existing governance structures, reflecting effective field supervision and technical backstopping.
203. RSCN also managed financial transfer constraints pragmatically and maintained close coordination with the Governor's Office and relevant line ministries, ensuring implementation remained locally grounded. Its operational flexibility, regional experience, and technical support enabled the project to navigate conflict- and COVID-19-related constraints while strengthening local ownership of conservation actions. Adaptive adjustments during the RSCN implementation time-maintained alignment with community-identified pressures, including tourism expansion, invasive species, and water scarcity. While some gaps remained in post-handover support—particularly for livelihood initiatives requiring sustained follow-up—RSCN's overall performance substantially strengthened delivery quality, adaptive learning, and stakeholder confidence.

204. Overall, the performance of the Executing Agencies is assessed as Satisfactory, reflecting improved effectiveness, responsiveness, and coordination during the latter phase of implementation.

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Satisfactory

4.9.2 Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

205. Stakeholder participation and cooperation are assessed as **Satisfactory**, with clear improvements observed after 2020. The Project Document included a comprehensive stakeholder analysis identifying the roles of national institutions, local authorities, civil society, academia, and community groups in biodiversity conservation, invasive species management, and land restoration. However, during the initial implementation phase under the SGN, stakeholders' participation was relatively weak. Limited contextual understanding, restricted access to Socotra, and insufficient coordination with local actors resulted in fragmented engagement and low levels of community involvement.
206. Following the transition to RSCN, stakeholder cooperation improved substantially. RSCN re-established active partnerships with the Environment Protection Authority in EPA Aden and Socotra, local councils, and community-based organizations. Regular consultation mechanisms—such as biannual Project Steering Committee meetings, technical workshops, coordination meetings with sectoral departments, and joint field visits—supported participatory decision-making and alignment with local priorities. But it was difficult to verify the level of engagement and their contribution in the project planning and implementation of these meetings and interactions.
207. Local communities in and around the protected areas were actively engaged in project activities. Broader inclusion of women, youth, and local associations enhanced ownership of eco-tourism, monitoring, and capacity-building initiatives. Evidence from KIIs and FGDs confirmed meaningful participation, including increased youth employment opportunities and improved coordination for community-managed water networks. Some of the livelihood enhancement activities, especially at the community level are agriculture training and tourist shops, helped to improve the economic upliftment of the communities.
208. Nevertheless, participation was uneven across components. Livelihood beneficiaries reported limited involvement during early planning stages, and FGDs highlighted instances where communities noted they “were not involved from the beginning,” indicating inconsistent application of participatory approaches.
209. Despite constraints related to conflict, limited mobility, and COVID-19, the project adopted adaptive approaches—such as local facilitation, remote coordination, and community-based monitoring—to sustain engagement. The absence of a structured knowledge management and communication strategy remained a weakness, limiting broader information sharing. Overall, improved coordination and more inclusive practices contributed positively to relevance, adaptive management, and prospects for sustainability.

Rating for Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation: Satisfactory

4.9.3 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

210. The project's responsiveness to human rights and gender equality is rated **Moderately Satisfactory**. While not explicitly designed using a Human Rights-Based Approach, the project indirectly advanced principles of inclusion, participation, and non-discrimination

- through community-based governance arrangements, empowerment processes, and efforts to promote equitable access to conservation-related benefits.
211. The project was broadly aligned with UNEP's Policy on Gender Equality and the Environment. The Project Document emphasized gender-sensitive participation and encouraged equitable roles for women and men in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, including opportunities for economic empowerment.
 212. Female participation was relatively strong, with women representing more than 50 percent of training beneficiaries and identified as a key target group. Particularly after 2020, the project supported women's and youth engagement in eco-tourism, conservation awareness, agricultural training, and community-based natural resource management. Examples include the women's shop in Hadibu; women-focused livelihood initiatives in Qalansiyah (Nama Association and Al-Keyr Association); and home gardening combined with water network rehabilitation and solar installations in Firmhin, which reduced women's workload. FGDs confirmed these positive trends and women's willingness to engage.
 213. However, the absence of a standalone Gender Action Plan and limited gender analysis and/or plan at the design phase constrained systematic integration during the project implementation. The project did not adequately account for Socotra's deeply embedded traditional belief systems, cultural practices, and prevailing gender roles, which shape women's mobility, decision-making power, and access to resources. Although some gender-sensitive indicators were included in the results framework, they were inconsistently operationalized during implementation. Gender-disaggregated data collection was uneven, and the lack of a guiding gender strategy limited integration of gender considerations into routine decision-making, resulting in variable support across locations.
 214. FGDs also revealed notable gaps. In some communities, women reported receiving no training, non-functional equipment, or limited meaningful engagement, with several noting that they "expected to benefit, but nothing significant happened." These findings indicate insufficient attention to structural constraints—such as water scarcity, mobility limitations, and restricted decision-making power—that affect women's participation and benefits.
 215. Participants highlighted the need for stronger gender mainstreaming in future interventions that are both systematic and culturally competent. This includes gender-responsive livelihood design, and participatory needs assessments that explore cultural dynamics, systematic use of gender-disaggregated data, inclusive beneficiary selection processes that work within and gradually expand cultural boundaries, and sustained follow-up that respects traditional timelines and social structures. Strengthening these elements would improve accountability, equity, and sustainability.
 216. Overall, the project demonstrated intent and achieved positive gender-related outcomes in selected areas. However, insufficient analysis of traditional belief systems and gender roles combined with uneven implementation and limited strategic resourcing, resulted in partial and, at times, symbolic inclusion rather than substantive empowerment required for lasting transformation.

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Moderately Satisfactory

4.9.4 Environmental and Social Safeguards

217. The project was appropriately classified as Category B, as its activities focused on capacity building, planning, and small-scale community initiatives with inherently low environmental risk. Overall, environmental safeguards performance is assessed as **Satisfactory**.
218. Project design accurately identified low environmental risks and anticipated net positive impacts on ecosystem integrity. Respondents from KIIs, including PIRs for 2024–2025, confirms that core activities, such as biodiversity conservation, invasive species control, and sustainable land management, did not result in adverse environmental impacts or safeguard violations. A key external risk identified was the expansion of private structures along coastlines and forest areas. While not attributable to the project, this trend poses a significant contextual threat to long-term conservation outcomes.
219. UNEP safeguard procedures were applied through periodic risk reviews and the integration of mitigation measures into adaptive work planning. The project's environmental footprint was further reduced through limited international travel and reliance on remote coordination. However, the absence of formal safeguard audits or documented environmental screening reports represents a procedural gap, constraining systematic verification of compliance.
220. The project demonstrated strong performance on social safeguards. Both field consultations in the project sites (FDGs) and KIIs indicated that extensive stakeholder consultations and the intentional inclusion of women, youth, and marginalized groups, particularly after 2020, supported social acceptability and alignment with local priorities. These practices were consistent with UNEP policies and contributed positively to social inclusion and community buy-in.
221. Despite these strengths, social safeguard systems were incomplete. No formal grievance redress mechanism was established; therefore, the absence of reported complaints cannot be interpreted as full compliance. Moreover, the project operated in a highly dynamic and fragile context characterized by migration pressures, land tenure disputes, and unregulated development. While project activities did not trigger negative impacts, the disconnect between controlled project interventions and broader contextual risks presents an ongoing challenge to sustainability.

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Satisfactory

4.9.5 Country Ownership and Driven-ness

222. Country ownership and driven-ness are assessed as **Satisfactory**. The project remained well aligned with Yemen's environmental and biodiversity priorities and with national commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the World Heritage Convention. The EPA played a central coordinating role, ensuring responsiveness to national and local needs and facilitating collaboration between UNEP, the Executing Agencies (SGN and later RSCN), and relevant ministries, including the Ministry of Water and Environment.
223. The interviews with the project team confirmed that the PSC met five times during implementation. The project team mentioned that particularly after 2020, the PSC demonstrated strengthened ownership through more structured governance, incorporation of stakeholder feedback into planning and reporting, and improved alignment with evolving local priorities.

224. Formally signed Project Steering Committee⁵² meeting minutes were not available for review and the information provided by the project team indicated what was presented but did not document the ensuing discussions or contributions from PSC members. According to the KIIs, persistent constraints included limited government financial resources, capacity gaps, and challenges in integrating inputs across national, regional, and community levels into a unified strategic direction.
225. Local ownership was further reinforced through participatory engagement of communities, traditional leaders, and civil society organizations in conservation, land management, and environmental awareness activities. This bottom-up approach strengthened stewardship and accountability at the local level. While national conflict, resource constraints, and weak institutional follow-up limited broader replication, the demonstrated commitment of EPA and local actors provides a credible foundation for sustaining project benefits. Overall, the project's responsiveness to local priorities and integration within national frameworks reflects a clearly country-driven approach and strong acceptance of project outcomes.

Rating for Country Ownership and Drive-ness: Satisfactory

4.9.6 Communication and Public Awareness

Communication and Public Awareness

226. The project's performance in communication and public awareness is assessed as **Moderately Satisfactory**. Communication among project partners and between the Executing Agencies, UNEP, and national stakeholders functioned reasonably well, with clear improvement following the transition to RSCN in 2020. Stakeholders reported more timely exchanges, better coordination, and increased responsiveness from the Project Management Unit, which helped maintain trust and operational continuity. The use of virtual meetings, online workshops, and flexible communication modalities during the COVID-19 period enabled coordination despite restricted access and limited connectivity on Socotra.
227. The project developed communication and outreach tools (see Annex VII) and established dissemination channels at the project level. Public awareness was a visible and integral component of implementation such as a video prepared on Socotra's Dragon Blood Trees⁵³. Communication activities included sensitization campaigns, school- and community-based events, and targeted outreach on technical issues such as biodiversity conservation, invasive species management, and sustainable land use. These efforts strengthened environmental awareness, particularly among women, youth, and community groups.
228. Stakeholders interviewed noted that, due to increased awareness, these groups actively participated in clean-up campaigns, eco-tourism initiatives, and local resource management. Consultations with stakeholders (through both KIIs and FGDs) reported that the communication processes and tools were customized based on needs and audience feedback. The project effectively leveraged existing community structures, and the tangible results of rehabilitated sites reinforced awareness messages and encouraged further local engagement.

⁵² According to PIR 2025, the Project SC meeting sat for five times during the project period, and the final PSC meeting was organized on 27 January 2025.

⁵³ <https://arabic.cnn.com/travel/video/2024/11/21/v155366-socotra-blood-dragon-trees>.

229. KILs with stakeholders also reported that no specific budget was allocated for communication during the planning stage and that no robust monitoring mechanisms were established at the project level to learn from communication-related interventions. No evidence was available to demonstrate cross-learning between project partners or with interested groups.
230. Communication related to physical infrastructure and field activities was generally effective, characterized by transparent dialogue and collaborative planning. However, this performance was uneven across components. Focus group discussions revealed communication gaps in several locations, including limited explanation of project objectives, insufficient guidance on the use and maintenance of provided assets, and weak follow-up support. Some beneficiaries reported feeling excluded from decision-making processes and indicated that certain activities were introduced without adequate consultation, leading to partial misalignment with local priorities.
231. The knowledge portal was developed but was primarily in English and not regularly updated. Consequently, it functioned more as a static repository than as an active tool for decision-making. Similarly, a project website was not developed, limiting the accessibility of knowledge for stakeholders and communities. Stakeholders indicated during KILs that these outputs were only partially developed due to political instability, resource constraints, and weak knowledge management systems. The absence of a structured communication and knowledge management strategy constrained systematic learning, documentation, and broader dissemination of lessons. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the project made a positive contribution to public awareness and supported incremental **behavioral** change toward conservation practices.

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Moderately Satisfactory

Summary statements on Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting issues

232. Overall project performance benefited from generally strong management and supervision, underpinned by responsive coordination between UNEP, the Project Management Unit, and the Executing Agencies. This collaboration helped sustain implementation momentum despite institutional transitions, restricted field access, and broader political constraints. Stakeholder participation, particularly by local communities and government institutions, was constructive and strengthened trust, cooperation, and ownership.
233. Human rights and gender considerations were partially addressed through participatory approaches involving women and vulnerable groups; however, implementation remained uneven across components. Environmental and social safeguards were broadly applied, particularly in protected area management and invasive species control, though systematic documentation of safeguard processes was limited.
234. Country ownership was strong, reflected in alignment with national priorities and committed engagement by EPA and local actors, even as conflict and institutional capacity gaps affected continuity. Communication and public awareness efforts were reasonably effective, but the absence of a clear communication strategy and a fully functional knowledge platform constrained wider outreach, learning, and replication.

Overall rating: Satisfactory.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Satisfactory

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Satisfactory

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Satisfactory

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Satisfactory

Rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness: Satisfactory

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Moderately Satisfactory

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

235. Overall, the project performed at a **Moderately Satisfactory** level (Table 20). Its strongest achievements were the delivery of tangible outputs related to ecosystem and biodiversity management, IAS control, and community-based land management. These technical results were consistently documented and validated through field consultations. In contrast, performance was weaker in areas such as sustainable financing, systematic data management, and long-term institutional continuity. These limitations were largely shaped by external shocks, including prolonged political instability, security constraints, the COVID-19 pandemic, and limited national institutional capacity.
236. Key accomplishments include strengthened protected area governance, the integration of ecological knowledge into land-use planning, and improved capacities among local institutions and communities to manage biodiversity and land resources. These interventions contributed to observable behavioral and attitudinal changes, reflected in increased community stewardship, compliance with zoning regulations, and stronger local commitment to conservation-linked livelihoods.
237. Much of this progress can be attributed to adaptive management measures introduced after 2020 under RSCN's leadership rather than change in operating context. RSCN's contextual familiarity, improved coordination with EPA and local actors, and participatory implementation approaches significantly enhanced delivery of project outputs and outcomes and responsiveness toward the EPA and communities. By combining traditional knowledge with applied scientific inputs and community-based monitoring, the project established a practical and scalable model of localized environmental governance, offering a relevant reference for other island ecosystems and fragile-state contexts.
238. Sustainability is assessed as moderately likely. Strong community ownership strengthened co-management arrangements, and improved technical capacity within EPA and local institutions provide a solid foundation for continuity. However, the cancellation of the sustainable financing component, persistent political instability, weak inter-ministerial coordination, and reliance on external funding present substantial risks to maintaining outcomes at scale and overtime.
239. While gender issues were partially addressed through a focus on women's participation, the overall gender-responsive approach of the project was weak. Critically, the project could have devoted greater attention to Socotra's deep-rooted cultural norms, traditional belief systems, and prevailing gender roles, all of which shape women's mobility, decision-making power, and access to resources. Human rights considerations remained neutral, receiving limited attention in both project planning and implementation.
240. No major unintended negative environmental or social impacts were identified. Nevertheless, the project did not consistently or systematically address gender equality considerations and benefit mechanisms. Future programming would benefit from stronger, culturally informed gender analysis and gender-responsive monitoring, with indicators that explicitly consider traditional belief systems and structural constraints embedded in project design, implementation, and reporting.
241. The project made a meaningful contribution to capacity development by strengthening institutional readiness, technical skills, and community-level competencies essential for biodiversity governance and resource management. While opportunities for broader

South–South cooperation were limited by context, targeted collaboration with Jordanian experts generated useful regional learning and demonstrated the value of peer exchange under constrained conditions.

