Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FAO-GEF PROJECT DOCUMENT

Project Title:	Combating land degradation and biodiversity loss by promoting sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in Afghanistan

GEF ID: 10169	FAO Entity Number: 658880 FAO Project Symbol: GCP /AFG/102/GFF
	Country(ies): Afghanistan
	EOD (Implementation start): January 2021 NTE (Implementation end): December 2025
Environmental and Social Risk Classification:	low risk □ moderate risk **x** high risk □
Gender Marker:	G0 □ G1 **x** G2a □ G2b □
Contribution to FAO's Strategic Framework: (Indicate as appropriate)	▪ Strategic Objective/Organizational Outcome: *Strategic Objective 2*: Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in a sustainable manner (Output 2.1.1: Practices piloted, tested or scaled up by producers, to sustainably increase productivity, address climate change and environmental degradation and Output 2.1.2: Capacities of institutions are strengthened to promote the adoption of more integrated and cross-sectoral practices that sustainably increase production, address climate change and environmental degradation), and; *Strategic Objective 4*: Enable more inclusive and efficient agriculture and food production systems (Output 4.3.1: Value chain actors equipped with technical and managerial capacities to develop inclusive, efficient and sustainable agrifood value chains). ▪ Country Outcome(s): Afghanistan ▪ Country Programming Framework(s) Output(s): *Priority area 1.* Better governance through improved capacity for policy planning, land reform, decentralization, management of common natural resources. Outputs 1.2: Sustainable Management of Common Resources. ▪ Regional Initiative/Priority Area: Regional Initiative on Climate Change and enhancement of sustainable management and use of natural resources, sub-area 8. Land restoration, including sustainable forest management, sustainable land and soil management, and biodiversity conservation.
	Project Budget (GEF/SCCF/LDCF): $5,906,850 Co-financing: $30,000,000 Total Project Budget: $35,906,850

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Executive Summary

Large parts of Afghanistan are affected by land degradation and desertification. Most of the country has been classified as having 'degraded soil', and it is estimated that 80% of the land area is at risk of soil erosion. Land degradation is mainly caused by overgrazing and deforestation, which in turn is one of the largest contributors to desertification in Afghanistan. Degradation and desertification present a significant risk to livestock grazing. Livestock products from rangelands form the basis of livelihoods for more than 80% of Afghan households and contribute more than 50% to the agricultural GDP. Current rates of land degradation and desertification will be exacerbated by climate change, which is predicted to cause decreases in mean annual rainfall and increased temperatures. Afghanistan's forests are severely damaged as a result of deforestation, mismanagement, and drought, and today account for only 2% of the country's total area. Illegal hunting, deforestation, overgrazing, climate change, and conflict, have led to widespread biodiversity loss.

Khost in the southeast, Laghman, and Nuristan Provinces in eastern Afghanistan are among the most vulnerable provinces of the country. The three provinces are particularly prone to natural disasters such as landslides, erosion and drought. This affects both livestock as well as rain-fed and irrigated agriculture production. The three provinces are also affected by conflict and internal displacement. In addition, the eastern provinces are projected to experience the highest increase in average temperatures in the country due to climate change. They are also among the provinces most affected by soil degradation. Although in decline, forests and shrubs still cover 28% of Khost, 25.5% of Laghman, and 25.8% of Nuristan (FAO, 2014).

The three target provinces are among the most biologically diverse areas of Afghanistan. They host globally significant biodiversity, among which are five globally threatened large mammal species: snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*, VU), markhor (*Capra falconeri*, NT), urial (*Ovis orientalis*, VU), musk deer (*Moschus cupreus*, EN*)* and Asiatic black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, VU*)*, as well as migratory and non-migratory birds[1] and endemic plant species[2]. As in other parts of Afghanistan, wildlife in these provinces is threatened by illegal hunting, deforestation, and conflict.

The proposed GEF intervention aims to strengthen government and communities' capacity to address the environmental problems above by promoting sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in these vulnerable landscapes of eastern Afghanistan. In order to do so, the following barriers to effectively combating land degradation and biodiversity loss need to be addressed.

- Barrier 1. Limited national and landscape-level planning mechanisms to support sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation.
- Barrier 2. Lack of experience, capacity, education and best practices for sustainable rangeland management, land restoration and biodiversity conservation.
- Barrier 3. Insufficient data and knowledge, and management and sharing of these data to inform appropriate decision making and planning.

The project is articulated in three main components:

1. Component 1. *Strengthening capacity of national, provincial and local stakeholders for CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management.*
2. Component 2. *Integrated management and restoration of degraded landscapes for biodiversity conservation and sustainable/regenerative rangeland management.*
3. Component 3. *Systematic creation and sharing of knowledge, project coordination, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and institutional capacity development.*

The project will be executed by MAIL in close collaboration with the Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (PAIL) and the District Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Offices (DAIL), and will engage stakeholders from government, academia, private sector, civil society, and local communities.

[1] Including the Osprey, White-eyed buzzard, Tawny eagle, Bonelli's eagle, Levant sparrowhawk, Barn owl, Pallid owl, Boreal owl, Gyrfalcon, Alexandrine Parakeet (parrot), and Large-billed reed warbler.
[2] Including the vulnerable Himalayan Elm tree (*Ulmus wallichiana*) and the near-threatened Chilgoza pine (*Pinus gerardiana*).

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Acronyms

AWP/B	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BH	Budget Holder
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDC	Community Development Council
CPF	Country Programming Framework
DAIL	District Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Offices
ESMG	FAO's Environmental and Social Guidelines
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMA	Forest Management Association
FE	Final Evaluation
FFS	Farmer Field School
FLO	Funding Liaison Officer
FPMIS	Field Programme Management Information System
FRA	Global Forest Resources Assessment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GD-NRM	General Directorate of Natural Resources Management (in MAIL)
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HDI	Human Development Index
IGDK	Independent General Directorate of Kuchis
IEAs	International Environmental Agreements
ILM	Integrated Landscape Management
LTO	Lead Technical Officer
LULUCF	Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MTR	Mid-Term Review
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NEPA	National Environmental Protection Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NPD	National Project Director
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NSIA	National Statistic and Information Authority
NWFP	Non-Wood Forest Product
PAIL	Provincial Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
PIR	Annual Project Implementation Review
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPR	Project Progress Report
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RMA	Rangeland Management Association
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society

PART I: PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Combating land degradation and biodiversity loss by promoting sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in Afghanistan			
Country(ies):	Afghanistan	GEF Project ID:	10169
GEF Agency(ies):	FAO	GEF Agency Project ID (FAO entity number):	658880
Project Executing Entity(s):	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)	Submission Date	Nov 2020
GEF Focal Area (s):	Multi Focal Area, Biodiversity, Land Degradation	Expected Implementation Start	Jan 2021
		Expected Completion Date	Dec 2025
Name of Parent Program	[if applicable]	Parent Program ID:	n/a

A. FOCAL/NON-FOCAL AREA ELEMENTS

Programming Directions	Focal Area Outcomes	Trust Fund	(in $)	
			GEF Project Financing	Co-financing
BD-1-1	Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors.	GEFTF	2,385,000	12,000,000
LD-1-1	Maintain or improve flow of agro-ecosystem services to sustain food production and livelihoods through Sustainable Land Management (SLM).	GEFTF	3,521,850	18,000,000
	Total project costs	GEFTF	5,906,850	30,000,000

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Project Objective: To combat land degradation and biodiversity loss by promoting sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in vulnerable landscapes of eastern Afghanistan (Khost, Laghman, Nuristan).

Project Components/ Programs	Compo-nent Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	(in $)	
					GEF Project Financing	Co-financing
1. Strengthening capacity of national, provincial and local stakeholders for CBNRM[3] and integrated landscape planning and management.	Technical Assistance	Outcome 1.1: National, provincial and local capacity and institutions in place supporting CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management. Indicators: • Number of national and provincial stakeholders with increased knowledge and capacity to facilitate CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management.	Output 1.1.1: Capacity development program on CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management developed and implemented for national and provincial stakeholders. Output 1.1.2: Creation, registration and strengthening of 24 Rangeland Management Associations (RMAs) or Forest Management Associations (FMAs). Output 1.1.3: Participatory assessment of local natural resources, land	GEFTF	462,077	6,000,000

[3] Community-based natural resource management.

		Target: 100 (of which at least 25% women) • Area covered by CBNRM plans supporting restoration and sustainable use of rangelands and forests. *Target: 24,000 ha* • Area covered by integrated landscape management plans. *Target: 100,000 ha* • Area of critical ecosystems providing habitat for globally important wildlife species included in CBNRM and/or landscape management plans. *Target: 7,200 ha*	degradation and biodiversity in the target landscapes, integrated with geospatial data and environmental resources assessment. Output 1.1.4: CBNRM plans developed in an inclusive and participatory process supporting restoration and sustainable use of rangelands and forests. Output 1.1.5: Multi-stakeholder platform for integrated landscape management established in two pilot districts. Output 1.1.6: Integrated landscape management plan developed in two pilot districts and implementation started.			
2. Integrated management and restoration of degraded landscapes for biodiversity conservation and sustainable/ regenerative rangeland management.	Investment	Outcome 2.1: Improved management and restoration/ rehabilitation of 24,000 ha of degraded landscapes to enhance biodiversity, increase productivity and restore/rehabilitate degraded land. Indicators: • Area of degraded landscapes under restoration/ rehabilitation and improved management. *Target: 24,000 ha*	Output 2.1.1: Learning sites established in three target districts for the effective dissemination of best practices of regenerative grazing and rangeland management (approx. 8-10 ha/site). Output 2.1.2: Pastoralist-centric, gender-sensitive field schools implemented on sustainable and regenerative rangeland management and biodiversity-friendly practices. Output 2.1.3: Holistic, regenerative grazing practices and restoration interventions applied in at least 19,000 ha of rangelands. Output 2.1.4: Technical assistance and support provided to women to operate small-scale greenhouses for income generation/household food security. Output 2.1.5: Sustainable forest management (SFM) implemented in 4,200 ha of	GEFTF	4,162,786	17,800,000

			forest areas for sustainable use of forest products. Output 2.1.6: Restoration/rehabilitation, reforestation and/or agroforestry implemented in 800 ha of degraded or deforested forest areas. Output 2.1.7: Small check dams/keyline dams and water ponds established or rehabilitated to support sustainable grazing and forest restoration and improved watershed management in upper catchment areas.			
		Outcome 2.2: Enhanced local capacity for processing and value-adding of rangeland/ agroforestry products, generating socio-economic benefits for women and men, to provide incentives for sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation. Indicators: • Number of households benefiting from enhanced value chains. *Target: 450*	Output 2.2.1: Value chain analysis conducted for selected rangeland/agroforestry products and recommendations formulated on value-addition and market access. Output 2.2.2: Selected value chain interventions implemented for rangeland/agroforestry products, including strengthening of RMA/FMA and community enterprises' capacity to support value chains.			
3. Systematic creation and sharing of knowledge, project coordination, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and institutional capacity development.	Technical Assistance	Outcome 3.1: Knowledge and data on sustainable rangeland management, ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation is systematically created, shared and disseminated. Indicators: • Number of indicators[4] for which data is generated,	Output 3.1.1: Data on land degradation, biodiversity and natural assets is generated, centrally stored and shared through the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL. Output 3.1.2: Provision of 10 small research grants for universities to conduct research on topics relevant to the project such as biodiversity surveys, ecosystem valuation and natural capital, socio-	GEFTF	1,001,130	5,000,000

[4] Such as for sub-indicators under SDG indicators 2.3.1 (Productivity of small-scale food producers), 15.1.1 (Forest area as a proportion of total land area) and 15.3.1 (Proportion of degraded land over total land area).

		centrally stored and shared through the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL. *Target: At least 3* • Number of project beneficiaries and other stakeholders reached by knowledge and awareness activities. *Target: 5,000 (50% women)*	economic surveys, Eastern Forest Complex ecosystem services, and climate change impacts. Output 3.1.3: Biophysical and socio-economic surveys conducted in view of the preparation of a justification document for Nuristan National Park. Output 3.1.4: Knowledge and outreach strategy developed and implemented on sustainable rangeland management, restoration ecology and biodiversity conservation through the National 'Centre of Excellence' at MAIL as well as through use of innovative information and mobile technology.			
		Outcome 3.2: Effective project coordination, M&E and NEPA and MAIL[5] institutional capacity development. Indicators: • Number of NEPA and MAIL technical staff trained. *At least 50 (25% women)*	Output 3.2.1: Effective project coordination and M&E undertaken. Output 3.2.2: NEPA's and MAIL's institutional capacity strengthened to support project implementation, monitoring, replication and scaling up.			
			Subtotal	GEFTF	5,625,993	28,800,000
			Project Management Cost (PMC)	GEFTF	280,857	1,200,000
			Total project costs	GEFTF	5,906,850	30,000,000

For multi-trust fund projects, provide the total amount of PMC in Table B, and indicate the split of PMC among the different trust funds here: ( )

The total project costs will amount to USD 35.9 million out of which USD 5.9 million will be funded by the GEF grant. The remaining funds consist of co-financing contributions committed during the project design phase. Table B includes costs by component, outcome and source of financing, and Table C shows confirmed sources and types of co-financing. FAO, as the GEF Implementing Agency, will be responsible only for the delivery of GEF resources and FAO's co-financing funds.

[5] National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL).

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

Please include evidence for co-financing for the project with this form.

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount ($)
Government	MAIL	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	23,000,000
Government	National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000
GEF Agency	FAO	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000
Total Co-financing				30,000,000

Investment Mobilized

The co-financing identified during the project design phase consists of recurrent expenditures by MAIL and NEPA in the form of existing projects and programmes implemented by these agencies. It also includes a contribution of USD 2 million by FAO, categorized as recurrent expenditures. Recurrent expenditure refers to operating expenditures and applies to all indicated in-kind co-financing. No investment mobilized has been identified.

D. TRUST FUND RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), COUNTRY(IES), FOCAL AREA AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country Name/Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in $)		
					GEF Project Financing (a)	Agency Fee (b)	Total (c)=a+b
FAO	GEFTF	Afghanistan	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	2,385,000	226,574	2,611,574
FAO	GEFTF	Afghanistan	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	3,521,850	334,576	3,856,426
				Total GEF Resources	5,906,850	561,150	6,468,000

E. PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT

Does the project include a "non-grant" instrument? Yes

(If non-grant instruments are used, provide in Annex D an indicative calendar of expected reflows to your Agency and to the GEF/LDCF/SCCF Trust Fund).

PPG AMOUNT REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), TRUST FUND, COUNTRY(IES) AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in $)		
					PPG (a)	Agency Fee (b)	Total c = a + b
FAO	GEF TF	Afghanistan	Biodiversity	(select as applicable)	80,754	7,672	88,426
FAO	GEF TF	Afghanistan	Land Degradation	(select as applicable)	119,246	11,328	130,574
Total PPG Amount					200,000	19,000	219,000

F. PROJECT'S TARGET CONTRIBUTIONS TO GEF 7 CORE INDICATORS

Update the relevant sub-indicator values for this project using the methodologies indicated in the Core Indicator Worksheet provided in Annex F and aggregating them in the table below. Progress in programming against these targets is updated at mid-term evaluation and at terminal evaluation. Achieved targets will be aggregated and reported any time during the replenishment period. There is no need to complete this table for climate adaptation projects financed solely through LDCF and SCCCF.

Project Core Indicators		Expected at CEO Endorsement
1	**Terrestrial protected areas** created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectares)	
2	**Marine protected areas** created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectares)	
3	Area of **land restored** (Hectares)	19,800
4	Area of **landscapes under improved practices** (hectares; excluding protected areas)	104,200
5	Area of **marine habitat under improved practices** (excluding protected areas) (Hectares)	
	Total area under improved management (Hectares)	124,000
6	**Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated** (metric tons of CO_2e (direct))	1,059,852
7	**Number of shared water ecosystems** (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management	
8	Globally over-exploited **marine fisheries** moved to more sustainable levels (metric tons)	
9	**Reduction**, disposal/destruction, phase out, **elimination** and avoidance of **chemicals of global concern** and their waste in the environment and in processes, materials and products (metric tons of toxic chemicals reduced)	
10	Reduction, avoidance of emissions of **POPs to air** from point and non-point sources (grams of toxic equivalent gTEQ)	
11	Number of **direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender** as co-benefit of GEF investment	50,000 (50% women)

Provide additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used, and other focal area specifics (i.e., Aichi targets in BD) including justification where core indicator targets are not provided.

G. PROJECT TAXONOMY

Please fill in the table below for the taxonomic information required of this project. Use the GEF Taxonomy Worksheet provided in Annex C to help you select the most relevant keywords/ topics/themes that best describe this project.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Influencing Models	Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making		
Stakeholders	Private Sector	SMEs	
	Beneficiaries		
	Local Communities		
Capacity, Knowledge and Research	Capacity Development		
Gender Equality	Gender Mainstreaming	Beneficiaries	
	Gender results areas	Capacity development	
Focal Area/Theme	Biodiversity	Mainstreaming	Agriculture & agrobiodiversity
			Forestry
	Land Degradation	Sustainable Land Management	Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands
			Community-Based NRM
Rio Marker	Climate Change Mitigation 1		
	Climate Change Adaptation 1		

PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

1.a Project Description

1) Global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)

Afghanistan is a landlocked, mountainous country located in the arid sub-tropics of South Central Asia. It has an area of 647,500 km², making it the 41st largest nation in the world. The climate is arid and semi-arid, with cold winters and hot summers that vary substantially from one region to another due to the dramatic topography. The wet season, including the snow season, usually runs from winter through early spring. The country as a whole is dry, and is classified as having a Desert or Desert Steppe climate.[6] With a population of about 35 million[7], Afghanistan is the 39th most populous nation in the world. According to the Human Development Index for 2018, Afghanistan is ranked 169 among 193 United Nations member states[8] and has around 10.6 million people undernourished.[9] Afghanistan also ranks among the countries most vulnerable to climate change, and among the most food insecure countries in the world.[10] In addition, up to 80% of the Afghan population depend on natural resources and associated biological diversity for their livelihoods.[11] Rangelands, forests, and biodiversity products are important sources of food, shelter, energy, income, and cultural heritage for the great majority of the country's population.[12]

Population growth is estimated at 2.03% based on population estimates in 1979 as compared to today, and the estimated urban population is 23.6%, a significant rise from 20% in 2004.[13] Urban population growth is largely driven by rural to urban migration, forced internal displacement and returning refugees.[14] According to most recent UNHCR reports, there are around 60,000 internally displaced persons and 15,700 returned refugees.[15] In addition to rural and urban dwellers, an estimated 6% of the population are nomadic Kuchi herders.[16] Decades of armed conflict have destroyed the country's infrastructure, damaged its institutions, and led to widespread poverty and underdevelopment, which collectively underpin Afghanistan's vulnerability and lack of adaptive capacity.

Large parts of Afghanistan are affected by land degradation and desertification. Most of the country has been classified as having "degraded soil", and it is estimated that 80% of the land area is at risk of soil erosion. Land degradation is mainly caused by overgrazing and deforestation, which in turn is one of the largest contributors to desertification in Afghanistan. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) reported that desertification in Afghanistan currently affects over 75% of the land area in the northern, western and southern regions. Degradation and desertification present a significant risk to livestock grazing. Livestock products from rangelands form the basis of livelihoods for more than 80% of Afghan households and contribute more than 50% to the agricultural GDP.

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[6] Afghanistan Initial National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). 2013. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA).
[7] Official UN population estimates as of February 2018. These exceed official Government estimates, which indicate a population of 31.6 million in 2018-19 (http://cso.gov.af/en/page/demography-and-socile-statistics/demograph-statistics/3897111).
[8] UNDP Human Development Indicators: http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/AFG, accessed 08/2018.
[9] The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, FAO 2019, available at: http://www.fao.org/3/ca5162en/ca5162en.pdf The SOFI also reports 6.5 million people in Afghanistan in 2016-2018 living in severely food insecurity and 19.3 million in moderate food insecurity conditions. They correspond, respectively, to the 18.3 and 54.3 percent of the population.
[10] DARA Climate Vulnerability Monitor (2012); GermanWatch Global Climate Risk Index (2013); Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index (2014); http://www.ipcinfo.org/.
[11] UNEP and NEPA (2008). Biodiversity Profile of Afghanistan: An Output of the National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Global Environment Management (NCSA) for Afghanistan.
[12] USAID (2017). Foreign Assistance Act 119 Biodiversity Assessment with Summary Assessment of Climate Vulnerability and Other Environmental Threats and Opportunities to Inform USAID/Afghanistan Program Design (Biodiversity-Plus Assessment).
[13] Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2016/17, Central Statistics Organization, Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
[14] Majidi, N. 2011. Urban Returnees and Internally-Displaced Persons in Afghanistan. Middle East Institute Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique.
[15] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Global Focus, Afghanistan, available at: http://reporting.unhcr.org/afghanistan
[16] Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2016/17, Central Statistics Organization, Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Water scarcity and drought affect several regions of Afghanistan. The Kabul River Basin, in particular, is extremely water-stressed, and both drought and flood events pose a severe threat to agricultural production, rural livelihoods, and poverty reduction. In addition, vegetation cover has reduced as shrubs and trees are cut for fuel, wheat straw is removed for animal feed and construction, lands are degraded due to mismanaged grazing and over cultivation, rangelands are exploitatively cultivated for rainfed wheat production (and thereafter left degraded), and human settlements encroach on productive agricultural land. These reductions in vegetation cover increase the rate of soil-moisture evaporation, reduce water infiltration, resulting in runoff and erosion.

As shown in Figure 1 below, tree cover in Afghanistan has been significantly reduced over the period 2010-2017, moving from 502,000 ha in 2010 to 481,000 ha in 2017, meaning that 21,000 ha of forest disappeared in less than 10 years at national level.

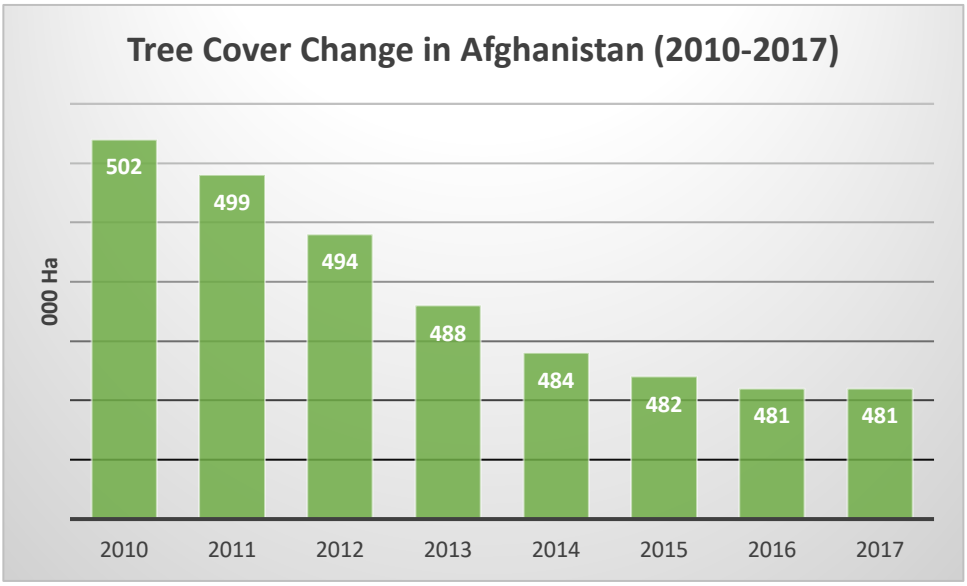

Figure 1: Afghanistan Tree Cover Change 2010-2017. Source: FAOSTAT.

Rangelands

At present, the rangelands of Afghanistan occupy about 30 million hectares, representing roughly 45% of the country's territory. However large areas which are considered 'barren land' or 'waste land' are also used for grazing, particularly in winter. The total grazeable area is therefore much larger, estimated at 70-85% of the total land area, providing habitat and forage for nearly 35 million livestock as well as numerous wild animals. Indirectly, rangelands have significant export potential and generate income for the rural population via livestock sub-products such as carpets and rugs, wool, and medicinal plants (Ferrula, Bunicum, Rosa, etc). The key characteristics of most rangelands in Afghanistan are those of shared, free resources in which the quantity and quality of the pasture in any one year is governed primarily by the rainfall and snow in that year. The lack of long-term management agreements and feasible grazing plans that are co-created with stakeholders' consensus means there is no incentive nor possibility for herders to conserve or invest in pastureland. Moreover, grazing patterns have changed as conflict, land claims and drought have affected traditional grazing routes.

Afghanistan's rangelands support a significant level of animal husbandry through sedentary, seasonal transhumance, and migratory systems, which is estimated to account for more than 50% of the country's total agricultural GDP. Unfortunately, mismanaged grazing and, particularly, overgrazing due to a lack of appropriate recovery times for

rangeland flora, as well as low stock densities of grazing herds[17] have resulted in heavy land degradation. Additionally, conversion to rain-fed wheat production has resulted in extensive desertification and decreased productivity.[18]

The key issues regarding rangelands and livestock production highlighted by local stakeholders during the field missions can be classified into three main categories:[19]

- Lack of biomass (for livestock feed) both in grazing (late spring to fall) and non-grazing seasons (winter).
- Lack of support systems and mechanisms to access technical knowledge and opportunities (veterinarians, grazing plans, value-adding facilities, access to markets, etc.).
- Issues related to access to land, either for security reasons/local tensions, or enacted policies by government (conversion and/or lease of rangelands).

The participatory maps drawn by stakeholders as well as vertical rangeland pictures taken as samples during the field mission, together with the official macro data and experiences from recent international projects and initiatives, show that appropriate grazing management has great potential to increase the biomass production both in high altitude pastures and, especially, in lowlands. This approach considers the "problem" (lack of biomass to be grazed due to mismanagement) as the opportunity (i.e., right grazing management offering great marginal reaction). The issue of overgrazing is not directly related to livestock numbers but rather to the timing: lack of recovery times allocated for plants, since this is the true reason of overgrazing. The result of continuous mismanagement is below-optimum photosynthesis processes, increased bare ground, shallow root systems, dominance of non-palatable (woody, noxious or non-livestock-palatable) plants and thus overall low biomass production in rangelands. The water cycle is also effected negatively due to increased bare ground, creating a reinforcing feedback loop that further degrades the rangeland ecosystems' health and productivity.

Afghanistan's rangelands are an especially valuable resource as they cover more than half of the country's total land and, in addition to supporting animal husbandry, provide vital food, fuel, building materials, medicinal plants, and habitat for wildlife, which collectively form the natural resource base that supports the vast majority of the country's population.[20] This suggests that even marginal enhancement of rangelands' underlying ecosystem health and thus biomass productivity would lead to considerable improvements in economic (quantity and quality of livestock production), ecological (water retention capacity and carbon sequestration in soil among other positive feedback loops) and social (local livelihoods and collaboration) indicators.

Forests

A few centuries ago, deciduous and evergreen forests covered 5% of Afghanistan's current land area, including one million hectares of oak and two million hectares of pine and cedar growing mostly in the eastern part of the country. Open woodland dominated by pistachios, almonds and junipers occupied an additional 33% of the land area. This is no longer the situation today. Natural forests now occupy less than one million hectares[21], with nearly half of those forests having less than 10% crown density[22]. The largest forested areas are located in a few of the eastern provinces, but remote sensing of these provinces in 1977 and 2002 showed forest cover in them had been reduced by more than 50%. From 2000 to

[17] When an area is grazed with low stock density for too long, overgrazing and "partial rest" happen at the same time, obstructing the regeneration of the landscape. FAO (2020). Guidelines for Grazing Management Planning: A Holistic Approach.
[18] NEPA and UN Environment (2015). Climate Change and Governance in Afghanistan.
[19] Field missions to Laghman and Khost were organized in February and March 2020. The baseline assessment methodology was structured in order to get qualitative as well as quantitative data from local stakeholders through participatory mapping and investigative questionnaires. The field mission reports are available upon request. More information can also be found in Annex I1: Stakeholder Engagement Plan.
[20] Afghanistan's Environment 2008. UN Environment Programme and the National Environmental Protection Agency of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
[21] FAO, The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Land Cover Atlas, 2016.
[22] Afghanistan's Environment 2008. UN Environment Programme and the National Environmental Protection Agency of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

2005, the forest declined at a rate of 3%, or 30,000 hectares, a year. This forest decline has implications for groundwater tables which appear to be precipitously declining, and for soil erosion, which currently affects over 80% of Afghanistan's land. The primary factors causing forest and woody cover loss are overgrazing and the unsustainable collection of fuelwood. There have been several initiatives implemented to reduce deforestation over the years, but conflict has slowed the development of large-scale restoration projects and has hindered the benefits for communities.

Afghanistan's forests are severely damaged as a result of deforestation, mismanagement, and drought, and today account for only two percent of the country's total area (FAOSTAT).[23]

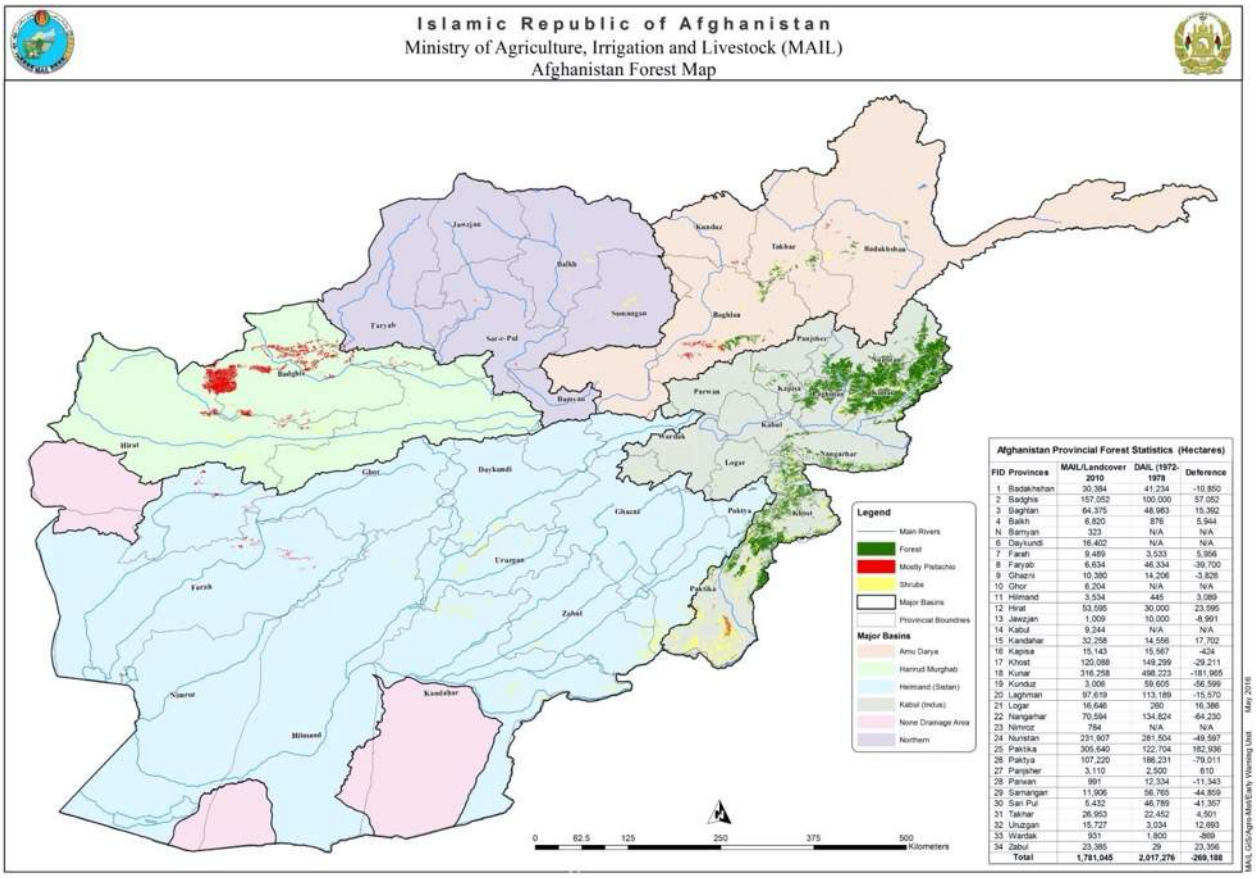

Figure 2: Afghanistan forest map. Source: MAIL. National Natural Resource Management Strategy (2017-2021)

Chilgoza pine (*Pinus gerardiana*), a tree species that is near-threatened in the IUCN Red List and important for local livelihoods, is distributed in eastern and southeastern provinces. This region is classified as the Eastern Forest Complex. Scattered populations of chilgoza pine are distributed in Paktika, Paktia, Khost, Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Logar, Nuristan and Kapisa Provinces. Significant stands (mixed and pure) are found in Nuristan, Laghman (Alishang and Alingar Districts); and Nangarhar.[24] The Eastern Forest Complex of Afghanistan comprises the last remaining contiguous patches of conifer forest and supports biological diversity likely to be unmatched in the country.