242. Overall, the project contributes positively to UNEP's Ecosystem Management Programme and advances GEF biodiversity objectives. It demonstrates that adaptive governance, strong community engagement, and flexible implementation arrangements can sustain global environmental benefits, even in highly fragile and crisis-affected settings.

Responses to Key Strategic Questions

243. The evaluation addressed six strategic questions outlined in the Terms of Reference. The following section summarizes project achievements based on interviews with governments and other stakeholders (including community members), project progress reports, and direct observations by the evaluation team member.
244. Overall, the project demonstrated moderate to strong contributions to biodiversity conservation, institutional capacity, community engagement, and integrated land management, while facing technical and contextual limitations that constrained full achievement of intended outcomes. The synthesized findings are presented below.

Question 1: Contribution to biodiversity conservation and protected areas management, and elaboration of PA management plans

245. The project made significant and tangible progress in strengthening biodiversity conservation and improving PA management across the Socotra Archipelago. Through updated baseline information, revised zoning, and improved ecological datasets, the project supported the substantial updating of the CZP. Capacity-building for the EPA, coupled with the introduction of management tools and site-level technical support, contributed to enhanced oversight of priority conservation areas.
246. A major achievement was the elaboration and implementation of management plans for four priority PAs—Dihamri, Rosh, Homhil, and Firmihin. These plans went beyond conceptual drafting and were fully operationalized through substantial infrastructure rehabilitation, including visitor facilities, solar power systems, and water infrastructure. These investments strengthened site functionality, particularly in Dihamri, which emerged as a model PA with increased tourism, improved revenue flows, and strengthened community stewardship. Communities demonstrated a collective responsibility for conservation, exemplified by active interventions to prevent destructive fishing practices. Nonetheless, not all PAs could be fully assessed or endorsed during the project period due to limited access, security risks, and restricted field verification.

Question 2: Effectiveness in strengthening local institutions for biodiversity management

247. The project was effective in enhancing local institutional capacity across the archipelago. Through targeted training, participatory planning, and the development of regulatory tools, the EPA and community-based organizations adopted improved monitoring, enforcement, and co-management practices. After 2020, RSCN played a pivotal role in accelerating capacity development by integrating hands-on mentoring with adaptive management approaches.
248. Capacity strengthening extended to community institutions, notably fisheries and women's associations. Training in administration, financial management, and reporting substantially improved the quality and reliability of reports submitted to government agencies. These improvements, largely attributable to RSCN's direct engagement during Phase II—including exposure visits to Jordanian organizations, supported the transition of associations toward autonomous management of project-supported assets, such as

the Nature Shop and PA facilities. Despite these gains, persistent institutional challenges remain, including high turnover, limited public budgets, and weak enforcement capacity within national agencies. While coordination improved during Phase II, the project did not fundamentally address structural capacity deficits or long-term financing constraints as indicated in outcome 4.3.

Question 3: Improvements in monitoring, inventory, and management of invasive alien species (IAS)

249. The project contributed meaningfully to improving IAS monitoring and management systems. It supported the identification of priority invasive species, mapping of invasion pathways, and the development of a national IAS strategy. Community-based IAS management pilots demonstrated feasible, locally appropriate control methods and generated valuable lessons for scaling up in other parts of Socotra. Key outputs—such as the updated IAS checklist, established pathways, community strategy, and construction of a quarantine facility—strengthened the institutional basis for IAS management.
250. A notable outcome increased public awareness, with communities actively reporting new IAS sightings, reflecting strong behavior change and enhanced vigilance. However, more systemic impacts were constrained. IAS prevalence was not significantly reduced, as operational capacity for ongoing control remains weak. The quarantine facility⁵⁴, though constructed, is non-operational due to lack of equipment and staffing from the local government side. Continued arrivals of invasive species through shipping and limited national capacity point to a fragmented system. While the project strengthened strategic and awareness dimensions, core prevention and response mechanisms remain underdeveloped.

Question 4: Effectiveness of awareness campaigns and community involvement, and strategies to enhance community engagement

251. Awareness campaigns including videos, posters and other communication materials and community participation efforts were highly effective, particularly after 2020. The project expanded participatory monitoring, environmental education programs, and community outreach. Schools, fishermen's associations, and local councils became strong partners, contributing to improved knowledge and stewardship of biodiversity resources. The combination of school programs, clean-up campaigns, and targeted workshops resulted in observable behavioral shifts. Fishermen demonstrated enhanced understanding of sustainable fishing regulations, while youth became active advocates for conservation, often influencing household practices.
252. The project leveraged existing community structures to enhance trust and local ownership. Community leaders and informal associations played a key role in interpreting and disseminating information, ensuring that messages were culturally resonant and acted upon. To deepen and sustain these gains, future initiatives should institutionalize citizen science programs, expand youth-led networks, and equip communities with enforcement responsibilities and monitoring resources. Strengthening community actions including planning and implementation of conservation friendly activities, beyond awareness, will be essential for long-term conservation outcomes.

Question 5: Alignment of conservation and sustainable land management (SLM) with socio-economic needs

⁵⁴ A stakeholder mentioned that this was not planned activities during design but added based on the government's demand.

253. The project effectively linked conservation objectives with sustainable land management through integrated zoning, participatory land-use planning, and SLM demonstration activities. It supported pilot measures such as establishing tree seedlings (Dragon Blood, Frankincense, and Mangrove) in protected areas and constructing fenced enclosures to restore degraded forest patches. This approach physically prevented grazing and enhanced ecological connectivity, which contributed to reducing soil erosion and habitat loss. However, it should also be noted that such interventions carry potential risks: without proper provenance record-keeping and genetic diversity assessments, nursery activities may inadvertently cause inbreeding depression. Similarly, fenced enclosures can exclude local communities and concentrate grazing pressure on surrounding areas, merely shifting rather than solving the underlying issue, while requiring long-term maintenance. Initiatives such as the Nature Shop and support for women's pottery associations demonstrated clear synergies between biodiversity conservation and income generation, generating incentives for adopting conservation-friendly practices. Nonetheless, claims of success must be tempered with recognition that ecosystem-level benefits remain unverified by strong research.
254. Despite these strengths, replication of SLM activities remains limited due to lack of follow-up financing and broader institutional support. The long-term alignment of conservation and socio-economic priorities will require diversification of livelihood strategies, including the development of sustainable value chains for non-timber forest products and promotion of climate-resilient agricultural practices. Addressing livelihood vulnerability in a more systemic manner will be key to reducing pressure on fragile ecosystems.

Question 6: Influence of gender integration on project performance

255. Gender integration was partial and indirect, limiting the project's ability to fully contribute to gender equality outcomes. While women participated actively, representing over 50 percent of training beneficiaries, the project could have focused more on Socotra's deep-rooted cultural norms, traditional belief systems, and prevailing gender roles that shape women's mobility, decision-making power, and access to resources. Tailored capacity-building initiatives for women were also limited in scope.
256. Nevertheless, the project generated meaningful gender-related benefits. The establishment of the women's shop expanded market access, enabling income generation for over 100 women. Computer literacy training enabled some women to secure formal employment, enhancing their economic agency and visibility in the local economy. These efforts demonstrated the potential for women to act as environmental stewards and economic actors when targeted support is provided. Future projects should adopt UNEP's gender-responsive monitoring framework to ensure stronger integration of gender in design, implementation, and reporting.
257. Overall, the strategic questions demonstrate that the project made substantive contributions to biodiversity conservation, institutional capacity, and community stewardship. However, sustainability and systemic impacts remain constrained by external shocks, institutional limitations, and partial attention to gender dynamics, cultural contexts, financing, and long-term enforcement capacities.
258. The table 20 below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter 4. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Table 20 Summary of project findings and ratings⁵⁵

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance: HS		
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities	Fully aligned with UNEP's biodiversity, ecosystem restoration, and resilience priorities under its MTS and Programme of Work.	Satisfactory (S)
2. Alignment to UNEP Donor/GEF/Partner strategic priorities	Strongly aligned with GEF BD-1-3 and LD-3 strategic priorities.	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Directly responds to CBD, SDGs (13, 14, 15), and Yemen's biodiversity strategies; relevance remains strong. Aligned with national plans.	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
4. Complementarity with existing interventions/Coherence	Synergistic with government supported biodiversity projects but limited coordination during early years.	Satisfactory (S)
Quality of Project Design	Logical framework robust and technically sound; risk analysis adequate but underestimated political fragility.	Satisfactory (S)
Nature of External Context	Highly challenging context marked by protracted conflict, inaccessibility, and COVID-19 restrictions affecting field smooth project operations. These challenges were, however, reasonably mitigated in Socotra through notable local leadership, adaptive management, and committed stakeholder engagement.	Unfavourable (U)
Effectiveness: MS		
1. Availability of outputs	Most outputs completed with good quality; a few (e.g., sustainable finance) cancelled due to external factors.	Satisfactory (S)
2. Achievement of project outcomes	Core biodiversity and IAS outcomes achieved; SLM and institutional outcomes moderately advanced.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
3. Likelihood of impact	Institutional and community uptake of technologies and practices showed early adoption and benefits (such as income) and possibility of long-term livelihoods enhancement; hence impact realization Moderately Likely with continued support.	Moderately Likely (ML)
Financial Management: S		
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	Initially weak under SGN, improved significantly under RSCN with sound internal controls.	Satisfactory (S)
2. Completeness of project financial information	Financial data generally complete and verifiable though some early documentation gaps noted.	Satisfactory (S)
Efficiency: MS		

⁵⁵ Most criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated, also on a six-point scale, from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU).

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
Prolonged delays due to contextual challenges; post-2020 implementation efficient with adaptive management.		Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Monitoring and Reporting: S		
1. Monitoring of project implementation	M&E framework functional after 2020; participatory monitoring enhanced adaptive decisions.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
2. Project reporting	Regular PIRs and audits submitted; analysis quality improved over time.	Satisfactory (S)
Sustainability: ML		
1. Socio-political sustainability	High local awareness and ownership but constrained by national instability.	Likely (L)
2. Financial sustainability	No sustainable financing mechanism operational at national level but local initiatives for fund management started. UNEP/GEF project (GEF project ID 11408) to support some of the selected project outputs.	Moderately Likely (ML)
3. Institutional sustainability	Institutional structures strengthened but fragile without stable policy and funding.	Moderately Likely (ML)
Factors Affecting Performance: S		
1. Quality of project management and supervision: S		
1.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency	Strong remote supervision and adaptive management; proactive risk mitigation.	Satisfactory (S)
1.2 Partners/Executing Agency	RSCN demonstrated effective leadership post-2020; early performance under SGN relatively weak.	Satisfactory (S)
2. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Broad participation after 2020; limited in early phase due to access barriers.	Satisfactory (S)
3. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	Gender integration partial; inclusion improved in community-level activities.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
4. Environmental and social safeguards	No negative impact: safeguards applied though documentation limited.	Satisfactory (S)
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	Strong EPA leadership and stakeholder commitment despite institutional fragility.	Satisfactory (S)
6. Communication and public awareness	Awareness campaigns effective; digital knowledge platform non-functional post-project.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Overall Project Performance Rating	Despite severe contextual challenges, the project achieved its core objectives with adaptive management and strong local engagement.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

5.2 Lessons Learned

259. Based on the findings of the evaluation, the following learning are identified for future projects.

Lesson Learned #1:	Adaptive management and contextual fit are decisive for a project performance in fragile settings <i>(Contextual and Enabling Conditions / Risk Management and Adaptation)</i>
Context/comment:	In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, project performance depends heavily on adaptive management capacity and contextual familiarity of the executing partner. The project demonstrates that context-aware execution and adaptive management can substantially recover performance in fragile and conflict-affected environments. The transition to an implementing partner with regional familiarity and local networks enabled rapid course correction, improved coordination, and more realistic delivery modalities. This learning can be replicated in the future projects. Future projects need to embed flexible workplans, decentralized decision-making, and ongoing risk analysis, among others, to adjust activities rapidly in volatile contexts, ensuring continuity of implementation despite insecurity, governance disruptions, or access limitations.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Chapters 4.4 (para: 142, 150), 4.6 (para 196), and 4.9 (para: 196, 199)

Lesson Learned #2:	Community-based governance translates plans into practice when ownership is real <i>(Stakeholder Engagement and Participation / Governance Arrangements)</i>
Context/comment:	Meaningful community participation, where local institutions and actors hold decision-making roles and derive tangible benefits, enables effective translation of conservation plans into practice. In the project, participatory protected area management, zoning enforcement, and local conservation committees proved effective once communities were meaningfully engaged and empowered. The shift from planning to active enforcement and stewardship illustrates that local ownership is the primary driver of behavioural change and compliance. This shows that the co-management structures succeed when communities see tangible benefits and retain decision-making roles. Future projects can co-design interventions with communities, formalize local management roles, and provide sustained facilitation and incentives so that local institutions actively implement, monitor, and adapt conservation measures beyond project timelines.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Chapters 4.4 (para: 135, 136, and 140), and 4.9 (para: 204 and 205)

Lesson Learned #3:	Technical success does not guarantee sustainability without financing and institutional anchoring. <i>(Sustainability and Scaling / Institutional and Financial Viability)</i>
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Context/comment:	Strong technical outputs and governance improvements are insufficient to secure long-term impact without sustainable financing mechanisms and institutional anchoring. Despite strong technical outputs and improved governance practices, the absence of a sustainable financing mechanism and weak institutional embedding at the national level constrain long-term impact. To ensure biodiversity and ecosystem outcomes, protected investment in financial sustainability and institutional continuity is critical even when technical delivery is strong. Future initiatives could pair technical outputs with long-term financing strategies, government budget integration, and formal institutional mandates to ensure that strategies, infrastructure, and systems remain operational after external funding ends.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Chapter 4.8 (para: 188,189,191,and 192)

Lesson Learned #4:	Gender inclusion requires systematic design, not symbolic participation <i>(Gender Equality and Social Inclusion)</i>
Context/comment:	Numerical participation of women does not automatically translate into empowerment or livelihood impact. While women's participation exceeded numerical targets in some activities in the project, inconsistent planning, weak gender analysis, including insufficient attention to deep-rooted cultural norms and prevailing gender roles, and lack of follow-up limited substantive empowerment and livelihood impact. Hence, enhanced gender outcomes require structured strategies, disaggregated monitoring, and context-sensitive livelihood design; participation alone is insufficient. Future projects may integrate gender analysis considering culturally informed gender strategies and context tailored livelihood approaches that address structural constraints at design stage, define measurable inclusion outcomes, allocate targeted resources, and provide ongoing capacity and market support so women's participation translates into tangible benefits and sustained empowerment.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Chapter 4.9.3 (para: 209- 214)

Lesson Learned #5:	Monitoring systems must evolve from output tracking to sustainability and learning functions <i>(Results-Based Management and Learning)</i>
Context/comment:	Monitoring systems that focus primarily on output delivery limit adaptive learning and sustainability assessment. In complex ecosystem projects, M&E frameworks must evolve to track outcomes, behavioural change, and post-handover functionality to inform adaptive management and long-term impact pathways. In the project, monitoring effectively captured physical outputs and activity delivery but was weaker in tracking outcomes, post-handover

	functionality, and long-term ecological or livelihood impacts. In complex ecosystem projects, therefore, M&E systems must evolve dynamically to track sustainability, behavioural change, and risk, not only implementation progress. Projects could design adaptive MEL systems that track behavioural change, institutional uptake, and long-term environmental outcomes, embedding feedback loops that inform management decisions, policy learning, and scaling of effective practices.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Chapter 4.7 (para: 175 and 178)

5.3 Recommendations

260. Based on the findings of the evaluation, the following recommendations are made for future UNEP supported projects in the island.

Recommendation #1:	Strengthen Community Capacities through a continuous, applied learning cycle aligned with UNEP’s community engagement principles. <u>Actionable measures:</u> Future interventions should adopt an end-to-end capacity development approach that includes participatory needs assessments, capacity gap assessment including gender considerations that account for existing traditional belief systems and gender roles, monitoring of project activities and results, small scale financial management through tailored training, hands-on mentoring, and structured post-handover support. Capacity building should also strengthen skills for livelihoods improvement, community enterprise management, and inclusive co-management of natural resources, ensuring participation, inclusivity, and accountability.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Capacity-building efforts were uneven in quality and sustainability, particularly for livelihood and community-managed activities. While training improved knowledge and awareness, insufficient needs assessments, limited follow-up, and lack of post-handover technical support undermined effectiveness and long-term use of assets and skills.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Chapters 4.4, 4.9.2 and 4.9.5
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Partner level
Responsibility:	Government of Yemen; UNEP (Task Manager); and Executing Agencies.
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Carry out immediately once the project starts implementation (within a year)

Recommendation #2:	Strengthen EPA Socotra as the Central Coordination Authority <u>Actionable measures:</u> Future project should invest decisively in strengthening EPA Socotra’s institutional, technical, and convening capacity for biodiversity conservation including PAs administration, supervision and management. Formalize its role as the mandatory coordination hub for all biodiversity and environmental interventions on the archipelago, including
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	leadership of a multi-partner coordination committee to harmonize planning, implementation, and monitoring across actors.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Weak institutional coordination and fragmented implementation—especially during the early project phase—led to duplication, inconsistent standards, and missed opportunities for system-wide learning and scaling.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Chapter 4.1.4, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.6, 4.8, 4.9.1, 4.9.2 and 4.9.5
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Partner level
Responsibility:	Government of Yemen (EPA); and UNEP – task manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Carry out immediately once the project starts implementation (within a year)

Recommendation #3:	Prioritize and Scale Conservation-Friendly Livelihoods through Community Empowerment <u>Actionable measures:</u> Scale up conservation-compatible livelihood models piloted by the project—such as community-managed ecotourism, native species nurseries, and sustainable resource use—using existing action plans (e.g., turtles, vultures). Strengthen CBO governance, financial management, and market access to ensure local ownership, income generation, and alignment with conservation outcomes.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Livelihood interventions showed mixed results due to weak design, inadequate consultation, and lack of market and operational linkages. However, pilots demonstrated strong potential where livelihoods aligned with conservation objectives and community ownership.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Chapters 4.4.1, 4.4.2, 4.6, 4.8, 4.9.1, 4.9.2 and 4.9.5
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Partner level
Responsibility:	EPA Socotra; local authorities; CBOs; future UNEP/GEF-supported projects
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Consider at project design or inception phase and carry out immediately once the project starts implementation (within a year)

Recommendation #4:	Recommendation 4: Future UNEP projects must systematically integrate a rights-based and gender-responsive framework that is sensitive to local cultural context. <u>Actionable measures:</u> In line with UNEP’s gender framework, future projects should embed participatory gender analysis into project design, including examination of traditional belief systems, existing gender roles and structural barriers to support gender equality and women. This must be followed by inclusive consultation and sustained support for women’s associations through culturally appropriate, need-based interventions, post-training coaching, and linkages to markets and decision-making platforms.
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Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Capacity gains were uneven, with women-focused livelihood support constrained by limited consultation, weak follow-up, and insufficient attention to gender-specific barriers and rights-based participation.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Chapter 4.4.1, 4.4.2 and 4.9.3
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	UNEP- Wide and Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP (policy and programme division – Gender and Safeguard Unit ; Task manager) and Executing Agencies
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Consider at project design or inception phase and carry out immediately once the project starts implementation (within a year)

Recommendation #5:	Strengthen Monitoring, Knowledge Management, and Learning for Sustainability <u>Actionable measures:</u> Strengthen M&E frameworks to track outcomes, behavioural change, and sustainability indicators, including gender and inclusion. Establish a simple, locally hosted knowledge management system to document lessons, support adaptive learning, and inform future programming at island and national levels.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Monitoring systems focused largely on outputs in the project, with limited tracking of outcomes, and sustainability. Weak knowledge management systems constrained learning, replication, and evidence-based decision-making and this require an improvement in the project M & E system.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Chapters 4.4, 4.7, 4.9.2 and 4.9.6
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP; EPA Socotra; future projects and partners
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Consider at project design or inception phase and carry out immediately once the project starts implementation (within a year)

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the evaluator(s), where appropriate

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Key strategic questions, Para 25, Page xvi	I think the reason for partial gender integration is more related to local traditions, than to weak planning and monitoring by the project team.	Partially Agree: Agree that the deep-rooted traditional belief systems and prevailing gender roles in Socotra has also affected the gender integration in the project. But it is also responsibility of the project to integrate these issues through gender gap analysis. This part was not adequately addressed in this project. Based on your suggestion, I have added the cultural practices and traditional believe systems in lesson learned, recommendations and main report as well. In overall, gender planning and monitoring was weak.	The text has been slightly revised. The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Para 4, Page xvii	USD 15,142,521 -> This is misleading value over estimated ! but given as a fact here.	Clarification: I agree this seems huge amount but for the GEF, the total amount is their fund plus the planned co-financing. This is how it is calculated. I just followed the general logic.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Para 44, Page 2	Mendel University (Czech Republic) -> This partner provide nothing in RSCN phase, it should be clear	Clarification: Thank you for the information. While appreciate the information, co-financing reporting in this project is highly confusing and inconsistent. I received a report from UNEP indicating that Mendel university provided 125,000 USD cofinancing in the first phase and 60,000 USD in the second phase (RSCN time on component 3-SLM) whereas planned cofinancing was 80,000 USD. I was expecting a genuine reporting from UNEP and leave it to UNEP to decide.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Para 47, Page 2	USD 19,897,087 -> it is expurgated, this can bring a very bad reputation when reached the	Clarification: Thank you for your information. I think there is a confusion on this. The actual fund is 4.8 M USD, and 15.04 M USD is just an in-kind cofinancing (I am sure this is well known to all). This is how the project financial reporting is	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

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	local stakeholders. A foot note can be added here telling that this figure is not true	generally prepared. The same approach is also used for GEF funded project.	
Context, Para 69 and 70, Page10	We discussed this during the draft findings' presentation: it could be the case that staff and personnel costs were spent on the implementation of the components (i.e. to conduct studies, assessments, management plans etc.). Thus, please see if the percentage is accurate.	Addressed: No change needed. This is based on the financial report provided by the UNEP finance team (5 th Nov 2025), and no further classification or categorization is carried from the evaluator side. As be the per analysis, the percentage is correct.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Evaluation Findings, Table 14, Page 35-36	In the Summary of the document/upper sections of the report, it was highlighted that the local stakeholder engagement was sufficient. Should we still consider it as a weak point?	Clarification: In the text above in ES, it is mentioned that the result framework focused on community engagement, it does not mean that is the case during project implementation. Our interviews and analysis showed that the level of engagement and inclusion considering the local context (including the traditional gender roles) was not adequate. This is what we are trying to reflect here.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Para 129, Page 34	This paragraph is written in very diplomatic way that put all the "weakness" on the EPA shoulders, while the fact that most "group of researchers= International groups, are working with ignorance to EPA on purpose, and they knew how to do it in their way, they manage to pay people, to facilitate their work, while come under Tourists Visa without any proper arrangement with EPA Aden or Socotra. This need to be reformatlised, with advance to EPA to set a protocol "suggested by the project in the lesson learned report.	Partially agree: Thanks for the clarification. We agree the points you have mentioned (this was also raised by some other respondents) and well received. The issue has been integrated in the text. However, we also believe that the role of EPA or government could have been better.	The evaluator has responded to the comment and also addressed the comments in Para 129.
Output 1.1.1, Page 37	Level of delivery: Partially delivered -> it does not reflect the truth, as RSCN started systematically with PA, and those 4 PAs were	Disagree: The assessment of partially delivered remains appropriate. While priority PAs were assessed effectively, the indicator requires coverage of existing PAs. Incomplete	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

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	the target, so it can be modified to fully delivered. On the other hand, the EA is not responsible for the political conflict that prevent it to reach other parts of the island.	geographic coverage (Abdul Kori and Samha) and lack of systematic updates mean the indicator was not fully met. External constraints are acknowledged, but ratings are based on achievement against agreed logframe targets, regardless of attribution. The field verification based on the stakeholder consultations also suggest the same.	
Page.40, Evaluation Findings, Table 15	In Table 15, there are several conclusions about "Partially delivered". If we come up with such conclusions, it is important to understand if this partial delivery is due to the project team/workplan or due to the external factors, on which project has limited impact. Here is an example of an external factor.	(There is no disagreement on my findings, so clarification is provided.) Clarification: I appreciate your viewpoint. The rating of “partially delivered” was assigned where evidence indicated that some planned outputs were produced but did not fully meet the defined output indicators, milestones, or expected scope. The evaluation tried to all the indicators and progress made (from the project progress report and out consultations and field observation). We noted progress reports primarily documented activities implemented rather than reporting systematically against output indicators and milestones, while the final technical report largely focused on completion of activities without fully assessing achievements against output or outcome indicators. Consequently, the evaluation relied on triangulation of available documents, field discussions, and key informant interviews (KIIs). Evidence suggests that partial delivery may be attributed to both internal project factors and external contextual influences. However, even where external factors played a role, good project management practice would require these risks to be identified in the project’s risk assessment framework, accompanied by mitigation measures and adaptive responses. Such risks, mitigation actions, and	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

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		resulting adjustments were not consistently reflected in the available progress reports. For example, in one output area, technical studies and stakeholder consultations were completed as planned, but the intended policy adoption or formal endorsement had not yet occurred, resulting in partial delivery. Similarly, several capacity-building activities were implemented, but the planned scale or coverage of target institutions was not fully achieved. These situations justify the rating of “partially delivered.”	
Output 4.2.2, Page 47	However, despite these achievements, no formal communication and awareness strategy document was developed as originally planned. -> there is a communication, and awareness strategy developed by the first phase, then updated at RSCN phase, implemented and evaluated.	Partially agree: Thank you for the clarification regarding the communication and awareness strategy. The text has been revised accordingly. However, the strategic framework remained partially adequate for the following reasons: First, while a strategy document existed, its full-scale development and application were limited. There was no systematic measurement of awareness increase against a defined baseline, making it difficult to assess the extent of change achieved. Second, field consultations revealed that the strategy was not sufficiently grounded in local languages, cultural contexts, and traditional knowledge systems, which reduced its resonance and accessibility. Third, stakeholders indicated that the strategy was not fully operationalized to guide how information was generated, shared, or applied, resulting in fragmented rather than systematic communication outcomes.	The evaluator has responded to the comment and certain points were addressed in output 4.2.2
Page 49 Narrative Assessment	Production of an online data portal does not constitute an acceptable outcome in its own right. It is cited as such, but later (page 54 and elsewhere) it is noted as being not updated, with no long-term plans for hosting or operational guidelines. In my opinion this was	Partially agree. Thanks for the input. In page 49, the report mainly focused on the updating conservation data baseline – to be used for portal) and the page 54 description slightly different which focused on data generation and storing in the portal.	The consultant has responded to the comment, and the narrative assessment

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	due to an erroneous long-term belief by some external stakeholders that an all-encompassing data tool would solve all issues of environmental planning and become embedded in local planning – which was not the case when this was done previously on Socotra and is not the case now. In my opinion this was a design flaw that sought to develop such a tool in a single location rather than ensuring expertise across multiple sectors were properly consulted, and tools designed specifically for outcomes and outputs determined by local governance.	I have now slightly revised statement to clarify the meaning and purpose (by referring PIR 2024).	has been slightly revised
Page. 50-57	According to the UNEP evaluation criteria, a rating of "Satisfactory" for the achievement of project outcomes is justified when the outcomes most important for attaining intermediate states are fully achieved, even if others are only partially realized. Based on the terminal evaluation report, the project fully achieved the Core Strategic Pillars: The project fully achieved the three most critical foundational outcomes: the BD-PAM strategy (Outcome 1.1), the IAS management strategy (Outcome 2.1), and the SLM strategy (Outcome 3.1). Because these strategies represent the technical and participatory "mechanisms" required for the project's biodiversity conservation and land use objectives which is the main goal of the project. Moderately Satisfactory -> do not agree, as the evaluators did not take the context of the	Disagree: Clarification: I appreciate your point. However, I have the following points to make. The overall rating of Moderately Satisfactory (MS) is maintained in accordance with the UNEP Evaluation Office rating guidance for achievement of project outcomes. According to the guidelines, a rating of Satisfactory (S) is assigned when: (i) the outcomes most important for attaining intermediate states are fully achieved; (ii) the assumptions for the transition from outputs to outcomes hold; and (iii) the drivers required to sustain the transition are in place. A rating of Moderately Satisfactory (MS) applies when: (i) the most important outcomes are only partially achieved; (ii) the assumptions for the transition from outputs to outcomes hold only partially; and (iii) the drivers supporting the transition are only partially in place. While the project successfully developed key strategic frameworks (BD-PAM, IAS, and SLM strategies), several	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