[23] The FAOSTAT Land Use domain contains data on forty-seven categories of land use, irrigation and agricultural practices, relevant to monitor agriculture, forestry and fisheries activities at national, regional and global level. Data are available by country and year, with global coverage and annual updates (FAOSTAT, http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/RL).

[24] Shalizi, M. et al. (2016). Afghanistan chilgoza pine forests: Current status, anthropogenic pressure, trends in regeneration and management. USAID Assistance in Building Afghanistan by Developing Enterprises (ABADE) Program.

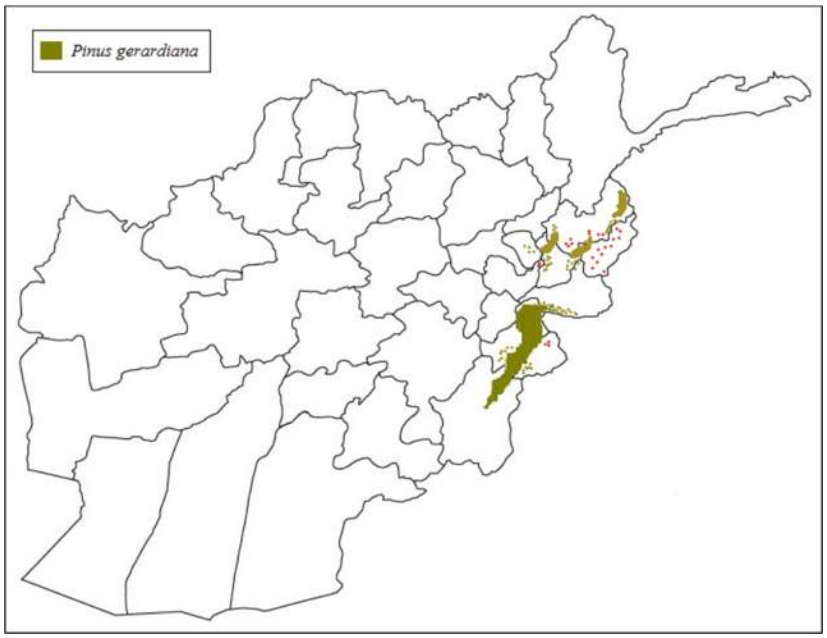

Figure 3: Map of chilgoza pine distribution in Afghanistan. Source: USAID ABADE (2016).

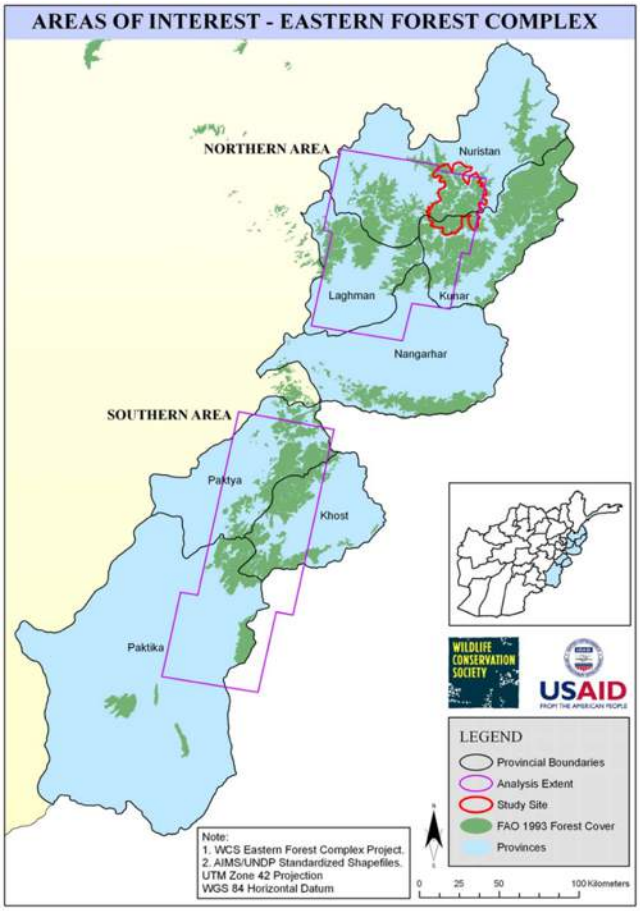

Figure 4: Eastern Forest Complex. Source: WCS, USAID (2007).[25]

The decline in forest cover in Nuristan Province, representative of the area, is shown in Figure 5 below.

[25] WCS, USAID (2007). A Preliminary Assessment of Forest Cover and Change in the Eastern Forest Complex of Afghanistan.

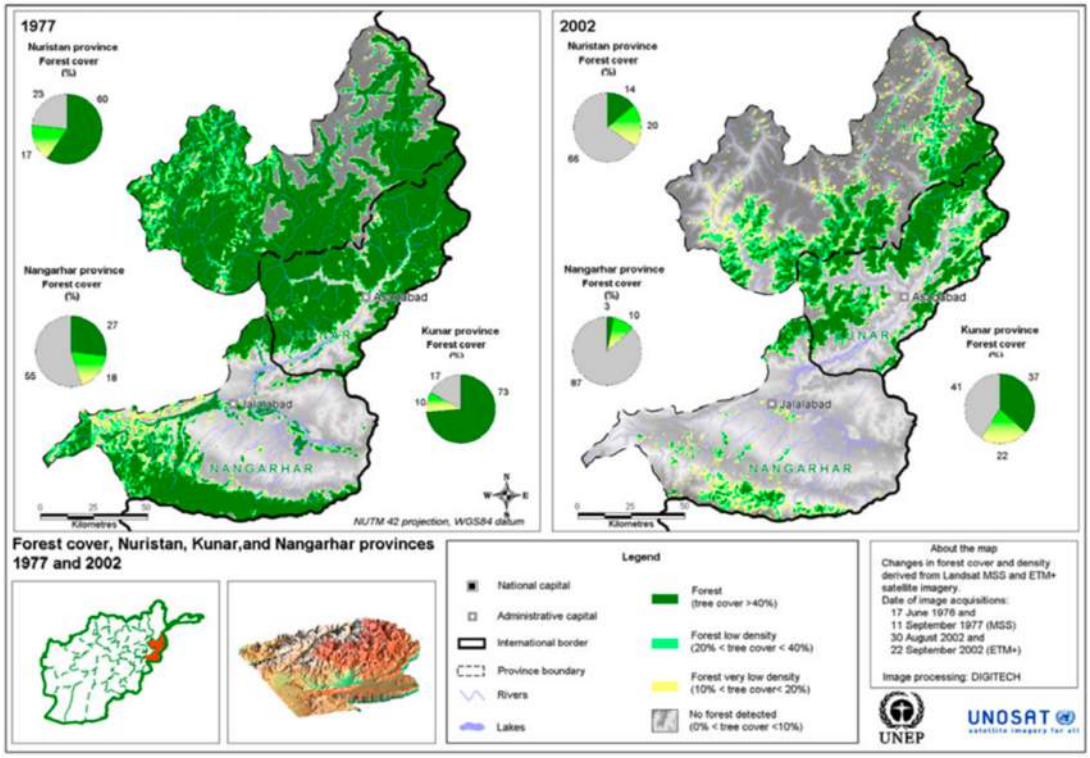

Figure 5: Forest Cover in Nuristan, Kunar and Nangarhar Provinces, 1977 and 2002. Source: UNEP, UNOSAT (2003).[26]

Biodiversity

All of the environmental decline noted above has unsurprisingly threatened much of Afghanistan's wildlife. For example, Siberian cranes have not been observed in Afghanistan for over 20 years. Several mammalian species, such as the Caspian tiger (*Panthera tigris virgata*) or cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*), are on the verge of global extinction and have not been seen in Afghanistan for decades. Other threatened species include the markhor (*Capra falconeri*), which is endemic to Afghanistan and adjacent territories. Much of Afghanistan's biodiversity is highly dynamic with cross-border and seasonal migration being the norm. As entire ecosystems disappear and or degrade, these migration routes disappear with them.[27]

Afghanistan's varied topography results in numerous habitat types, with temperature and precipitation changing considerably at different elevations. According to Afghanistan's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), Afghanistan is home to more than 700 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, butterflies, and a staggering 3,500-4,000 native vascular plant species, though recent studies suggest that biodiversity loss is accelerating across the country.[28] Human activity, especially habitat fragmentation, is the primary cause of biodiversity loss, though climate change is expected to become one of the most significant drivers of biodiversity loss before the end of the century (globally and in Afghanistan).[29]

Afghanistan has many types of medicinal plants that can be grown commercially. Medicinal plants already constitute 20% of Afghanistan's total exports. Much is currently exported in raw form to other countries where these are processed, sorted, cleaned, packaged, labelled and subsequently sold to pharmaceutical companies.[30]

[26] http://enviroinfo.eu/sites/default/files/pdfs/vol110/0418.pdf.
[27] State of the Environment Report, 2008.
[28] Afghanistan (2014c). National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. Kabul: National Environmental Protection Agency, p.14
[29] Convention on Biological Diversity, Climate Change and Biodiversity, available (September 2015) at: https://www.cbd.int/climate/intro.shtml
[30] MAIL (2018). Operational Manual (OM) for Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). http://nrm.mail.gov.af:1080/Library/BookDetails/4026.

Afghanistan is classified into four major biomes and 17 eco-regions, as shown in Table 1 and Figure 6 below.

Biome	Eco-region "Zip-Code"	Eco-region Name	Global Status
Temperate Coniferous Forests			
	PA0506	East Afghan Montane Conifer Forests	Vulnerable
Temperate Grasslands, Savannahs and Shrublands			
	PA 0808	Gissaro-Alai Open Woodlands (minor occurrence in Afghanistan)	Critical/Endangered
Montane Grasslands and Shrublands			
	PA1006	Karakoram-West Tibetan Plateau Alpine Steppe	Vulnerable
	PA 1014	Pamir Alpine Desert And Tundra	Vulnerable
	PA 1005	Hindu Kush Alpine Meadow	Vulnerable
	PA 1004	Ghorat-Hazarajat Alpine Meadow	Vulnerable
	PA 1012	Northwestern Himalayan Alpine Shrub and Meadows (minor occurrence in Afghanistan)	Relatively Stable/ Intact
	PA 1018	Sulaiman Range Alpine Meadows (minor occurrence in Afghanistan)	Stable/Intact
Deserts and Xeric Shrublands			
	PA1307	Baluchistan Xeric Woodlands	Critical/Endangered
	PA 1309	Central Afghan Mountains Xeric Woodlands	Critical/Endangered
	PA 1301	Afghan Mountains Semi-Desert	Critical/Endangered
	PA 1306	Badkhiz-Karabil Semi-Desert	Critical/Endangered
	PA 1313	Central Persian Desert Basins	Vulnerable
	PA 1326	Registan-North Pakistan Sandy Desert	Vulnerable
	PA 1322	Paropamisus Xeric Woodlands	Vulnerable

Table 1: Biomes of Afghanistan. Source: UNEP, NEPA, GEF: Biodiversity Profile of Afghanistan, 2008

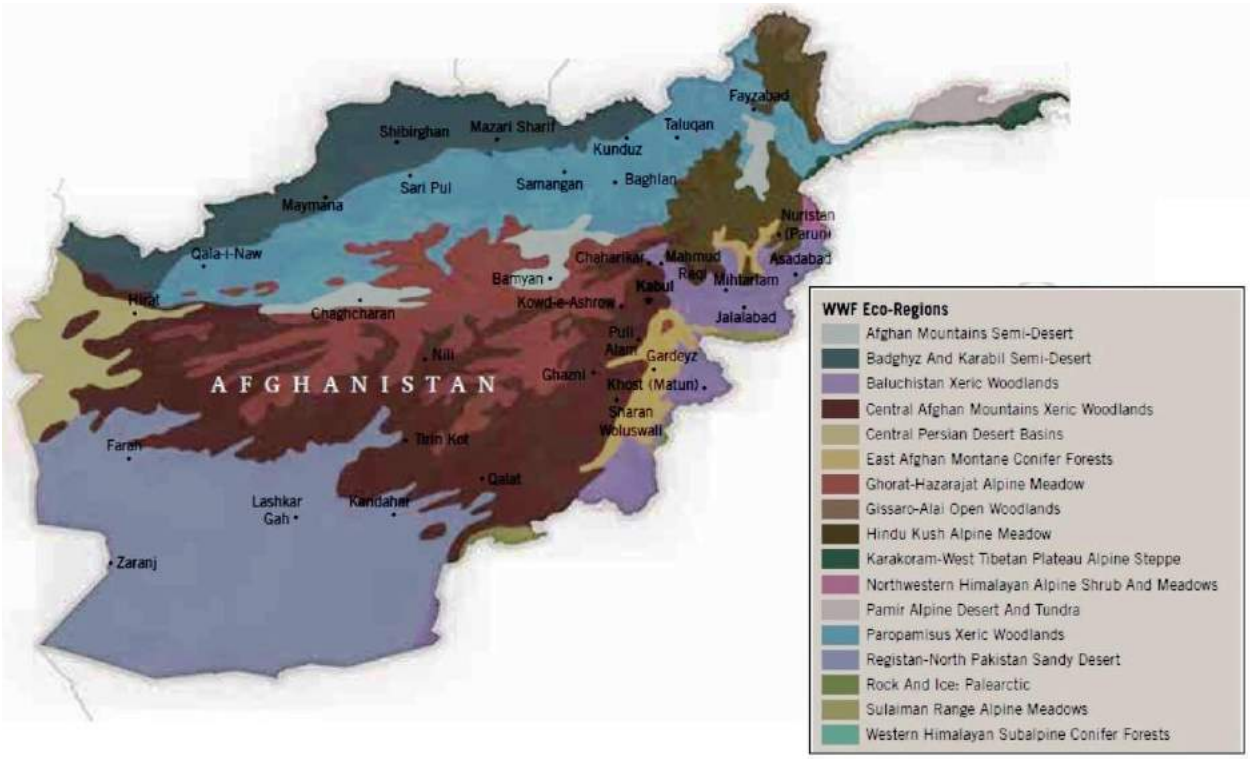

Figure 6: Map of ecoregions in Afghanistan. Source: NBSAP (2014)

Afghanistan has four key protected areas with functional management plans. These are Band-i-Amir National Park (613.3 km^2), Wakhan National Park, Kol-i-Hashmat Khan Waterfowl Sanctuary (1.91 km^2), and Shah Foladi (700 km^2). The other protected areas (yet to be announced) include the Northwest Afghanistan Game Reserve, Hamun-e-Puzak Waterfowl Sanctuary (1,453.4 km^2), Registan Desert, Ab-e-Estada, Imam Sahib Wildlife Reserve, Nuristan, Ajar Valley Wildlife Reserve (400 km^2), and Darqad Wildlife Reserve (120 km2), which all together make 381,129 km^2 or 5.8% of the total land area.[31]

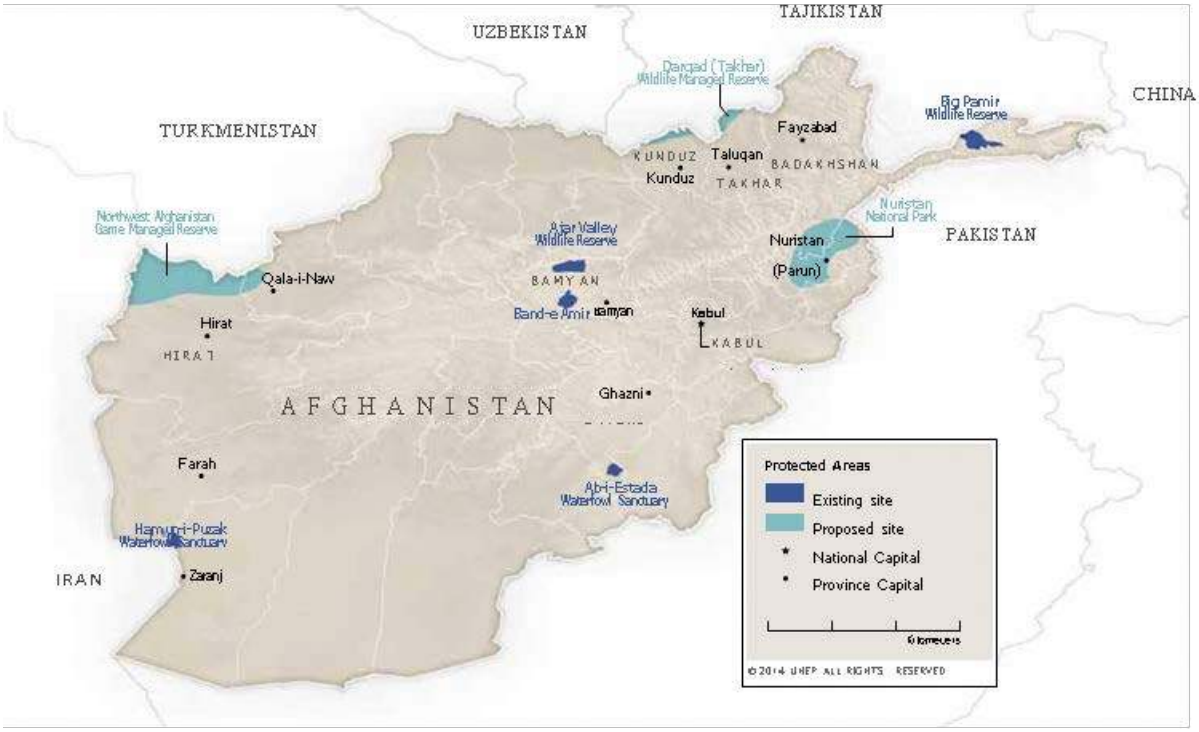

Figure 7: Existing and proposed protected areas of Afghanistan. Source: NBSAP (2014)

Sayer and van der Zon (1981) proposed that Nuristan National Park be created in Laghman and Kunar Provinces centred on the Paron and Kantiwa valleys. They provided a map showing the proposed, approximate extent of the Park. The major value of the area was suggested as being the largely undisturbed monsoon-influenced forests and the unique species assemblage in the area including Himalayan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus laniger*), markhor, leopard and snow leopard. As well, the traditional way of life is of great cultural value. Petocz and Larsson (1977) described the ecology of the area and made recommendations for management. Remote sensing analysis undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2003) indicated that 52% of forest cover was lost in Nuristan, Laghman and Nangarhar Provinces between 1977 and 2002. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has undertaken wildlife studies in Nuristan and has confirmed the identity and distribution of mammal species through snow tracking, scat identification and camera trapping. The national park remains a proposal and has had no formal recognition.[32] On World Environment Day on 5th of June 2020, the Government of Afghanistan announced four areas as National Parks and Protected Areas, namely Darqad Takhar, Imam Sahib Kunduz, Abi-i-istada Ghazni and Nuristan. However, the official gazettement and detailed plans are yet to be developed.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that additional targets for protection and sustainable management (including through community protected areas) will be established in Afghanistan's revised NBSAP in 2020, providing opportunities for

[31] NEPA (2019). Afghanistan's 6th National Report to the United Nation's Convention on Biological Diversity.
[32] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2014). National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2014-2017.

local governments and communities to attract funding for reforestation, eco-cultural tourism development, etc. in areas designated for protection.

Agriculture

Agriculture (crops and livestock) accounted for approximately half of economic growth in 2016 and provided a source of income for about 44% of the population – 61% of women and 40% of men – especially for rural households, which are largely subsistence farmers with small, rainfed holdings. Agriculture remains a critical driver of economic growth through its impact on aggregate demand and inputs to the manufacturing sector. Agricultural productivity is closely tied to irrigation, but currently only 40% of farming households have access to irrigated land. In 2018, drought, conflict and internal displacement severely affected crop production. According to the Afghanistan Emergency Food Security Assessment 2018, 54% farmers reported having less than 3 months cereal stocks as compared to 33% in 2017 and 69% of the farmers did not have access to seeds for cultivation in 2018.[33] Cereal production represents an increasing source for national food security and nutrition: about 6.1 million tonnes of cereals were harvested in 2019, over one third above the outturn in 2018 and 7% above the five year average.[34]

Grapes generated the greatest income of any crop with nearly $150 million for fresh grapes and $280 million for raisins in 2016. Almonds generated $120 million, while pomegranates generated $100 million in that year. About one-third of Afghanistan's horticulture crops are exported, primarily to India and Pakistan, although significant quantities of raisins are exported to the Russian Federation, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, and central Asian countries.[35]

The Eastern Region of Afghanistan is very suitable for agriculture. The climate there is relatively more humid and warmer during summer. Rainfall occurs mainly during the months of January to May and November to December and the annual precipitation varies from 200 mm to 350 mm and averages at about 270 mm. Soil in the area is mostly sandy loam or clay loam with a pH of 6.8 - 7.5 and clay loam generally prevails in rice cultivating areas. The area is rich in terms of water resources with rivers like Kunar, Kabul, Alingar and Alishang passing through this region. In Laghman province, rice is cultivated in about 10,000 ha in four districts, namely Qarghayee, Mehtarlam, Alishang, and Alingar. Average yield of rice with appropriate practices is about 4 mt/ha in areas. However, poor irrigation infrastructures and consequent water losses are the major constraints.

Food security

Food security, poverty, and hunger remains a critical issue in Afghanistan despite the encouraging achievements in the past decade. The Afghan population across the country, especially the poor are severely impacted by conflict, structural causes of poverty, cross border movement, climate change and lack of basic services. Despite the past decade of international assistance, poverty, inequality and instability remain entrenched. According to the Afghanistan Multidimensional Poverty Index (A-MPI), approximately 51.7% of Afghans are multi-dimensionally poor and live on 1 dollar a day and struggle to meet their basic requirements resulting in chronic malnutrition, severe food insecurity.[36] The country also has one of the highest infant and maternal mortality rates globally. This underlying chronic state of the population is becoming even more intense and geographically more extensive. Along with the long-standing drivers of humanitarian needs, drought was one of the largest emergencies in 2018 and 2019. According to the Afghanistan Emergency Food Security Assessment 2018, drought affected around 10.5 million rural population out of 17 million from 22 affected provinces. Out of them, 3.5 million were found to be also highly food insecure. In 2018 alone, around 0.3 million people across the country were found to be displaced. Moreover, conflict and cross border movement have affected

[33] Afghanistan Food Security Cluster and MAIL (2018). Afghanistan Emergency Food Security Assessment.
[34] FAO GIEWS Country Brief on Afghanistan.
[35] ADB, Horticulture Value Chain Development Sector Project.
[36] NSIA (2019). Afghanistan Multidimensional Poverty Index 2016–2017: Report and Analysis. https://www.mppn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/AFG_2019_vs9_online.pdf (retrieved May 2020)

the livelihoods, and unemployment has reached 31%, which is also one of the triggering factors for food insecurity and poverty across the country.[37]

Climate change impacts

In Afghanistan, the lack of robust environmental and climate data presents numerous challenges for the development of comprehensive climate projections. Nevertheless, based on currently available climate data analysed in conjunction with regional climate models from the Cordex experiment, NEPA and UN Environment have developed Afghanistan's most detailed climate change projections to date. The climate change projections of these models are based on GHG scenarios, the current generation of which are known as Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs). Overall, these projections show a strong increase in mean annual temperature, considerably higher than global mean projections, when compared to a baseline period of 1986-2006.[38]

More specifically, the optimistic scenario (RCP4.5) shows Afghanistan warming approximately 1.5°C until 2050, followed by a period of stabilization and then additional warming of approximately 2.5°C until 2100. In contrast, the pessimistic scenario (RCP8.5) shows extreme warming across the whole country of approximately 3°C until 2050, with further warming by up to 7°C by 2100. Under both scenarios there are regional differences, with higher temperature increases expected at higher altitudes than the lowlands. In the Central Highlands and the Hindu Kush, warming over a 30-year period in the near future (2021-2050) is projected to range from 1.5°C to 1.7° compared to the base period (1976-2006), while in the lowlands the increase ranges from 1.1°C to 1.4°C. The band of uncertainty for these projections is approximately +/- 2°C and all model runs show the same tendency.[39]

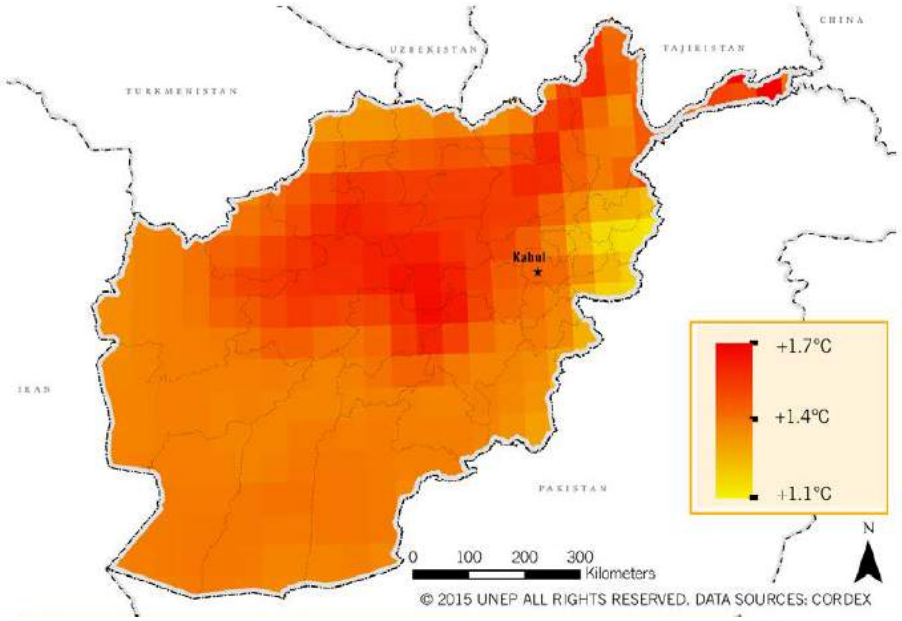

Figure 8: Projected temperature increase in Afghanistan 2050, Source: UNEP, 2015.

Overall, the decrease of precipitation during springtime is particularly relevant since this is the period of main plant growth for agricultural production. In addition, this precipitation decrease is projected to take place in the regions with the highest agricultural productivity of Afghanistan (East, North, and Central Highlands). In combination with the overall increase in

[37] World Bank. Afghanistan Country Update Report 2019.
[38] National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and United Nations Environment Programme (2015). Climate Change and Governance in Afghanistan.
[39] Ibid.

temperature and the related increase in evapotranspiration across the country, this will most likely negatively impact the hydrological cycle, agricultural productivity, and availability of water resources.[40]

In Afghanistan, climate change induced increases in temperature and decreases in availability of water resources will likely have considerable impacts on the country's ecosystems. Natural adaptation could be manifested by shifting habitats or changing life cycles. Thus, the conservation and restoration of ecosystems is essential to protecting biodiversity, supporting adaptation to climate change, and mitigating climate change. Ecosystems are essential for life and biodiversity. They provide provisioning services, regulatory services, habitat and supporting services and cultural services.[41]

The trees and plants that make up Afghanistan's forests and rangelands face a number of climate change risks and adaptation challenges as temperatures increase and availability of water resources decreases. With warmer temperatures, forest and rangeland plant species are expected to see a shift in their geographic range to more northern latitudes and higher altitudes thereby altering vegetation cover and increasing the risk of desertification, erosion, flooding, avalanches, and landslides. A warmer climate would also impact the biological diversity of plant species, as not all would be suited to a warmer climate. New pests, diseases, and invasive plant species better suited to a warmer climate could also increase competition with native species resulting in alterations to the ecosystem. Likewise, the increase in temperature and decrease in availability of water resources would likely increase the severity of droughts, and although many tree species are able to cope with limited droughts, these changes could put many forest and rangeland plant species at risk, along with the people that depend upon them for their livelihoods.[42] Droughts in Afghanistan are already a recurring phenomenon with almost all years since 1997 being a drought year in some part of the country and 2-3 droughts every 10 years since the past 50 years.[43]

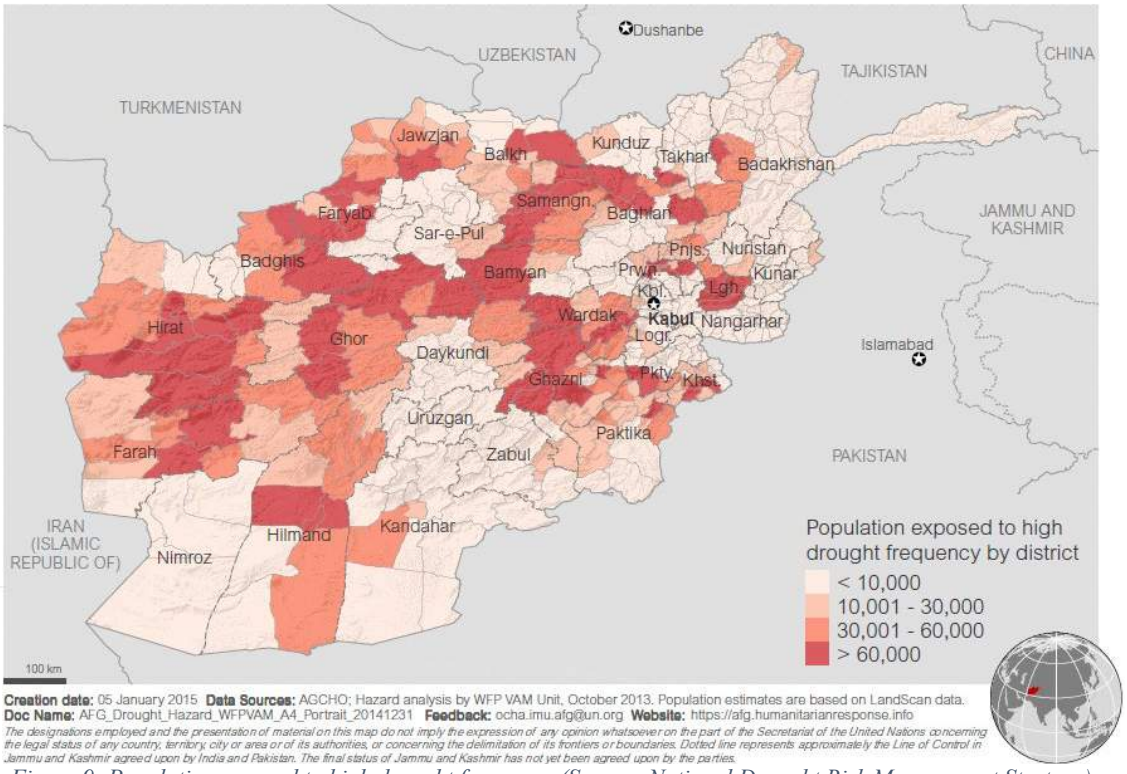

Figure 9: Population exposed to high drought frequency (Source: National Drought Risk Management Strategy)

[40] Ibid.
[41] System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) 2012, Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (EEA). https://seea.un.org/sites/seea.un.org/files/seea_eea_final_en_1.pdf
[42] NEPA and UN Environment (2015). Climate Change and Governance in Afghanistan.
[43] FAO/MAIL (2019). National Drought Risk Management Strategy.

Ecosystem-based adaptation, which integrates the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services into climate change adaptation, can provide a cost-effective approach that both maintains biodiversity and reduces negative impacts from climate change. Examples of ecosystem-based adaptation applicable in Afghanistan include: reduction of habitat loss and fragmentation, as well as habitat conservation through establishment of protected areas; afforestation to stabilize slopes, enhance soil integrity and regulate water flow; the promotion of agroforestry systems using diverse crops and plant species; and the sustainable management and restoration of watersheds linking upstream and downstream areas.[44] Afghanistan is a biodiversity rich country, in terms of biome and eco-regions, but most parts of these ecosystems are vulnerable or in a critical status. By focusing on forest and grassland biome, the project will support part of its vulnerable ecosystems.