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	working environment into consideration, otherwise the rate will be at least satisfactory	outcomes relating to operationalization, institutional coordination, knowledge management, and sustainable financing were only partially achieved, and Outcome 4.3 on financing mechanisms was not achieved. In addition, key assumptions—such as stable institutional coordination and operational financing mechanisms—did not fully hold, and several drivers for sustaining outcomes (e.g., financing systems, fully institutionalized coordination frameworks) remain weak or incomplete. Given that more than two-thirds of outcomes were partially achieved or not achieved, the evidence does not meet the conditions required for a Satisfactory rating. Therefore, the overall outcome rating of Moderately Satisfactory is considered appropriate and consistent with UNEP evaluation guidance.	
Outcome 4.2, narrative assessment, Page 56	2nd para: no formal agreements, curricula, or implementation records were available for verification. ->Not True, there are a special curricula prepared and implemented over two years.	Partially agree: Thanks for the feedback. Here the formal agreement was meant to formal agreement related to data sharing. I have revised the text.	The evaluator has responded to the comment and certain points were addressed in outcome 4.2
Table 17, Page 58-59	Proportion of intermediate states achieved : “sustainable finance is absent” -> beyond the project capacity due to the political conflict	Clarification: Thanks. We acknowledge that it was mainly outside the control of the project. Here referred the progress against the log frame.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Para 169 Page 63	In several locations, sewing initiatives yielded limited results due to insufficient training, non-functional equipment, and unsuitable sites. -> Regarding ‘equipment’, do not forget that the budget were consumed in the first phase.	Partially agree. Thanks for the info. It was well acknowledged but the evaluation reported the context that was observed during the evaluation process.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

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Footnote 50, Page 63	'and revision of conservation zoning plan. It is also noted that RSCN mentioned that they did not receive all reports from earlier EA.' -> again, the former EA did its best to deliver what it had, but due the former conflict with the international partners especially Mendel University they did not deliver any data to the former EA and likewise to RSCN.	Partially agree. See above the clarification. I have also adjusted the text to partially integrated the point raised.	The evaluator has responded to the comment and tried to address the comment in Para 170 and footnote 48.
Para 170, Page 63	The truth is , it is not SGN who did not deliver, but their international partners.	Partially agree. Thanks. It should be noted that as the designated executing agency, SGN bore contractual responsibility to manage partner relations and ensure deliverable handover. When such challenges arose, they should have been documented through the Project Steering Committee and reflected in PIRs. However, no evidence of such reporting or formal discussion was found during the evaluation, limiting visibility into the issue and accountability mechanisms. I have however partially addressed this issue with revised text.	The evaluator has responded to the comment and tried to address the comment in Para 170 and footnote 48.
Para 171, Page 64	The revision of the Socotra Conservation Zoning Plan has been considered a critical requirement ever since the original SCZP was developed and published in 2000 and a number of proposed revisions have been developed since then. While the evaluation report mentions that this has been produced it is difficult to judge the effectiveness of this as it is not available to most stakeholders as far as I am aware. There seems to be little awareness of how this revision was achieved – simply producing it does not constitute an acceptable outcome long-term. It would be useful to	Clarification: Thanks for important observation. We have consulted with a huge number of ex-staff and government officials on this, and people generally agree that SCZP was developed and handed-over to EPA. It was also noted from EPA that they started using the tool (although assessing the level of use was not possible in this evaluation). I agree with the use part is really important. In our analysis see (outcome 1.1), we have reported any outcome from the plan. In overall, we also felt the used of the tools and learning should have been increased so overall the outcome – of this part was considered as 'moderately satisfactory'.	The consultant has responded to the comment.

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	mention in the report what is the timescale for this being operationalized in Yemeni Law and what plans are in place for routine monitoring and adaptation – especially given the approval of another GEF programme on Socotra.		
Pra 186, Page 66	Socio-political sustainability assessed as “likely” is somewhat disappointing and should be mentioned in the context of the amount of prior external finance apportioned to Socotra over the past three decades. The examples give are highly localised.	Disagree: Thank you for the comment. We acknowledge the point regarding substantial historical external financing in Socotra and agree that sustainability should be interpreted cautiously. However, the “Likely” rating reflects evidence gathered during field missions and stakeholder consultations, which indicate improving enabling conditions, including reduced conflict intensity at the time of evaluation and increasing government engagement. EPA and local stakeholders demonstrated continued use of project-supported tools and expressed commitment to sustaining results. While examples cited are localized, they provide concrete evidence of behavioural change and institutional uptake. Importantly, emerging local institutions and anticipated follow-on support, including new GEF investments, suggest a reasonable probability of continuation, though risks related to broader political dynamics remain.	The consultant has responded to the comment.
Para 18, Page 67	It is surprising that financial sustainability is assessed as moderately likely in the absence of addressing this in any systematic way, except through highly localised activities that depend on tourism – which due to current conflict is essentially zero as has been sporadically the case over the last ten years. At some point, those designing such programmes must look beyond “ecotourism” as a catch-all income generator – as that was developed extensively	Disagree: Thank you for this important observation. I acknowledge your concern regarding the reliance on ecotourism as a sustainability mechanism, given the ongoing conflict and historical challenges with this approach. However, the Moderately Likely rating is based on several contextual factors observed during field consultations. Local communities have initiated self-sustaining activities, albeit at limited scale, and expressed confidence in continuing project-supported initiatives using skills and institutional capacities strengthened by the project. Government respondents indicated recent positive changes and	The consultant has responded to the comment.

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	in the 1990s and later but has repeatedly failed to deliver for a variety of reasons.	willingness to devise support mechanisms. Additionally, stakeholders noted that forthcoming GEF funding enhances local-level sustainability prospects. While national-level financing mechanisms remain absent, the combination of local ownership, institutional capacity, and anticipated external support justifies a Moderately Likely rating for financial sustainability at the local level.	
Para 193-195, Page 68	It should be noted that databases do not constitute policy and planning tools – they are simply data gathering and storage mechanisms with no guarantee they will be used in any practical or beneficial way. Further, the issue of retaining staff at EPA and other responsible authorities is also related to how projects operate – by employing existing EPA staff on the projects at inflated salaries in the local context, and at the end of the project staff either return to extremely poor local salaries that are unpredictable or they seek opportunities elsewhere using the skills developed during the project. This is a well-known cyclical issue and requires addressing.	Partially agree: Thank you for these critical observations. I agree that databases alone do not constitute policy and planning tools, and I have revised the text to clarify that stakeholder-reported usage, not the databases themselves, informs the assessment. I also agree on the cyclical challenge of inflated project salaries undermining long-term retention. This point has been integrated into the revised text. While these are genuine constraints, the Moderately Likely rating reflects stakeholder-reported ownership, demonstrated use of planning tools, and community-level institutional gains that exist alongside the structural challenges you rightly highlight.	The consultant has responded to the comment and the relevant paragraphs have been slightly revised.
Evaluation Findings, Para 224 Page 73	Some PSC meetings minutes were provided by the RSCN.	Clarification. I got a couple of notes, but they are not signed or formally approved by the PSC members. I informed this but no additional document available to review. This has been reflected in the text.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Para 248, Page 77	While coordination improved during Phase II, the project did not fundamentally address structural capacity deficits or long-term	Disagree: Thank you for the observation. While addressing structural capacity deficits and long-term financing may indeed be beyond the project's direct control, these elements were explicitly included in the project's original design and results framework. If such objectives were unattainable, this	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

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	financing constraints. -> This is not applicable, and beyond the project capacity.	should have been identified through risk assessments, discussed at the Project Steering Committee, and formally revised in project documentation. As these adjustments were not made, the evaluation reports against the established plan. I have however slightly revised the text for clarity.	
Section 4.9.6 Page.73	The project's successful placement in high-profile international media, such as the CNN feature on the Project's achievements on Socotra's Dragon Blood trees, provides concrete evidence of "well-targeted" communication that effectively reached a global audience,. This international recognition complements the project's delivery of high-quality technical guides and sensitization campaigns that significantly improved environmental literacy among local schools and fishers,. Such widespread exposure demonstrates that communication efforts were "highly effective" in driving change and influencing attitudes beyond technical outputs, justifying a rating upgrade. https://arabic.cnn.com/travel/video/2024/11/21/v155366-socotra-blood-dragon-trees	Disagree: Clarification: The rating of Moderately Satisfactory (MS) for communication and public awareness is consistent with UNEP Evaluation Office guidance. A Satisfactory (S) rating requires evidence that most key audiences have strong awareness of project messages, communication channels were very frequent and interactive, well monitored for evidence of effect, adequately financed, and that a communication strategy was fully implemented. In this project, communication activities—such as technical guides, local awareness campaigns, and international media coverage (e.g., CNN feature)—demonstrate positive outreach and visibility. However, several criteria for a Satisfactory rating were not fully met. Evidence of systematic monitoring of communication effectiveness, consistent feedback mechanisms, and structured experience-sharing platforms was limited. In addition, the knowledge management system and data portal were not sustainably hosted or maintained, and documentation of learning and outreach impacts remained partial. While awareness increased among some key local audiences, evidence that most target groups developed strong and sustained awareness is limited. Therefore, communication efforts were well targeted to some audiences and moderately effective, supporting the Moderately Satisfactory rating.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

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Para 253, Page 79	Establishment of tree nurseries may be a good thing, but without proper record keeping of the provenance of seeds and seedlings and good knowledge of genetic diversity across the island these approaches may do more harm than good as assessment of the effects of inbreeding depression etc have not been made. Further, the establishment of fenced areas is contrary to many logical arguments in conservation theory – it forces exclusion on local communities (there are examples of fence removal on Socotra) and further concentrates excluded animals into smaller surrounding areas thus re-focusing the underlying issue rather than addressing it. It also requires long term monitoring and maintenance by local actors. It is not good practice to mention such activities as successes simply because they have been completed. This is especially important in mangrove systems that are multi-faceted in terms of water availability and movement. Further, a focus on a small number of species, while looking good for PR, needs to be backed up with strong research to determine the positive benefits at an ecosystem level.	Partially agree: Thank you for this rigorous and technically substantive comment. I agree that nursery establishment and fencing are not unqualified successes and carry potential ecological and social risks, including genetic provenance issues, community exclusion, and displaced grazing pressure. The revised text now incorporates these counterarguments while retaining the original emphasis on the project's intended logic and observed local incentives. The evaluation does not claim ecosystem-level benefits but rather reports completed activities and stakeholder perceptions. Your points appropriately caution against presenting implementation as equivalent to ecological success, and the revised language reflects this necessary nuance.	The consultant has responded to the comment and the relevant paragraph has been slightly revised.
Section 5.3	Please re-assess the recommendations. The mixed responsibility of UNEP and the EA or the government cannot be achievable in a completed project. Recommendations should be formulated simpler and should have a single owner. I have provided the comments on recommendations earlier but happy to discuss if needed. The evaluators should assess UNEP's gender and social environmental	Partially agree: Clarification: Thank you for the comment. I agree in principle that recommendations should be as clear and actionable as possible and, where feasible, identify a primary responsible entity. I trust the recommendations are specific and useful for future UNEP projects. Please also note that the recommendations were also intentionally framed to support future programming in Socotra rather than actions within the already completed	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

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	safeguards framework. Recommendation 4 has already been addressed.	project. The evaluation findings indicate that addressing the identified issues, particularly those related to conservation management, community engagement, and institutional capacity—requires coordinated action among multiple actors, including United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the executing agency, relevant government institutions, and local stakeholders. During stakeholder consultations, several recommendations emerged as shared priorities that inherently depend on joint planning and collaboration. Assigning a single owner in such cases could oversimplify the institutional realities and potentially limit the effectiveness of implementation. Moreover, specifying very detailed institutional responsibilities at this stage may be premature, as the configuration of implementing partners for any future project is not yet defined and may evolve during project design and partner selection. Therefore, while the recommendations aim to remain clear and actionable, they are deliberately framed at a level that maintains flexibility for future project formulation, allowing responsibilities to be refined once the implementing arrangements are confirmed.	
General	The spelling used throughout is “Socotra” with a “c”. In our own (and others) work, we always use and encourage people to use the spelling “Soqotra” with a “q”. This is because there is no equivalent of “c” in either Arabic or the Modern South Arabian languages of which Soqotri is one. Many researchers use “c” because it is more prevalent online and therefore is recognised by search engines, but we would	Not integrated. Beyond evaluator’s scope. Clarification. Thank you. While I appreciate genuine feedback, I am not able to follow this at this stage as whole projects and other documentations refer ‘c’.	EOU acknowledges the comment and suggestion. However, to remain consistent with terminology used in other documents, we will continue to use “c.” For your information,

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
	encourage the change to a more accurate Anglicisation of the term.		this comment will be retained in the report.
One comment related to Page 50-57, Page 87	While the project successfully developed key strategic frameworks (BD-PAM, IAS, and SLM strategies), several outcomes relating to operationalization, institutional coordination, knowledge management, and sustainable financing were only partially achieved, and Outcome 4.3 on financing mechanisms was not achieved. In addition, key assumptions—such as stable institutional coordination and operational financing mechanisms—did not fully hold, and several drivers for sustaining outcomes (e.g., financing systems, fully institutionalized coordination frameworks) remain weak or incomplete. Given that more than two-thirds of outcomes were partially achieved or not achieved, the evidence does not meet the conditions required for a Satisfactory rating. Therefore, the overall outcome rating of Moderately Satisfactory is considered appropriate and consistent with UNEP evaluation guidance. -> Strongly disagree, justification is out of context, as the project environment and conditions do not allow this kind of thinking. Those that partially not achieved are questionable as they were modified in coordination with all project partners / and UNEP so we consider them achieved fully. while this "not achieved" is due to conditions that are far away of project	Disagree: Thank you for the information. While we fully recognize the significant contributions made by the project and the challenging context in which it operated, it is already respectfully clarified the basis for the "Moderately Satisfactory" rating (see other comments). Please also note that the evaluation covered the project start to end (2016 to 2025). Challenges are a common part of project implementation. However, when risks fall outside a project's control, it is expected that they be managed through documented risk assessments and, where necessary, formal revisions to the project document following agreed procedures. Our evaluation was conducted in line with the project's logical framework, including any approved revisions, and the evaluation criteria provided by the UNEP Evaluation Office. Based on these established references, we consider the "Moderately Satisfactory" rating to be justified.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
	capacity, while UNEP and project owner (Gov. of Yemen) are also aware about it. So, depending on these evidences is weak. Again, Disagree with the final judgment.		

ANNEX II. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
Strategic Questions		
Q1: To what extent has the project contributed to improving unique biodiversity conservation and strengthening protected areas management in the Socotra Archipelago? Were the protected area management plans elaborated? (cross-reference with the 9 evaluation questions: effectiveness – availability of outputs and achievement of project outcomes)	Primary data collection such as KIIs and site visits and desk review	• Project documents/reports • Interviews with the project team and the stakeholders and the beneficiaries • Observations by the evaluation team
Q2: How effective have the project interventions been in strengthening the capacity of local government/institutions to manage and protect the archipelago's biodiversity and management? (cross-reference with the 9 evaluation questions: strategic relevance; effectiveness – availability of outputs and achievement of project outcomes; and stakeholder participation and cooperation)	Primary data collection such as KIIs, FGDs and site visits and desk review	
Q3: To what extent have the monitoring, inventory and management of invasive alien species (IAS) been improved with support from the project's activities and interventions? (cross-reference with the 9 evaluation questions: strategic relevance, effectiveness, availability of outputs and achievement of project outcomes)	Primary data collection (i.e. KIIs) and desk review	
Q4: To what extent have the awareness campaigns and community involvement initiatives been in fostering local stewardship and participation in conservation efforts? What strategies can be employed to enhance community engagement and support? (cross-reference with the 9 evaluation questions: strategic relevance; effectiveness – availability of outputs and achievement of project outcomes; and stakeholder participation and cooperation)	Primary data collection (KIIs, FGDs and site visits) and desk review	
Q5: In terms of integrating conservation efforts with sustainable land management/land degradation initiatives, how effectively has the project initiated the alignment of conservation goals with the socio-economic needs of the local population to ensure long-term success? (cross-reference with the 9 evaluation questions: strategic relevance; effectiveness – availability of outputs and achievement of project outcomes; and stakeholder participation and cooperation)	Primary data collection (KIIs, FGDs and site visits) and desk review	
Q6: To what extent has the project performance been affected by the integration/absence of gender considerations during project implementation? (cross-reference with the 9 evaluation questions: strategic relevance; effectiveness – availability of outputs and achievement of project outcomes; stakeholder participation and cooperation; and responsiveness to human rights and gender equity)	Primary data (KIIs, FGDs and site visits) and desk review	

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
Strategic Relevance: (Key question: To what extent were the Project interventions and objectives relevant and suited to the priorities, policies and strategies of the target groups, implementing agencies and donors?)		
Alignment to the UNEP Medium-term strategy (MTS), programme of Work (POW), and other strategic priorities - Was the Project in line with UNEP's Mandate and how? - Is the Project responding to UNEP strategies and programmes of work, and how (qualitative and quantitative contributions)?	Desk review and primary data collection (KIIs)	- UNEP publications (MTS, PoW) - ProDoc - progress reports - Interviews with Task / Project Manager) - UNEP publications (including BSP, S- SC)
Alignment to Donor Strategic Priorities Was the Project responding to the GEF's Strategic priorities, and how?	Desk review and primary data collection (KIIs)	- ProDoc - Reports/progress reports - Interviews with UNEP staff, Project/stakeholders
Relevance to Regional, Sub-Regional and National Environmental Priorities - Was the Project responding to the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries/sub-regions/regions and was aligned with SDGs/UNDAF, and climate policies? - Did the project contribute to national policy frameworks relevant to project objectives?	Desk review and primary data collection (KIIs)	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex project staff, and national project stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with the government representatives
Complementarity with existing interventions - To what extent did the Project, at the design and/or mobilization phase, take account of ongoing initiatives? - To what extent did the Project team make efforts to ensure that the Project was complementary to other UNEP (regional and sub-programmes) and other interventions (i. e. other UN organizations, one-UN programming), and optimize any synergies?	Primary data collection and desk review (KIIs)	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff, national project stakeholders, and communities/catchment management forum

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
		Interviews/surveys with the government representatives
Quality of Project Design (How adequate was the Project design to achieve the Project Outputs, Outcomes and Objectives?)		
Relevance and logic of Project Objectives, Activities, Outputs and Outcomes according to Project Quality Design template - To what extent was the project design to achieve the project outputs, outcomes and objectives? - To what extent the activities, outputs and proposed outcomes, and their indicators logically linked? What could have been improved?	Desk review and primary data (KIIs)	- ProDoc, including the Project Review Committee review sheet - Interviews with Task/Project managers and stakeholders /communities
Nature of External Context (To what extent the project faced external factors which might affect project implementation?)		
Aspects related to external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval) - Has the Project faced an unusually challenging operational environment that negatively affected project performance, such as: - Conflicts or security issues? - Risks of natural disasters? and Government instability? - To what extent did the external context support or hamper the project implementation? - How did the project team mitigate and respond to changes in the external context?	Primary data (KIIs) and desk review	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff, national project stakeholders, and communities - Interviews/surveys with the government representatives
Effectiveness (Key question: To what extent did the projects achieve the expected outputs and Outcomes?)		
Availability of Outputs⁵⁶		
- To what extent has the produced outputs and which factors contributed to the achievement of Outputs (and/or what were the reasons Outputs were not produced)? - Were outputs and milestones delivered on time and as planned? What is the quality of these Outputs? If not, what were the reasons for the delay/changes? - How useful did beneficiaries find the outputs produced by the project? - What level of ownership of outputs among the beneficiaries?	Primary data collection (KIIs, FGDs and site visits) and desk review	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff, national project stakeholders,

⁵⁶ Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2023)

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
- To what extent have the Outputs contributed to their planned Outcomes? - Did the assumptions in the ToC hold or were adaptations put in place to mitigate any risks where assumptions didn't hold?		communities, and the government representatives
Achievement of Project Outcomes⁵⁷		
- To what extent have Outcomes (as per the reconstructed TOC) been achieved and what evidence support these achievements? - Are these Outcomes a result of Project intervention? - Would these have been achieved without the direct involvement of UNEP? Why? - What were the major challenges witnessed and what learning can be drawn? - Did the assumptions in the ToC hold or were adaptations put in place to mitigate any risks where assumptions didn't hold?	Primary data collection (KIIs, FGDs and site visits) and desk review	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff, national project stakeholders, and the government representatives - Interviews/surveys with communities
Likelihood of impact		
- What is the likelihood of expected positive (intended/unintended) impacts to be realized? - Were there any (possible) negative effects identified in the Project? - To what extent does the project play a catalytic role and/or promote the scaling up or replication of Project results? - Is the Project likely to contribute to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals, and/or the intermediate states reflected in UNEP's MTS, POW and national strategic priorities in Yemen?	Primary data collection (KIIs, FGDs and site visits) and desk review	- Likelihood of Impact Assessment - Reconstructed ToC at Design and Evaluation - ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with ex-project staff, project stakeholders, and government representatives

⁵⁷ An outcome is a change at institutional level, or changes in behaviors, attitudes or conditions achieved from the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of outputs by intended beneficiaries (UNEP, 2023).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
		Interviews/surveys with communities
Financial Management (Key question: How conducive was the financial management to the achievement of project Outputs and Outcomes?)		
Adherence to UNEP’s financial policies and procedures Was the Project implemented in compliance with UN financial management standards and procedures?	Primary data collection (KIIs) and desk review	- Project budget - Financial reports, audit reports - Interview with UNEP Fund Management Officer, ex-project staff, and Project partners that received financial support - UNEP staff
Completeness of financial information - What was the actual expenditure across the life of the Project? - To what extent were the projects’ expenditures in line with the corresponding approved budget? - To what extent the financial documentation follows the UNEP’s standard procedures? - How effective is the coordination among the project and finance team? - What changes, if any, have been made to the projects’ budget and why?	Primary data collection (KIIs) and desk review	
Communication between financial and Project management staff To what extent did the quality of communication between project management and financial management staff affect project efficiency?	Primary data collection (KIIs, FGDs and site visits) and desk review	
Efficiency (Key question: To what extent and how were cost-effectiveness and timeliness considered during Project implementation? How did these factors affect project performance?)		
Cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution - To what extent does the project deliver the maximum results from the given resources? - Were any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed-upon project timeframe? - Did the Project make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, etc. to increase project efficiency? How? - What factors have caused delays (if any) and have affected project execution, costs and effectiveness? How? - Were activities leading to the completion of outputs sequenced efficiently? - What was the role of the Project’s Governance structure and management approach on its efficiency?	Primary data collection (KII and site observation) and desk review	- ProDoc - Mid-term review reports - Project budget - Financial reports - Monitoring reports - Interviews with ex-project staff
Monitoring and Reporting (Key question: How were monitoring, evaluation and reporting used to support, adapt and improve Project implementation?)		
Monitoring of project implementation		
- To what extent were the monitoring plans operational? - To what extent did the monitoring system facilitate the timely tracking of results and progress toward Project Objectives? - To what extent was the information generated by the monitoring system, (such as baseline) used to adapt and improve Project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability? - To what extent did the stakeholders/beneficiaries participate in the M & E process?	Primary data collection (KIIs) and desk review	- ProDoc - Mid-term review reports - Project budget - Financial reports - Monitoring reports

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
To what extent were the allocated funds for monitoring used to support monitoring?		- Interviews with Ex-project staff - UNEP Staff
Project reporting		
- Have the 6-monthly status and other reports been delivered on time? - Whether the project followed the established standard process to ensure quality and accurate reporting (such as generating evidence, tracking results)? - To what extent have other UNEP and donor reporting requirements (such as disaggregated groups) been fulfilled?	Primary data collection (KIIs) and desk review	- ProDoc - Mid-term review reports - Project budget - Financial reports - Monitoring reports - Interviews with Ex-project staff, and UNEP Staff
Sustainability (Key question: How do socio-political, financial and institutional factors affect the probability of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the projects end?)		
Socio-political sustainability		
- To what extent do the existing social and political factors support sustainability? What is the likelihood that the Project achievements will be taken forward at the national level, by the government (including integration in the national programme, and extension of technologies) and the main stakeholders? - What is the level of ownership, interest and commitment among governments and other main stakeholders including communities to continue the project results? - What is the likelihood that capacity development efforts continue?	Primary data collection (KIIs) and desk review	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Steering Committee meetings - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff/ national stakeholders, and government representatives
Financial sustainability		
- To what extent are project outcomes dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained? - Is there any government funding secured to sustain the CMF, extension of sustainable, and inclusive NRM technologies at the catchment and household levels?	Primary data collection (KIIs) and desk review	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders, and government representatives

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
Institutional Sustainability		
To what extent were institutional frameworks, policies, and legal and Accountability frameworks in place and robust enough to support the sustainability of project outcomes?	Primary data collection (KIIs) and desk review	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders, and government representatives
Factors affecting project performance and cross cutting issues		
Quality of project management and supervision		
- Was project management technical backstopping and supervision by UNEP proactive and responding timely and adequately to any issues encountered within the Project? To what extent does the UNEP provide leadership for the adaptive management of the project? - How do UNEP, the government and the service provider collaborate in the smooth management of the project? - To what extent and how were risks managed?	Primary data collection (KIIs) and desk review	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interview with UNEP Task Manager - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with government representatives - UNEP staff
Stakeholder participation and cooperation		
- Were key project stakeholders properly identified at Project design and to what extent have they duly involved in project implementation? - What level of communication mechanisms and consultation were carried out to ensure active stakeholder engagement and ownership? To what extent were these effective? - What measures were taken to ensure inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender and vulnerable groups?	Primary data collection (KIIs) and desk review	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with government representatives
Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity		

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
- To what extent did the project intervention adhere to UNEP policy and strategy for gender and human right? - To what extent did project implementation and monitoring take into consideration (gender; specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups, political and resource conflict to environmental degradation or disasters)	Primary data collection (KIIs) and desk review	- UN policies and strategies on gender and human rights: - UN Common Understanding on the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) - ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders
Environmental and social safeguards		
- To what extent were UNEP's requirements, for environmental and social safeguards, met (through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities? - To what extent were the following activities carried out (Review of risk ratings regularly; Monitoring of Project implementation for possible safeguard issues; and providing responses to safeguard issues) - To what extent did the project management minimise UNEP's environmental footprint? What measures, if any, were taken?	Primary data collection (KIIs) and site observations) and desk review	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders, and government representatives
Country ownership and driven-ness		
- To what extent was the government involved in the project? (with respect to the need to embed the Outputs and Outcomes of Project work in their respective institutions) - How did government ownership contribute to embedding changes in their respective institutions and offices?	Primary data collection (KIIs) and desk review	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders, and government representatives
Communication and public awareness		
- How was project learning communicated with the project partners and interested groups? - Which public awareness activities were undertaken during project implementation?	Primary data collection (KIIs and FGDs) and	- ProDoc - Project progress reports

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
• To what extent did the project influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large? How? • To what extent were existing communication channels and networks used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalized groups?	desk review	• Final report • Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders • Interviews/ with government representatives and beneficiaries

ANNEX III. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Stakeholders consulted during the evaluation (male – 35 and female – 3)

S/N	Organization /Entity	Position	Role in the project	Gender
1	RSCN	Manager	Project manager – II phase	M
2	Consultant	Consultant	Developed all Birds related work including guidebooks, species conservation plans, and training materials	M
3	Consultant	Consultant	Developed the KBA of Socotra	M
4	Consultant	Consultant	Developed the Ecosystem services framework and all its related activities	M
5	Consultant	Consultant	Developed the Zoning plan, The sustainable management plan, the climate change and soil erosion reports	M
6	Consultant	Consultant	Develop the marine Ecotourism framework	M
7	Consultant	Consultant	Engaged in project design and technical support	M
8	UNEP (now retired)	Project team member	Project team member of the earlier phase	M
9	UNEP	UNEP GEF Coordinator (ao) / Ex-task manager	Ex- task manager	M
10	UNEP	GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit Head / Portfolio Manager	Portfolio Manager	M
11	UNEP	GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Expert for Europe and Western Asia Region / Task manager	Task manager	F
12	UNEP	GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit / Project Assistance	Project Assistance	M
13	UNEP	GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit / Finance Officer	Finance Officer	M
14	Ex UNEP staff	UNEP Former Project Manager	Former Project Manager	M
15	Ex UNEP staff	Implementing staff	Project Staff	M