Main drivers of land degradation and biodiversity loss

Biodiversity is being degraded as immediate needs, ongoing conflict, internal displacement, high rates of population growth, low levels of education, and poverty, result in a prioritization of survival over the longer-term sustainability of natural resource use and management.[45] As of today, the main drivers to Afghanistan's biodiversity loss and degradation are conversion of land for agriculture and housing, illegal hunting, deforestation, overgrazing, shrub collection, dryland farming, water diversion, climate change, and conflict.[46]

- *Conversion of land for crop production*

Conversion of rangelands into rainfed farmland either for fodder or other production purposes is common across Afghanistan. This practice has caused a visible decrease in available rangeland area and disturbance to routes of animal migration and is bringing about serious erosion problems. Over the last ten years, in fact, land under permanent crops has increased from 116,000 ha in 2007 to 211,000 ha in 2017.

Land use change analysis also records significant increase of land under temporary fallow, with an increase of around 55% over the last ten years. Most of the rangelands have very low and highly variable fodder productivity ranging between 0.4 and 0.8 tonnes/hectare in years with good rainfall. Many studies suggest that in most of Afghanistan, the productivity of the rangelands is so low that an average ewe would need at least 1 ha of all-rangelands and 16.4 ha of one-season rangeland.[47]

- *Hunting, Trapping and Trade*

Hunting, trapping, habitat destruction and trade are among the greatest threats to many large mammals and birds in Afghanistan. Today, waterfowl hunting is widely practiced, especially in the winter months, while large mammals hunting is undertaken for sport by the elite in some places or opportunistically by local people. In 2005, President Hamid Karzai issued Decree No. 53 banning hunting in any form for a period of 5 years. However, although significant steps have been taken towards enforcement, most ordinary citizens are unaware of the Decree. A Fauna Conservation and Hunting Regulation is under development which will regulate hunting, but it may be several years before it is approved by the Cabinet and even longer before it can be effectively implemented.[48]

[44] NEPA and UN Environment (2015). Climate Change and Governance in Afghanistan.
[45] UNEP and NEPA (2008). Biodiversity and Wetlands Working Group, Final Thematic Report. National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Global Environment Management (NCSA) for Afghanistan.
[46] Ghulam M. Malikyar (2017). The State of Environment of Afghanistan (2010 - 2017). Pressures, Progress, Challenges/Gaps.
[47] Ibid.
[48] NBSAP (2014).

- *Deforestation*

Afghanistan has two basic forest types: closed forest of oak and conifer in the monsoon-influenced areas of eastern Afghanistan, and savannah-like, open pistachio woodlands originally located in an arc around the mountain regions. Closed forests (not including northern juniper communities) may once have covered about 5% of the country or about 34,000 km^2. There were about 3,600 km^2 of closed canopy forest remaining in the late 1970s. It is estimated that as much as half of that has been lost since the 1980s leaving some 1,800 km^2, largely driven by the demand for firewood and timber. Afghanistan is currently left with roughly 5% of its pristine closed forest vegetation, representing about 0.25% of the country's area. Forests that have been cut do not regenerate, largely because of livestock grazing pressure and high soil temperatures and therefore they revert to shrubland.

- *Overgrazing (lack of recovery for plants)*

Afghanistan has been grazed by sheep, cattle and goats for the past 4,000-5,000 years and plant communities have accordingly adapted to overgrazing – i.e., the lack of recovery times allowed for plants between two grazing sessions. Afghanistan has a low stocking level relative to similar environments elsewhere in the world and shows considerable declines from the 18.4 million sheep reported in 1991 (FAO 2008). These figures, together with the lack of herd increase following drought, suggests very generally a) that Afghanistan's rangelands are at the bottom of their biomass production potentials and b) that implementing proper (holistic, time adaptive) grazing management to allow adequate recovery times for the plants as well as stronger (yet more seldom) herd impact through high stock intensity may have tremendous positive impact on the biomass production of rangelands (short and long term), decrease of bare ground ratio (mid and long term) and depth of root systems (long term). Such interventions would offer the chance to increase both the stocking capacity and ecological restoration processes at once.

- *Shrub collection*

Much of Afghanistan is dominated by thorny cushion-shaped shrubs. This vegetative community itself results from thousands of years of livestock grazing on a landscape that may have been mostly grass. Together with dried dung, shrubs are the major source of fuel in much of rural Afghanistan. Shrubs are dug up by the roots and burned for bread-making, general cooking, and heating. As settlements grow, ranges near inhabited areas are becoming denuded of shrub vegetation and shrub collectors are being forced to travel further afield. Little information is available on recovery rates of shrub vegetation. Loss of shrubs is of particular concern because their dense, thorny matrix provides protection from grazing for a vast number of native herbaceous and grass species, many of which are endemic. Shrub loss also increases soil erosion by wind and water.

- *Water diversion and loss of wetlands*

Afghanistan has few lakes, water bodies and wetlands relative to neighbouring countries and many of those that do exist are increasingly at threat from a combination of water diversion and drought. In the future, the problem of wetland loss can be expected to worsen as Afghanistan diverts more water for irrigation, hydroelectric and flood control, as wetlands are drained for agriculture and urbanization and as drought becomes more common through climate change.[49]

Target landscapes

The GEF-7 project will be implemented in eight districts across the three provinces Khost, Laghman, and Nuristan in eastern Afghanistan. These three provinces are among the most vulnerable provinces of the country, and are particularly prone to natural disasters such as landslides, erosion and drought. This affects both livestock as well as rain-fed and irrigated agriculture production. The three provinces are also affected by conflict and internal displacement. In addition,

[49] NBSAP (2014).

the eastern provinces are projected to experience the highest increase in average temperatures in the country due to climate change. They are also among the provinces most affected by soil degradation.

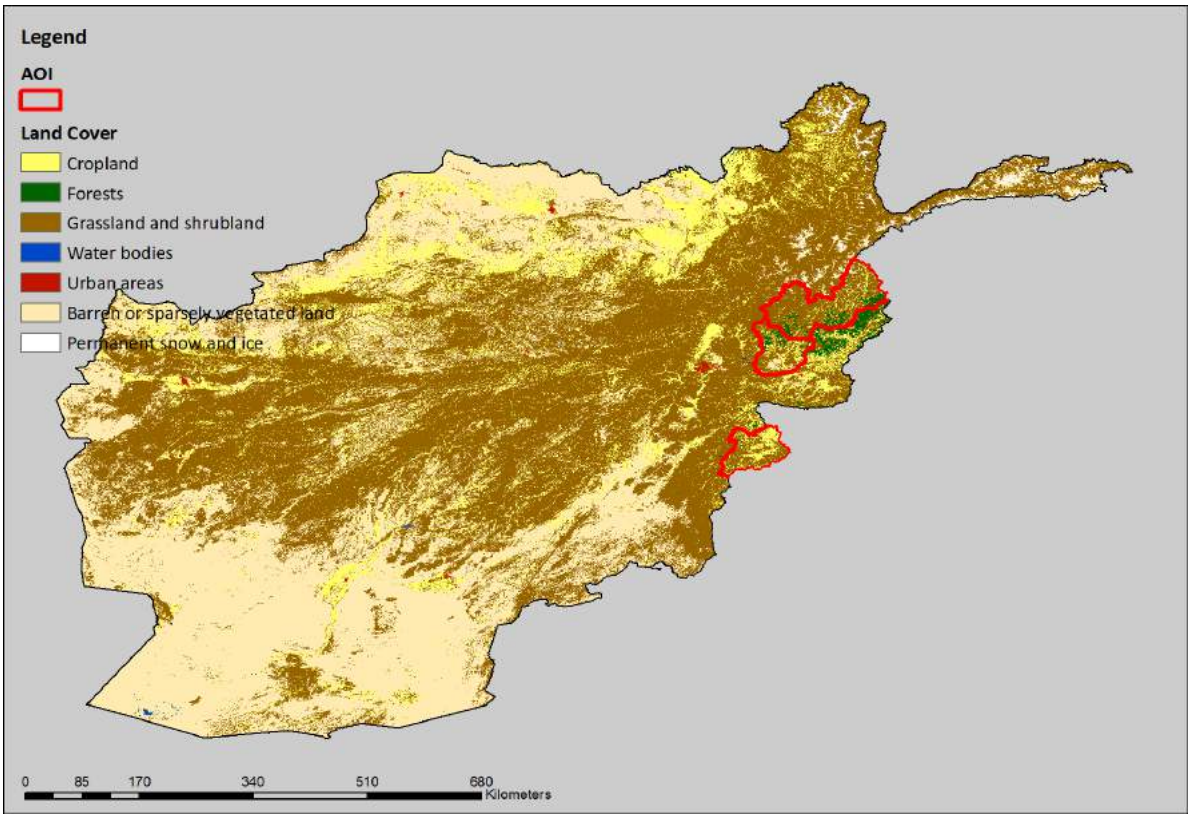

Figure 10: Three target provinces of Khost, Laghman and Nuristan, Source: FAO, 2019.

The target provinces have been selected based on the following criteria, in consultation with relevant stakeholders:

- Evidence of environmental threats and land degradation from unsustainable agricultural and livestock production.
- Provinces that are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and climate shocks, in particular based on latest IPC[50] report.
- Presence of globally important biodiversity and habitats.
- Presence of co-financing and partners.
- Accessibility but also balance with other investments.
- Balance of different ethnic groups.
- Potential for applying an integrated landscape approach generating multiple global environmental benefits.

Within these target provinces, eight districts were selected based on a multi-criteria ranking and in consultation with national and provincial stakeholders.[51]

[50] Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Assessments. http://www.ipcinfo.org/

[51] The criteria included: Potential to reach the GEBs from PIF; security and accessibility; suitable to the proposed project activities; willingness of local and regional authorities and other stakeholders; current levels of social vulnerability with focus on gender; severity of current and risk/trends of future land degradation; representing "average" or below (but not above average) in terms of weather (precipitation), productivity and socio-economic development; having forest/rangeland extensive cover and potential; biodiversity richness; need for livelihood improvement; communities' dependence on natural resources and willingness to support the project implementation; existence of disaster risks vulnerabilities; fewer development projects existed (history of projects implemented or under implementation).

Province	District	Number of villages
Laghman	Qarghayee	60
	Mehtarlam	51
	Alishang	14
Khost	Jaji Maidan	n/a
	Sabari	n/a
	Bak	n/a
Nuristan	Parun	30
	Wama	n/a

No	Province	Districts	Population (beneficiaries)		Total area (ha)	Important Resources	
			Men	Women		Forests and shrubs (ha)	Rangeland (ha)
1	Laghman	Qarghayee*	52'082	49'642	88'662	6'434	41'120
		Mehtarlam	134'576[52]		71'889	2'722	35'091
		Alishang	139'000		67'009	31'813	28'245
2	Khost	Jaji Maidan*	12'929	12'075	32'749	6'612	23'238
		Sabari	37'445	36'104	41'345	8'389	21'105
		Bak	92'930		17'079	3'582	9'817
3	Nuristan	Parun	7'197	6'830	142'684	16'408	117'139
		Wama	5'855	5'611	28'145	17'385	8'953
Total				**592'276**	**489'562**	**93'345**	**284'708**

*Proposed pilot districts for Integrated Landscape Management (ILM). Others mostly for CBNRM.

The three target provinces are among the most biologically diverse areas of Afghanistan. They host globally significant biodiversity, among which are five globally threatened large mammal species: snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*, VU), markhor (*Capra falconeri*, NT), urial (*Ovis orientalis*, VU), musk deer (*Moschus cupreus*, EN*)* and Asiatic black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, VU*)*, as well as migratory and non-migratory birds[53] and endemic plant species[54]. The three provinces are partially located in the vulnerable Hindu Kush Alpine Meadow, East Afghan Montane Conifer Forests, and Baluchistan Xeric Woodlands ecoregions. Although increasingly under threat from illegal logging, large tracts of natural conifer forest can still be found in the less accessible parts of Nuristan Province. Forest and shrubs cover 28% of Khost, 25.5% of Laghman, and 25.8% of Nuristan, and rangelands represent the largest land cover category in all three provinces (FAO, 2014).

Khost information

Khost has 13 districts and a population of about 546,800, with Pashtun people representing the majority of the population. The total area of the province is 4131.8 km^2 and approximately 58% is mountainous or semi-mountainous and 42% flat or semi-flat area[55]. Rural households in Khost Province rely mostly on crop production for their livelihoods and income (43% of households), followed by non-agricultural wage labour, small business/petty trade, remittances and salaried work. Livestock rearing represents a source of income for 10% of households.[56] Fruits and nuts represent the largest share in crop production (53%). Other important crops include wheat, maize, alfalfa, and clover. Most farmers have livestock such as poultry, cattle, goats, and sheep. Animal husbandry, pasture identification and improvement, watersheds construction, contour bunds construction and plantation on it,

[52] Gender-disaggregated data currently unavailable.

[53] Including the Osprey, White-eyed buzzard, Tawny eagle, Bonelli's eagle, Levant sparrowhawk, Barn owl, Pallid owl, Boreal owl, Gyrfalcon, Alexandrine Parakeet (parrot), and Large-billed reed warbler.

[54] Including the vulnerable Himalayan Elm tree (*Ulmus wallichiana*) and the near-threatened Chilgoza pine (*Pinus gerardiana*).

[55] Wali E., A. Datta, R. Shrestha, and S. Shrestha. 2015. Development of a land suitability model for saffron (Crocus sativus L.) cultivation in Khost Province of Afghanistan using GIS and AHP technique. Archives of agronomy and soil sciences

[56] Afghanistan Food Security Cluster and MAIL (2018). Afghanistan Emergency Food Security Assessment.

horticultural projects (orchard/forest nursery, high density orchards, vegetable trellising systems, tunnel farming, integrated pest management, farmer field schools and demonstration plots etc.), value adding (food processing and preservation, value altering), post-harvest technology and irrigation infrastructure are some potential areas for development, identified during the field mission.[57]

The GEF-7 target districts in Khost include Sabari, Bak and Jaji Maidan, as shown below. The detailed district land cover maps are included in Annex E.

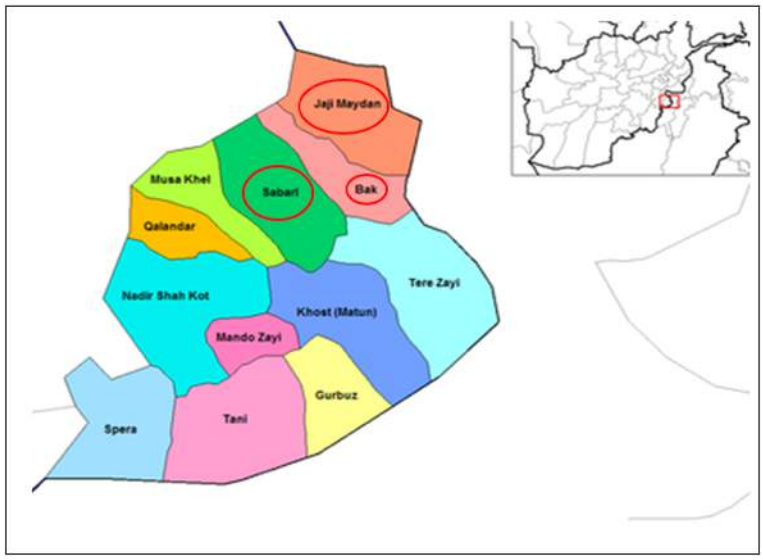

Figure 11: Selected districts in Khost Province.

Data from Trends Earth[58] shows that land cover in Khost has been relatively stable in the period 2001-2010 to 2011-2018. In turn, land productivity appears to be declining in some areas.

	Area (sq km)	Percent of total land area
Total land area:	4'033.7	100.00%
Land area with improved land cover:	20.6	0.51%
Land area with stable land cover:	4'010.3	99.42%
Land area with degraded land cover:	2.8	0.07%
Land area with no data for land cover:	0.0	0.00%

Table 2: Khost land cover change (2001-2010 to 2011-2018). Source: Trends Earth.

The land cover and land productivity maps of Khost are shown below.

[57] UC Davis, 2011. Afghanistan Provincial Agriculture Profiles. Khost.
[58] http://trends.earth/docs/en/ Land productivity is assessed in Trends Earth using three measures of change derived from Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) time series data: productivity trajectory, productivity performance, and productivity state.
See http://trends.earth/docs/en/background/understanding_indicators15.html.

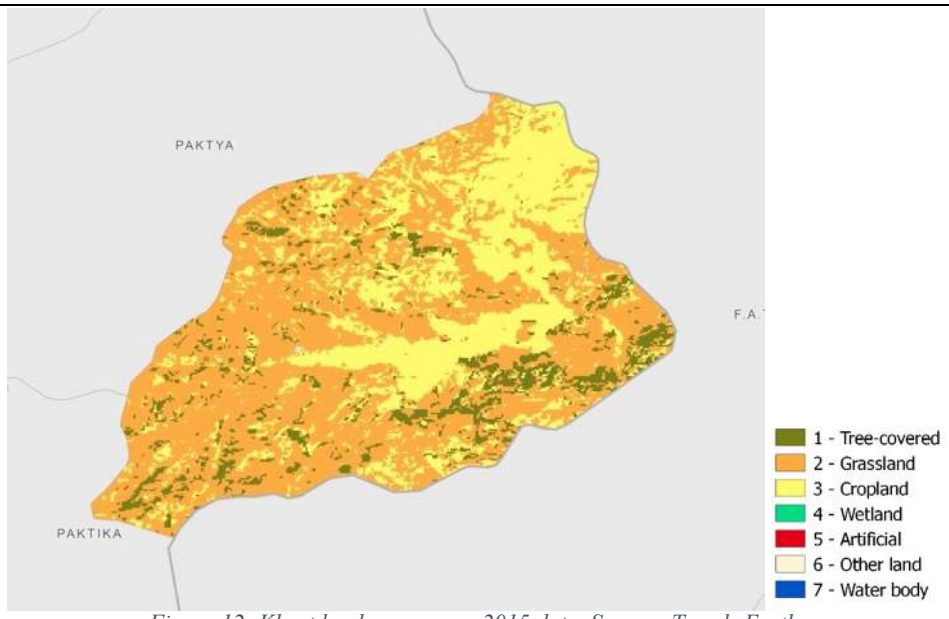

Figure 12: Khost land cover map, 2015 data. Source: Trends Earth.

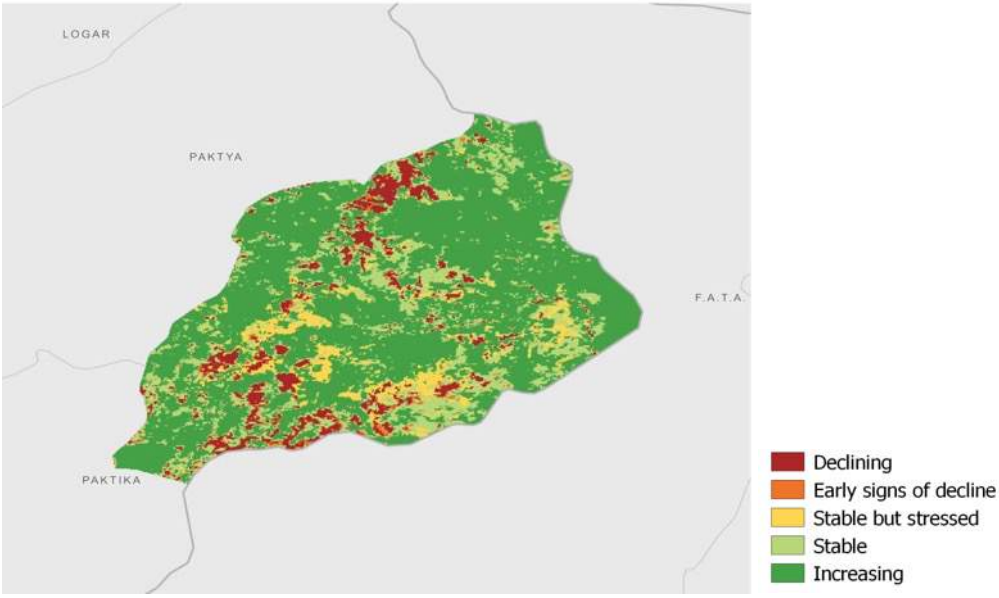

Figure 13: Khost land productivity change (2001-2010 to 2011-2018). Source: Trends Earth.

FAO (2014) land cover data shows that the province has a total of 118,240 ha of land under shrubs and forests. However, data on forests varies significantly depending on the source and definition of forest. According to Global Forest Watch, in 2010, Khost had 174 ha of tree cover, extending over 0.043% of its land area. In 2018, it lost 21.3 ha of tree cover.[59] According to the GEF-7 project design mission, there is still significant tree cover in parts of Sabari and most areas of Jaji Maidan districts. Furthermore, in Jaji Maidan district there was a visible regrowth in deforested areas.

The main plants found in the forest, as mentioned by the local communities, are chilgoza (pine nut *Pinus gerardiana* NT), khawan (olive *Olea europaea*), srup (West Himalayan spruce *Picea smithiana*), wild almond (*Prunus amygdalus*), bera (Chinese date *Ziziphus mauritiana*), kikar (*Gleditschia triacanthos*), najo (Eldarica pine *Pinus eldarica*), Serai (brown oak *Quercus semecarpifolia*), mamane (*Carissa opaca*, medicinal plant), gorgore (*Reptonia buxifolia*, medicinal plant), wild pomegranate (*Punica granatum*), ziarwan (used for firewood), shne (wild pistachio *Pistachio khinjuk*), sherawna (wild olive), wild persimmon (black persimmon *Diospyros lotus*), Patawa/mazaree palm (*Chamaerops ritchiana*; its leaves are harvested and are used for making

[59] Global Forest Watch, www.globalforestwatch.org/ For Global Forest Watch, "forest" refers to a landscape with a high density of trees and value for biodiversity, carbon storage, and human use.

wires/threads and traditional beds and carpets for houses in remote areas – over 30% of households in Jaji Maidan rely on it), and medicinal plants. Several bird species are also found in the forests, as well as wildlife such as wild boars, wolves, black bears, wild goats and wild cats.

Laghman information

Laghman consists of six districts and has a population of about 445,600. It is a multi-ethnic (Pashto, Dari, Pashayee) and mostly rural society. The province has a total area of 3,843 km². More than half of the province is mountainous (55%). Laghman is also a Kuchi (nomadic herdsmen) pastoral destination. In recent years, Laghman has been faced with high levels of insecurity. Fruit and nuts (37%) make up the biggest share in total crop production. The most important field crops grown in Laghman are wheat and rice. The climate for agriculture differs within the province; the areas near Kabul River have four cropping seasons, while in the mountainous regions there is only one season and, if it rains, two seasons. Most farmers have livestock, most commonly sheep, goats, while rearing of cows is common in remote villages where the main use of it is for household dairy production and consumption. In rural Laghman, non-agricultural wage labour is the most common livelihood activity, followed by crop production and sales (39% of households) and livestock rearing (32% of households). Skilled labour is also a fairly common livelihood activity in that province.[60] Potential areas for improvement, as identified during the field mission, include financial services for farmers (credit), animal husbandry, pasture improvement, horticultural project (nursery improvement, high density orchards), value adding (food processing), post-harvest technology, irrigation, and livestock management (artificial insemination, clinical facilities construction, vaccination and farmer capacity building).[61]

The GEF-7 target districts in Laghman include Mehtarlam, Qarghayee and Alishang, as shown below.

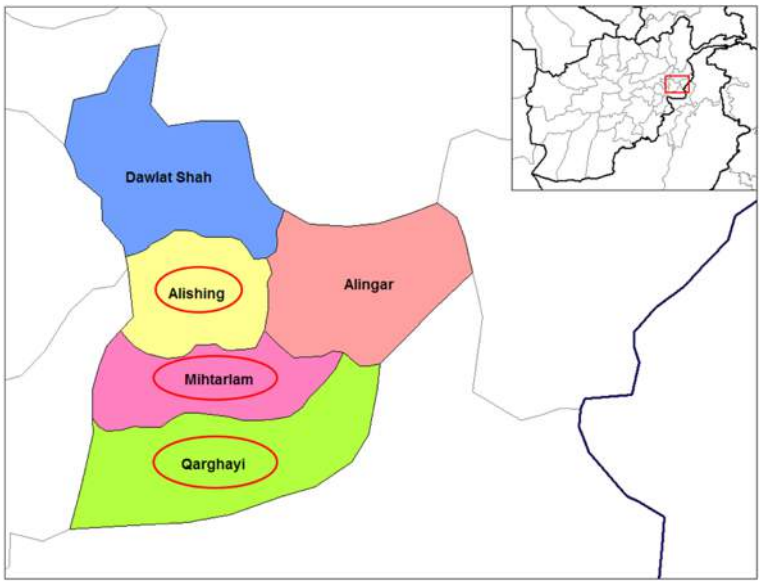

Figure 14: Selected districts in Laghman Province.

The land cover map of Laghman is shown below.

[60] Afghanistan Food Security Cluster and MAIL (2018). Afghanistan Emergency Food Security Assessment.
[61] UC Davis, 2011. Afghanistan Provincial Agriculture Profiles. Laghman.

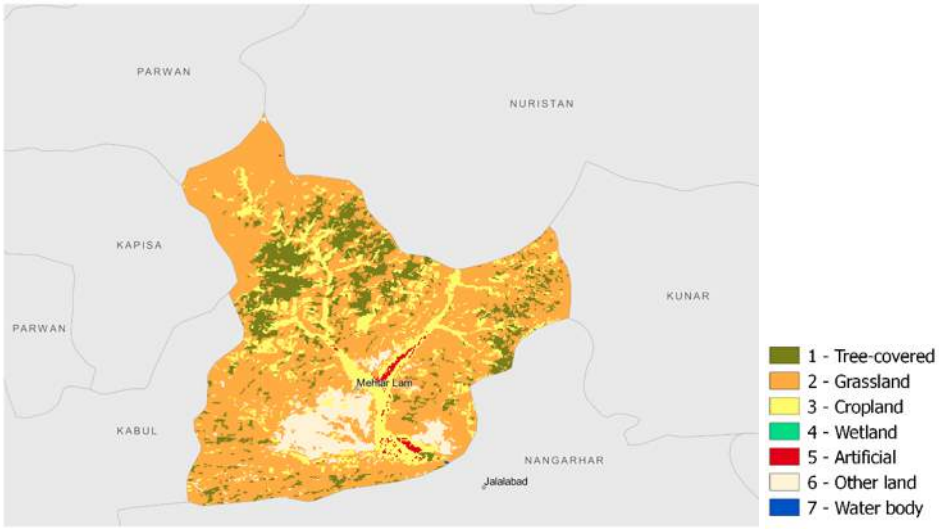

Figure 15: Laghman land cover map, 2015 data. Source: Trends Earth.

Like in Khost, data from Trends Earth in Laghman shows that land cover has been relatively stable in the period 2001-2010 to 2011-2018. Land productivity in some areas has also been increasing, but is declining in other areas.

	Area (sq km)	Percent of total land area
Total land area:	3'893.1	100.00%
Land area with improved land cover:	20.5	0.53%
Land area with stable land cover:	3'868.1	99.36%
Land area with degraded land cover:	4.4	0.11%
Land area with no data for land cover:	0.0	0.00%

Table 3: Laghman land cover change (2001-2010 to 2011-2018). Source: Trends Earth.

Laghman land productivity (Trends Earth)

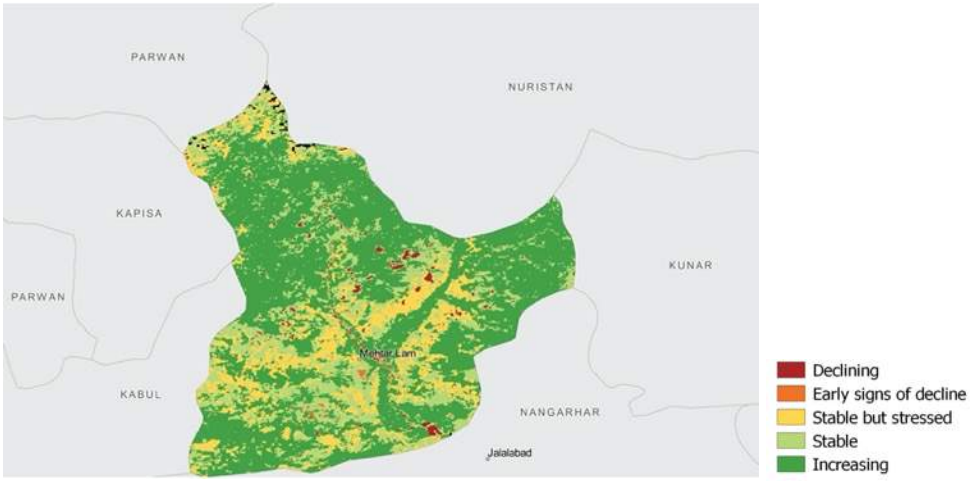

Figure 16: Laghman land productivity change (2001-2010 to 2011-2018). Source: Trends Earth

According to Global Forest Watch, in 2010, Laghman had 2,590 ha of tree cover, extending over 0.67% of its land area. In 2013, it lost 127 ha of tree cover. According to the FAO Land Cover Atlas (2014), it had 97,619 ha of forests and shrubs.

The plants found in the forest, as cited by the local communities, include chilgoza (pine nut *Pinus gerardiana*), nakhtar (Greek juniper *Juniperus excelsa*), srup (West Himalayan spruce *Picea smithiana*), shne (wild pistachio *Pistachio khinjuk*), wild almond (*Prunus amygdalus*), walnut (*Juglans regia*), palosa (*Acacia modesta*), ghoraski (hopbush *Dodonaea viscosa*), etc. Common animals found in the forest include wolves (Gray wolf *Canis lupus*), gidar (Golden Jackal *Canis aureus*), sag lawoo (Eurasian otter *Lutra lutra*), shaghal (Golden Jackal *Canis aureus*), monkey, black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*), wild cat (*Felis chaus*), and gharsa (musk deer *Moschus cupreus*), as well as birds.

Nuristan information

Nuristan is one of the poorest and most remote provinces of Afghanistan. It has a total area of 9,225 km^2, has eight districts and a total population of 140,900, mostly of the Nuristani ethnic group. Nuristan is also one of the country's most inaccessible regions, and has been afflicted by conflict and insecurity. Most of the province is mountainous (99%), while just 1% is made up of flat land towards the Kabul River Basin. Crops and livestock are the main source of income for households in Nuristan (88%). Agriculture in Nuristan is mainly based on crops like maize, wheat, beans, walnuts, mulberries, potatoes, and animal products such as eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, butter, and wool. Handicrafts and small industries include rugs (can be made locally from wool) and honey production (collected from wild bees in the forest). The agriculture sector suffers due to the lack of sufficient technology and infrastructure for water and irrigation systems. Potential areas for developments in Nuristan include irrigation infrastructure, rangeland restoration (nursery, quarantine spots, RMAs, check dams, contour bunds etc.), reforestation (forest management association, forest nursery, capacity building, contour plantation, agroforestry etc.), animal breeding, veterinary services, dairy processing, value addition of agriculture produce, introduction of new agriculture technologies.[62]

The GEF-7 target districts in Nuristan include Parun and Wama.

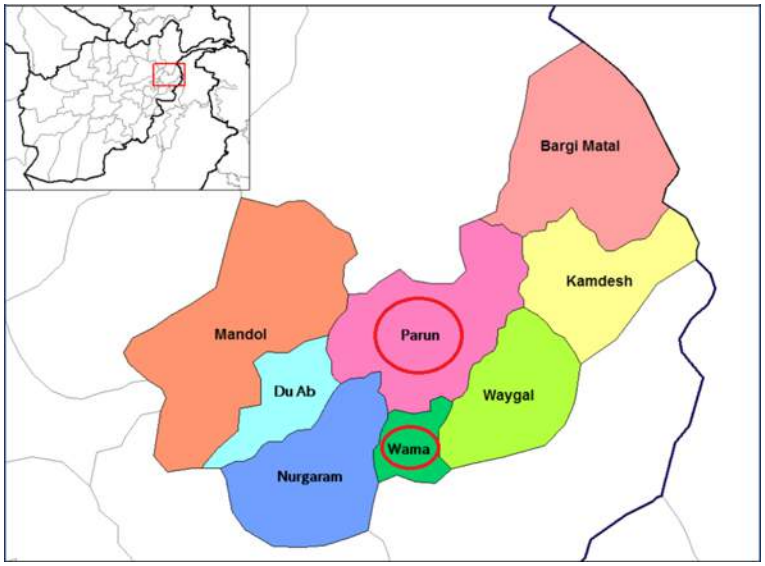

Figure 17: Selected districts in Nuristan Province.