Stakeholders consulted in the project sites

S/N	Organization /Entity	Position	Role in the project	Gender
1	Turtle Protection Association	Head of Socotra Turtle Protection Association	Partner / Other Government Partners	M
2	Ministry of Social Affairs	Head of the Ministry of Social Affairs Office – Socotra	Government / Partner /	F
3	UNEP/Executing Agency	Agricultural technician and later Environmental Empowerment Component Manager	Executing Agency	M
4	Conservation and Development Association	Head of the Dihemri Protected Area Conservation and Development Association	Partner/NGOs	M
5	Social Affairs	Former Head of Social Affairs in Socotra	Government	M
6	Public Authority for Pensions and Social Security	Specialist, Public Authority for Pensions and Social Security; Secretary-General, Socotra Wildlife Association	Other Government Partners	M
7	UNEP/Executing Agency	Marine Advisor	Executing Agency	M
8	Conservation and Development Association	Head of Dihemri Marine Protected Area Conservation and Development Association	Partner/NGOs	M
9	Conservation and Development Association	Environmental monitor in the protected area and snorkeling guide, Dihemri Marine Conservation Association	Partner/NGOs	M
10	Conservation and Development Association	Head of Roche Environmental Protected Area Conservation and Development Association	Partner/NGOs	M
11	Other Government Partners	Environmental Coordinator for Firmihin Protected Area; Services Director, Local Committee	Other Government Partners	M
12	Community Committee	Former Head of Firmihin Protected Area Community Committee	Partner/NGOs	M

S/N	Organization /Entity	Position	Role in the project	Gender
13	Other	Responsible for dragon's blood tree nursery and distribution to nurseries	Other	M
14	Namaa Women's Association	Chairwoman, Namaa Women's Association	Partner/NGOs	F
15	EPA Branch – Qalansiyah	Head of Office, EPA Branch – Qalansiyah & Abd al-Kuri District	Government	M
16	Other	Environmental Education Program Representative in Qalansiyah	Government	M
17	Cleaning and Improvement Fund	Former Head of Cleaning and Improvement Fund	Government	M
18	Government	Socotra Governor	Government	M
19	Public Authority for Fisheries in the Arabian Sea – Archipelago Governorate	Head of Public Authority for Fisheries in the Arabian Sea – Archipelago Governorate	Government	M
20	Conservation and Development Association	Head of Homhil Conservation and Development Association	Government	M
21	Agriculture Office	Head of the Agriculture Office	Government	M
22	International Organizations Department, currently the Airport Director	Head of International Organizations Department, currently the Airport Director	Government	M
23	UNEP/Executing Agency	Invasive Species Component Lead	UNEP	M

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

- UNEP / GEF Terminal Evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR).
- Project Document (ProDoc) – Socotra Integrated Program for Conservation and Sustainable Development.
- Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC.pdf.
- CEO Endorsement Request & Project Identification Form (PIF).
- Project Implementation Reports (PIRs).
- Final Technical Progress Report.
- Mid-Term Review (MTR) Report, 2020.
- 01-15-15_CEO_Endorsement_Request_with_corrected.pdf
- 01-22-15_Council_Letter.pdf
- 02-23-15_CEO_Endorsed_Letter.pdf
- 12-01-14_Project_Document_PAD.pdf
- 5347-2013-04-15-175416-GEFReviewSheetGEF52.pdf
- Amendment no. 1 PCA Socotra project Draft 04 Dec 2024_BP SIGNED (signed).pdf
- Annex 1_Socotra ProDoc_27_03_2020_Draft.docx
- Annex 2 - 02-23-15_CEO_Endorsed_Letter_0.pdf
- Countersigned amendment No 2_Socotra Yemen project.pdf
- Countersigned NCE 1 - Socotra Yemen Project (1).pdf
- Countersigned PCA RSCN Socotra Yemen project.pdf
- Countersigned PCA Socotra Yemen FSP (2).pdf
- RSCN Revised PCA 29 August 2024 - signed by UNEP_Countersigned.pdf
- 5347_2017_PIR_UNEP_Yemen.doc
- 5347_2018_PIR_UNEP_Socotra Yemen.doc
- 5347_2021_PIR_UNEP_Socotra_Final clean.docx
- 5347_PIR_UNEP_2024_Socotra Project.pdf
- 5688_PIR_UNEP_2024-August-12.docx
- ProjectImplementationReportPIR_5347_2019_PIR_UNEP_Socotra (1).docx
- ProjectImplementationReportPIR_5347_2020_PIR_UNEP_Socotra project.docx
- ProjectImplementationReportPIR_5347-PIR-UNEP-2025-Socotra Project (1).pdf
- ProjectImplementationReportPIR_5347-PIR-UNEP-2025-Socotra Project.pdf
- ProjectImplementationReportPIR_GEF-BD-5347-Socotra Yemen-PIR 2022 (1).docx
- ProjectImplementationReportPIR_GEF-BD-5347-Socotra Yemen-PIR 2023 1.pdf
- Project financial report
- Financial reports from various years
- Various output related reports, documents, materials produced by the project such as books, Ecosystem Services, IAS work, KBA, Lesson Learned, Management Plan, Action plans, PA management effectiveness report, and a video
 - Reports
 - Spatial ecological planning to the archipelago of Socotra (Protected Areas, and the whole island) Report 2: A comparative desk review of the available data generated in phase I April 2023
 - Species Conservation Action Plan for the Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) in Socotra Island
 - Abd-al Kuri Sparrow Action Plan in Socotra Archipelago (2024)
 - Socotra's Egyptian Vultures: towards an Action Plan (2024)
 - Species Conservation Action Plan for the Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) in Socotra Island (2022)
 - Sustainable Land Management Note (in Arabic)
 - From Declaration to Implementation: A Critical Review of Socotra's Protected Areas' Management Effectiveness (2021, 2023)

- Management Plan (in Arabic)
- Lesson Learned in Sustainable Conservation: Enhancing Protected Areas and Empowering Local Communities in Socotra Island (2024)
- Report on Key Biodiversity Areas of the Socotra Archipelago
- Pathway Risk Assessment for Socotra, Yemen (2024) (IAS)
- Socotra (Yemen) National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan(2024)
- Report on Ecosystems Services (2023) by University Di Roma.
- Assessment of climate change and mapping of soil erosion for Socotra Archipelago (2024)
- Books: Fish Book (2021), Socotra Special Birds 1001 and Socotra Special Birds (Arabic)
- Video link: https://unitednations.sharepoint.com/sites/UNEP-EO-Ind-Eval-Off9/_layouts/15/stream.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FUNEP%2DEO%2DInd%2DEval%2DOff9%2FShared%20Documents%2FEOU%5FFUNCTION%2Fh%2E%20Workfiles%2FEval%20Man%20Workfiles%2F2025%2FGEF%20%205347%20Conservation%5F%20Socotra%2FShared%20with%20Consultant%5Ftemp%2F07%200Others%5Foutput%20related%20result%20products%2FFINAL%201%2Emp4&referrer=StreamWebApp%2EWeb&referrerScenario=AddressBarCopied%2Eview%2E826b15f4%2Dd229%2D4fa9%2Da9de%2Ddc20eebd0658
- Video in Socotra's Dragon Blood Trees available in Arabic at <https://arabic.cnn.com/travel/video/2024/11/21/v155366-socotra-blood-dragon-trees>

ANNEX V. EVALUATION ITINERARY

Field mission dates: **06–13 November 2025**

Field mission to Socotra Island (Hadibu and Qalansiyah Districts), including Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with government authorities, protected area institutions, civil society organizations, women's associations, and local communities

Milestone	Tentative Dates
KIIs with government authorities and executing/partner institutions in Hadibu District , including Governorate leadership; heads of international cooperation departments; Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) representatives; fisheries and agriculture authorities; cleaning and improvement fund leadership; airport administration.	08 November 2025
Key Informant Interview with protected area management and local implementing actors at Dihimri Marine Protected Area and FGDs with protected area community members and association staff in Dihimri Protected Area , Hadibu District, including protected area heads; procurement and operational staff; tourism service workers; fishermen; local community members.	09 November 2025
Key Informant Interview with protected area personnel and FGDs with protected area community members in Rosh Area , Hadibu District, including campsite workers; community representatives; association members involved in tourism, agriculture, and site management.	09 November 2025
KIIs with former heads of protected area community committees, protected area nursery managers, and environmental livelihood practitioners and FGDs with mixed community groups (men and women) in Firmhin Area , Hadibu District, including water network beneficiaries; solar energy users; youth engaged in infrastructure rehabilitation; women involved in agriculture and home gardening; local livestock-dependent households.	10 November 2025
KII with environmental and institutional stakeholders in Qalansiyah District, including Environmental Protection Authority, and FGDs with women's associations in Qalansiyah District , including women-led livelihood groups; sewing and tailoring initiative beneficiaries; association leadership and members (Nama Women Association) and (Al-Keyr Women Association).	11 November 2025
KIIs with Hadibu-based institutions and government stakeholders, including Cleaning and Improvement Fund (former head); Socotra Governor; Public Authority for Fisheries; Homhil Conservation & Development Association; Agriculture Office (Plant Quarantine Facility)	12 November 2025
Key Informant Interview (KII) in Aden with UNEP technical staff responsible for the Invasive Alien Species (IAS) component, focusing on awareness campaigns, field operations, coordination with local institutions, port-of-entry risks, procurement constraints, sustainability, and strategic alignment	13 November 2025

ANNEX VI. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS ASSESSMENT

ESS PLANNING AT PROJECT DESIGN	
List any ESS issues identified at project design (e.g. SS 1.7, SS 2.3, etc.)⁵⁸	The following issue was identified within Environmental safeguards: a. Are ecosystems related to project fragile or degraded? - yes The following five social issues were identified during the project design stage: a. Does the project respect internationally proclaimed human rights including dignity, cultural property and uniqueness and rights of indigenous people? b. Are property rights on resources such as land tenure recognized by the existing laws in affected countries? c. Does the project incorporate measures to allow affected stakeholders' information and consultation? d. Will the project cause technology or land use modification that may change present social and economic activities? e. Does the project include measures to ensure a safe and healthy working environment for workers employed as part of the project?
For any ESS issues identified at project design, were <u>mitigation strategies</u> developed (Y/N)? Yes	Mitigation measures for environmental issues were proposed: a. The project proposed to improve habitat conditions within and outside PAs in the target areas. The following mitigation measures for Social safeguards were proposed: a. Special attention was proposed to give to indigenous people living on the island; their knowledge, customs and conservation practices found entry into the project's strategy and results framework. b. Independent of the existence or non-existence of relevant laws, the land and property rights were planned to carefully assess to ensure they are duly taken into account during consultations for PA design, or development of alternative livelihood options. c. The project planned to contribute positively to changing present social and economic activities around and within the selected target areas in the long term d. It was proposed to carry out stakeholder identification and consultations, and develop a communication and outreach strategy while focusing on community-based approaches to sustainably achieve positive environmental impacts e. It was planned to apply the rules and regulations of the host government
Were any <u>gaps</u> in ESS issues identified at the evaluation inception phase (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	No information from the inception phase available to review.

⁵⁸ Select from the list of Environmental and Social Safeguards Risks in Table 1 of the template (tool 14, Safeguards Assessment Template).

ESS MONITORING AT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Is there evidence that the potential emergence of ESS issues was actively <u>monitored</u> during project implementation (Y/N)? ⁵⁹ (If yes, briefly describe)	No information available from the project as part of formal monitoring, although during the discussions the respondents mentioned those issues were considered in planning activities and field activity implementation. The project report, for instance, PIRs 2024 and 2025 mentioned that there have been some new social and environmental issues arising such as ‘increase private properties along the coastline, irresponsible tourism activities, land tenure conflicts due to growing immigration, and growing pressure on natural resources management.
Is there a justification for the absence of ESS monitoring (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe ⁶⁰)	No systematic or structure process of ESS monitoring available, but the project reported the emergent issues in the project report. No new mitigation measures reported to address the emerging EES issues.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIVENESS DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Identify the ESS issues/events <u>triggered</u> ⁶¹ by the project. ⁶²	No such information or document available confirms there have been issues emerged due to project interventions.
Describe <u>consequences</u> of ESS issues/events during project implementation.	Based on the document available, no systematic assessment was carried out and no issues reported because of EES issues.
Describe the management response and identify supporting documentation. ^{63, 64}	As there were no notable concerns emerged during the project implementation and no management response prepared.
Were negative ESS effects offset by management response (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	No negative issues reported and there was no management response.

⁵⁹ **Low risk:** Negative impacts minimal or negligible: no further study or impact management required.

Moderate risk: Potential negative impacts, but limited in scale, not unprecedented or irreversible and generally limited to programme/project area; impacts amenable to management using standard mitigation measures; limited environmental or social analysis may be required to develop an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). Straightforward application of good practice may be sufficient without additional study.

High risk: Potential for significant negative impacts (e.g. irreversible, unprecedented, cumulative, significant stakeholder concerns); Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) (or Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA)) including a full impact assessment may be required, followed by an effective comprehensive safeguard management plan.

⁶⁰ For instance, during COVID, access to the field may have been restricted

⁶¹ ‘Triggered’ refers to environmental or social issues/events that are caused or exacerbated—directly or indirectly—as a result of the project’s activities, interventions, or presence.

⁶² Select from the list of Environmental and Social Safeguards Risks in Table 1 of the template (tool 14, Safeguards Assessment Template).

⁶³ For most low-moderate risk projects, good practice approach may be sufficient. Project should demonstrate safeguard management approach in the project activities, budget, risks management, stakeholder engagement or/and monitoring segments of the project document to avoid or minimize the identified potential risks without preparing a separate safeguard management plan.

⁶⁴ E.g., GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR), Progress Report, Minutes, etc.

ANNEX VII.COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH TOOLS

Knowledge products and communication tools can be accessed from the project portal - <https://socotra.senckenberg.de/socotra-demo/>.

Some communication materials and knowledge products shared by the project are provided below.

Themes or types of awareness / knowledge products	File Name in English
Books	FISH BOOK 2021 /Socotra special birds 1001 for print/ Socotra special birds Arabic (09052023)
Climate change and soil erosion	<i>Climate change and soil erosion</i>
Ecosystem Services	Ecosystem Services reports
IAS work	Socotra animal guide_combined_08-Apr-25 / Socotra Guide - June new (online Version) /Socotra ISA Guide Ar Final / SOCOTRA NISSAP/ Pathway Causes – Final version
KBA	Soqotra KBA Report FINAL DRAFT/ Socotra KBA Species
Lesson Learned	Lesson learned report-2024
Management Plan	<i>Management Plan 2024 – Di-Hamri Marine Protected Area – Socotra Final Management Plan for Formehn Protected Area – Version 2 – 2025. Management Plan for Jabal Samhan Protected Area – 2025. Management Plan for Hamma Natural Protected Area – Final Version 2025. Management Plan for Rosh Natural Protected Area. Management Plan for Di-Hamri Protected Area – 2024. Formhen Management Plan Final 2025 – Version 2. Hammil Nature Reserve – Ghider Homhil management plan 2006 English. Simple Inventory of Hammil Animal Numbers.</i>
PA management effectiveness report	Socotra PA_Management Effectiveness-Final report.
SLM	Sustainable land management
Socotra IAS Guide AR final	Socotra IAS Guide AR Final.
Species Action plans	Abd al Kuri Sparrow Action Plan Egyptian Vulture Action Plan for Socotra. Species Conservation Action Plan for the Loggerhead Sea Turtle test. Species Conservation Action Plan for the Loggerhead Sea Turtle test.
Technical reports	Grazing_Anas.
zoning plan	Final report (Zoning Plan_07052023).
zoning plan	Zoning Plan in Arabic.
Other Files	Annex 15 – Final Technical Progress Report Template
Other Files	Final video of turtle protection
Themes or types of awareness / knowledge products	File Name in English
Books	FISH BOOK 2021 /Socotra special birds 1001 for print/ Socotra special birds Arabic (09052023)
Climate change and soil erosion	Climate change and soil erosion
Ecosystem Services	Ecosystem Services reports
IAS work	Socotra animal guide_combined_08-Apr-25 / Socotra Guide - June new (online Version) /Socotra ISA Guide Ar Final / SOCOTRA NISSAP/ Pathway Causes – Final version

KBA	Socotra KBA Report FINAL DRAFT/ Socotra KBA Species
Lesson Learned	Lesson learned report-2024
Management Plan	Management Plan 2024 – Di-Hamri Marine Protected Area – Socotra Final Management Plan for Formehn Protected Area – Version 2 – 2025. Management Plan for Jabal Samhan Protected Area – 2025. Management Plan for Hamma Natural Protected Area – Final Version 2025. Management Plan for Rosh Natural Protected Area. Management Plan for Di-Hamri Protected Area – 2024. Formhen Management Plan Final 2025 – Version 2. Hammil Nature Reserve – Ghider Homhil management plan 2006 English. Simple Inventory of Hammil Animal Numbers.
PA management effectiveness report	Socotra PA_Management Effectiveness-Final report.
SLM	Sustainable land management
Socotra IAS Guide AR final	Socotra IAS Guide AR Final.
Species Action plans	Abd al Kuri Sparrow Action Plan Egyptian Vulture Action Plan for Socotra. Species Conservation Action Plan for the Loggerhead Sea Turtle test. Species Conservation Action Plan for the Loggerhead Sea Turtle test.
Technical reports	Grazing_Anas.
zoning plan	Final report (Zoning Plan_07052023).
zoning plan	Zoning Plan in Arabic.
Other Files	Annex 15 – Final Technical Progress Report Template
Other Files	Final video of turtle protection

ANNEX VIII. CONFIRMED SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY NAME AND TYPE

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Cofinancing	Investment Mobilized	Amount (USD) at CEO	Amount (USD) at MTR	Amount (USD) at TE
Executing Agency	Senckenberg Gesellschaft Feur	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Investment Mobilized	200,000	0	0
Executing Agency	The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Investment Mobilized	0		600,000
Other	GIZ	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Recurrent Expenditures	7,500,000		5,055,000
Government	EPA	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Recurrent Expenditures	4,500,000		4,850,000
Other	CMEP/RBGE	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Recurrent Expenditures	1,015,000		1,003,750
Other	CSIC-UPF	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Recurrent Expenditures	181,151		247,151
Other	Sapienza University Roma	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Recurrent Expenditures	116,370		181,936
Recipient Country Government	Local Councils	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Recurrent Expenditures	500,000		876,500
Recipient Country Government	Gov Hadramaut (replaced by Gov Socotra)	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Recurrent Expenditures	500,000		1,305,000
Other	Mendel Uni Bmo	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Recurrent Expenditures	80,000		185,000
GEF Agency	UNEP	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Recurrent Expenditures	300,000		425,000
Other	CABI	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Recurrent Expenditures	150,000		215,000
Other	OSME-Birdlife International	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Recurrent Expenditures	0		110,159
Other	SRI/BIK	Actual In-Kind Co-Finance	Recurrent Expenditures	0		170,000
Total Co-financing				15,042,521		15,224,496

(Source: UNEP FMO)

Cofinancing according to components and years

			Planned Phase II by components					Planned phase II by year				
Co-financier	Committed	Actual 1 st Phase	Comp 1 - BD-PAM	Comp 2 - IAS	Comp 3 - SLM	PMC	TOTAL	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Grand Total
EPA	4,500,000	2,350,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	1,000,000	2,500,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	500,000	2,500,000	4,850,000
GIZ	7,500,000	5,055,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,055,000
CMEP/RBGE	1,015,000	703,750	150,000	150,000	0	0	300,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	300,000	1,003,750
CSIC-UPF	181,151	147,151	50,000	50,000	0	0	100,000	20,000	60,000	20,000	100,000	247,151
Sapienza	116,370	121,936	0	0	60,000	0	60,000	10,000	30,000	20,000	60,000	181,936
Local Councils	500,000	376,500	100,000	100,000	100,000	200,000	500,000	100,000	200,000	200,000	500,000	876,500
Gov Hadramaut	500,000	705,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	420,000	600,000	100,000	300,000	200,000	600,000	1,305,000
Mendel Uni	80,000	125,000	0	0	60,000	0	60,000	10,000	30,000	20,000	60,000	185,000
UNEP	300,000	225,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	200,000	100,000	50,000	50,000	200,000	425,000
CABI	150,000	115,000	0	100,000	0	0	100,000	20,000	60,000	20,000	100,000	215,000
SRI/BIK	0	170,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	170,000
OSME-Birdlife International	0	10,159	50,000	50,000	0	0	100,000	20,000	40,000	40,000	100,000	110,159
SNG	200,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RSCN	0	0	200,000	100,000	200,000	100,000	600,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	600,000	600,000
TOTAL	15,042,521	10,104,496	1,160,000	1,160,000	1,030,000	1,770,000	5,120,000	1,680,000	2,070,000	1,370,000	5,120,000	15,224,496

ANNEX IX. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

1. Principal Evaluator

Name	Ram Chandra Khanal
Profession	Evaluator
Nationality	Nepal
Country experience	• Africa: Sudan, Madagascar, Uganda, Malawi • Asia: Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Thailand, Viet Nam, Cambodia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Mongolia, Laos and Tajikistan
Education	• MSc – Agriculture System, PhD – Development Studies

Short biography

Dr. Ram Chandra Khanal is a seasoned Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) expert with over 20 years of experience leading complex evaluations and impact measurement systems across climate resilience, agroforestry, and livelihoods. With an MSc in agriculture and a PhD degree in education/development studies and development policy, he has worked extensively across Asia and Africa with institutions such as FAO, UNEP, UNDP, DFID/FCDO, and ADB. Dr. Khanal has developed MEL frameworks for large-scale, multi-country programs, including nature-based solutions, climate-smart agriculture, and forest landscape restoration. His leadership spans strategic MEL planning, capacity development, experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation designs, and integration of MEL into adaptive programming. Known for promoting participatory, data-driven decision-making, he successfully managed approaches that drive both accountability and learning. His work is focused on deep technical rigor, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and a commitment to evidence-informed environmental and social outcomes.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Over two decades leading MEL design and implementation in agroforestry, climate resilience, and livelihoods
- Strong background in building MEL systems aligned with Theory of Change and strategic goals
- Experience leading large MEL teams across multiple countries and training partners/staff
- Proven track record in impact assessment
- Skilled in designing cost-effective, rigorous data collection systems (quantitative and qualitative)
- Active engagement to global evaluation standards
- Extensive experience working with UN agencies, international NGOs, and government partners

Thematic Experience:

- Climate actions and policy (adaptation, resilience and mitigations): climate risk assessment, identification of adaptation options, priority ranking & planning, resilience assessment and strategy development,
- Agriculture, food security and policies: agriculture value chain, agro-advisory, food security mapping/analysis, develop and manage agriculture and food security-related projects
- Natural Resources Management: participatory resource management, management of biodiversity and ecosystems services, Livelihood enhancement: livelihoods assessment and planning.

2. Evaluation Specialist

Name	Mohammed Othman
Profession	Evaluator
Nationality	Yemeni
Country experience	Middle East: Yemen, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq Remote/global evaluations for multi-country UN programmes: Africa: Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia
Education	Bachelor's Degree – Business Administration and Management - Master's Degree – International Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid - PhD (ongoing) – Monitoring, Measurement, and Evaluation

Short biography

Mr Mohammed Othman is a senior Evaluation and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) specialist with over 19 years of experience leading evaluations, assessments, and MEAL systems across humanitarian, development, and recovery contexts, primarily in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. With a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Management, a master's degree in international Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, and ongoing PhD studies in Monitoring, Measurement, and Evaluation, he has worked extensively with United Nations agencies, international NGOs, and government counterparts in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

Mr Othman has led and contributed to 15 external and independent evaluations for organizations, including UN-Habitat, UN ESCWA, and IOM, covering terminal, end-term, thematic, and post-evaluation studies. He has developed and applied MEAL and evaluation frameworks for multi-sectoral programmes spanning urban recovery, livelihoods, food security, WASH, education, protection, and resilience. His professional experience includes strategic MEAL planning, mixed-methods evaluation design, and integration of evaluation findings into adaptive programming and decision-making processes.

Known for his strong analytical rigor and participatory approach, Mr Othman promotes evidence-based, inclusive evaluation practices that strengthen accountability, learning, and utilization of findings.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Nearly two decades of experience in evaluation and MEAL design and implementation in humanitarian and development contexts
- Strong background in building MEAL and evaluation systems aligned with Theory of Change and results frameworks
- Experience leading internal assessments and independent external evaluations across multiple sectors
- Proven track record in mixed-methods evaluation and impact-oriented analysis
- Extensive experience working with UN agencies, international NGOs, and national partners

Thematic Experience:

- Urban recovery and resilience
- Livelihoods, food security, and market systems
- WASH and basic services
- Education and social services
- Protection and accountability to affected populations

ANNEX X. GEF PORTAL INPUTS

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7⁶⁵, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided⁶⁶).

Response: At completion, the project demonstrated moderate progress toward core indicator targets, particularly those related to biodiversity conservation, protected area (PA) management, invasive alien species (IAS) monitoring, and community engagement. Four PA management plans were completed and operationalized, contributing to improved governance and strengthened conservation zoning. In addition, Community-based conservation actions—such as reporting IAS sightings, rehabilitating PAs, and enhancing sustainable land management—were broadly achieved. IAS baselines, inventories, and a national strategy were developed, though systemic IAS control remained limited due to capacity gaps. However, sustainable financing, long-term ecological monitoring, and knowledge-management-related indicator targets were only partially met. Overall, indicator performance reflects strong technical delivery but constrained systemic uptake under fragile conditions. In addition, most of the quantitative data of relevant GEF Core Indicator targets are not available.

To sum-up, the project contributed to achieving the several GEF core indicator targets, as following.

Indicator 1. Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectares)

- Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness: There is no available quantitative data reported for Terrestrial protected areas.

Indicator 2. Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (hectares)

- Marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness : 4100 ha (source: PIR 2024)

Indicator 3. Area of land restored (hectares) Component Sub-Indicators:

- Area of degraded agricultural lands restored: No data is available.

Indicator 11. Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment : No data is available.

Reference: Monitoring & Reporting; Effectiveness Chapters.

Question: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? (This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)

Response:

Stakeholder engagement improved substantially after the MTR, driven by RSCN's localized management approach and stronger coordination with EPA, community groups, and local councils. Participation expanded across fishermen's associations, women's cooperatives, schools, and traditional leaders, leading to more inclusive planning, enhanced stewardship, and improved reporting from community institutions. Challenges persisted due to political instability, limited mobility, and uneven institutional capacity, which affected consistent participation in remote areas. Despite this, engagement outcomes were positive: communities co-implemented PA management, contributed to IAS monitoring, and shaped SLM demonstrations. Trust and collaboration increased markedly, though long-term institutional anchoring remains incomplete.

Reference from: *Factors Affecting Performance – Stakeholder Participation & Cooperation.*

⁶⁵ The GEF is currently operating under the seventh replenishment period of the GEF Trust Fund covering the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022. The GEF Portal Reporting Guide for FY20 Reporting Process indicates that GEF-6 projects that have yet to map existing indicators to GEF-7 Core Indicators need to do so at MTR stage or (if already there) at the time of the TE. (i.e. not GEF projects approved before GEF-6)

Question: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? <i>(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)</i>
Response: Gender integration was partial but generated meaningful results. Although the project lacked a formal gender action plan and gender-disaggregated monitoring, several gender-responsive measures were delivered. Women actively participated in awareness campaigns, community committees, and training programs. The establishment of the women's Nature Shop enabled income generation for more than 100 women, while digital literacy training supported women's access to employment. Engagement of girls in school programs fostered early environmental stewardship. Nonetheless, gender considerations were inconsistently mainstreamed across components, and structural barriers to women's leadership remained insufficiently addressed. Reference from: <i>Responsiveness to Human Rights & Gender Equality – Factors Affecting Performance.</i>
Question: What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. <i>(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)</i>
Response: Environmental and social safeguard risks were rated low at design and remained unchanged throughout implementation. The project generated no adverse impacts, as activities focused on biodiversity conservation, IAS management, and sustainable land management. Safeguards were addressed through adherence to government environmental regulations, integration of social considerations in field activities, and COVID-19 safety protocols during community events. However, safeguard documentation, screening updates, and risk-register reviews were limited, and the quarantine facility for IAS remained non-operational. No safeguard-related complaints were recorded. While safeguard performance was satisfactory, monitoring and documentation could have been more systematic, particularly regarding data governance and community feedback. Reference from: <i>Environmental & Social Safeguards Chapter; PIR 2024–2025.</i>
Question: What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? <i>(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)</i>
Response: The project produced valuable KM outputs—including ecological datasets, IAS tools, PA management plans, and awareness materials, but knowledge use and accessibility were limited. The digital data portal was established but remained non-functional due to unclear management arrangements and lack of updates. Communication with partners was strong, enabling effective coordination and responsive problem-solving. Public awareness activities—education programs, workshops, clean-up campaigns—were widely successful. However, the absence of a formal KM and communication strategy reduced institutional continuity, limited visibility of knowledge products, and hindered long-term learning. Adaptive management improved after 2020, but systematic KM practices were not fully embedded. Reference from: <i>Communication & Public Awareness; Monitoring & Reporting; KM Findings.</i>
Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?
Response: The project achieved moderately satisfactory performance, delivering strong technical results in biodiversity conservation, PA management, IAS monitoring, and community-based land management. Capacity of EPA, community groups, and associations improved significantly, and PA management plans were operationalized with tangible site-level gains. Adaptive management under RSCN accelerated progress after 2020. However, institutional continuity, knowledge management, gender integration, and sustainable financing remained weak. Political instability, limited access, and capacity constraints hindered broader systemic change. Sustainability is moderately likely, supported by community

ownership and strengthened technical capacities but threatened by financing gaps and governance instability. No major negative effects were observed.

Reference from: Conclusion; Effectiveness; Sustainability; Factors Affecting Performance.