The land cover map of Nuristan is shown below.

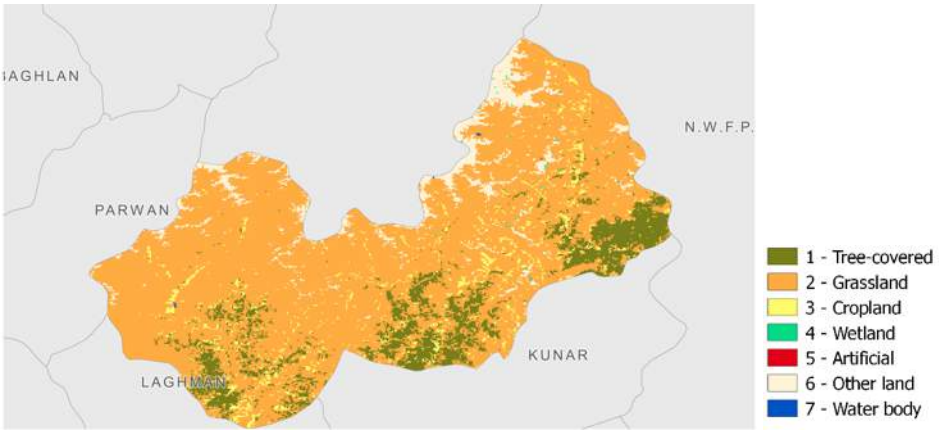

Figure 18: Nuristan land cover map, 2015 data. Source: Trends Earth.

[62] UC Davis, 2011. Afghanistan Provincial Agriculture Profiles. Nuristan.

Like in Khost and Laghman, data from Trends Earth in Nuristan shows that land cover has been relatively stable in the period 2001-2010 to 2011-2018. Land productivity is improving in most areas, indicating that deforestation has been slowing in recent years. More detailed assessments will be required during implementation to understand drivers and dimensions of change.

	Area (sq km)	Percent of total land area
Total land area:	8'878.2	100.00%
Land area with improved land cover:	14.1	0.16%
Land area with stable land cover:	8'857.3	99.76%
Land area with degraded land cover:	6.8	0.08%
Land area with no data for land cover:	0.0	0.00%

Table 4: Nuristan land cover change (2001-2010 to 2011-2018). Source: Trends Earth.

Nuristan land productivity (Trends Earth)

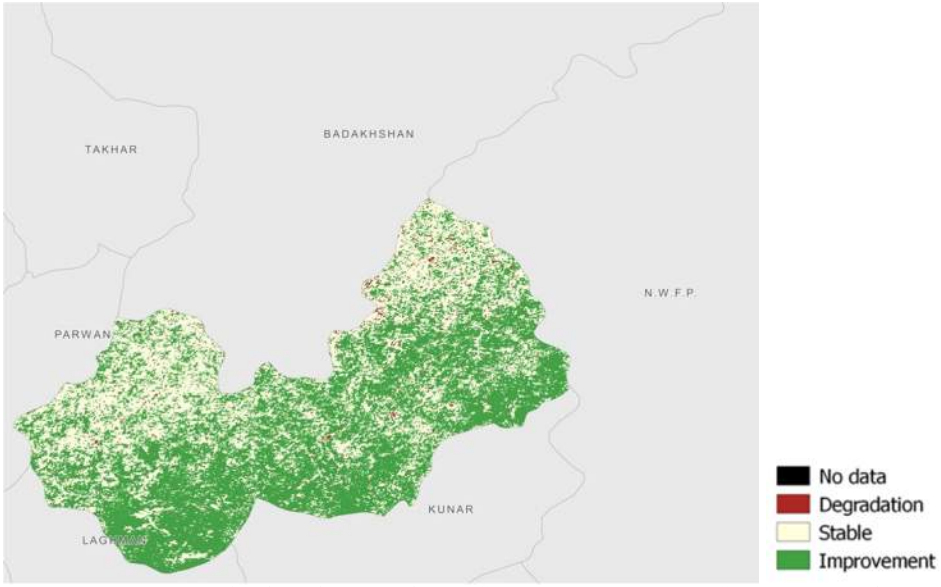

Figure 19: Nuristan land productivity change (2001-2010 to 2011-2018). Source: Trends Earth

According to Global Forest Watch, in 2010, Nuristan had 13,100 ha of tree cover, extending over 1.4% of its land area. In 2012, it lost 3.53 ha of tree cover. According to the FAO Land Cover Atlas (2014), the province had 231,907 ha of forests and shrubs.

Plants found in the forest of Nuristan include, among others, chilgoza (pine nut *Pinus gerardiana*), nakhtar (Greek juniper *Juniperus excelsa*), srup (West Himalayan spruce *Picea smithiana*), baloot (holm oak *Quercus baloot*), wild almond (*Prunus amygdalus*), walnut (*Juglans regia*), and medicinal plants such as Russian sage (*Salvia yangii*), fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*), liquorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) and Jerusalem oak (*Dysphania botrys*). The Nuristan's forests are home to a variety of birds and wild animals, but deforestation, hunting and armed conflicts have led to a reduction in the populations of these species. Wild animals found in forests include, among others, wild cats, black bear, monkeys, deer, foxes and wolves. Birds cited by locals include sparrows, hawks, falcons, mahi khorak (pelican) and parrots.

WCS has undertaken wildlife studies in Nuristan and has confirmed the identity and distribution of mammal species in the area. They found solid evidence of species presence for leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*), grey wolf (*Canis lupus*), golden jackal (*Canis aureus*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Asiatic black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*), markhor (*Capra falconeri*), rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*), crested porcupine (*Hystrix indica*), a civet species, suggested to be the common palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*), and yellow-throated marten (*Martes flavigula*). In addition, camera trap photographs confirmed the presence of four bird species, the chukar patridge (*Alectoris chukar*), common woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*), large-billed crow (*Corvus macrorhynchos japonensis*), and scaly-bellied woodpecker (*Picus squamatus*). In addition, interviews with residents suggested that common leopard (*Panthera pardus*), snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*), lynx (*Lynx lynx*), brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), and musk deer

(*Moschus cupreus*) still occur in the study site.[63] As explained above, Nuristan National Park along the border between Badakhshan and Nuristan Provinces is among the recently announced new protected areas in Afghanistan. Nuristan also hosts the Pech and Waygal valleys Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA), which has a typical and representative west Himalayan breeding avifauna, with at least 53 breeding species.

The boundaries of the recently announced Nuristan National Park are not yet clearly identified. Indicative boundaries are shown in the map below, covering parts of the two GEF-7 target districts of Parun and Wama (as well as adjacent Badakhshan and Kunar Provinces).

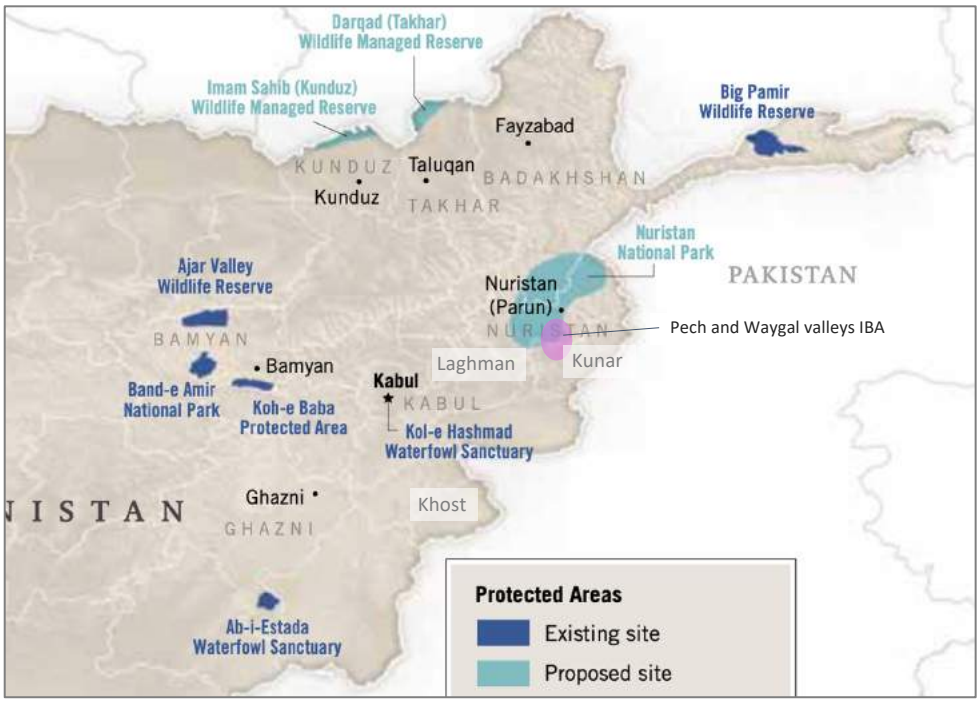

Figure 20: Tentative area of recently announced Nuristan National Park (in green), and IBA in project area (in purple). Source: NBSAP, 2014 and http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/mapsearch.

The main threats to biodiversity, forest and rangeland health in the target districts, highlighted in the discussions with local communities, are summarized below.

a) Hunting and killing of birds and wild animals.
b) Absence of conservation mechanisms for rare species of plants, animal and birds.
c) Illegal occupation of rangelands.
d) Conversion of grasslands to cropland and housing.
e) Urbanization.
f) Overgrazing, deforestation.
g) Eradication of plants with roots, overharvesting of certain species.
h) Absence of forest or rangeland management associations.
i) Absence of rotation mechanisms and/or quarantine areas for seed production.
j) Flash floods.
k) Conflicts
l) Unavailability of veterinary facilities at village and district level.
m) Lack of summer (Laghman) and winter (Khost, Nuristan) shelters for livestock.
n) Lack of feed and knowledge on feed alternatives for livestock in winter (off-season).
o) Insufficient capacity about disease management and vaccination.

[63] WCS, 2008. Wildlife Surveys and wildlife conservation in Nuristan, Afghanistan. https://programs.wcs.org/data/doi/ctl/view/mid/33065/pubid/DMX652800000.aspx (accessed May 2020)

Socio-economic information

Income and poverty levels. The main sources of income in all target districts are crop production and livestock, followed by daily wage labour. The poverty rate in Laghman is 66.8%. Per capita monthly total consumption is 987 Afs. The female share in active population in Laghman is 35.7%. For Khost and Nuristan, there is no recent data available.

Literacy. The literacy rate in the target provinces, as well as among Kuchis, is as follows:[64]

- Laghman: men 44.2%, women 6.2%.
- Khost: men 27%, women 2.7%
- Nuristan: men 36.7%, women 5.3%
- Kuchis: men 0.2%, women 0.2%

Land tenure. Land disputes and conflict are common across Afghanistan, including in the target provinces. The 2008 Law on Managing Land Affairs lays out principles of land classification and documentation, governs settlement of land-rights, and encourages commercial investment in state-owned agricultural land with opportunities for long leases. The Ministry of Justice, however, estimates that 90% of Afghans continue to rely on customary law and local dispute-resolution mechanisms. The Law on Managing Land Affairs provides that pasture land is public property that neither the state nor any individual can possess (except as otherwise provided by *Shari'a*), and which must be kept unoccupied for the public use for activities such as grazing and threshing grounds. Customary law provides that individuals and communities can obtain exclusive or non-exclusive rights of access to government-owned pasture land through customary use and deeds.[65]

Ethnic groups. The target population in the target districts is composed of the following ethnic groups:

- Mehtarlam (Laghman): 60% Pashtun, 35% Tajik and 5% Pashai
- Qarghayee (Laghman): 60% Pashtun, 20% Tajik and 20% Pashai
- Alishang (Laghman): 65% of them Pashai, 20% Pashtun and 15% Tajik
- Jaji Maidan (Khost): 100% Pashtun
- Sabari (Khost): 100% Pashtun
- Bak (Khost): 100% Pashtun
- Nuristan Province: 98.3% Nuristani, 1% Pashtun, 0.6% Gujar (seasonal), 0.1% Tajik

Kuchi herders. Kuchis are Pashtuns from southern and eastern Afghanistan. Traditionally nomadic, many have settled in north-western Afghanistan. Nowadays only a few thousands still follow their traditional livelihood of nomadic herding. Others have become farmers, settled in cities or emigrated.[66] Kuchis have been greatly affected by conflict, drought and demographic shifts. In the GEF-7 target provinces, Kuchis are mostly present in Laghman. Their population in Laghman is estimated to be 50,000-100,000 in winter, and less than 5,000 in summer. There is also a smaller number of Kuchis in Khost Province; however, the population numbers are currently unavailable.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs). In the GEF-7 target provinces, IDPs are mostly present in Laghman. Laghman is the destination for 2.8% (roughly 128,000 individuals) of the total returnee population. It is, however, not a main hosting province for IDPs, and it is estimated that there are approximately 100+ IDP households in the target districts. In Khost, there were 95 conflict-affected IDPs reported in 2019. In Parun and Wama districts of Nuristan, there were 16 conflict-affected IDPs reported in 2019.

Livestock numbers. According to the 2002-2003 livestock census, Khost had a total number of 164,426 cattle, 79,924 sheep, 167,300 goats, and 30,726 donkeys. Laghman had 158,359 heads of cattle, 161,097 sheep, 163,306 goats, and 19,831 donkeys.

[64] UNESCO (2017).
[65] https://www.land-links.org/country-profile/afghanistan/ (accessed May 2020)
[66] MAIL (2018). Operational Manual (OM) for Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). http://nrm.mail.gov.af:1080/Library/BookDetails/4026.

Nuristan, in turn, had 95,892 cattle, 75,480 sheep, 559,898 goats, and 12,821 donkeys.[67] The combined number of cattle, sheep, goats and donkeys owned by family was approximately 13.4 in Khost, 15.5 in Laghman, and 40.4 in Nuristan (which, due to the steep terrain, has a larger proportion of goats). Chickens are also commonly raised in the three provinces. According to the GEF-7 field mission report, the size of herds or flock of small animals (goats, sheep) starts from 20 to approximately 300 animals. The farmers having herds of more than 200 animals are very few. Most common herd animals are sheep and goats. Afghanistan is a country prone to periodic drought and the availability of feed for animals varies greatly with the seasons. Information from the census shows that feed and forage production are the major bottlenecks for increasing livestock production.[68]

Provincial NRM and NEPA staff

There is a total number of **36 GD-NRM staff** in the three targeted provinces, as detailed below. Gender-disaggregated data was unavailable at the time of data collection.

1) Khost Province (total=18)
   - NRM and Irrigation General Manager = 1
   - Natural Forest Manager = 1
   - Natural Forest Officer = 2
   - Manmade Forest Manager and Officers = 4
   - Rangeland Manager = 1
   - Forest and Rangeland Officer for Gorboz District = 1
   - Forest and Rangeland Officer for Qalandear District = 1
   - Forest and Rangeland Officer for Nadirshakot District = 1
   - Forest and Rangeland Officer for Mosakhil District = 1
   - Forest and Rangeland Officer for Bak District = 1
   - Forest and Rangeland Officer for Tanai District = 1
   - Forest and Rangeland Officer for Alishir District = 1
   - Forest and Rangeland Officer for Jaji Maidan District = 1
   - Forest and Rangeland Officer for Dohmand District = 1

2) Laghman Province (total=14)
   - General NRM Manager = 1
   - Natural Forest Manager = 1
   - Natural Forest Officer = 1
   - Manmade Forest Manager = 1
   - Manmade Forest Officer = 1
   - Forest Manager Baghseraj = 1
   - Rangeland Officer = 1
   - Forest Officer Qarghayee District = 1
   - Forest Officer Alingar District. = 1
   - Forest Officer Alishang District = 1
   - Forest Officer Dawlatshahee District = 1
   - Forest and Rangeland Officer Bapakh District = 1
   - Farm Manger and Officer for Gardikach = 2

3) Nuristan (total=4)
   - NRM and Irrigation Manager = 1
   - Forest Officer for Natural Forest = 1
   - Forest Officer Bargmatal district = 1
   - Forest Officer Norkram District = 1

In addition, there is a total number of **31 NEPA technical staff** in the three target provinces (includes all NEPA staff, not only NRM related).

[67] FAO (2008), Afghanistan National Livestock Census 2002-2003. http://www.fao.org/3/i0034e/i0034e00.pdf
[68] Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey 2016-2017. Central Statistics Organization, Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

1) Khost = 13 (male = 12, female = 1)
2) Laghman = 9 (all male)
3) Nuristan = 9 (all male)

The proposed GEF intervention will support government efforts aimed at addressing the environmental problems above by promoting sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in vulnerable landscapes of eastern Afghanistan. More specifically, the following barriers to effectively combating land degradation and biodiversity loss need to be addressed.

- ***Barrier 1. Limited national and landscape-level planning mechanisms to support sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation***

Although Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) and integrated watershed management are key approaches of Afghanistan's NRM Strategy, there is still limited capacity for integrated planning and management at the national and landscape level. In particular, the three target provinces have limited experience in applying these approaches. Interventions are often sector-based, i.e. they are focused on either water, forests, rangelands, or agriculture. Integrated planning, taking a watershed or landscape approach, is critical to holistically address the challenges of unsustainable agriculture and livestock production and associated land degradation and biodiversity loss. For an integrated and strategic planning of land and water resources, there is a need for linking both spatial and economic analysis as to build integrated and sustainable scenarios. Participatory planning is also essential, involving local communities, local government, and several government agencies including MAIL, NEPA, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), but also civil society, universities and the private sector.

Much of Afghanistan's land is currently under communal land tenure. Consequently, users have few incentives for ensuring the sustainability of resource consumption or for the conservation of resources and biodiversity. As a result, short-term interests are prioritised at the expense of long-term benefits. The creation of integrated, holistic and sustainable scenarios and management plans is therefore essential. In addition, resource users often have a limited understanding of the impacts of land and forest degradation on the sustainable production of ecosystem goods and services. An improved understanding of resource availability through participatory assessment of local natural resources and related economic activities, combined with enhanced, participatory planning mechanisms, would result in benefits of resource conservation being recognized and greater incentivisation of sustainable land use practices.

In the target districts, a limited number of forest associations have recently been established through the provincial PAIL. However, these associations have not been formally established with MAIL, they do not have defined roles and responsibilities, and have not developed any management plan. Thus, no sustainable management regimes have been developed. In some areas, grasslands are converted to farmland and housing, without consideration of the economic value of grasslands to local communities. Capacity and social skills need to be developed among government staff and field officers to work with communities and coordinate among national ministries and departments for improved natural resources planning and governance.[69] Some nurseries have been established with support from PAIL in the target provinces, but not in the GEF-7 target districts.

- ***Barrier 2. Lack of experience, capacity, education and best practices for sustainable rangeland management, land restoration and biodiversity conservation***

Despite numerous government and donor-funded initiatives on CBNRM, sustainable land and water management, and resilient livelihoods, there is still a lack of experience and best practices for implementing sustainable rangeland management, land restoration and biodiversity conservation at scale. Integrated and sustainable natural resources

[69] MAIL (2018). Operational Manual (OM) for Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). http://nrm.mail.gov.af:1080/Library/BookDetails/4026.

scenarios to facilitate policy and decision making based on evidence are missing. In addition, low productivity and unsustainable practices are often due to a lack of knowledge and capacity among farmers, pastoralists, extension workers and other actors involved in the agriculture and livestock sectors. Furthermore, there is a dearth of professionals with fundamental skills in these areas who are able to pass their knowledge on to resource users and on the ground practitioners. Where skills exist, it is often picked up piecemeal through on-the-job training and is insufficient to thoughtfully and sustainably implement natural resource management projects.

The state of knowledge about rangelands and forests and ways to manage them sustainably is generally weak. Livestock grazing can effectively be used to manage rangelands by harvesting forage to produce livestock, changing plant composition or reducing fuel loads. Rangelands comprise between 60% and 75% of the land area in Afghanistan. These rangelands are critical for supplying Afghanistan with livestock products, fuels for heating and cooking, building materials, medicinal plants, and habitat for wildlife. Rangeland watersheds feed the springs, streams, and rivers, and they are the lifeblood of the country, nourishing nearly 4,000,000 ha of irrigated lands.[70]

The key sectors and ministries of the provinces of Khost, Laghman, and Nuristan lack experience, capacity and resources for effective coordination of sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation initiatives. Some training has been provided such as on livestock management and veterinary services, but these trainings and services do not reach smaller or more remote villages. Additional capacity building and outreach is needed to reach a larger area and introduce sustainable rangeland and forest management techniques.

Finally, there is limited capacity for developing sustainable income-generating activities, such as through processing and value-adding of sustainable rangeland and forest products, in particular for women. Private sector is still weak in the target landscapes, and community associations or enterprises have limited capacity to support processing and marketing of products.

- ***Barrier 3. Insufficient data and knowledge, and management and sharing of these data to inform appropriate decision making and planning***

There is currently a lack of data and appropriate measurement on the status of land degradation and biodiversity. There is a need to compile and update data, recorded in an integrated, holistic and comprehensive framework in order to mobilize support for the most critical areas and interventions. A strong theoretical foundation and the ability to understand and research NRM issues, including associated social and economic benefits, is key to effective conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources.

Knowledge management mechanisms to share best practices and lessons learned between key stakeholders involved sustainable rangeland management, biodiversity conservation and land restoration are currently inadequate. Information sharing between different units, departments and agencies is limited and not systematically organized, hindering collective learning and action towards unified objectives. This limits possibilities for collective learning and mutual support on the common issues affecting other areas in the region.

In the age of big data, it is notable that much data relevant for addressing land degradation is available or can potentially be gathered at low cost. Initiatives such as FAO's Global Assessment of Soil Degradation (GLASOD) and its closely related LADA (Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands), Global Forest Watch[71], and Trends Earth[72], are examples. Moreover the FAO Land Use and Agricultural Practices questionnaires that support environmental statistics supplied through FAOSTAT as well as specific questionnaires on land degradation (SDG indicator 15.3.1) and sustainable agriculture (SDG indicator 2.4.1) and related indicators of sustainable agriculture (PROSA) are easily accessible. Finally, initiatives such as AGRIS (International System for Agricultural Science and Technology) currently collect a large

[70] Daniel Robinett, Daniel Miller, and Donald Bedunah. Central Afghanistan Rangelands.
[71] https://www.globalforestwatch.org/ (to monitor forest and tree cover loss)
[72] http://trends.earth/docs/en/index.html (to track land change)

number of agricultural survey information at global level. Through these approaches, global data can be integrated with national and local data to support local, provincial and national planning and decision-making. Measurement of land use and land cover change in a natural capital perspective can help to understand the real trend of the natural resources depletion and support the planning of sustainable livelihoods and source of income.

2) Baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects

Government Plans and Programmes

The Government of Afghanistan has made sustainable agriculture and livestock production and natural resources management a top priority in the country's development. It has issued a National Natural Resource Management Strategy (2017-2021), promoting the concept of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). It has also formulated a National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Priority Program (NCADPP) (2016-2020) and associated Interministerial Implementation Plan (2019-2023). Furthermore, the government has issued a National Dry Lands Agriculture Policy in 2018, and a National Drought Risk Management Strategy in 2019. It has also formulated a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) under the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2014, and a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2015.

MAIL is the primary government institution responsible for the protection and sustainable management of Afghanistan's forests and rangelands, particularly as they relate to agroforestry and animal husbandry. Within MAIL, the General Directorate of Natural Resource Management (GD-NRM) is comprised of three sub-unit Directorates for Rangelands, Forestry, and Protected Areas, and is mandated with the management of Afghanistan's natural resources, with a particular focus on land use planning, biodiversity conservation, and the sustainability of forestry and rangeland resources.

In addition, the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and MAIL jointly play the valuable role of conserving Afghanistan's forests and rangelands through the declaration and management of nationally protected areas. Within NEPA, the Natural Heritage Division is responsible for the conservation and protection of the country's environment and biodiversity through the national protected areas system, which also encompasses the forests and rangelands located within protected areas. NEPA, in collaboration with UN Environment and WCS, have conducted several biodiversity surveys, primarily focusing on the country's protected areas.

The government has also recently undertaken efforts for establishing Community Development Councils (CDCs), Provincial and District Development Committees, Forest Management Associations (FMAs), as well as Rangeland Management Associations (RMAs). MRRD has established mechanisms for engagement with communities under the Citizen Charter Programme (CCP) and detailed district profiles and resource maps are being developed in a participatory process. The CCP supports decentralized planning and engagement with communities, civil society and public institutions. It represents an important mechanism for mobilizing stakeholders and catalysing change at the local level.

In its NDC, Afghanistan has set a target of regeneration of at least 40% of existing degraded forests and rangeland areas (232,050 ha of forests; and 5.35 million ha of rangelands). To achieve this goal, GD-NRM is working on a 5-year plan for the rehabilitation and sustainable management of 5.7 million ha of rangelands across the country. For the fiscal year 2020, MAIL has invested USD 1.5 million funding from government to rehabilitate and manage 87,000 ha of rangeland in six provinces (not including the GEF-7 project provinces). Additional funding is sought from partners and donor agencies to support implementation of the plan.

MAIL has developed an Operational Manual for CBNRM[73] in support of the NRM Strategy, and has established priority interventions for the implementation of CBNRM, including sustainable rangeland and forest management. In line with these priorities, the GD-NRM is currently implementing several projects and programmes, as summarized below.

Programme	Main interventions
Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Project	The Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) project aims to strengthen community-based management of natural resources across more than 10 provinces in the country, including interventions such as: i) Raising public awareness to reduce pressure on natural resources; ii) Establishing woodlots for alternative sources of fuelwood; iii) Constructing 'check dams' to reduce soil erosion; iv) Constructing nurseries; v) Constructing deep-wells to improve water supply. The CBNRM is a nation-wide program with ca. USD 2.8 million funding by the Government of Afghanistan. In 2019, ca. USD 1 million was invested in activities including forest rehabilitation, watershed protection (check dams, terracing, water ponds), home nursery establishment of high value nut trees (chilgoza, walnut, pistachio) and capacity building of FMAs in 29 provinces including **Khost, Laghman and Nuristan**.
Forest Restoration and Protection Project	The Forest Restoration and Protection Project is implemented across 20 provinces in Afghanistan and aims to improve conservation and management of forest ecosystems. This will be done by: i) Reforestation of pistachio and pine forest; ii) Protection of forests; iii) Monitoring forest resource use; iv) Establishing forest management associations; v) Developing alternative income-generating projects; and vi) Raising public awareness about forest protection and forestry laws. Under this program, GIZ/BMZ in partnership with GD-NRM/MAIL have launched a EUR 11 million "Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR)" project. This project will be implemented from 2020-2022 in five provinces including Takhar, Badakhshan, Samanagan, **Khost** and Paktiya. The main approaches of the new FLR project are: 1) Restore forest landscapes at community level in targeted provinces; 2) Increase resilience of landscapes and people; and 3) Carry out capacity development at all levels. The project aims to improve access to fuel(wood) and non-timber-forest products, improve income, micro-climate, access to water (drinking and irrigation), reduce the impact of natural disasters, improve food security, and general security, and to provide approaches for tolerance and peace. The target districts in Khost are not yet known. The interventions of this project will be closely coordinated with the GEF-7 project.
Community-Based Integrated Rangeland Management Project	The main activities under this project are as follows: a. Community mobilization and capacity building. b. Restoration and conservation of rangeland areas through rotational practices, artificial seeding and quarantine. c. Watershed management through construction of check dams, water reservoirs and other micro water harvesting structures. d. Desertification control and sand dune fixation through tree plantation and direct seeding. e. Integration of silvopasture in the future rangeland management activities.

[73] MAIL (2018). Operational Manual (OM) for Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). http://nrm.mail.gov.af:1080/Library/BookDetails/4026.

	These activities are not currently implemented in the GEF-7 target provinces due to priorities in other parts of the country. However, it is planned that these activities will be extended to other provinces (including Khost, Laghman and Nuristan), in the coming years.
Community-Based Medicinal Plants Management Project	The main activities under this project are as follows: a. Community mobilization and their capacity building for sustainable utilization and value addition of medicinal plants. b. Restoration and conservation of degraded areas and areas vulnerable to degradation of medicinal plants. c. Value addition of medicinal plant products. These activities are also not currently implemented in the GEF-7 target provinces, but are planned to be expanded to additional provinces.
Rangeland Survey	A presidential decree issued in August 2019 ordered the Ministry of Urban Development and Land (MUDL) to survey, demarcate and register the rangelands in Afghanistan. This includes both public and private lands. Following this, the MUDL have started surveying, demarcating and registering rangelands into their land database commonly named "Land Bank". As part of this effort, MAIL, in collaboration with the provincial PAIL offices, is currently undertaking a rangeland survey across the country. 27 provinces, including Khost and Nuristan, have started this work. Laghman will be part of the second phase of this project. The GEF-7 project will build on any data collected by this survey, if available at the time of the participatory assessment.

In addition, a national guideline on rangeland management (including a chapter on grazing) is currently under development, and would be incorporated into this project when available.

National policies, laws and regulations

Afghanistan's existing environmental regulatory framework includes the following policies, laws and regulations:

- Environment Law (2007)
- Forest Law (2013) and National Forestry Management Policy (2012)
- Rangeland Law (pending approval) and Rangeland Management Policy (2012)
- Wildlife Management Law (draft) and Wildlife and Hunting Regulations (under development)
- Law on Disaster Response, Management, and Preparedness (2012)
- Water Law (2009), Trans-boundary Water Policy (2007) and Water Sanitation and Hygiene Policy (2010)
- Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2008)

Effective implementation and enforcement of these laws will, however, take some time to achieve.[74] One of the main capacity constraints is the implementation at the provincial and district levels due to insufficient training and resources and ongoing conflict.

An amendment of the existing Rangeland Law was drafted by MAIL in 2007, aiming to provide an enhanced framework for the administration, management, and use of rangelands and rangeland resources in Afghanistan. Its purpose is to recognize and formalize the custodianship, management and use rights of communities and other users, to establish a legal framework for bringing all rangelands under community custodianship, and to define the regulatory, advisory and mediating role of the Government of Afghanistan in relation to pastures. The draft includes detailed provisions for the administration of rangelands, including ownership and user rights, conflict resolution and rationalization of access rights

[74] USAID (2017). Biodiversity-Plus Assessment.

of private, community, and public rangelands. The Rangeland Law is still pending approval by Parliament. In addition to the Rangeland Law, MAIL developed a Rangeland Management Policy in 2012 in order to provide a framework and roadmap for the rehabilitation and protection of the country's rangelands to ensure that they are used in a productive, sustainable, and equitable manner by both sedentary and migratory populations.

Donor-funded projects

The GEF-7 project also builds on the following baseline investments by various donor agencies.

Project	Main interventions
1. **USAID SERVIR Hindu Kush-Himalaya** (2015-2020)	SERVIR-HKH is part of a worldwide program that aims to build capacity for analysis of satellite data for various needs in the agriculture, forestry and other land use sector. Implemented by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), SERVIR-HKH is developing an integrated environmental database and portal for the Hindu-Kush Himalayan region. In Afghanistan, SERVIR is developing tools and training for stakeholders to improve their capacity for data analysis and decision making, and establishing a data management unit within MAIL to sustain a data management portal. SERVIR-HKH has developed the following services and databases that are of relevance to the GEF-7 project. o Agriculture Information Portal (http://gis.mail.gov.af/afiims) o Watershed characterization for Afghanistan (http://tethys.icimod.org/apps/watershed-afgan/) o National Land Cover Monitoring System (in development) The national land cover monitoring system assesses land use/land cover change using Landsat images with 30m resolution from year 2000 to 2018 on an annual basis. The objective of the system to assess and understand the annual land use/land cover change for various decision making processes.
2. **World Bank National Horticulture and Livestock Productivity Project** (2013-2020) **Integrated Landscape Management approach** (under development)	The aim of this World Bank project is to promote adoption of improved production practices by target farmers, with gradual rollout of farmer-centric agricultural services systems and investment support. The project supports the government's efforts to restore the agricultural sector's productive capacity from the negative effects of over 20 years of conflicts. The project promotes increased adoption of improved technologies through interventions in the area of (1) horticultural production, (2) animal production and health, and (3) implementation management and technical assistance support. The project supported the establishment of Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) in districts of the GEF-7 target provinces. The project is implemented in **Khost**, **Laghman**, Nangarhar, **Nuristan**, and Kunar Provinces, among others. The GEF-7 project will coordinate closely with the activities implemented under this project in Khost, Laghman and Nuristan, in particular with regard to the horticulture/kitchen garden scheme for women and animal health components of the project. Additionally, the World Bank is currently developing a paper on integrated landscape management approach for sustainable management and restoration of degraded landscapes, including through social mobilization. The GEF-7 project will coordinate with the World Bank to enhance capacity and knowledge of the integrated landscape management approach for resilience and productive landscapes in Afghanistan.
3. **FAO Country Support Programme**	FAO is implementing several programmes and projects in Afghanistan in the areas of agricultural production, livestock, irrigation, emergency assistance, resilience and capacity building. In particular, FAO is currently implementing the European Union-funded "Strengthening Afghanistan Institutions capacity for the assessment of agriculture production and scenario development" (2016-2020). Under this project, FAO has supported Afghanistan in developing a Soil Map and National Agro-Ecological Zoning Atlas, including climate

	projections, suitability assessments and soil maps for 33 crops.[75] The project is also developing a Land Resources Information Management System (LRIMS) for monitoring and analysis of agricultural production systems, which will be completed in 2020. Furthermore, FAO has introduced the Farmer Field Schools approach to provide training to farmers, develop value chains, and to perform extension activities in collaboration with agricultural technology transfer centres located in each agro-ecological zone. FAO via the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's National Statistic and Information Authority (NSIA) regularly collects, validates and disseminates in FAOSTAT environmental statistics, including land use data and indicators and more in general supports sustainable agriculture measurement through the indicator 2.4.1, PROSA and related capacity development. Lastly, FAO is implementing the GIZ/European Union-funded project, "Development of a Geographical Indication System in Afghanistan" (2019-2020). The project goal is to promote inclusive growth and job creation in the agricultural sector by strengthening the capabilities of producers and private enterprises to effectively link Afghan farmers to domestic and international markets through the development of pilot Geographical Indication (GI) value chains. This is expected to lead to increased income of various participants in the product value chain, such as producers, processors and traders. The project also aims to promote environmental and social sustainability by contributing to the development of sustainable approaches into policies and strategies related to voluntary standards. The project identified three pilot GI products, i.e. saffron in Herat Province, pomegranate in Kandahar Province and **pine nut in Khost Province**, and has promoted the set-up of the corresponding GI associations, which will be officially registered with the Ministry of Justice. The GEF-7 will build on the outcomes of this project, in particular with regard to the pine nut value chain interventions in Khost.
4. **Green Climate Fund** (GCF) project "Transforming Kabul River Basin through Integrated Climate Resilient Watershed Management" Concept note submitted to GCF in 2019.	FAO and MAIL have developed a GCF concept note on Integrated Climate-resilient Watershed Management in the Kabul River Basin, which will be implemented in 10 selected districts of Kunar, Kabul, Logar, and **Khost** Provinces. The project aims to transform 150,000 vulnerable farmer households in the Kabul River Basin to have more climate-resilient livelihoods. It will apply an Integrated Climate Resilient Watershed Management (ICRWM) approach to achieve the objectives of ecosystem restoration and protection, sustainable agricultural production and productivity, and climate change adaptation. The project will address climate change stresses in the water and agriculture sectors in one of the most stressed river basins in the country. Furthermore, the project aims to alter the current farming system by introducing climate-resilient agricultural practices and crop varieties based on the climate and hydrological information in the project area. It will also build local capacity in community-based forest and rangeland management. The GEF-7 project will work closely with this project, in particular in Bak District of Khost (where the two projects will operate), to further promote the integrated landscape management approach and scale interventions for sustainable rangeland and forest management and restoration. Moreover, FAO and NEPA are implementing the "Further Strengthening Country Capacity for Engagement with GCF and Direct Access to Climate Finance (GCF Readiness II)" project.

[75] http://www.fao.org/3/ca6889en/ca6889en.pdf

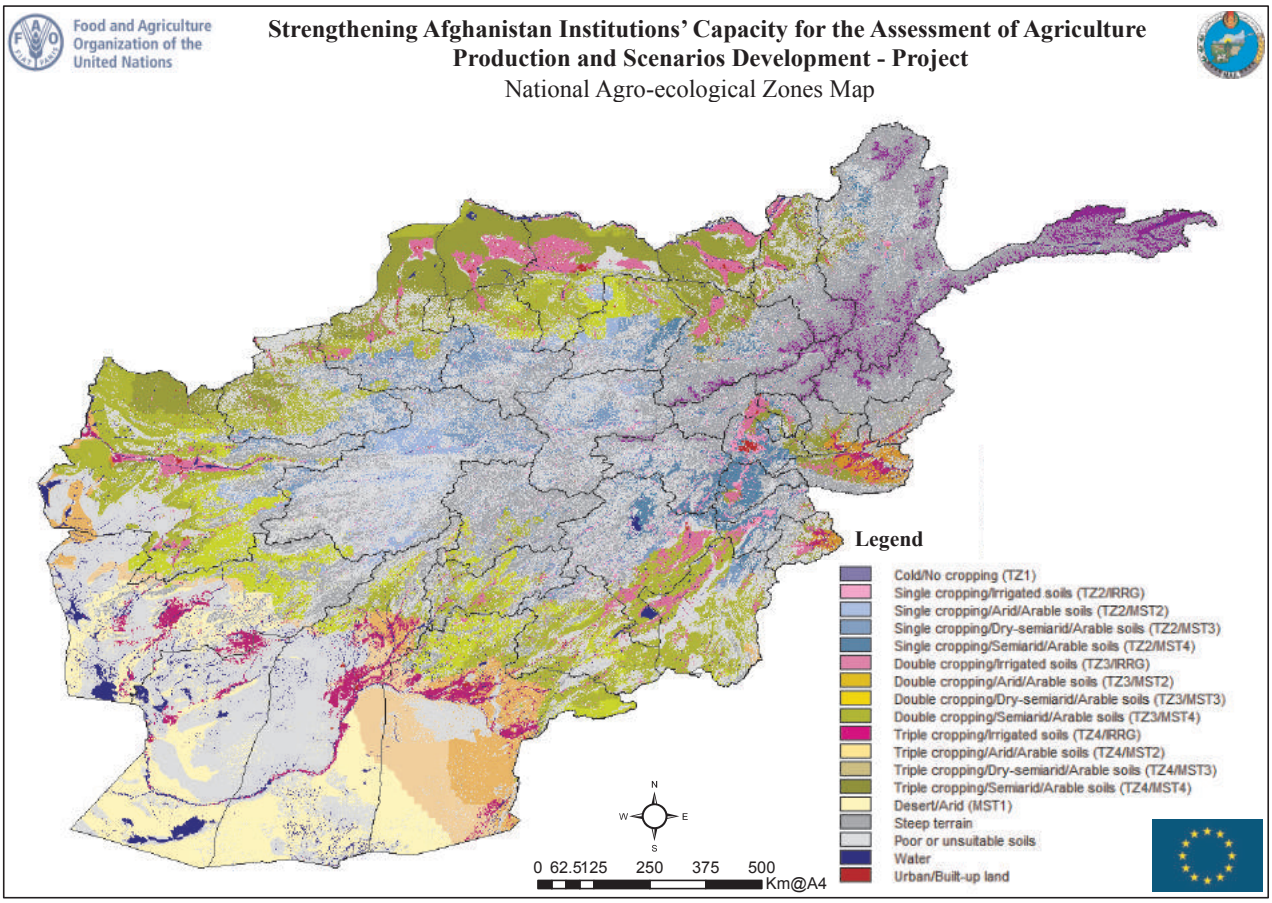

Figure 21: National Agro-ecological Zones Map developed by FAO and MAIL under the EU-funded project

3) Proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project and the project's Theory of Change

The GEF-7 project will build on the above-mentioned, ongoing efforts to enhance natural resources management, crop and livestock production and livelihoods in the target areas in order to achieve a systemic change for global environmental benefits. The objective of the proposed project is to combat land degradation and biodiversity loss by promoting sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in vulnerable landscapes of eastern Afghanistan. The improved practices of participatory assessment, planning, conservation, sustainable management and land restoration resulting from this project will help to reduce pressure on natural habitats and ecosystems and enhance the natural resource base upon which the local communities depend. It will also support measuring of natural resources depletion and support integrated and holistic scenarios for informed policy decision making through Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting (NCAA) activities.[76] The project will help to restore and increase resilience of productivity in degraded pasture systems and forests in Afghanistan's high-altitude, arid and semiarid drylands, while generating global environmental benefits in the area of biodiversity and land degradation and co-benefits in the area of climate change.

The project's Theory of Change is summarized in Figure 22 below. The project will aim to:

[76] Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting (NCAA) aims to measure the stock of renewable and non-renewable resources (natural capital), including biodiversity (e.g. plants, animals, air, water, soils, and minerals), that combine to yield a flow of benefits (ecosystem goods and services) to people. Natural capital can be monitored and evaluated through specific frameworks, as the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (SEEA AFF).

1. Bring 124,000 ha of landscapes under improved management/planning and restoration for improved livelihoods, land degradation (LD) and biodiversity (BD) benefits;
2. Generate socio-economic benefits from improved ecosystem assets and enhanced value chains; and
3. Improve knowledge, data and capacity supporting enhanced planning, policy and decision making.

To achieve these intermediate outcomes, the project will implement outputs that are expected to lead to (i) strengthened national, provincial and local capacity for CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management; (ii) improved management and restoration/rehabilitation of degraded landscapes; (iii) enhanced local capacity for processing and value-adding of rangeland/agroforestry products, providing incentives for sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation; (iv) creation and sharing of knowledge and data on sustainable rangeland management, ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation; and (v) effective project coordination, M&E and NEPA institutional capacity development.

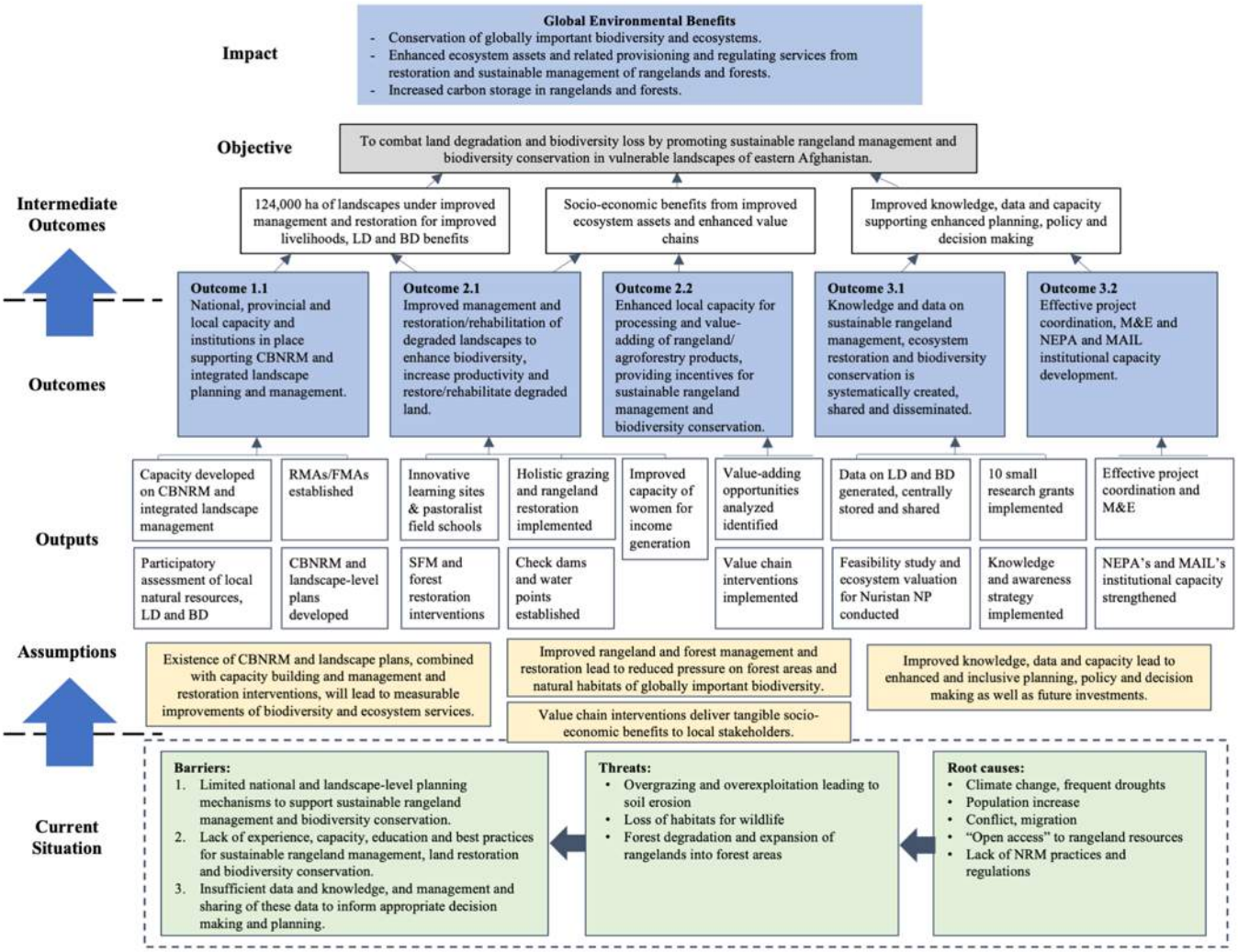

Figure 22: Theory of Change

The Theory of Change is based on a number of assumptions, as summarized below. These assumptions will need to be reviewed and verified throughout implementation.

- Existence of CBNRM and landscape management plans, combined with capacity building and management and restoration interventions, will lead to measurable improvements of biodiversity and ecosystem services, including increased biomass, water absorption and retention capacity, and reduced soil erosion.

- Improved rangeland management, such as through holistic grazing practices, and forest management and restoration, lead to reduced pressure on forest areas and natural habitats of globally important biodiversity.
- Value chain interventions, including for livestock and forest products as well as medicinal plants and small-scale greenhouses (for sapling and fruit/vegetable production), deliver tangible socio-economic benefits to local stakeholders.
- Improved knowledge, data and capacity lead to enhanced planning, policy and decision making as well as future investments.

In line with the Theory of Change, the project is divided into three components as follows. Please refer to the work plan in Annex A2 for the detailed activities description, and Annex A1 for the indicators and targets.

Component 1. Strengthening capacity of national, provincial and local stakeholders for CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management.

Under this component, the project will strengthen capacity of national, provincial and local stakeholders for CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management, as a basis for sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation. It will then implement CBNRM and integrated landscape planning in the selected districts of the three target provinces. Component 1 is divided into five outcomes as follows.

Outcome 1.1: National, provincial and local capacity and institutions in place supporting CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management.

- Output 1.1.1 Capacity development program on CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management developed and implemented for national and provincial stakeholders. In addition to sustainable rangeland and forest management, biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and restoration, the training modules will also cover the concepts of natural capital, biodiversity and land degradation neutrality (LDN), linkages with SDGs 2 and 15 and environmental statistics[77], facilitation of CBNRM planning process, as well as principles of integrated landscape management[78].
- Output 1.1.2 Creation, registration and strengthening of Rangeland Management Associations (RMAs) or Forest Management Associations (FMAs). The project will organize participatory and inclusive community meetings and will provide technical assistance and capacity building to facilitate the creation, registration and operation of the RMAs and FMAs in the target districts, including financial management, opening of bank account, etc. These RMAs and FMAs will be the basis for the CBNRM process.
- Output 1.1.3 Participatory assessment of local natural resources, land degradation and biodiversity in the target landscapes, integrated with geospatial data and environmental resources assessment. The project will conduct large-scale assessment of the target landscapes using geospatial data (including data on land and water resources, ecosystems and biodiversity, as well as impacts of climate change and land degradation), and any previous survey data, in close collaboration with MAIL, NEPA, WCS and relevant university staff. These assessments will be combined with participatory mapping and data collection with local communities and community institutions and local government, in order to identify areas for improved management and restoration, and potential areas to be set aside for conservation, in view of the preparation of the CBNRM plans.
- Output 1.1.4 CBNRM plans developed in an inclusive and participatory process supporting restoration and sustainable use of rangelands and forests. CBNRM plans will be developed for each RMA/FMA.
- Output 1.1.5 Multi-stakeholder platform for integrated landscape management established in two pilot districts, i.e., Qarghayee in Laghman and Jaji Maidan in Khost. The landscape approach will be coordinated with other relevant initiatives, including the GCF Kabul River Basin project.

[77] Including the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (SEEA AFF). The SEEA AFF is an official UN statistical standard that facilitates the description and analysis of the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors as economic activities within the framework of natural resources and the environment. The SEEA AFF includes specific accounting tables to allow for the measurement and accounting of biodiversity and ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, eco-tourism and agri-tourism. The white cover version has been published in 2018 and is currently available online at: http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/environment/methodology/seea-aff/en/

[78] In line with FAO and WWF guidance, in particular the five elements of the landscape approach: (1) Multi-Stakeholder Platform, (2) Shared understanding, (3) Collaborative Planning, (4) Effective Implementation, (5) Monitoring.
See http://www.fao.org/3/i8324en/i8324en.pdf and https://wwfeu.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/final_wwf_landscape_elements_09_11_i_1.pdf.

- Output 1.1.6 Integrated landscape management plan developed in two pilot districts and implementation started (in total of 100,000 ha). The plans will be developed in a participatory, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach that involves capacity building for relevant provincial and district stakeholders. Based on the assessments conducted under Output 1.1.3, stakeholders will discuss potential areas that could be set aside for conservation, areas for restoration, sustainable forest and rangeland management, agriculture, etc. The plans will serve as a basis for future investments by government and donor agencies in the target provinces/districts. Agencies in charge of implementing the plans will be identified, such as PAIL/NRM district office, NEPA provincial/district office, in collaboration with the multi-stakeholder platform. The integrated landscape management planning process will be guided by FAO and WWF guidance (see footnote 78), the World Bank guidance on integrated landscape management approach that is currently under development, as well as lessons learned from the GCF Kabul River Basin project.

For the CBNRM planning, the project will follow MAIL's CBNRM process outlined in the CBNRM Operational Manual, combined with some elements of LADA and PRAGA[79] assessments. The eight steps are summarized in the table below. In addition, experiences from previous projects in the implementation of CBNRM will be taken into account (see section 6.b *Coordination*, sub-section on lessons learned from previous projects).

The eight steps of MAIL's CBNRM process[80]

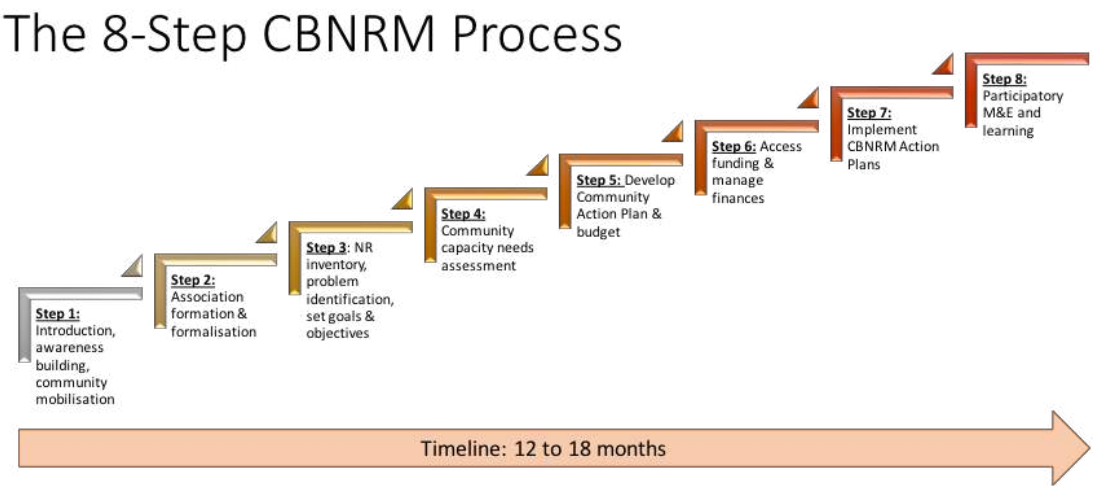

Figure 23: CBNRM Process (MAIL, 2018)

Step 1. Introduction, awareness building and start community mobilization. The community mobilization, which is part of this step, will be implemented by community experts/CBO/NGO staff, of which at least one will be a woman, who will work with the community.

Step 2. Forming and formalizing community groups – FMAs, RMAs and Protected Area Associations (PAAs). One of the main target groups is women, and in particular female-headed households, where vulnerability is often highest. There is a target of 30% of women. This may be in the form of all women groups, or these may be mixed. Wherever possible women should be encouraged to stand for official positions within the membership.

Step 3. Develop a resource inventory, problem identification and ranking, setting goals and objectives. This step makes extensive use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Tools. Annex 7 of the Operational Manual includes detailed step-by-step guidance on how to implement these in the field. The PRA tools include resource mapping, transect walk, historical timeline, problem

[79] Participatory Rangeland and Grassland Assessment Methodology. https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/media-uploads/2018/12/prmp_methodology_021118.pdf (accessed May 2020)
[80] MAIL (2018). Operational Manual (OM) for Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). http://nrm.mail.gov.af:1080/Library/BookDetails/4026.

identification and ranking, and participatory goal-setting. This process also takes into account vulnerable groups, including women and Kuchi nomadic herders.

Step 4. Community capacity needs assessment and community training.

Step 5. Setting CBNRM zones and developing CBNRM plans. This step involves defining CBNRM zones, agreeing on objectives for the CBNRM zones, preparing an action plan, and developing a budget.

Step 6. Accessing funding and managing finances. This involves identifying sources of funding, including donor funding, CDCs, etc.

Step 7. Implementing CBNRM Action Plans.

Step 8. Participatory M&E and learning.

Value chain approach. As highlighted in the Operational Manual, the provision of socio-economic benefits to community members is a key component in the design and implementation of CBNRM initiatives in rural areas. Market-oriented benefit sharing arrangements are identified as appropriate for the Afghanistan CBNRM programme. MAIL is adopting a pro-active value chain approach, is encouraging public-private partnerships, and there are strong moves to engage rural communities in markets and value chains.

Land tenure issues. The Operational Manual also emphasizes that supporting effective natural resource management (NRM) in ways that contribute to wider peacebuilding outcomes is a highly positive way to address land tenure concerns and bring these to the notice of MAIL. Natural resources are critical to the country's prospects for a stable, peaceful and more economically viable future. Practitioners should address land tenure concerns during CBNRM Step 3 (problem identification and ranking), and work with communities to bring these to the attention of government. CBNRM requires joint decision-making and the use of what has come to be known as Alternative Conflict Management (as opposed to traditional, or government imposed). Alternative conflict management addresses natural resource conflicts through promotion of joint decision-making. It draws upon conflict management strategies long relied upon by communities in settling their disputes.

Component 2. Integrated management and restoration of degraded landscapes for biodiversity conservation and sustainable/regenerative rangeland management.

Outcome 2.1: Improved management and restoration/rehabilitation of 24,000 ha of degraded landscapes to enhance biodiversity, increase productivity and restore/rehabilitate degraded land.

Based on the CBNRM plans developed under Outcome 1, the project will aim to bring 24,000 hectares of degraded landscapes (rangelands and forests) under restoration/rehabilitation and improved management by local stakeholders in the target landscapes to enhance biodiversity, increase productivity and restore/rehabilitate degraded land, as well as to lead carbon sequestration. Adaptive and rotational grazing via herding based on locally co-created maps and landmark bordered grazing units will be designed based on best practices, adaptability (socio-economical appropriateness), feasibility (cost effectiveness) and relevant traditional knowledge. This outcome will also include enhancing livestock management and animal health to increase productivity and resilience. Among others, the project will benefit from experiences from a GEF-funded project in Turkey, the *Conservation and Sustainable Management of Turkey's Steppe Ecosystems Project*, which has developed Guidelines for Grazing Management Planning.[81] The project will also implement Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and forest restoration/rehabilitation interventions in the areas identified during the participatory assessments. Furthermore, this outcome will include the promotion of agroforestry, and small-

[81] FAO (2020). Guidelines for Grazing Management Planning: A Holistic Approach; and FAO (2020). Guidelines for Grazing and Livestock Monitoring.

scale greenhouses for women, as part of the holistic approach. Accordingly, Outcome 2.1 will be composed of the following outputs:

- Output 2.1.1 Learning sites established in three target districts for the effective dissemination of best practices of regenerative grazing and rangeland management (approx. 8-10 ha/site).
- Output 2.1.2 Pastoralist-centric, gender-sensitive field schools implemented on sustainable and regenerative rangeland management and biodiversity-friendly practices.
- Output 2.1.3 Holistic, regenerative grazing practices and restoration interventions applied in at least 19,000 ha of rangelands.
- Output 2.1.4 Technical assistance and support provided to women to operate small-scale greenhouses for income generation/ household food security.
- Output 2.1.5 Sustainable forest management (SFM) implemented in 4,200 ha of forest areas for sustainable use of forest products.
- Output 2.1.6 Restoration/rehabilitation, reforestation and/or agroforestry implemented in 800 hectares of degraded or deforested forest areas. Agroforestry interventions are aimed at increasing socio-economic benefits for FMAs and RMAs, help to stabilize soils, and reduce pressures on existing forests.
- Output 2.1.7 Small check dams/keyline dams and water ponds established or rehabilitated to support sustainable grazing and forest restoration and improved watershed management in upper catchment areas.

The interventions under this Outcome will be implemented with strong community ownership. Contracts will be established with the community groups (CDCs, RMAs and FMAs), and the communities will contribute 20% to the costs of the interventions. The interventions will be entirely handed over to the communities after the first 2-3 years of operations.

For the rangeland management and restoration interventions, the project takes a dynamic and innovative approach to have greater impact on a maximum amount of land and for pastoralists with minimum project resources, as well as to create multiplying impact and trigger for continuous improvement. The main framework for this, the holistic grazing management and planning procedure, focuses on when, where, how densely and how frequently to graze the herds, in order to enable a restorative instead of degrading impact on ecosystems by livestock, while taking into account micro and macro socio-cultural and economical concerns.[82] To enable the local grazing management patterns to change in this direction, "learning sites", a custom, innovative and progressive tool is designed to be established at local levels. These learning sites are envisioned as community centres to demonstrate different management techniques, their short and long-term impacts, organize trainings and know-how sharing mediums, act as physical environments for support mechanisms such as veterinary services and introduction of other innovative tools, in service not only of pastoralists but also farmers and disadvantaged groups. The project will also support the implementation of the One Health approach by providing technical guidance on animal health and the human-livestock-wildlife interface.

Based on experiences from other countries, it is expected that holistic grazing would lead to up to 30-40% increase in biomass production (vegetation including grass and shrubs). This would lead to a positive feedback loop with increased water absorption and retention capacity of soil, reduced soil erosion, decreased evapotranspiration, and further increase in biomass production that sustainably supports livestock. In addition to the holistic grazing (which also serves as a restoration tool), the project will implement direct restoration interventions on rangelands in order to multiply, facilitate and quicken the restoration process. These interventions may include small earthwork such as terracing, plantation and seeding, subsoil treatments and other soil and water conservation measures, construction and maintenance of water points for livestock, fencing for management purposes, as well as other support measures such as visual paddock markings, fodder production, etc. These interventions will be planned in a participatory process with the local communities/RMAs during the CBNRM and holistic grazing management planning process.

[82] Savory, Allan and Butterfield, Jody (2016). "Holistic Management, Third Edition: A Commonsense Revolution to Restore Our Environment", Island Press.

Strengthening veterinary services has been identified as a priority in the consultations held with local communities to help pastoralists improve the health of their animals. The project builds on existing capacities within the provincial and district offices of MAIL, as well as the Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) established under previous projects (in particular, the World Bank National Horticulture and Livestock Productivity Project). VFUs are mobile vaccination/veterinary services facilities. The project will work with PAIL/DAIL officers and VFUs to enhance access of the target communities to veterinary services. In particular, within the learning sites/pastoralist field schools, the project aims to demonstrate veterinary services such as vaccination, and good animal health management practices. The project will provide equipment/vaccines/materials to the VFUs to enable them to reach a larger community. Training will be provided to provincial/district staff of MAIL and VFUs to increase their capacity to provide veterinary services.

Where relevant, small check dams and water ponds will be established in an ecosystem-friendly way, using locally available building material where feasible. This will provide watering points for livestock, but will also serve as gully control to reduce run-off and conserve water for forest restoration in upper catchment areas. Lessons learned from past projects will be taken into account in order to ensure feasibility, ownership and sustainability of these interventions. Regular community-based monitoring and evaluation will be implemented for the different interventions.

The three elements of sustainable rangeland management of the project (learning sites, pastoralist field schools, and holistic grazing) are described in more detail below.

Learning sites

The learning sites are closely linked with the pastoralist field schools: they are the physical sites where the pastoralist field schools and related demonstration activities will be implemented. Furthermore, the learning sites are a key mechanism to demonstrate the principles of holistic grazing. The establishment of learning sites and the use of holistic grazing techniques are innovative concepts that are expected to have a multiplier and catalysing effect for replication within the target provinces and beyond.

Learning sites have a fundamental role in the project. This is due to them being able to:

- Enable implementation of various applications (of the project) concerning rangeland and livestock management (demonstrated as part of the pastoralist field schools),
- Disseminate knowhow to the widest base of beneficiaries on how to implement these activities in greater scale,
- Demonstrate the time-delayed (short and long term) impact of different applications and techniques, thus further increase the dissemination,
- Support the research and development efforts at regional and national scales by providing data and demonstration capacities during and after the project, ensuring sustainability (follow-up), and
- Provide community centers for related activities, such as field schools, gathering place for the suggested provincial/local rangeland management associations.

Learning sites are planned to be established in 3 of the 8 target districts, to be selected at the beginning of the project implementation based on the feasibility and security situation. Each learning site will cover approx. 8-10 ha, to be independently assessed for each learning site. In case there is not enough rangeland available near the community center, the holistic grazing, fodder cultivation, etc. would be demonstrated outside the community center. Where the establishment of learning sites is not feasible, demonstration plots can be established with the RMAs as part of the Pastoralist Field Schools.

Learning sites will be close (at the edge) of district settlements, covering a land piece that represents as much as possible the overall regional topography. Learning sites will act as innovation centers, as well as demonstrations, and exchange of best practices among herders, including on winter feed alternatives and fodder production, where relevant. In addition, the learning sites also serve to demonstrate activities related to reforestation and medicinal plants.

Setup

Learning sites will be composed of the following elements.

Community center:

- This consists of simple yet efficient buildings, which could be pre-existing community centres. In the absence of existing buildings, prefabricated, modular buildings or other simple structures can be considered.
- These buildings will include office place, meeting (teaching) hall to teach 30-50 persons at a time, library/dissemination area and semi-open community hall/coffeehouse.
- A total of 200 sqm of under-roof area may be sufficient.

Perimeter marked/fenced area (approx. 8-10 ha):

- The rangeland area covered by the learning site (the borders) will be marked (with visual posts/flags) and/or fenced by electric fencing or green fencing (trees).
- Paddocks (grazing cells) will also be established by visual paddock borders and/or temporary fencing. Each learning site will have approx. 5-10 grazing cells/paddocks with access to water points for livestock. Holistic Land Planning will be made for each learning site with the guidance of the International Rangeland/Livestock Management Expert.

Livestock/herds used for the learning sites:

- The learning sites will use herds belonging to students of field schools/RMA members to implement and demonstrate regenerative, holistic/adaptive grazing planning and implementation, on a voluntary basis.

Livestock facility:

- Where feasible, the learning sites will have simple livestock management and handling facility. This will directly serve the demonstration of veterinary services.
- As for the other elements, this facility needs to be designed according to regional realities. This implies that the design and implementation must be efficient yet feasible enough to be replicable across the region and country.

Water points:

- Each grazing cell (paddocks) will be designed to have access to appropriate, efficient, mobile or semi-mobile water points setup. These techniques will also help the replication in much wider scale.

Management

The learning sites will be set up (designed and procured) by the project, on government lands that are assigned (for long term) by the appropriate authorities. During the project, the learning sites will be managed by staff of PAIL/DAIL with a special protocol with the project, allowing the project management team to have a direct line to the authorities for co-management procedures. The modalities will be agreed with the PAIL/DAIL offices at the beginning of project implementation. The protocol will describe:

- Responsible authority for maintenance and operation of the learning site during implementation of the project (with support from the project's Provincial Coordinators/Community Mobilizers).
- Responsible persons for tending the livestock.
- Exit strategy, i.e. responsible authority and planned activities after the project ends (including those implemented by government and RMAs).