ANNEX XI. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluand Title: Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project “Support to the Integrated Program for the Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Socotra Archipelago, Yemen” (GEF ID 5347) 2016-2025

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant's efforts and skills.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Section A: Executive Summary	Assessment	
1. Does the <i>Executive Summary</i> act as a concise, accurate standalone section, especially to inform decision-making? Consider how clearly and concisely the report presents: - a clear summary of the evaluation object - evaluation objectives, scope and methodology - the overall project evaluation rating - a summary of main evaluation findings, including key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) - summary responses to key strategic evaluation questions - summary of main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> <i>All required elements are addressed in the executive summary.</i> <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> <i>The section is succinctly and clearly articulated based on the findings. A summary of main findings is presented, including strengths and weaknesses.</i>	5.5
Section B: The Project	Assessment	
2. Does the report clearly describe the <i>key parameters, scale and complexity of the evaluand</i>? Consider how well the report presents: - an overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address - timeline, including dates of project approval, duration and number of phases (where appropriate) - geographic coverage (regions/countries) - total secured budget and project financing, including a table with funding sources - implementing and funding partners - Institutional context (i.e. UNEP sub-programme, Division, Branch etc.) - implementation structure with diagram - UNEP results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. PoW Direct Outcome) - summary of results framework as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) - stakeholder groups organised according to relevant common characteristics - whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, by an external agency, etc.) - substantive or significant changes in design during implementation	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> <i>The section covers all key elements to describe the project.</i> <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> <i>The report clearly describes the project and addresses key information, and relevant maps and diagrams are presented. The section provides a strong summary of the results framework, including the project results hierarchy, structure, and delivery mechanism. In addition, analysis of project financing is robust, effectively comparing planned versus actual expenditures across budget lines as reflected in UMOJA.</i>	6
Section C: Evaluation Methods and Theory of Change	Assessment	

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
3. Does the report present a clear, comprehensive and adequate description of the evaluation methodology? Consider how well it presents the following elements, and their adequacy based on the scope of the evaluation: - statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the evaluation findings - data collection methods and information sources - justification for methods used (e.g. electronic/face-to-face interviews, qualitative/quantitative analysis) - criteria and sampling strategies used to select stakeholders for consultations, and for sites/countries visited - number and types of respondents (<i>including in a table broken down by gender</i>) - strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and response rate - methods used to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. women, marginalised) - data verification methods (e.g. triangulation) - data analysis methods (e.g. scoring, thematic analysis) - evaluation limitations and mitigation measures (e.g. how these were addressed by the evaluator) - consideration for ethics and human rights issues, including how anonymity and confidentiality were protected	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The evaluation methods section covers all key elements. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The report clearly describes the methodology applied for the evaluation and its limitations. The report also presents detailed data analysis methods (such as evidence matrix, thematic coding, content analysis) and also explains which various mitigations were used to respond to the limitations.	5.5
4. Does the report describe an assessment and reformulation of the Theory of Change, and present an adequate articulation of the TOC causal pathways that were used to assess project performance (<i>narratively and diagrammatically</i>)? Consider how well the report presents: - whether the project design included a TOC - how the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i>⁶⁷ was designed (e.g. who was involved, etc) - confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions (<i>including reformulation table, which may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear in the Main Evaluation report.</i>) - articulation of causal pathways - identification of drivers and assumptions - identification of key actors in the change process	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The report includes most primary elements for the ToC section, except for identification of key actors in the change process. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The section clearly articulates the project's causal pathways, demonstrating the key drivers and underlying assumptions along each pathway. It also makes an effort to identify the key owners of results within the results framework. However, the analysis on missing element would strengthen the section.	5
Section D: Evidence and Analysis	Assessment	

⁶⁷ During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
5. Is the report based on <i>sufficient and adequate data</i> and <i>clear and credible evidence</i>? Consider how well the report presents: - sufficient evidence that is consistent throughout the report - evidence that is supported by data sources (e.g. quotes, reports, etc) - evidence that is explicitly triangulated, unless noted as having a single source - gaps in data are explained and justified - data sources that are reliable, adequate, sufficient for the scope of the evaluation	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The finding section covers all criteria in line with UNEP guideline. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Due to the nature of the results and absence of its indicators in the project document, the report identifies the limitations such as lack of quantitative data at outcome level. However, the findings presented in the report are supported by the evidence from the triangulated multiple sources. Data sources are reliable, adequate including comments from stakeholders.	5
6. Does the report include <i>rigorous analysis</i> and <i>logical findings</i>? Consider the extent to which the findings are: - supported by clear analysis that is consistent with the evidence presented - logical, clear and coherent - aligned with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix - aligned with the evaluation framework - more than descriptions and provide insights into 'how' and/or 'why' the project performed a certain way - balanced, presenting both successes and weaknesses	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section covers assessment of all evaluation criteria. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The section is well articulated aligning with UNEP's criteria rating matrix and evaluation framework. Despite the limited quantitative indicator and targets, the report has triangulated various data and information sources. In addition, the section provides balanced view with successes and weaknesses. Furthermore, the evaluation findings were demonstrated by providing insights into 'why' the project performed as it did.	5
Section E: Evaluation Findings	Assessment	
7. Does the report present evidence and analysis of project <i>Strategic Relevance</i> with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval? Consider how well the report addresses: - Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities - Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities - Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities - Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation⁶⁸), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The report includes key elements to explain strategic relevance. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> While the section presents a succinct summary assessment using the standard table, the report also provides comprehensive narrative discussions grounded in the supporting evidence.	6

⁶⁸ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Does the report present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the Quality of Project Design , based on the detailed assessment presented in the Inception Report?	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section covers all sub-criteria of the Quality of Project design. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The section succinctly outlines the strengths and weaknesses of the project design quality.	*NOT RATED
Does the report recognise and describe, when appropriate, key features of the Nature of the External Context under which the project was implemented that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval ⁶⁹), and how they affected performance?	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section describes the external context of the project. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The report explains the external context of the project, how the project was affected by this context, and how the project addressed and overcame these challenges.	*NOT RATED
8. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the Availability of Outputs to the intended beneficiaries? Consider how well the report presents: - a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget - assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets - assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries - identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section includes all key elements required for the assessment of the availability of outputs. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Although limitations related to insufficient quantitative indicators and results data were identified, the section demonstrates evidence-based analysis by triangulating the various available data sources and information. In addition, the analysis covers the timeliness, quality, and utility of outputs for the intended beneficiaries by identifying ownership and intended users of each output.	5.5
9. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the Achievement of Outcomes, as a result of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries? This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. Consider how well the report presents: - a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries - assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets - discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The report covers most key elements except for identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The section assesses the achievement of outcomes against available indicators and targets and examines uptake, as well as behavioural and institutional changes based on available evidence. However, the section would be strengthened by a more in-depth contribution/attribution analysis to	4.5

⁶⁹ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
- level changes to the work of the project itself - any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work - identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	the observed outcome-level changes would strengthen the section. In addition, identification of positive/negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups would strengthen the section.	
10. Does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to Likelihood of Impact? Consider how well the report presents: - an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and the resulting change processes - an explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out - an explanation of roles played by key actors and change agents - identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The report covers most of the key elements required for the assessment. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The report demonstrates a structured analysis of the likelihood of impact through the ToC, supported by a summary table of drivers and assumptions at each stage. The section also presents unintended positive effects observed during the mission. In addition, it explains the potential for replication, aligned with relevant SDGs and UNEP's sub-programme. However, the more explicit analysis would benefit from an in-depth examination of roles of key actors/change agents. Additionally, the section would have been strengthened by cross-referencing or addressing unintended negative effects of the project on disadvantaged group	4.5
11. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Financial Management and include a completed 'financial management' table? Consider how well the report addresses the following: <i>adherence</i> to UNEP's financial policies and procedures <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs and actual co-financing used and explanation of any variances between planned and actual expenditures	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The report covers all key sub-criteria for the assessment of the financial management. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> <i>The section identified strengths and weakness in financial management including analysis on 'why'.</i>	5.5
12. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Efficiency? Consider how well the report presents: - cost-effective or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe - implications of any delays and no cost extensions - discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, partnerships and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. - the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The analysis includes all dimensions evaluated under the criteria except for the extent to which management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The section presents evidence -based analysis and findings covering most of key dimensions for efficiency. While findings related to UNEP's footprint are addressed in another section, Environmental and Social safeguards, incorporating the efficiency-focused analysis of this aspect would have strengthened the section.	5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
13. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the project's Monitoring and Reporting? Consider how well the report addresses the following: - the quality of <i>monitoring of project implementation</i> (including use of monitoring data for adaptive management) - the quality of <i>project reporting</i> (e.g. PIMS and donor reports)	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The report covers key sub-criteria in the section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The report demonstrates a well-balanced analysis on implementation and its quality of monitoring and reporting by identifying both improvements. The evidence supports the analysis on identified existing weakness and limitations in monitoring and reporting.	5.5
14. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level)? Consider how well the report addresses the following: - socio-political sustainability - financial sustainability - institutional sustainability	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section covers all key dimensions for the assessment of sustainability. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The section clearly presents strengths (e.g. strong ownership at the local level, adoption of key conservation tools) and gaps (e.g. absence of exit strategies, insufficient resources) related to sustaining the benefits of achieved outcomes based on triangulation of available evidence.	5
15. Does the report present a well-evidence analysis of the Factors Affecting Performance, <u>either in this section or in cross-referenced sections?</u> <i>These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed, and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors.</i> Consider how well the report addresses the following cross-cutting issues: - quality of project management and supervision⁷⁰ - stakeholder participation and co-operation - responsiveness to human rights and gender equality - environmental and social safeguards - country ownership and driven-ness - communication and public awareness	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The report includes standard sub-criteria required to assess the factors affecting performance. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The analytical findings are supported by the evidence gathered from multiple sources and provide a balanced view of both achievements and gaps. The report demonstrates how these factors influenced performance in driving outcomes and observed changes. However, further analysis on linkages to poverty alleviation or impact on economic livelihood, as well as of planned efforts to minimize the project's environmental footprint, would have strengthened the section.	5
Section F: Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations	Assessment	

⁷⁰ In some cases, 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
16. Do the Conclusions present a summative assessment of the evaluand as a whole, reflecting on prominent aspects of the project's performance? Consider how well the conclusions: • provide a compelling narrative and integrated assessment of project project's performance (i.e. achievements and limitations) • add deeper insights and analysis beyond the findings under each individual criterion • are derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the evaluation process • provide clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • address the human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) • provide lessons that are rooted in real project experiences, describe the context from which they are derived, and do not duplicate recommendations	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The conclusion includes summative assessment of the evaluand as a whole. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The section provides a concise the assessment of key achievements and limitations in project performance. The section presents the succinct responses to all strategic questions based on the evidence and includes the analysis and improvement areas in human rights and gender dimensions. The conclusion also includes lessons learned rooted in actual experiences of the project. However, it includes some actionable guidance (especially lesson 4 and 5) going beyond replicable insights and causal patterns observed in the project. Maintaining this distinction would strengthen the analytical clarity and utility of the report for future programming.	5
17. Does the report present Recommendations for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? Consider how well the recommendations: • are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions • are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when • include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions • represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. <u>NOTES:</u> (i) In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance. (ii) Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section presents the recommendations using the standard template. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The report presents recommendations that are clearly grounded in the evaluation's findings and conclusions. In addition, one recommendation explicitly addresses human rights and gender dimensions. However, inclusion of more explicit and clearly defined and measurable performance targets would have strengthened the recommendations section.	5
Section G: Report Structure and Presentation	Assessment	
18. Is the report well-structured and complete? Does it: • follow the Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u>	5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
- include all required sections and annexes, as applicable - not exceed 50 pages in length from the Executive Summary to the end of the Conclusion Does the report present information clearly and appropriately? Is it written: - in clear and accessible language - largely free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors - in an adequate and professional tone - with the use of visual aids, such as maps, graphs tables and photos	The report covers all standard sections and structure in line with the UNEP's evaluation report template including key Annexes. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The report is well articulated, using clear language, a professional tone as well as visual aids such as maps and photos. Due to the number of outputs and outcomes, the length of the report was influenced, resulting in a report exceeding 50 pages.	
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING	Satisfactory	5

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion, with half-point increments allowed (e.g., 3.5 or 4.5). Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall rating is based on a simple average of the ratings for each criterion.

* This criterion was not rated to avoid giving it disproportionate weight in calculating the overall score, as this section is typically brief. The remaining criteria are comprehensive and substantial enough to provide a balanced and meaningful overall rating for the report.

Rating the Report Quality Criteria

Rating (1–6)	Description
6	Provides all content with high quality.
5	Provides all content with minor weaknesses.
4	Provides most content with minor weaknesses.
3	Provides most content with significant weaknesses.
2	Omits substantive content with significant weaknesses.
1	Omits almost all content with major weaknesses.

At the end of the evaluation, compliance of the evaluation process against the agreed standard procedures is assessed, based on the table below. *All questions with negative compliance must be explained further in the table below.*

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Consultant's independence:		
1. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?	x	
2. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders?	x	
3. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?		x
4. If Yes to Q3: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?		

Project's engagement and support:			
5.	Did the project make available all required/requested documents?	x	
6.	Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?	x	
7.	Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	x	
8.	Were the project team, relevant UNEP senior staff, partners and interviewed stakeholders given an opportunity to provide comments on key deliverables, as appropriate (e.g. Terms of Reference, Inception Report and Draft Evaluation Report)?	x	
Quality assurance of key deliverables:			
9.	Were the Terms of Reference peer-reviewed?	x	
10.	Was the inception report peer-reviewed, including the Theory of Change?	x	
11.	Were evaluation preliminary findings presented to the project team in a format allowing discussion, before drafting the report?	x	
12.	Was the draft report peer-reviewed?	x	
Transparency and commenting:			
13.	Was the inception report, including the (reconstructed) TOC, sent to the project team, relevant UNEP senior staff and partners, with a minimum of eight working days to comment?	x	
14.	Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	x	
15.	Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office?	x	
16.	Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	x	
17.	Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	x	
Financial Resources:			
18.	Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation? If not, comment in the table below on the sufficiency of the funds made available.	x	
19.	Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process? If not, comment in the table below.	x	
Timeliness:			
20.	If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within six months after project operational completion and not more than three months prior? (Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?)	x	
21.	Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?		x
22.	Were all submission and commenting deadlines met as set by the Evaluation Manager and as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed? If not, comment in the table below on exceptional delays.	x	

Provide comments / explanations / mitigating circumstances below for any non-compliant process issues.

Evaluation Process Criterion Number	Evaluation Office Comments
21	To avoid the peak tourism season in Socotra, the country mission started during the middle of the IR finalisation phase, including discussions on the restructured ToC and the reformulation of results.