Curriculum of pastoralist field schools, techniques to be used in the learning sites, grazing planning and all the other technical capacity will be managed and implemented by the project with the support of relevant authorities. At the end of the project, the learning sites' management and resources will be transferred to the relevant authorities as agreed by the protocols.

Pastoralist field schools

A pastoralist field school is a season-long learning modality where pastoralists can learn through observation and experimentation within their own context. Through experimental and participatory learning techniques, participants are empowered rather than advised what to do.[83] Sessions will be organized by gathering herders through the RMAs. The FAO GEF-6 project is currently

[83] http://www.celep.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/PFS-Reglap-learning-practice.pdf

designing a methodological framework and curriculum for Pastoralist Field Schools with the support of an International Rangeland Management Specialist. The GEF-7 project can benefit from the GEF-6 experience and materials developed.

The project's Provincial Coordinators/Community Mobilizers, as well as local PAIL/MAIL staff, will be trained and coached as local facilitators/trainers of the Pastoralist Field Schools by the National Rangeland/Livestock Management Expert. The main objectives of the Training of Trainers course include:[84]

- Understanding the basic principles of the Pastoralist Field School (PFS) approach.
- Developing facilitation skills.
- Understanding the core activities of PFS.
- Developing the skills how to establish and run a PFS group.
- Acquiring a general understanding of how to incorporate technical issues in PFS.
- Knowing how to develop action plan for implementation of PFS

Holistic grazing

Holistic grazing is an approach that aims to embrace and properly manage the complexity of grazing management. The approach is characterised by three principles:[85]

1. Holistic as the overall management framework,
2. Regenerative as the core technical approach, and
3. Livestock management-focused as the strategical tool.

Holistic grazing involves the use of proper livestock management as the main tool for grazing management planning towards improved underlying ecosystem health indicators. Proper allocation of recovery periods, accompanied by high intensity animal impact in the right season and in the right places, with a special focus on both social-economic and biodiversity zones and time-spatial buffers results in improvement of the triple bottom line (ecological, economic and social) benefits for all stakeholders involved. This ecosystem-based approach to grassland management offers a different understanding of "overgrazing": It is a matter of time not the number of livestock. Holistic grazing involves shorter regenerative cycles compared to traditional rotational grazing practices.

The fundamental premise of this approach is to transform grazing practices into restoration tools. This means a) increased fodder production and quality, and b) improved ecosystem functions and increased life quality standards for pastoralists at once. What is important is a) for how long each plant are grazed, b) for how long each plant are given time to recover away from livestock.

To preserve well-functioning pasturelands, periodic grazing and animal impact (trampling, urination and manure) are required for better mineral cycle and to allow new plant growth to happen (in particular, non-woody plants), further enhancing plant biodiversity. Regular community-based monitoring and dynamic, adaptive planning and management are an integral part of this approach. The potential use of remote sensing and/or drone imagery to complement the community-based monitoring will be explored during implementation, in close collaboration with the Center of Excellence at MAIL. Detailed guidance for the holistic grazing will be developed by the International Rangeland/Livestock Management Expert in consultation with stakeholders at the beginning of project implementation.

[84] Pastoralist Field Schools Training of Facilitators Manual (2013). ECHO, EC and SDC funded interventions in the Horn of Africa. FAO, Rome and Farmer Field Schools Promotion Services, Nairobi. http://www.fao.org/3/a-bl492e.pdf

[85] FAO (2020). Guidelines for Grazing Management Planning: A Holistic Approach. Developed under the GEF-5 project in Turkey, *Conservation and Sustainable Management of Turkey's Steppe Ecosystems Project*.

Outcome 2.2: Enhanced local capacity for processing and value-adding of rangeland/agroforestry products, generating socio-economic benefits for women and men, to provide incentives for sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation.

This outcome will support the development of selected value chain interventions to generate socio-economic benefits for women and men in the target districts, in particular poorer households, while providing incentives for restoration, conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources. The project will focus on products with potential to generate income for local women and men who rely on natural resources for their livelihoods, such as, for example, pine nuts, medicinal plants or dairy and other livestock products.

- Output 2.2.1 Value chain analysis conducted for selected rangeland/agroforestry products and recommendations formulated on value-addition and market access. The project will conduct a value chain analysis for selected rangeland/ livestock/agroforestry products identified and prioritized during participatory meetings. This will involve an assessment of current and potential economic benefits derived from these products, their potential for market development, their significance for women's livelihoods and poor households, and their potential to contribute to sustainable management and conservation of dryland ecosystems and biodiversity (including rangelands and forests) in the target provinces and beyond.
- Output 2.2.2 Selected value chain interventions implemented for rangeland/agroforestry products, including strengthening of RMA/FMA and community enterprises' capacity to support value chains. Based on the analysis above, the project will provide technical assistance and capacity building to local communities for the implementation of improved value chains (such as, for example, for pine nuts, medicinal plants, mushrooms, agroforestry, honey, or dairy and other livestock products, as prioritized by the communities in a participatory process), including on maintaining the operations after the project ends. Support will be provided to establish or improve small-scale, cost-effective and innovative processing and/or packaging facilities, in collaboration with RMAs/FMAs or other community-based institutions/enterprises. Furthermore, in communities where this has been prioritized, the project will support the sustainable production of medicinal plants through reseeding and natural conservation. The development of an inventory of species diversity and a community seed bank or nursery to promote *ex situ* conservation of selected agroforestry products and/or medicinal plants may also be supported to this end.

The project will follow the value chain approach described in MAIL's CBNRM Operational Manual, as shown in the figure below.

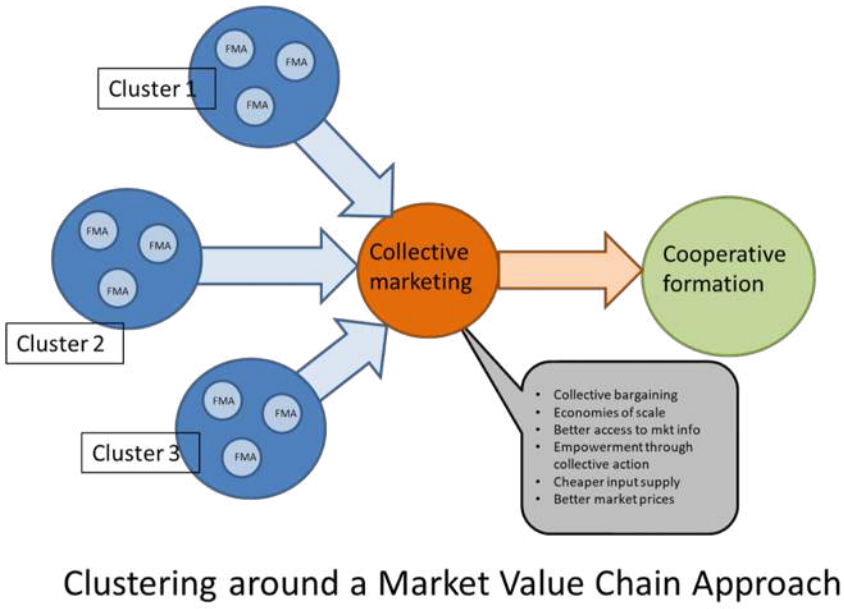

Figure 24: CBNRM Value Chain Approach (MAIL, 2018)

MAIL has commissioned value chain analyses of three high-value products found in the country, mentioned below. Where relevant, the GEF-7 project will build on these.

Chilgoza pine nut is an important non-timber forest product (NTFP) found in Afghanistan. Local communities and or contractors harvest the pine cones annually. Unsustainable harvesting is common, without consideration for tree health and natural regeneration. In the eastern provinces, cones are predominantly harvested by villagers; while in southern provinces cones are usually harvested by contractors. Traditional methods can be replaced by use of better harvesting equipment and extraction techniques to reduce damage. A study conducted in 2016 revealed that compared to other non-timber forests products (NTFPs), pine nuts is the most important NTFP in eastern and southeastern provinces of the country.[86] In 2018, the Afghan Government signed a trade agreement with China to export chilgoza worth USD 2 billion annually by 2020. This has led to higher prices of chilgoza in both the local and national markets, benefiting local communities. Following this, MAIL has also launched some projects and programs improving chilgoza trees in forest areas in the eastern provinces.

Hing (*Ferula assafoetida*) is the local name for a medicinal herb grown in large parts of Afghanistan, particularly in northern areas. It provides a drug with strong commercial potential, used for treating asthma, stomach disorders, and intestinal pests. It is also consumed as a vegetable, with its extracts mixed into soups and beverages. The Afghani varieties are of good quality, with high nutritional value and excellent quality gum-resin. It is appropriate for small rural businesses such as those to be developed by FMAs/RMAs/PAAs.

Cumin (*Cuminum cyminum*) is a herbaceous medicinal plant. The valleys of Badakhshan produce the highest quality cumin in the world and the seeds of this herb have been exported along the ancient Silk Roadtrade route for thousands of years. In Afghanistan, white, black and green cumin varieties are all grown, as well as a wild variety called Kajack cumin. It is widely grown on rangelands and has much potential for RMAs that are seeking business opportunities. Exports have increased steadily over the years, exceeding $20m in 2016, and thus cumin is a major contributor to national income. Small producers provide the bulk of this crop, and the potential for improving value chains to offer small producer companies with greater value addition is high.[87]

Component 3. Knowledge management to support project implementation, replication and scaling up, as well as the systematic creation and sharing of knowledge on sustainable dryland management and biodiversity conservation at the provincial and national levels.

This component will support the development, compilation and dissemination of data and knowledge on sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity, to support replication and scaling of the project interventions. It will be linked closely to and will aim to further strengthen the capacity of the Centre of Excellence established in MAIL under GEF-6. The Centre of Excellence will play the role of a central knowledge hub, while closely coordinating with other sectors, in particular NEPA and the National Statistic and Information Authority (NSIA). Data will be compiled to support future decision making and investments, in particular with regard to biodiversity and land degradation and related SDG indicators and natural capital accounts. This will also lay the foundations (capacity, data) for future LDN target setting. Knowledge products and communications will be aimed at recognizing efforts of herders to implement sustainable practices, to motivate further action. The involvement of youth and women will also be highlighted. Interventions to improve gender equality will be documented and analyzed, and best practices disseminated.

The project will provide capacity building to MAIL, NEPA, MEW, MRRD and National Statistic and Information Authority (NSIA) staff on data collection and management, including linkages with SDGs. This will also involve further strengthening of the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL and other relevant institutions. Workshop with national and provincial stakeholders will be organized to discuss lessons learned and use of data in future planning and decision-making.

Regarding land degradation monitoring, remote sensing and drone imagery may be used for alternative landscape-scale estimations of carbon stocks both above and below the ground; as well as high-resolution data processing on biomass

[86] Shalizi, M. & Khurram, S. (2016). Socio-Economic Importance of Chilgoza Pine Forest of Afghanistan: A Survey-Based Assessment. *Asian Journal of Science and Technology*. 7. 3556-3559.
[87] MAIL (2018). Operational Manual (OM) for Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). http://nrm.mail.gov.af:1080/Library/BookDetails/4026.

production, land productivity, land cover ratios to have more accurate information on SDG 15.3. The feasibility of these interventions will be assessed at the beginning of project implementation, in collaboration with the GEF-CBIT project and the Centre of Excellence at MAIL.

The biophysical and socio-economic surveys for the recently announced Nuristan National Park are aimed at supporting the implementation of the National Protected Area System Plan and will lay the foundations for the future park planning process, while ensuring that both bio-physical/ecological and socio-economic/cultural factors are taken into account.[88] Recommendations will be formulated for the national park planning process and future management plan/co-management structure.

Furthermore, the project will provide grants for researchers to conduct studies that support the goals of the project and increase knowledge on biodiversity and land degradation, such as biodiversity surveys, ecosystem valuation and natural capital, socio-economic surveys, Eastern Forest Complex ecosystem services, and climate change impacts. The criteria and selection process for the provision of research grants will be established in collaboration with stakeholders from government and research institutions. Research results will be disseminated through the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL and other channels.

Moreover, through targeted capacity building, the project will aim to enhance capacity of both MAIL and NEPA to execute and manage GEF and other donor-funded projects. It will also develop the capacity of these agencies for enhanced coordination of environmental data collection and management, and the use of data in decision and policy making.

The component is divided into two outcomes, as follows.

Outcome 3.1: Knowledge and data on sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation is systematically created, shared and disseminated.

As described above, Outcome 3.1 includes the following outputs:

- Output 3.1.1 Data on land degradation, biodiversity and natural assets is generated, centrally stored and shared through the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL.
- Output 3.1.2 Provision of 10 small research grants for universities to conduct research on topics relevant to the project such as biodiversity surveys, ecosystem valuation and natural capital, socio-economic surveys, Eastern Forest Complex ecosystem services, and climate change impacts.
- Output 3.1.3 Biophysical and socio-economic surveys conducted in view of the preparation of a justification document for Nuristan National Park.
- Output 3.1.4 Knowledge and outreach strategy developed and implemented on sustainable rangeland management, restoration ecology and biodiversity conservation through the National 'Centre of Excellence' at MAIL as well as through use of innovative information and mobile technology.

The project will also aim to share integrated landscape management, SLM and restoration best practices through the WOCAT SLM database.[89]

Outcome 3.2: Effective project coordination, M&E and NEPA and MAIL institutional capacity development.

Under this outcome, the project will ensure effective project coordination and M&E, including adaptive planning and management. This will include the preparation and implementation of annual budgets and work plans. NEPA will be involved in regular project monitoring, including monitoring missions to the project sites. Additionally, the project will conduct a social analysis and define risk mitigation measures as per the project's Environmental and Social Management

[88] http://nrm.mail.gov.af:1080/Library/BookDetails/1004.
[89] https://qcat.wocat.net/en/wocat/list/?type=wocat&filter__qg_location__country=country_AFG&page=1.

Plan, including FPIC process. Gender and FPIC trainings will be organized for project staff and provincial/district focal points.

Lastly, the project will implement a comprehensive capacity development program for NEPA and MAIL staff, aiming to increase national capacity for following global best practices and effective policy development. The capacity development program is anticipated to include (but not limited to) the following: (i) GEF project execution, including financial management and reporting, (ii) Coordination of environmental data collection and management (in particular, related to LD, BD, and SDGs) among NEPA, MAIL, NSIA and other relevant agencies, including on LDN target setting and natural capital, (iii) Use of data for decision and policy making, planning and mobilizing investments, and (iv) Assessing effectiveness and monitoring progress in achieving landscape targets, including social and environmental outcomes. The capacity development program will be implemented in close coordination with other relevant projects including GEF-CBIT and GCF.

Accordingly, Outcome 3.2 includes the following outputs.

- Output 3.2.1 Effective project coordination and M&E undertaken.
- Output 3.2.2 NEPA's and MAIL's institutional capacity strengthened to support project implementation, monitoring, replication and scaling up.

4) Alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies

First, the project is aligned with BD Objective 1, *Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes* by mainstreaming biodiversity in the NRM, livestock and forestry sectors. The project applies spatial and community-based planning and management tools to ensure that land and resource use maximizes production without undermining or degrading biodiversity. It incorporates sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation into community- and district/landscape-level plans, thereby contributing to the conservation of globally important biodiversity in the target landscapes such as the markhor, urial, and musk deer, as well as vulnerable forest and rangeland ecosystems and endemic plant species (including medicinal plants). The project introduces the concepts of natural capital and land degradation neutrality as a tool for mainstreaming biodiversity and account for land degradation and loss of biodiversity. The CBNRM and integrated landscape management plans will take into account opportunities for enhancing habitat connectivity in the wider landscape through community-based approaches. Restoration and conservation of critical ecosystems will lead to restoration of wildlife and their habitat. Furthermore, the biophysical and socio-economic surveys for the recently announced Nuristan National Park will aim to lay solid foundations for enhanced, community-based conservation of globally significant biodiversity in the target area. The project will also support implementation of FAO's Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors[90], by identifying and quantifying in both bio-physical and economic terms the impacts and dependencies of the livestock and forestry sectors on biodiversity and selected ecosystems services.

Second, by promoting restoration and the sustainable management of rangelands and forests, the project is aligned with LD Objective 1, *Support on the ground implementation of Sustainable Land Management to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality*. The project contributes to avoiding further degradation of land and ecosystems through the sustainable management of Afghanistan's dryland landscapes, addressing the complex interactions between local livelihoods, land degradation, climate change, and environmental security. It also contributes to land degradation neutrality and, thereby, to a more resilient, diversified agro-ecological food production system in an area that is projected to be even further affected by drought and water scarcity in the future. Indirectly, the project contributes to the climate change focal area by mitigating GHG emissions and increasing carbon storage in rangelands and forest landscapes.

[90] http://www.fao.org/3/ca7722en/ca7722en.pdf (accessed May 2020)

In line with these focal areas, the project also contributes to the SDGs, in particular SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land).

5) Incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing

The proposed project builds on significant baseline investments by the government and international donors in support of agricultural productivity, natural resources management, food security, and value chain development for sustainable livelihoods. The targeted GEF intervention will contribute to generating global environmental benefits in the area of ecosystem goods and services, land restoration, biodiversity, and GHG emissions reduction. It will specifically fund the incremental costs of addressing barriers with regard to community-based and landscape-level planning mechanisms in the three target provinces, best practices and innovative approaches for the implementation of restoration and sustainable management of degraded landscapes, biodiversity conservation, capacity development for sustainable production and value chains, as well as data and knowledge management and sharing. Without the GEF intervention, it is anticipated that implementation of CBNRM in the GEF-7 target landscapes will continue to be insufficient, rangelands and forest will be further degraded, biodiversity will be lost and GHG emission reduction targets will not be achieved.

6) Global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)

The project is expected to generate multiple global environmental benefits as well as socio-economic benefits. In particular, it will contribute to Afghanistan's commitment to restore 5.35 million hectares of rangelands and to decrease the rate of biodiversity loss and degradation of natural habitats. The project will aim to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and restoration into community- and district/landscape-level plans while enhancing livelihoods and food security in one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change and most food insecure in the world. It will, thereby, contribute to the conservation of globally important biodiversity such as the markhor, urial, and musk deer, as well as vulnerable forest and rangeland ecosystems and endemic plant species (including medicinal plants). By supporting restoration and sustainable management of rangelands, it is anticipated that the proposed project will generate global environmental benefits in the area of ecosystem goods and services (including through improved soil and water management), land restoration, biodiversity, as well as GHG emissions reduction as a co-benefit.

Specifically, the project will bring 800 ha of forest land and 19,000 ha of rangelands under restoration, and will bring 4,200 ha of forests under sustainable forest management (SFM). An additional landscape of 100,000 ha will be under improved management through integrated landscape planning and management, of which an estimated 7,200 ha will be managed to benefit biodiversity and the remainder for sustainable land management in production systems. The greenhouse gas emissions mitigated from the project activities is estimated at 1 million ton of CO_2e (direct).

An assessment using FAO's Biodiversity Integrated Assessment and Computation Tool (B-INTACT) was conducted during the project preparation phase. Based on this assessment, it is estimated that the area of avoided biodiversity loss through the project is 6,607 ha, which translates into an added social value of biodiversity of USD 5,048,137.

Furthermore, the project will also lay the foundations for generating global environmental benefits beyond the project duration by introducing national level planning on land degradation, biodiversity and sustainable rangeland management and by supporting knowledge management and sharing for appropriate decision making and planning. Moreover, socio-economic benefits will result from reversing land degradation, improved rangeland management and from increased food security and resilience. An estimated 50,000 people (50% women) in the target communities will benefit from improved natural resources upon which their livelihoods depend. Adaptation benefits will result from improved ecosystems, soil stability, reduced habitat loss, restoration of watersheds, and improved adaptive capacity of local communities through community organization. The project area is extremely water-stressed and affected by frequent droughts and floods,

posing a threat to agricultural and livestock production and rural livelihoods. It is, therefore, anticipated that this project will not only improve resilience and food security, but will also contribute to reducing conflict and fostering peace.[91]

7) Innovativeness, sustainability, potential for scaling up and capacity development[92]

Innovativeness. The project is innovative by using a system-wide, national and landscape-level approach to land restoration, sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in Afghanistan, as well as a natural capital perspective. In particular, it is innovative by linking interventions on the ground with the SDGs, by strengthening the generation of data to support national reporting and policy and decision making, in line with international environmental statistics frameworks that integrate international, national and local data.

The project is also innovative by combining international best practice and traditional knowledge, for greater impact within the landscape. Furthermore, it applies an integrated approach of biodiversity conservation, sustainable production systems and landscape restoration, supporting both environmental and food security, and introduces the concept of Land Degradation Neutrality in support of SDG 15.3 as well as national restoration targets. The establishment of learning sites and the use of holistic grazing techniques are also innovative concepts that are expected to have a multiplier and catalysing effect for replication within the target provinces and beyond.

Sustainability and potential for scaling up. MAIL and NEPA, as well as provincial and local stakeholders, will have a key role in sustaining and replicating project interventions. Accordingly, institutional capacity building, monitoring and coordination mechanisms, and well as knowledge and data creation and sharing, have been incorporated into the project design in order to build long-term capacity for sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in Afghanistan and in the target landscapes. The landscape-level plans to be developed under Output 1.1.5 are also anticipated to contribute to replication and scaling and future investment. Through capacity building at the national and landscape level, a comprehensive knowledge management and planning approach, by establishing strong community-based institutions (FMAs and RMAs), and by promoting community-based approaches that benefit local livelihoods, it is anticipated that the project interventions will be sustained and replicated after the project ends. Sustainability considerations and exit strategies have been incorporated into the design of relevant project activities, such as, for example, the learning sites, which will be operated in close collaboration with local authorities and communities.

Sustainability of project outcomes will be enhanced by the project's support for inclusive and transparent approaches to sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation and benefit sharing that involve all stakeholders, particularly local communities, women, and vulnerable groups, ensuring that sustainable management planning and initiatives are demand-driven and built upon a wide base of support. Involvement of local communities in the implementation of project activities will be very important for the attainment of social sustainability. Furthermore, empowering communities through capacity building, participatory decision-making processes, and enhancing the capacity of local communities to design and manage projects on a long-term basis is also considered important for sustaining project activities over the medium to long-term.

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[91] See also United Nations Environment Programme (2013). *Natural Resource Management and Peacebuilding in Afghanistan*. https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_Afghanistan_NRM_report.pdf (retrieved May 2020)

[92] System-wide capacity development (CD) is essential to achieve more sustainable, country-driven and transformational results at scale as deepening country ownership, commitment and mutually accountability. Incorporating system-wide CD means empowering people, strengthening organizations and institutions as well as enhancing the enabling policy environment interdependently and based on inclusive assessment of country needs and priorities.

- Country ownership, commitment and mutual accountability: Explain how the policy environment and the capacities of organizations, institutions and individuals involved will contribute to an enabling environment to achieve sustainable change
- Based on a participatory capacity assessment across people, organizations, institutions and the enabling policy environment, describe what system-wide capacities are likely to exist (within project, project partners and project context) to implement the project and contribute to effective management for results and mitigation of risks.
- Describe the project's exit / sustainability strategy and related handover mechanism as appropriate.

Capacity development. Strategies to develop individual, institutional and systemic capacity have been incorporated throughout all three components of the project. Under Outcome 1.1., the project will develop capacity of national, provincial and local stakeholders and institutions to support integrated landscape-level planning and management. This will be done through trainings and through implementation of planning and management mechanisms, as well as strengthening of local institutions (FMAs/RMAs). Under Outcome 2.1, capacity will be built through the learning sites and pastoralist field schools, including some specific capacity building for women. Outcome 2.2 will enhance capacity of RMAs/FMAs and community enterprises to implement value chain activities that support sustainable natural resource management and generate income for local communities. Outcome 3.1 develops capacity of national institutions and stakeholders to generate and manage data and enhance use of data in policy and decision-making. Finally, Outcome 3.2 includes an output specifically dedicated to enhancing NEPA's and MAIL's institutional capacity, including with regard to GEF project execution, monitoring and evaluation.

8) Summary of changes in alignment with the project design with the original PIF

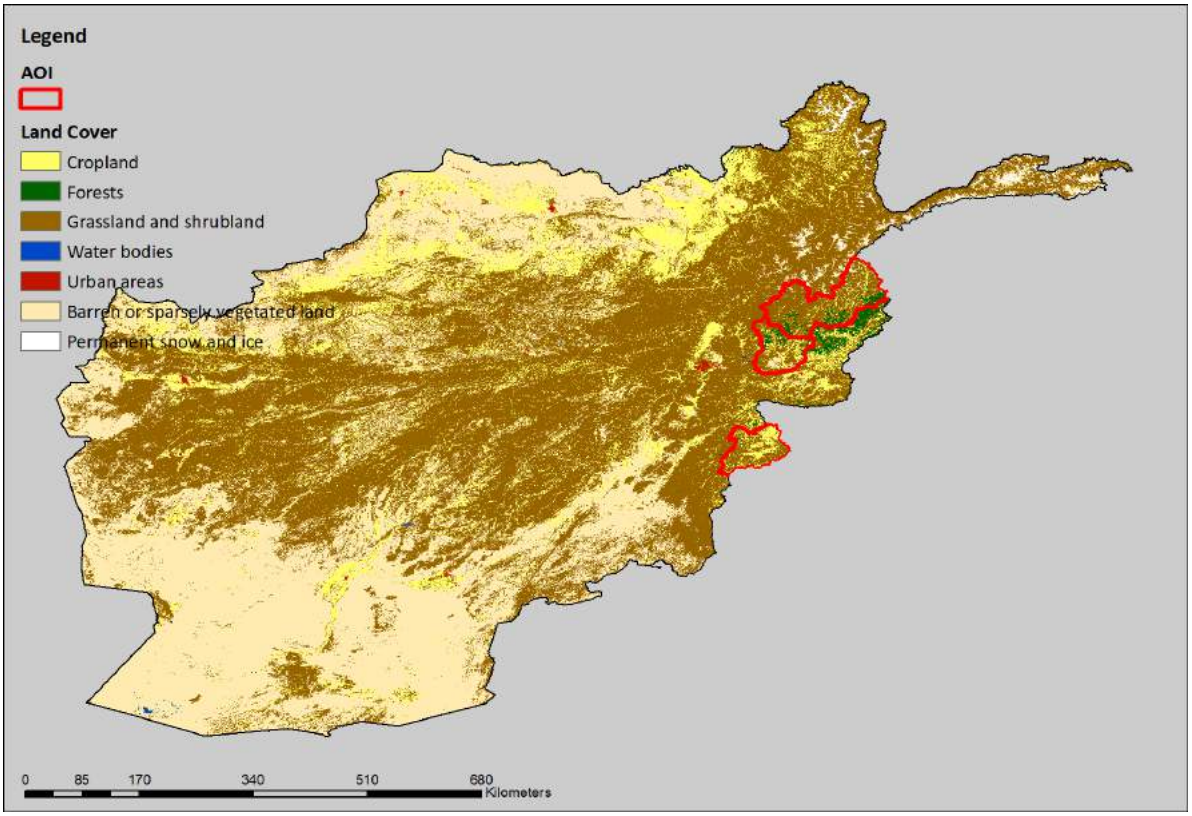
During the project design phase, the interventions have been elaborated more in detail and additional information has been collected on the baseline, co-financing and other related initiatives. Some changes have been made in the outputs and outcomes to better reflect the identified needs in the target areas and achieve the project objective. The main changes are described below.

Topic	Main changes from PIF
Component 1. Strengthening capacity of national, provincial and local stakeholders for CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management.	Outcome 1.1 has been revised to be more specifically focused on community- and landscape-level planning, by enhancing capacity to implement existing planning and coordination mechanisms, in particular the CBNRM and integrated landscape management process. Participatory assessments have been incorporated into this outcome as part of the CBNRM planning process. Outputs related to data collection and management have been moved to Component 3 to be better integrated with the knowledge management aspect of the project. It is anticipated that the revised outputs will lead to more tangible outcomes and will lay the foundations for the implementation of the restoration and sustainable management interventions under Component 2.
Component 2. Integrated management and restoration of degraded landscapes for biodiversity conservation and sustainable rangeland management.	The spatial analysis, participatory assessment and planning aspects have been moved to Component 1. Component 2 will be focused on the field implementation based on the developed CBNRM plans. The output wording has been revised to be more concrete and tangible. Pastoralist field schools have been incorporated into this component, combined with learning sites, to be better integrated with the field interventions. The component has been split into two outcomes to better represent both the sustainable production and value chain aspects.

<table>
<tr><td>Component 3. Systematic creation and sharing of knowledge, project coordination, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and institutional capacity development.</td><td>As explained above, the outputs related to data collection and management from Component 1 have been incorporated into this component. The concepts of environmental statistics and natural capital have been incorporated as innovative approaches to be piloted under the project. The university curriculum has been replaced by the provision of small research grants that will generate tangible outcomes relevant to the project objectives. Moreover, based on discussions with project stakeholders, an output on biophysical and socio-economic surveys for the recently announced Nuristan NP has been added, in order to lay solid foundations for the future park planning process.</td></tr>
<tr><td>GEBs and Core Indicator targets</td><td>The area targets under Core Indicator 3 and 4 have been adjusted and slightly reduced based on the detailed baseline assessment and lessons learned from previous projects, in order to reflect more realistic numbers. Core Indicator 3 (restoration) target is reduced from 40,000 ha in the PIF to 19,800 ha in the CEO ER. Core Indicator 4 (sustainable management) is slightly increased from 100,000 ha to 104,200 ha based on a more detailed understanding of the target districts and planned interventions. The detailed targets can be found in Annex A1.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Co-financing amounts</td><td>Based on the detailed baseline assessment, the co-financing amounts have been revised as shown below. Total co-financing remains unchanged at USD 30 million.
The GCF co-financing has been removed as the timing of approval of the concept note and development of the full project proposal is still uncertain. However, the GEF-7 project will closely collaborate with the GCF Kabul River Basin project if and when it is approved.
The investment mobilized by local private sector has also been removed. The private sector in the target provinces is still nascent and not well developed; thus, no co-financing from private sector has been included. Nevertheless, the project will aim to engage and strengthen private sector, such as community-based enterprises and associations, through its Outcome 2.2.
Co-financing amounts from PIF:<table><tr><td>Government</td><td>MAIL</td><td>11,000,000</td></tr><tr><td>Government</td><td>NEPA</td><td>5,000,000</td></tr><tr><td>Government</td><td>MRRD</td><td>4,700,000</td></tr><tr><td>Donor Agency</td><td>FAO-GCF</td><td>5,300,000</td></tr><tr><td>GEF Agency</td><td>FAO</td><td>2,000,000</td></tr><tr><td>Private Sector</td><td>Local private sector</td><td>2,000,000</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">Total Co-financing</td><td>30,000,000</td></tr></table>The co-financing amounts present the changes below:<table><tr><td>Government</td><td>MAIL</td><td>23,000,000</td></tr><tr><td>Government</td><td>NEPA</td><td>5,000,000</td></tr><tr><td>GEF Agency</td><td>FAO</td><td>2,000,000</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">Total Co-financing</td><td>30,000,000</td></tr></table></td></tr>
</table>

1.b Project Map and Geo-Coordinates.
Please describe the project sites and provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.

The three target provinces are shown in the map below. Please refer to Annex E for detailed maps of the target districts.



Khost Province lies at a base elevation of about 1,180 m above mean sea level and is located between 33°59′ and 33°46′ North latitudes and 69°19′ and 70°21′ East longitudes. Laghman's elevation is 779 m and its coordinates N 34° 47' 0" E 70° 11' 0". Nuristan lies at an elevation of approximately 2,550 m and its coordinates are N 35° 18' 0" E 70° 50' 0".

Province	Districts	Geo-Coordinates
Laghman	Qarghayee	N 34° 32' 49" E 70° 14' 39"
	Mehtarlam	N 34° 40' 17" E 70° 12' 34"
	Alishang	N 34° 46' 58" E 70° 6' 33"
Khost	Jaji Maidan	N 33° 38' 26" E 70° 4' 44"
	Sabari	N 33° 32' 36" E 69° 54' 42"
	Bak	N 33° 31' 48" E 70° 4' 35"
Nuristan	Parun	N 35° 25' 14" E 70° 55' 21"
	Wama	N 35° 10' 56" E 70° 47' 44"

2. Stakeholders.

Please provide the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent mapping/assessment.

- Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:
  ☒ Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities;
  ☒ Civil Society Organizations;
  ☐ Private Sector Entities;
  ☐ If None of the above, please explain why.

- In addition, provide a summary on how stakeholders will be consulted in project execution, the means and timing of engagement, how information will be disseminated, and an explanation of any resource requirements throughout the project/program cycle to ensure proper and meaningful stakeholder engagement. Please identify disadvantaged or vulnerable groups/individuals that may be affected by the project for appropriate consideration in the stakeholder engagement plan and in the risk matrix or environmental and social management plan.

Consultations were held during project identification with government agencies and civil society organizations. More detailed consultations were held during the project preparation phase with various stakeholders at the national and landscape level, in particular with local communities (including Kuchi herders), to refine the detailed project interventions and collect relevant baseline information. The main stakeholders and their potential role in project implementation are summarized below. The detailed Stakeholder Engagement Plan is included in Annex I1.

Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the planned validation with local communities of the project work plan, the Environmental and Social Management Plan, and Gender Action Plan could not be held. This will be done during the inception phase of the project.

Name of Institution	Role
1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	As the GEF Implementing Agency, FAO is responsible for coordinating and ensuring quality control in the design and implementation of the project in line with FAO and GEF requirements.
2. MAIL	Lead Executing Partner, linking closely with national and landscape level stakeholders on project implementation, knowledge management, and upscaling and replication. Hosts UNCCD focal point.
3. National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA)	In charge of policy making and protected area planning. Will be engaged in national and landscape level planning and knowledge management, as well as capacity building. Hosts UNFCCC and CBD focal points and GEF Operational Focal Point.
4. Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)	In charge of rural development. Will be closely involved in the project implementation, in particular for engagement with local communities through the Community Development Councils (CDCs).
5. Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW)	In charge of energy and water infrastructure development. Will be closely involved in project implementation.
6. Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (PAIL) and District Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Offices (DAIL)	In charge of agricultural extension and NRM at the provincial and district level. Will be leading project interventions at the local level, jointly with the project team.
7. Independent General Directorate of Kuchis (IGDK)	Will continue to be engaged in the project implementation to ensure that the interests of Kuchi herders will be taken into account and that Kuchi herders are able to benefit from the project interventions.
8. Local communities (women and men)	Will be closely engaged in the project implementation as the local stewards of natural resources and beneficiaries of project interventions. During implementation, the project will ensure that women's needs and interests are taken into account by organizing focus group discussions and specific activities with women, as represented in the Gender Action Plan and project work plan. The project will also ensure that the needs and interests of vulnerable groups, in particular Kuchi herders and internally displaced persons (IDPs), as well as the disabled, will be taken into account.
9. Civil society	Civil society will be engaged as stakeholders in the project implementation, in particular for community-based and landscape-level planning, as well as implementation of restoration and sustainable management initiatives and capacity building. Relevant civil society organizations include, among others, the Aga Khan Development Network, The Liaison Office (TLO) and WCS.
10. Private sector	The project will seek to engage with private sector entities, in particular community-based enterprises and associations, in the value chain activities under Outcome 2.2. It will aim to enhance their capacity to support sustainable value chains.

11. Universities, colleges and research institutes	Will be involved for knowledge sharing, generation of data, and monitoring and evaluation for LD, CC and BD impacts under Component 3.
12. Other relevant national sectors (e.g. Energy, Industry, Transport, Health, Women's Affairs, Afghanistan Independent Land Authority, Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority)	Will be involved for integrated landscape-level planning and sustainability of project interventions.
13. Donors, international agencies, Food Security Cluster of Afghanistan (FSAC) members	The project will seek regular exchange and collaboration with other donor-funded initiatives in order to maximize use of expertise and experience, and increase awareness, collaboration and replication.

- Select what role civil society will play in the project:
  ☐ Consulted only;
  ☐ Member of Advisory Body; contractor;
  ☐ Co-financier;
  ☐ Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body;
  ☐ Executor or co-executor;
  ☒ Other (Please explain)

Civil society organizations, namely WCS, will be involved as a partner in the project execution, in particular for the implementation of activities under Components 2 and 3.

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.
Provide the gender analysis or equivalent socio-economic assessment. If available provide document in annex and/or provide link.

Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment? (yes ☒ /no ☐) If yes, please explain and upload/annex **Gender Action Plan** or equivalent[93].
If possible, indicate in which results area(s)the project is expected to contribute to gender equality:
☐ Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;
☒ Improving women's participation and decision making; and or
☒ Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.
Does the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? (yes ☒ /no☐)

A detailed Gender Analysis and Action Plan is included in Annex K.

Women are key players in agricultural production and natural resources management in Afghanistan. They are the primary caretakers of the country's livestock, the primary wood and water gatherers and are therefore highly impacted when these resources are depleted, and land is degraded. Women account for one third (32.8%) of the agricultural workforce; the percentage is as high as 58.6% in the livestock production sub-sector. 70% of rural women are involved in farming, processing or livestock care. It is, therefore, essential to engage women in capacity building and in the planning and implementation of restoration and sustainable management of degraded landscapes.

Equality between men and women in Afghanistan is emphasized in national plans and strategies, in particular in the Afghanistan National Strategy on Women in Agriculture (2015-2020). The National Development Strategy and the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan emphasize the importance of gender-sensitivity in planning and implementing project activities. The project will closely involve women during the project implementation to ensure that project priorities are gender sensitive. The Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Provincial Departments of Women's Affairs will be engaged and involved in the project design and implementation. At the local level, women will be involved

[93] Please refer to GEF Gender Equality Guidelines, Guide to mainstreaming gender in FAO's project cycle, GEF Gender Guidelines.

in decision making through Community Development Councils (CDCs), Rangeland Management Associations (RMAs) and other community-based associations.

Rural women and men (including Kuchis) have differentiated roles in ensuring livelihoods and family well-being. The project will aim to generate socio-economic benefits for, and enhance capacity and resilience of, both women and men. Gender-responsive outputs and actions have been incorporated into the project work plan and Gender Action Plan, including actions focusing on addressing the strategic and specific needs of Kuchi women.

The actions outlined in the Gender Action Plan are based on the following strategies.

1. ***Gender mainstreaming in project structure.*** The project will ensure adequate representation of women in the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and among project staff and consultants. In addition, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has been invited to be a member of the PSC. The project should aim to achieve at least 30% women within the coordination and technical team.[94] It will ensure sufficient female facilitators among the project staff to enable active engagement and interaction with women at the local level. The project also incorporates gender-disaggregated indicators in its results framework. Furthermore, it will develop capacity and awareness among project implementers and partners on gender mainstreaming.

2. ***Consultations and engagement with women.*** Women will be engaged during the planning and implementation of activities to ensure that project priorities are gender-sensitive, take into account the differentiated roles of women and men, and respond to both women's and men's needs and priorities. The project will actively seek input from women for the development of CBNRM plans while respecting the cultural context and taking gender roles into account. It will also aim to identify and address the strategic and specific needs of Kuchi women. The relevant Provincial Departments of Women's Affairs will be continuously engaged and involved in planning of project activities at the local level, as well as the FAO Gender Focal Point in Afghanistan and the Gender Department of MAIL.

3. ***Addressing women's priorities.*** Sustainable land management practices focused on increasing rangeland productivity will increase the availability and quality of feed for livestock. Concurrently, improved access to veterinary services will contribute to better animal health, thus addressing some of the women's priorities highlighted above. The project will also involve activities that are specifically in the domain of women, such as small-scale greenhouses (for sapling and fruit/vegetable production), and related value chains.

4. ***Sensitization and capacity development.*** Through the capacity development activities of the project, government officials and other stakeholders will be sensitized on gender issues and their capacity for gender mainstreaming will be enhanced.

4. **Private Sector Engagement.**
Elaborate on the private sector's engagement in the project, if any.

Will there be private sector engagement in the project? (yes ☒ /no ☐). Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.

Despite long-standing national and international efforts to revive the Afghan economy, the country's private sector is still not well developed.[95] After achieving remarkable growth during the 2000s decade, Afghanistan's economy has struggled in the past two years as national and international investors and other agencies and organizations have significantly scaled back operations as a result of the deteriorating security environment. Some of the key factors undermining an effective and sustainable private sector are: unequal access to economic resources, flawed public services and goods, corruption

[94] This proportion could be achieved by targeting qualified women or providing additional mentoring/training to female candidates who are close to meeting the criteria.
[95] SIPRI, 2015. Afghanistan's Private Sector Status and Ways Forward. Richard Ghiasy, Jiayi Zhou And Henrik Hallgren. SIPRI, 2015.

and the adverse security situation.[96] To address some of these challenges, the project will work to strengthen capacity of community-based enterprises, local cooperatives, farmers and herders, in particular under Outcome 2.2. These institutions are important in developing capacity for processing and value-adding of sustainable livestock, rangeland and agroforestry products in the target landscapes.

5. Risks.

Risk management is a structured, methodical approach to identifying and managing risks for the achievement of project objectives. The risk management plan allows stakeholders to manage risks by specifying and monitoring mitigation actions throughout implementation. Part A of this section focuses on external risks to the project and Part B on the identified environmental and social risks from the project.

Section A: Risks to the project (External)

The following section elaborates on indicated risks **to the project**, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, the proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation.

Description of risk	Impact [97]	Probability of occurrence	Mitigation actions	Responsible party
1. Uncertainty due to evolving security situation.	**H**	**H**	Considerations on environmental security, in line with GEF guidance[98], have been incorporated into the project design to address security risks related to environmental management. In particular, the project includes measures to strengthen livelihoods, equity, social stability and effective governance and natural resources management. In addition, as described in Section B. below, the project will apply a conflict-sensitive approach, ultimately aiming to contribute to wider peacebuilding outcomes. Nevertheless, the evolving security situation in the target provinces may pose a risk to project implementation. Consequently, the project will regularly reassess its intervention strategy and apply an adaptive management approach. The project will be executed in close collaboration with provincial and local government and local organizations, who have better access to the project sites. The lead government agency will continually engage with local governance structures – including community leaders, CDCs and *shuras* – to enhance security and community ownership. The project will adhere to UN Security Rules as stipulated in the Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) system under the guidance of UN-DSS at all times. FAO national and international staff, including implementing and leading government agency functions will be in adherence with the UN Rules and Regulations on Safety and Security. In case of significant restrictions due to security concerns in certain target districts, the project will consider including additional	PMU

[96] MAIL (2018). Operational Manual (OM) for Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). http://nrm.mail.gov.af:1080/Library/BookDetails/4026.
[97] H: High; M: Moderate; L: Low.
[98] https://www.stapgef.org/environmental-security-dimensions-and-priorities.

			districts where the security situation allows on-the-ground implementation.	
2. COVID-19 risks and opportunities: (i) Local consultations and on-the-ground implementation is hindered by COVID-19 restrictions. (ii) Co-financing may not materialize at the level foreseen. (iii) Opportunities to contribute to socio-economic recovery.	**M**	**M**	Afghanistan is suffering from one of the most severe food crises worldwide. According to the 2020 Global Report on Food Crises, Afghanistan is ranked as the third worst crisis country globally, and food insecurity has significantly worsened since the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) broke out in the country. The agriculture (including livestock) sector has been adversely impacted by COVID-19, according to a joint needs assessment conducted by FAO and MAIL in June/July 2020. The sector is the main source of livelihood for close to 80% of the Afghan population. FAO has been working to support vulnerable farmers in Afghanistan and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in agricultural markets across the country. In addition to information on COVID-19 safety measures, FAO's anticipatory action has been providing hygiene and sanitation products, COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE), thermal measuring equipment and training. (i) As mentioned above, the GEF-7 project will be executed in close collaboration with provincial and local government and local community organizations, who have better access to the project sites. Capacity of local government staff and community organizations will be strengthened from the beginning of project implementation so that they can lead the local consultations and on-the-ground interventions. The project interventions will need to be regularly reviewed, and revised, if necessary, as part of the adaptive management approach. (ii) It is not anticipated that co-financing will be reduced due to COVID-19, in particular due to the additional investments in humanitarian and socio-economic response. (iii) Through its interventions to enhance the natural resource base upon which rural livelihoods depend, the project will contribute to socio-economic recovery in Afghanistan, in line with the United Nations COVID-19 Humanitarian/Socio-Economic Response Plan for Afghanistan. Furthermore, as explained above, the project will also support the implementation of the One Health approach by providing technical guidance on animal health and the human-livestock-wildlife interface, building on FAO's ongoing technical assistance in Afghanistan.	PMU
3. Continued threats to forests, rangelands and protected areas through uncontrolled exploitation.	**M**	**M**	The project aims to provide incentives for the protection of forests, rangelands and surrounding areas by supporting key alternative income and livelihood opportunities. In particular, it is anticipated that the restoration, holistic grazing, agroforestry and medicinal plant interventions help to reduce pressure on natural ecosystems.	PMU
4. Impacts of global climate change lead to	**M**	**H**	The following climate risks have been addressed, as follows:	PMU

further degradation of forests and rangelands in the target areas and/or cancel out the benefits of the project interventions.			1) How will the project's objectives or outputs be affected by climate risks over the period 2020 to 2050, and have the impact of these risks been addressed adequately? Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed? Climate change impacts are described in section 1.a *Project Description*, and measures to address climate risks have been taken into account in the project design. In particular, it is anticipated that climate change leads to further degradation of forests and rangelands, water scarcity, and extreme events such as drought and floods, leading to soil erosion. Climate change may also cancel out the benefits of project interventions, such as in the case of drought. 2) Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with? To address the risks described above, the project activities incorporate an ecosystem-based approach that is expected to lead to an improved state and enhanced resilience of biodiversity and ecosystems in the target areas, reduced soil erosion, increased vegetation cover, and water absorption capacity. Additionally, an adaptive management approach will be used and capacity will be built among stakeholders to implement climate change adaptation measures. Appropriate restoration approaches for forests and rangelands will include consideration of potential extreme events (such as droughts and floods) specific to each province and target district and will take into account relevant mitigation measures. 3) What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures? Capacity needs to be developed among provincial (government) and local (FMAs, RMAs) stakeholders to implement ecosystem-based adaptation. The project will work with provincial and local government staff, regional institutions and grassroots organizations to share experiences related to climate change adaptation and resiliency programs. It will also collaborate closely with the GEF-6 and other relevant initiatives to learn from their experiences.	

Section B: Environmental and Social risks <u>from the project</u> – ESM Plan

Risk identified	Risk Classification	Mitigation Action (s)
1.10 – Could this project result in any changes to existing tenure rights (formal and informal) of individuals, communities or others to land, fishery and forest resources?	Moderate	The project will closely follow MAIL's CBNRM process (as described above) and address any land tenure issues if and when they arise. It is anticipated that this process would result in more formalized rights of local communities to use forest and rangeland resources. The CBNRM process is in line with the principles of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT).[99]

[99] http://www.fao.org/3/a-i2801e.pdf.

Yes. However, only positive change through the CBNRM process.		In addition, the project will apply a conflict-sensitive approach in line with the FAO Corporate Framework to support sustainable peace in the context of Agenda 2030.[100] Efforts were undertaken during PPG to understand stakeholder interests and potential conflict dynamics, and analyse local conflict resolution mechanisms. The CBNRM planning process has been chosen as a demonstrated approach for community-based, conflict-sensitive NRM. Furthermore, participatory approaches have been incorporated throughout the project's workplan (Annex A2). With regard to the recently announced Nuristan National Park, the project will not result in any changes in land tenure. The project will commission biophysical and socio-economic surveys, which will look into social safeguards issues more in detail, to ensure that any future gazetting will not result in any restrictions to land or resources, and/or economic displacement, of local communities. In this process, all relevant community groups, including women, marginalized and vulnerable groups, will be consulted. There is a legal requirement in Afghanistan for communities to participate in the co-management of protected areas. Thus, local communities will fully participate in decision-making related to the future management of Nuristan National Park. A social risk analysis will be conducted at the beginning of project implementation by the Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist to prepare a more detailed analysis and mitigation measures. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this could not be conducted during PPG and had to be postponed to project implementation. Terms of Reference for the assignment have been prepared. This risk will be closely monitored and managed, under the overall responsibility of the PMU and the involvement of the National Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist.
2.5 – Would this project involve access to genetic resources for their utilization and/or access to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that is held by local communities and/or farmers? Low risk.	Low	The main focus of the project is on sustainable rangeland management and forest restoration. The project is expected to enhance benefits for local communities from sustainable natural resource management and value chains. The medicinal plants and agroforestry products promoted by the project are considered to be already in the public domain (promoted by government). Benefits are only expected to arise for the local communities themselves. Should changes take place with regard to the access and use of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources held by local communities, their consent will be sought through the implementation of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process. Through FPIC, a community benefit-sharing mechanism will be established. Although categorized low risk, this risk will continue to be monitored by the PMU.

[100] http://www.fao.org/3/I9311EN/i9311en.pdf.

9.2 – Are there different ethnic groups/vulnerable groups living in the project area where activities will take place?	Moderate	Several ethnic groups are present in the project area (Pashtun, Tajik, Pashai, Nuristani, Gujar, Tajik). In addition, Kuchi nomadic herders are present in the project areas. Since such groups are living in mixed communities, a Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process will be applied for all local communities in these area. A social risk analysis will be conducted at the beginning of project implementation by the Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist to prepare a more detailed analysis and mitigation measures, and implement the FPIC process. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this could not be conducted during PPG and had to be postponed to project implementation. Terms of Reference for the assignment have been prepared. This risk will be closely monitored and managed, under the overall responsibility of the PMU and the involvement of the National Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist.

6. Institutional Arrangements and Coordination

6.a Institutional arrangements for project implementation

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will be the GEF Implementing Agency of the project. It will be responsible for ensuring the overall coordination of the project implementation, ensuring quality control in the design and implementation of the project in line with FAO and GEF requirements, as well as coordination and collaboration with partner institutions, local community organizations and other entities participating in the project.

MAIL will be the Lead Executing Agency of the project with the support of national, provincial and district level government offices. As such, MAIL will have the overall executing and technical responsibility for the project. It will be responsible for the day-to-day management of project results entrusted to it in full compliance with all terms and conditions of the agreement signed with FAO. At the request of MAIL, FAO will provide specific execution support to the project, including recruitment of consultants to be assigned to the Project Management Unit (PMU), contracting of executing partners and purchase of goods and services, and financial management and reporting.

The execution services provided by FAO are expected to include:

a. Recruitment of the Project Management Unit (PMU) personnel and all experts/consultants, in close consultation with MAIL. General Directorate of Natural Resource Management (GD-NRM) of MAIL will be part of the recruitment process from TOR development to selection process and staff evaluation as observer.

b. Contracting of executing partners and purchasing of goods and services based on the FAO's procurement guideline and in line with the annual budgets and work plans that are approved by the Project Steering Committee (PSC). FAO, in close coordination with GD-NRM/MAIL, will develop the generic technical specifications and relevant TORs, and MAIL/GD-NRM will act as an observer in the whole procurement process.

c. Financial management and reporting and related financial institutional capacity development of MAIL/GD-NRM to enable them to access and manage the climate funding in the future.

d. Financial adjustments/revisions in close coordination with GD-NRM/MAIL and approved by the PSC.

e. Contracting independent evaluators for the Mid-Term Review and Final Evaluation; the evaluators' TORs will be developed in close coordination with GD-NRM/MAIL, NEPA and the FAO Independent Office of Evaluation.

f. Processing of project terminal report and annual financial audits.

All other execution functions will be led by MAIL/GD-NRM and will be managed by the PMU and other partners including local forest and rangeland management associations etc. As the Lead Executing Agency of the project, MAIL/GD-NRM will guide, lead and oversee the overall project activities for a timely implementation and reporting, and for effective use of GEF resources for the intended purposes and in compliance with GEF and the Government of Afghanistan's policy requirements. MAIL will chair the PSC, and will designate a National Project Director (NPD), who will be responsible for directing, leading and coordinating the project with all the national stakeholders. The PMU will be closely embedded in MAIL/GD-NRM. MAIL will also be responsible for linking closely with national and local stakeholders on project implementation, knowledge management, and upscaling and replication.

In addition to GD-NRM/MAIL, several other national partners will be closely involved in the execution of the project and will directly benefit from the project's investment from capacity building perspectives. The proposed co-execution arrangement under the leadership of MAIL is considered the most effective in ensuring a timely and effective delivery of the project outcomes and outputs.

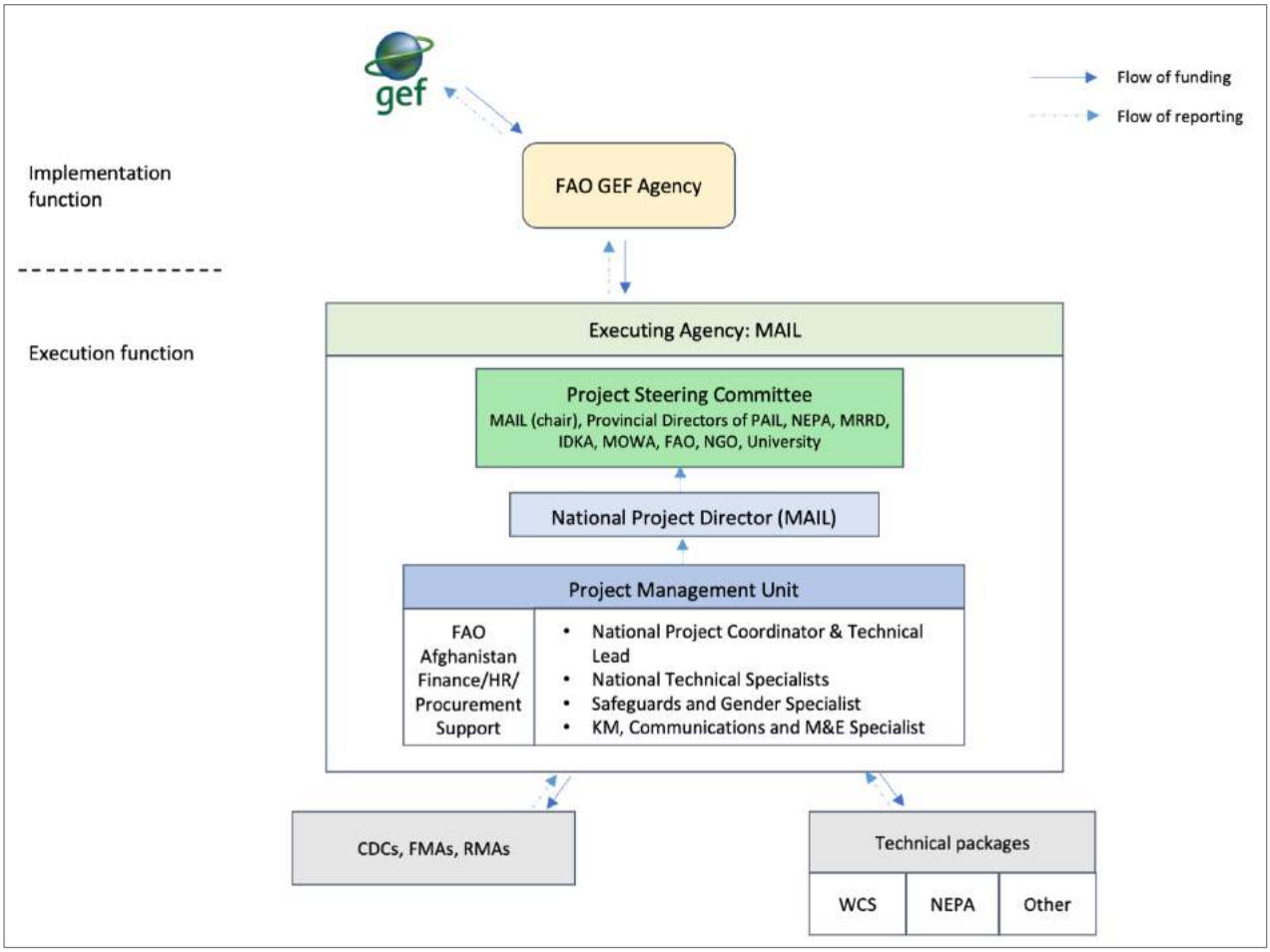
The National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) will support MAIL in the formulation of policy recommendations, knowledge sharing and in project monitoring and evaluation, in order to ensure that lessons learned of the project will be incorporated into future policies and projects. In particular, NEPA will be closely involved in regular project monitoring, including monitoring missions to the project sites. As the agency in charge of biodiversity and environmental policy formulation in Afghanistan, NEPA will also be closely involved in the data management and biodiversity components of the project. NEPA is GEF's operational focal point in Afghanistan and as such is responsible for coordinating GEF resource programming, and supervising the GEF project portfolio in Afghanistan, in cooperation with GEF executing agencies and project implementation partners. Its specific responsibility within the project as GEF's focal point is to monitor Annual Project Implementation Review reports and participate in the project's mid-term review and final evaluation. Other stakeholders will be closely involved in the project implementation as described in Section 2.

FAO and the executing partners will collaborate with the implementing agencies of other GEF and non-GEF programs and projects in order to identify opportunities and mechanisms to facilitate synergies with other relevant GEF projects, as well as projects supported by other donors. This collaboration will include: (i) informal communications between GEF agencies and other partners in implementing programs and projects; and (ii) exchange of information and outreach materials between projects; (iii) participation in forums and inter-institutional coordination mechanisms regarding policies and plans of action for the sustainable management of rangeland and biodiversity conservation, with representatives from national and provincial institutions, local community organizations and civil society organizations. With a view to guaranteeing the realization of coordination and cooperation opportunities between different initiatives.

In particular, the project will develop mechanisms for collaboration with relevant initiatives, as described in Section 6.b. Most of the projects with international financing that are relevant to the sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation are carried out under MAIL, thus facilitating interactions with the institutions through simple agreements. MAIL hosts the UNCCD focal point, while NEPA hosts the CBD focal point; through their involvement, both agencies will ensure alignment of the project implementation with national commitments and priorities under these conventions.

Furthermore, the project will exchange experiences and lessons learned and promote the global integration of responses in this field with existing projects that address the same topic in other countries.

The project organization structure is as follows:



A Project Steering Committee (PSC) chaired by MAIL will be established to ensure coordination and provide guidance to the project. The government will designate a National Project Director (NPD). Located in MAIL, the NPD will be responsible for coordinating the activities with all the national bodies related to the different project components, as well as with the project partners. The NPD will also be responsible for supervising and guiding the National Project Coordinator (see below) on the government policies and priorities.

The NPD (Deputy Minister for Irrigation and Natural Resources under MAIL) will chair the Project Steering Committee which will be the main governing body of the project. The PSC will approve Annual Work Plans and Budgets on a yearly basis and will provide strategic guidance to the Project Management Team and to all executing partners. The other members of the PSC would be the DG-NRM of MAIL, NEPA, the Provincial Directors of PAIL, FAO, MRRD, the Independent Directorate of Kuchi Affairs (IDKA), the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), a civil society organization and representation of academia. The members of the PSC will each assure the role of a focal point for the project in their respective agencies. Hence, the project will have a focal point in each concerned institution. As focal points in their agency, the concerned PSC members will: (i) technically oversee activities in their sector; (ii) ensure a fluid two-way exchange of information and knowledge between their agency and the project; (iii) facilitate coordination and links between the project activities and the work plan of their agency; and (iv) facilitate the provision of co-financing to the project.

The National Project Coordinator (see below) will be the Secretary to the PSC. The PSC will meet at least once per year to ensure: i) Oversight and assurance of technical quality of outputs; ii) Close linkages between the project and other ongoing projects and programmes relevant to the project; iii) Timely availability and effectiveness of co-financing support; iv) Sustainability of key project outcomes, including up-scaling and replication; v) Effective coordination of

government partner work under this project; vi) Approval of the six-monthly Project Progress and Financial Reports, the Annual Work Plan and Budget; vii) Making by consensus, management decisions when guidance is required by the National Project Coordinator of the PMU.

A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be co-funded by the GEF and established within MAIL. The main functions of the PMU, following the guidance of the Project Steering Committee, are to ensure overall efficient management, coordination, implementation and monitoring of the project through the effective implementation of the annual work plans and budgets (AWP/Bs). The PMU will be composed of a National Project Coordinator (NPC) who will work full-time for the project lifetime. In addition, the PMU will include a National Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist, a National Knowledge Management, M&E and Communications Specialist, and other technical consultants. The project will ensure an adequate representation of women in the PSC and PMU (at least 25%).

A Provincial Project Coordination Unit (PPCU) will be established and hosted by PAIL in all three project provinces. A Provincial Project Coordinator/Community Mobilizer will be hired in each province and will be based at the PAIL offices, in order to work closely with the local PAIL officers.

The National Project Coordinator (NPC) will be in charge of daily implementation, management, administration and technical lead and supervision of the project and within the framework delineated by the PSC. S/he will be responsible, among others, for:

i. Overall technical lead for the implementation of all project outputs and activities and ensure technical soundness of project implementation;
ii. Manage PMU staff and consultants;
iii. Prepare annual and quarterly work plans and annual budgets for submission to the PSC, in line with the principles of adaptive learning and management;
iv. Supervise preparation of various technical outputs, e.g. knowledge products, reports and case studies;
v. Coordination with relevant initiatives;
vi. Ensuring a high level of collaboration among participating institutions and organizations at the national and local levels;
vii. Coordination and close monitoring of the implementation of project activities;
viii. Tracking the project's progress and ensuring timely delivery of inputs and outputs;
ix. Providing technical support and assessing the outputs of the project national consultants hired with GEF funds, as well as the products generated in the implementation of the project;
x. Monitoring financial resources and accounting to ensure accuracy and reliability of financial reports;
xi. Implementing and managing the project's monitoring and communications plans;
xii. Organizing project workshops and meetings to monitor progress and preparing the Annual Budget and Work Plan;
xiii. Submitting the six-monthly Project Progress Reports (PPRs) with the AWP/B to the PSC and FAO;
xiv. Preparing the first draft of the Project Implementation Review (PIR);
xv. Supporting the organization of the mid-term and final evaluations in close coordination with the FAO Budget Holder, FAO GEF Coordination Unit and the FAO Independent Office of Evaluation (OED);

xvi. Inform the PSC and FAO of any delays and difficulties as they arise during the implementation to ensure timely corrective measure and support.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will be the GEF Implementing Agency (IA) for the Project, providing project cycle management and support services as established in the GEF Policy. As the GEF IA, FAO holds overall accountability and responsibility to the GEF for delivery of the results. In the IA role, FAO will utilize the GEF fees to deploy three different actors within the organization to support the project:

- The Budget Holder, which is usually the most decentralized FAO office, will provide oversight of day to day project execution;
- The Lead Technical Officer(s), drawn from across FAO will provide oversight/support to the projects technical work in coordination with government representatives participating in the Project Steering Committee;
- The Funding Liaison Officer(s) within FAO will monitor and support the project cycle to ensure that the project is being carried out and reporting done in accordance with agreed standards and requirements.

FAO responsibilities, as GEF Agency, will include:

- Administrate funds from GEF in accordance with the rules and procedures of FAO;
- Oversee project implementation in accordance with the project document, work plans, budgets, agreements with co-financiers, Operational Partners Agreement(s)and other rules and procedures of FAO;
- Provide technical guidance to ensure that appropriate technical quality is applied to all activities concerned;
- Conduct at least one supervision mission per year; and
- Reporting to the GEF Secretariat and Evaluation Office, through the annual Project Implementation Review, the Mid Term Review, the Final Evaluation and the Project Closure Report on project progress;
- Financial reporting to the GEF Trustee.

6.b Coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives

Coordination with other GEF and non-GEF interventions, in addition to the baseline initiatives described under Section 2) *Baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects*, will be ensured through the coordinating role of FAO, MAIL and NEPA. These interventions are described below.

GEF and non-GEF interventions	Areas of complementarity with this project
1. **Community-based sustainable land and forest management in Afghanistan (GEF-TF/FAO, 2018-2023)** This GEF-6 project is supporting integrated, sustainable community-based approaches for promoting biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and rangeland productivity. To achieve this, it will build capacity of government institutions for sustainable NRM approaches, it will help communities develop CBNRM plans, it will improve management of forests and improve management degraded rangelands in order to reduce land degradation, conserve biodiversity and sequester CO_2e, and improve knowledge to inform sustainable NRM practices. The project will be implemented in Badghis, Bamyan, Ghazni, Kunar and Paktya Provinces.	The GEF-7 project will build on the outcomes and lessons learned of this GEF-6 project. In particular, it will use the Centre of Excellence for NRM that will be established under this project, to share and replicate best practices on SLM/SFM at all levels. Moreover GEF-6 biodiversity and climate change data will be integrated into the same databases, to the extent possible. Finally, the GEF-7 project will add new aspects on system-wide, landscape-level planning and enhancing data on land degradation and biodiversity for planning and decision-making. Like the GEF-7 provinces,

The project is implemented under the lead of MAIL in collaboration with MRRD, NEPA and IGDK.	Paktya and Kunar are part of the Eastern Forest Complex. Thus, approaches in SFM, forest restoration and integrated landscape management should be coordinated and best practices shared.
2. **Climate-induced Disaster Risk Reduction Project (CDRRP) (Adapting Afghan Communities to Climate-Induced Disaster Risks) (GEF-LDCF/UNDP, 2017-2022)** This project is aimed at insulating vulnerable Afghan communities from the worst impacts of climate change, by promoting community based preparedness and adaptation in the highly vulnerable provinces of Jawzjan and Nangarhar. MAIL is leading implementation of the four pillars: gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction; establishing community-based early warning systems; promoting climate-resilient agricultural practices and livelihoods; and working with national to district institutions to integrate climate change into planning.	Through the leading role of MAIL, the proposed project will seek to build on lessons learned and experiences from this project with regard to community-level planning and resilience building.
3. **Conservation of Snow Leopards and their Critical Ecosystem in Afghanistan (GEF-TF/UNDP, 2018-2022)** This project aims to strengthen conservation of the snow leopard and Its critical ecosystem in Afghanistan through a holistic and sustainable landscape approach that addresses existing and emerging threats. The project is executed by WCS, and will focus on the snow leopard landscape of the Wakhan Corridor in Badakhshan Province.	The GEF-7 project will coordinate closely with this project with regard to biodiversity conservation efforts in Nuristan and Laghman Provinces. In particular, the project will seek inputs from WCS with regard to the biophysical surveys to be conducted for the recently announced Nuristan NP.
4. **USAID Regional Agricultural Development Program-East (2016-2021)** The Regional Agricultural Development Program-East (RADP-East) promotes sustainable agriculture-led economic growth and contributes to the development of a vibrant and prosperous agriculture sector in Ghazni, Kabul, Kapisa, **Laghman**, Logar, Nangarhar, Parwan, and Wardak Provinces in eastern Afghanistan. The program fosters the expansion of sustainable agriculture-led economic growth to enhance development of a vibrant and prosperous agriculture sector. The project provides technical services to increase the competitiveness of selected value chains (such as for grapes and raisin, melon, dried fruits and nuts), expand the number of enterprises that can compete and upgrade their products and services in selected markets, and improve relationships and linkages between those firms and other market participants throughout the value chain.	The GEF-7 project will incorporate lessons learned of this project with regard to promoting sustainable production systems and value chains. Interventions in Laghman Province, where both projects operate, will be coordinated.
5. **IFAD Agricultural Development: Community Livestock and Agriculture Project (CLAP) and Support to National Priority Programme 2 (SNaPP2) (2012-2021)** The goal of IFAD's CLAP project is to increase agricultural and livestock productivity, and improve food security, for almost 170,000 rural households in selected districts of Kabul, Parwan and Logar provinces. The project also aims to reduce gender disparities by increasing the social and economic status of women. The goal of the SNaPP 2 project is to contribute to improving the food security and economic status of poor rural households in the three selected provinces (Balkh, Herat and Nangarhar).	The GEF-7 project will build on lessons learned of the IFAD project, in particular with regard to strengthening veterinary services and access to markets for both Kuchi and settled herders.

The CLAP-Kuchi livestock development sub-project, implemented by the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA), covers routes of Kuchi beneficiaries during the winter in **Laghman and Khost provinces**, and during the summer season in Paktya, Panjshir and Kapisa provinces. The goals of the DCA CLAP-Kuchi livestock project are to enhance livelihoods of Kuchi and to strengthen their resilience against predictable livestock hazards. The project targets both migratory pastoralists and settled Kuchi. The CLAP project increases Kuchi food security and income through livestock interventions as well as through development of alternative livelihoods for settled Kuchi. Main objectives are: • Improved access to quality veterinary services; • Balanced year-round feeding of Kuchi small ruminants through extension services; • Value chain development for improved access to markets and extra value of products; • Development of alternative livelihoods for Kuchi settlers by establishment of Self-Help groups; • Organization of grassroots Kuchi Boards.[101] The main activities in Laghman and Khost include: 1. Establishment of feed banks on the track that Kuchis follow in winter. 2. Paravet or mobile veterinary doctors along the Kuchi grazing routes. 3. Vaccination.	
6. ADB Horticulture Value Chain Development Sector Project (2019-2024) The ADB project will help strengthen the horticulture value chain in Afghanistan by (i) improving the processing efficiency and marketing capacity of domestic agro-business enterprises; (ii) modernizing crop production through better planting material, trellising, modern greenhouses, and on-farm facilities; and (iii) contributing to the national effort in establishing internationally recognized brands of Afghan horticultural produce. It will increase value addition for horticultural commodities produced in 11 provinces in the central, southern, and eastern parts of Afghanistan. As such, the project will contribute to increasing the supply of fresh and processed fruit and vegetables, and expanding exports of high-value fruit, vegetables, and nuts in which the country has a comparative advantage. The project will be implemented in Bamyan, Ghazni, Kabul, **Khost**, Kunar, **Laghman**, Logar, Nangahar, Paktika, Paktya, and Wardak provinces. These provinces were selected based on production area and output for fruit and vegetables. (Mehtarlam district of Laghman for lemon and orange orchards)	The GEF-7 project will coordinate closely with this project, in particular in Khost and Laghman provinces, where both projects will be implemented. Coordination will be led by MAIL as the lead implementing agency of both projects. Furthermore, the GEF-7 project will aim to exchange lessons learned with this project with regard to promoting sustainable production systems and value chains.
7. **Addressing Climate Change through Sustainable Energy and Ecosystems Management in NE Region – Panj-Amu River Basin** This USD 36 million project, funded by ADB and the European Union, is implemented from 2019-2023. The objective of the project is to improve resilience to climate change of communities and the ecosystems in the Panj-	Through the involvement of NEPA, the GEF-7 project will build on the lessons learned and approaches implemented by this project, in particular with regard to biodiversity

[101] https://www.dca-livestock.org/?page_id=1442 and https://www.ifad.org (accessed November 2019)

Amu River Basin and the sustainability of their use for the benefit of rural communities. The project is implemented in Bamiyan, Badakhshan and Takhar Provinces. WCS is the implementing partner for Bamyan and Badakhshan, and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and GIZ are the implementing partners in Takhar and Badakhshan Provinces. Component 1 of the project is focused on climate change adaptation and streamlining biodiversity conservation. Component 2 is focused on rangeland rehabilitation, reforestation and watershed management conducted in 11 districts of Badakhshan and Takhar Provinces. Component 3 focuses on promoting renewable energy.	conservation, rangeland rehabilitation, and reforestation.
8. **Sustainable Livelihoods and Social Development (SLSD) Programme (2013-2023)** The SLSD programme, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), is a three-phase programme implemented by the Afghan NGO The Liaison Office (TLO) with an overall budget of CHF 14 million. The goal of the programme is to contribute to inclusive socio-economic development of rural communities in **Khost and Paktya** through natural resource management and income opportunities benefiting both men and women while strengthening local communities and service delivery institutions. The project is working directly with Community Development Councils (CDCs) and the District Development Assemblies (DDAs) of 16 districts of the two provinces. TLO worked in Jaji Maidan district of Khost during the SLSD Phase 1 and 2 (2013-2019) and developed three large irrigation systems. Additionally, TLO grafted successfully over 18,000 wild olive trees with improved varieties graft from Nangarhar Valley Development Authorities, and planted 1,000 improved olive saplings in Jaji Maidan, Bak, and Khost city (at Khost PAIL and Shekhzayed University). Under the SLSD Phase 3, TLO will be implementing orchards, vegetable production improvement and supporting vulnerable families through livestock management, goat and cow rearing in Bak and Yaqoobi districts of Khost. In addition, implementation of an irrigation system improvement project is planned in Bak district.	The GEF-7 project will seek to build on the outcomes and capacity developed under the SLSD programme in the target districts of Khost.
9. **SDC-funded Rangeland Management project (RAMA) (Phase 1, 2018-2022)** The goal of this SDC-funded project is for poor families in the Central Highlands of Afghanistan to improve their livelihoods through sustainable natural resource management. This goal will be advanced through two outcomes: 1) women and men make sustainable use of rangeland resources to improve production and food security and 2) community-based governance institutions improve and manage rangelands in an inclusive and sustainable way. During the pilot phase, a particular emphasis will be on research, documentation, and dissemination of learning from the project. The project will establish and work with 30 Rangeland Management Associations and 4'500 rural households in 6 target districts of Daykundi	Through the leading role of MAIL, the GEF-7 project will aim to exchange lessons learned with this project (although not in the same geographic region) with regard to rangeland management and CBNRM.

Province. The project will also engage with national, provincial and district level government authorities, notably from MAIL.	
10. **UN Environment programme in Afghanistan** UN Environment conducted some trainings on SDG statistics and data management in Afghanistan in 2019. In addition, they had conducted some work on the geospatial platform MapX (https://www.mapx.org/afghanistan-success/) in Shah Foladi, the third protected area in Afghanistan, in 2015.	The GEF-7 will continue to keep UN Environment informed and involved in the activities regarding environmental statistics and data management.
11. **Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Facility (CARD-F)** (2014-2020) This DFID and DANIDA-funded initiative is one of the key agricultural and rural development programs of the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA). CARD-F aims to increase employment, income and business opportunities for rural masses through the design, facilitation and implementation of commercially viable agricultural value chains supplemented with rural infrastructure projects in the target provinces of Afghanistan. The target provinces include Nangarhar, Kunar, **Laghman, Khost**, Logar, Kabul, Parwan, Kapisa, Balkh, Badakhshan, Takhar, Herat, Helmand, Kandahar. Among others, the project has supported investments in agricultural value chains for vegetables, poultry, dairy, honey, and cotton production.	The GEF-7 project will seek to build on the outcomes and lessons learned of this project, especially in Laghman and Khost.
12. **Integrated Pest Management in Afghanistan** MAIL, in collaboration with FAO, has been implementing an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Project in Afghanistan since 2010. The project supports capacity building of various Directorates of MAIL – especially Plant Protection and Quarantine Directorate and the General Directorate of Extension – to establish IPM as an overall strategy for sustainable crop production and protection in Afghanistan. The project has conducted four season-long "training-of-trainers" on IPM and sustainable agriculture, and trained 116 plant protection and extension officers from MAIL. Over the last four years, these trained facilitators have conducted 556 Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) on wheat, rice, melon and potato crops and trained 12,029 farmers to learn how to improve the productivity of their crops using more sustainable agriculture practices, while addressing the pest problems more effectively. Technologies introduced to the FFS have been proven highly effective not just to improve the productivity of their crops but to make their agriculture more resilient to the adverse impact of climate change. As a result, the requirements for water use in rice, melon, potato and wheat crops have reduced by 25-70%. Similarly, chemical fertilizer use has been reduced by 50% while pesticides use reduced to zero percent. These technologies tested over the last four years have prepared a strong ground for new projects on climate-resilient agriculture.	The GEF-7 project will build on the lessons learned and methodologies, in particular the farmer field school approach, to develop capacity on sustainable production systems and land management.
13. **Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund** The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) was established in 2002 to provide a coordinated financing mechanism for the Government of Afghanistan's budget and priority national investment projects. It is the largest single source of on-budget financing for Afghanistan's development	The GEF-7 project will build on the work of this initiative to encourage farmers to adopt sustainable approaches to livestock management and animal husbandry. Lessons learned from this initiative on the facilitation of farmer field schools will inform the community-based

and is delivering important results within key sectors including education, health, agriculture, rural development, infrastructure, and governance.	rangeland management planning under this project.
14. **Afghanistan-ICARDA partnerships** The Government of Afghanistan collaborates closely with the CGIAR centres on agricultural research for sustainable food systems, in particular with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) on livestock and dryland agriculture. ICARDA and MAIL collaborate on projects in several provinces. Ongoing projects in Afghanistan cover crop improvement (wheat, barley and legume crops), seed systems, water management, pest and disease management, livestock production, and market-oriented diversification of farming systems. For example, collaboration in Nangarhar Province began in 2002, resulting in new crops and varieties providing substantially higher yields and farm incomes; as well as the cultivation of medicinal plants; village-based seed enterprises (VBSEs) to produce high-quality seed at affordable prices; and new technologies for goat husbandry and dairy processing. A special focus has been placed on empowering women to enhance agricultural productivity, and on crop and forage value chains and rural development for post-conflict rebuilding.	The GEF-7 project will build on the experience from ICARDA in the field of livestock and dryland agriculture, sustainable agricultural development, value chain development, as well as women's empowerment.
15. **Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSnet)** FEWSnet is a leading provider of early warning and analysis on food insecurity. It was created to help decision-makers plan for humanitarian crises, and uses satellite-based data and teams of experts to estimate food availability based on crop coverage patterns and reported local needs. FEWSnet supports the yearly Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Assessments (IPC) in Afghanistan, which inform food disaster response actions.	The GEF-7 project will coordinate closely with FEWSnet, in particular with regard to data on agricultural production, food security and resilience.
16. **Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) in Afghanistan** FSAC in Afghanistan was established in 2008, is co-led by WFP and FAO with Welthungerhilfe as NGO in a co-chair role. FSAC's main aim is to provide an action-oriented forum for bringing together national and international humanitarian partners to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance on the lives of crisis-affected population in Afghanistan. Over 167 partner organizations country-wide are active in the FSAC, including 62 international NGOs, 69 national NGOs, 3 Red Cross/Crescent related organizations, 9 state-level line ministries, 13 UN agencies, 2 research institutes, 4 donors and 3 embassies.	The GEF-7 project will build on the FSAC platform to disseminate lessons learned, approaches and methodologies for sustainable agriculture and livestock production and rangeland management in Afghanistan.
17. **Forest Restoration for Enhancing Ecosystem Services in Afghanistan (FREESIA) (2019-2020)** Funded by the Korean Embassy and implemented by UN Environment in collaboration with MAIL, this project is working on forest restoration in Afghanistan's Central Region. The project aims to reduce environmental degradation of watersheds in Bamyan, Daykundi and Takhar provinces by improving environmental decision-making based on a better understanding of the impact of human activities on ecosystems and the social context that drives those actions.	The GEF-7 project will seek to build on lessons learned with this project with regard to restoration and NRM. Natural capital assessment activities on forest ecosystem and related services will also build on lessons learned in FREESIA.

A LEARN (Local Environmental Action, Research and Knowledge) training curriculum on forestry has been developed. A training on the basis of the LEARN material is undergoing in all seven target districts. The objective of this training is to increase local awareness regarding forestry, forest ecosystem and the ecosystem services provided by the forests and their use for socio-economic development. Additionally, a policy gap analysis was conducted that provides analysis, strengths and weaknesses, of the legal policy documents developed by environmental regulatory bodies MAIL and NEPA, for the forests sub-sector. As of December 2019, around 555 ha of degraded land were treated for water and land use practices such as implementation of soil and water conservation techniques like soil bunding, stone bunding, gully plugging, construction of water storage ponds and re-seeding of the land with different varieties of wild almond, wild cherry, ferula, pistachio and wild alfalfa; 257 ha of pastureland were rehabilitated through protection, treatment and reseeding; 118 ha of land were brought under irrigation by building water reservoirs, solar pumps etc.; and 486 greenhouses were built for winter vegetable cultivation.[102]	
18. **Reversing Deforestation and Degradation in High Conservation Value Chilgoza Pine Forests in Pakistan** This FAO GEF-6 project in Pakistan is part of the GEF-6 "The Restoration Initiative" with the objective of improved local livelihoods through increased productivity and enhanced services and functions of the Chilgoza forests of Pakistan. It will bring around 30,000 hectares areas of Chilgoza forests under sustainable forest management through active participation of the local communities. This will also include 3,600 hectares under Assisted Natural Regeneration and 800 hectare under agroforestry and farm forestry. The project, besides local benefits, will also contribute to global environmental benefits.	The GEF-7 project in Afghanistan will aim to build on lessons learned from the GEF-6 project with regard to sustainable management of chilgoza forests. Sharing of lessons learned will be coordinated by FAO as the GEF implementing agency of both projects.

In addition, the following lessons learned of previous projects have been taken into account during the GEF-7 project design.

GEF and non-GEF interventions	Lessons learned and recommended actions for the GEF-7 project
1. **Climate Change Adaptation Project (CCAP)** (GEF-LDCF/UNDP, 2014-2019) The full title of this UNDP GEF-5 LDCF project was "Strengthening the Resilience of Rural Livelihood Options for Afghan Communities in Panjshir, Balkh, Uruzgan and Herat Provinces to Manage Climate Change-induced Disaster Risks".	The proposed project will aim to build on lessons learned of this project with regard to rural livelihoods and resilience building. The following conclusions and recommendations from the Terminal Evaluation (2019)[103] have been taken into account during the GEF-7 project development. • In the future, clear roles and resources should be defined for partners in terms of planning, implementation, and monitoring of project activities in the project documents. • It should be mandatory to include a sustainability/exit plan in the project documents.

[102] http://open.unep.org/project/PIMS-02033 (accessed May 2020)
[103] https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/7615 (accessed May 2020)

The project built government capacity to integrate risk and impact assessments into development plans at the local level. The government learned to study climate change scenarios and assess alternatives for the agriculture sector, Community Development Councils were trained to integrate climate change risk into planning, climate-resilient livelihoods were developed for women, and land issues were addressed through rangeland rehabilitation, reforestation and improved water storage and transport infrastructure.	• Women in remote and restricting communities should be reached through training and incentives for women from welcoming communities. • Some innovative structures such as rain water harvesting reservoir and solar system-based water supply sub-projects were implemented in Balkh. The following targets had been established and were achieved by the project: • A change in project outputs in 2016 was reduction of target for the indicator "Number of hectares of degraded rangelands planted with stress resistant seedling varieties" from 2,000 hectares to 400 hectares. Reason cited by the project management for this change was unexpected high cost per hectare of rangeland rehabilitated. This was 80% reduction in the original target and shows major miscalculation in budgeting the project. • Component 2, resilient livelihoods. Indicator 2.1 # men and women trained in alternative livelihoods to farming and on climate-resilient farming. Target F: 800, achieved F: 886; M: 308. • Indicator 2.3 # hectares of degraded rangelands planted with stress resistant seedling varieties. Target 400 hectares, achieved 592.6 hectares. • Panjshir completed 23 hectares of community based afforestation activities.
2. **Reducing GHG Emissions Through Community Forests and Sustainable Biomass Energy in Afghanistan** (GEF-TF/FAO, 2015-2019) This FAO GEF-5 project, which ended in 2019, had two main goals: (i) promoting the use of low emissions cooking and heating technologies (biogas digesters, solar cookstoves, etc.) and (ii) training communities in CBNRM principles in two districts of Nangarhar and Parwan Provinces, where forests remain and such actions could have a positive impact. The project also introduced the FAO EX-ACT GHG accounting tool to government partners. This tool is helping them estimate emissions reductions from interventions for this project as well as any future GHG reduction projects. Ten FMAs were established and formally registered with MAIL under the new forest law. In addition, 10 CBNRM plans were prepared and endorsed by the FMAs, district governor offices, PAIL and MAIL; which the FMAs are currently implementing with the small grant received from FAO. In addition, a forest inventory and carbon measurement were carried out, including the value chain on mushroom in the target	The GEF-7 project builds on lessons learned of this project with regard to implementation of CBNRM. The following conclusions and recommendations were highlighted in the Terminal Evaluation report (2020).[104] • Not all projects can have national level policy influence and this should be acknowledged at the beginning to avoid missed targets. Having more local level policy-cascade/pilot implementation of new policies, laws, etc. can be valid and valuable. • Given that the registration of the FMAs, as well as the approval of the CBNRM plans, took longer than envisaged, the FMAs and MADERA (service provider) were not able to establish the nurseries on time. Thus, in consultation with PAIL and FMA members, it was agreed to procure fruit and non-fruit saplings for plantation and build check dams to avoid soil erosion and forest degradation and reduce floodwater pressure. • For future projects, during the establishment of the FMAs, it is advised that all concerned members be consulted, and that a participatory approach be adopted for their establishment, to ensure that no members are excluded, and that problems are avoided at a later stage. • A major governance shortcoming of FMAs is the lack of women elected to be officials. The Sustainable Biomass Energy Systems component was more successful and is set to be more sustainable than the CBNRM component unless the way that FMAs are set up is fine-tuned to make sure that there is a balance of rights to go with new responsibilities, and that FMA's forest management plans are appropriate content and cost-wise to the community organizations. • FAO-AF and FAO-GEF Coordination Unit (GCU) should make sure middle and high-level staff of future GEF projects include women. • From the interviews with MAIL officials in Kabul and at the provincial and district levels it is clear that elements of CBNRM have been successfully

[104] http://www.fao.org/3/ca8493en/CA8493EN.pdf (accessed May 2020)

districts. Capacity building was another important part of the project, involving the training of many government line departments of PAIL, MEW, MRRD, NEPA, the FMAs and the CDCs, including district sectors.	implemented but only partially (in particular with regard to forest utilization rights and activities), and not robustly incorporated at a district scale. • The NGO-Technical Service Provider mode of delivery meant that there was suboptimal integration with MAIL staff's day-to-day office-based activities and field operations. The trainings, whilst generally technically sound and well-received, did not lead to the full integration of FMA support activities into MAIL field staff duties. • Even though the target number of developed CBNRM plans, also called FMA Forest Management Plans (FMPs), was achieved, they look and read more like highly technical consultants' reports, not community entity 'plain language' practical action programmes and explanations. • Another reason is the below-critical-mass of land and forest involved. In Parwan, the target area of 8,000 ha (all five FMAs' land) was not reached. The Nangarhar province pilot site was much more suitable and, with 11,313 ha, almost met its 12,000 ha target.
3. **Establishing Integrated Models for Protected Areas and their Co-management in Afghanistan** (GEF-TF/UNDP, 2015-2019) The aim of this UNDP GEF-5 LD/BD project, executed by WCS in collaboration with NEPA and MAIL, was to establish a national system of protected areas to conserve biodiversity and mitigate land degradation pressures on habitats in key biodiversity areas, initially centered in Bamyan Province and the Wakhan corridor. The project sought to support the development of the protected area system in Afghanistan through strengthening the policy framework and institutional capacity of a national system for the effective management and expansion of protected areas; setting up ('gazetting') new protected areas in Wakhan (the Badakhshan province); operationalising the management of these areas and the Band-e Amir National Park in the Bamyan province; and developing sustainable natural-resource and land / rangeland management and livelihoods solutions within the respective areas. The project has had the following intended outcomes: Outcome 1: A national protected areas system is established with legal, planning,	The proposed project builds on lessons learned and outcomes of this project with regard to biodiversity conservation and protected areas in Afghanistan. The following conclusions and recommendations were highlighted in the Terminal Evaluation report (2019)[105]. • Project interventions ranged from drafting policy documents and management plans to setting up the management of declared protected areas, supporting the ranger system, building the operational capacity of community institutions and their rangers, providing conservation awareness at all levels, propagating environmental education and developing livelihoods opportunities to communities, i.a. to motivate their conservation-oriented behaviour. • Not all results could be achieved fully or in time, in particular on the policy and the institutional level (laws, plans, community institutions), considering it is dependent on many factors that are outside project control. National conservation policy set-up still needs formalisation, and the sustainability of the regional / local level interventions partly remains challenging. • Protected area committees (PACs) comprise representatives of all local communities, provincial government officials, and representatives of community management associations. Their mandate is to guide the management of protected areas, whereas the ultimate decision-making rests with NEPA and MAIL. BAPAC in the Band-e Amir National Park was established with the help of WCS already prior to the project, and took active role in project activities; whereas WaPAC in the Wakhan National Park was to be established once the WNP management plan is approved – which did not happen during the lifetime of the project. • Some of the project-result targets may have been overambitious in terms of what could be realistically achieved in the difficult institutional context of Afghanistan. This concerns, e.g., targets for the number of approved laws, regulations and management plans, but also improved socio-economic well-being of affected communities and generating of revenues from protected areas, as all of these were partly dependent on the anticipated institutional changes.

[105] https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/7617 (accessed May 2020)

policy and institutional frameworks for expansion and management; Outcome 2: Protected area coverage and management effectiveness is improved to increase biodiversity representativeness and ecological resilience; Outcome 3: Conservation in the targeted protected areas is enhanced to reduce threats to key species and improve climate resilient livelihoods of the community.	• On the other hand, given the key role of community institutions in ensuring the long-term sustainability of results after project end, the quantitative targets for the increase of the institutional capacity of community councils may not have been ambitious enough. • We also question the effectiveness of quantitative targets on the state of natural ecosystems and species (such as vegetation cover, rangeland conditions, or wildlife population counts) as reliable measures of project performance. The high natural variability of such conditions, exacerbated by the unfolding effects on climate change (e.g., strong nation-wide drought in 2018), makes the short duration of the project period insufficient for making direct conclusions about the impact of the project on natural ecosystems. Much longer time-series would be required to derive reliable conclusions of this kind. This said, indirect conclusions based on the available short time-series nonetheless point to positive impact, or at least do not allow to conclude otherwise. • The project has also made significant efforts in promoting community-level activities to reduce other pressures on land and natural vegetation, such as reducing the collection of firewood, limiting / restricting hillside farming, and indeed planting trees.
4. USAID Biodiversity-Plus Assessment (2017) This *USAID Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) 119 Biodiversity Assessment with Summary Assessment of Climate Vulnerability and Other Environmental Threats and Opportunities to Inform USAID/Afghanistan Program Design* was conducted in 2017.[106]	The following project-level recommended actions were included in the report, and are partially addressed by the GEF-7 project: • Conduct a baseline study to inventory the flora and fauna of the country. • Develop sustainable grazing systems. • Develop water and salt stations to disperse use. • Strengthen community tenure arrangements. • Enforce existing legislation and regulation. • Survey and gazette proposed protected areas. • Form village resource management councils • Transfer mapping and modelling skills and software (e.g., GIS at ESRI) • Support updating skills and the biodiversity database. • Produce a vegetation map which includes forest and rangeland species. • As part of inventory work, initiate flora and fauna monitoring programs with cooperation from university and conservation agencies, focusing on science, information, and trend reporting. • Identify animals, birds, and plants threatened with extinction.
5. Helvetas projects (implemented since 2008, now completed), in particular the Sustainable Land Management Project (SLMP) and Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) Project Bamyan and Samangan Provinces.	Under these projects, Helvetas promoted and applied the globally standardized World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) tools and methods to support sustainable land management and watershed management. Helvetas also applied a simplified SLM Decision Support Tool, based on the tool that had been developed under the global FAO-GEF Decision Support for Mainstreaming and Scaling up Sustainable Land Management (DS-SLM) project (implemented in collaboration with WOCAT).[107] Focus Group Discussion guidelines were developed and participatory stakeholder workshops for the selection of SLM practices were organized at local level.

[106] USAID (2017). Biodiversity-Plus Assessment. https://usaidgems.org/Documents/FAA&Regs/FAA118119ME/Afghanistan/OAPA-17-APR-AFG-0021.pdf (accessed May 2020).
[107] http://www.fao.org/3/CA2855EN/ca2855en.pdf (accessed May 2020)

	Among others, the following lessons learned were formulated[108]: • Promote simple DRR measures with co-benefits e.g. cultivation of fodder and medical plants on terraces for improved income and reduced erosion. • Consider governance aspects by ensuring participation and ownership of the local population, especially women, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups. SLM best practices were shared through the WOCAT SLM database.[109] The GEF-7 project will aim to further expand the database on SLM best practices in Afghanistan, and apply previously tested methodologies, where relevant.

7. Consistency with National Priorities.
Is the project consistent with the National strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions? (yes ☒ /no ☐). If yes, which ones and how.

Describe the consistency of the project with national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions.

Afghanistan's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2014-2017

The project directly contributes to the implementation of Afghanistan's commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity by contributing to the conservation of globally significant biodiversity and ecosystems in the target landscapes. In particular, it supports the following targets set out in Afghanistan's NBSAP:

- Target 5: Rate of loss and degradation of natural habitats decreased

Strategy 5.1: To prevent the illegal or unsustainable use of biodiversity resources.

Actions: Prohibit grazing in areas that are undergoing managed regeneration; develop effective plans for preserving and recovering remnant pistachio and juniper forests in northern Afghanistan, and monsoon-dependent forests in eastern Afghanistan.

- Target 7: Resilience of the components of biodiversity to adapt to climate change maintained and enhanced; pollution and its impacts on biodiversity reduced.

Strategy 7.1: To control impacts on biodiversity resources resulting from climate change, desertification and pollution.

Actions: Restore degraded lands: stabilize sand dunes and soils; reseed highly degraded rangeland; reduce grazing and dry land cultivation in vulnerable areas; map areas vulnerable to desertification; and establish representative rangeland areas where grazing is excluded or experimentally controlled.

- Target 8: Capacity of ecosystems to deliver goods and services maintained; biological resources that support sustainable livelihoods, local food security and health care, especially of poor people, maintained.

[108] https://www.shareweb.ch/site/DRR/Documents/About%20Us/EPFL%20MOOC_Helvetas%20Case%20Study%20Afghanistan_2016.pdf (accessed May 2020)
[109] https://qcat.wocat.net/en/wocat/list/?type=wocat&filter__qg_location__country=country_AFG&page=1 and https://www.wocat.net/library/media/133/ (accessed May 2020)

Strategy 8.1: To develop and implement mechanisms and plans for maintaining goods and services obtained from critical ecosystems, focusing on forests and woodlands.

Actions: Develop/rehabilitate rangelands.

Afghanistan's National Report to the UNCCD, 2018 and Sustainable Development Goals

The proposed project also directly contributes to the implementation of the UNCCD and related SDG targets. The project will support planning and coordination mechanisms that strengthen Afghanistan' capacity to implement its commitments under the UNCCD, in particular through the establishment of a national database on land degradation and by introducing the concept of land degradation neutrality. Specifically, it supports the restoration targets set out in Afghanistan's National Report to the UNCCD in 2018 (based on the National Rangeland Management Strategy) in some of the areas most affected by land degradation and soil erosion.

It also contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets highlighted in the UNCCD National Report:

- 2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.
- 2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.
- 15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.

The project further contributes to the following SDGs and related indicators in Afghanistan: SDG 1 on Eradicating Poverty, SDG 2 on Zero Hunger, SDG 5 on Gender Equality, SDG 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13 on Climate Action, and SDG 15 on Life on Land.

Afghanistan's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), 2015

The project also contributes to the following adaptation and mitigation targets of Afghanistan's NDC:

- Planning for proper watershed management and promoted through community-based natural resources management.
- Regeneration of at least 40 percent of existing degraded forests and rangeland areas (232,050 ha of forests; and 5.35 million ha of rangelands)
- GHG emission mitigation in the Land Use, Forests and Rangelands sector through afforestation and reforestation, natural forests, fuelwood from forest and orchards, rangelands rehabilitation.

National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management (NCSA), 2009

The GEF-7 project is aligned with the following actions of the NCSA Action Plan:

- Food security improved

- Development and implementation of range management systems
- Rehabilitation of areas affected by drought, desertification and floods
- Identification of priority degraded areas to be rehabilitated
- Government facilitates community rehabilitation of targeted degraded areas

National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Priority Program (NCADPP)

The proposed project is in line with the NCADPP by supporting CBNRM approaches to sustainable production and landscape restoration. In particular, it contributes to the following priorities and objectives:

- Strategic Priority 5: Climate-Sensitive Natural Resource Management
- Strategic Priority 6: Food and Nutrition Security, and Resilience Building

National Dry Lands Agriculture Policy: Towards Climate Resilient Agriculture in Afghanistan. A 2030 Vision (2018)

The project also supports the implementation of the National Dry Lands Agriculture Policy, in particular the policy objectives below:

Policy Objective 1: Increase the reliability and overall productivity and profitability of cereal grain production.

- Promote an integrated crop-livestock system among dryland farming communities that involves cereal crops, cover crops including forage crops, shrubs and trees to ensure sufficient fodder is available for livestock throughout the year.

Policy Objective 2: Increase the climate resilience and diversity of rainfed farming systems, including integrated crop-livestock systems, so that communities living in dryland environments are better able to withstand climate shocks.

- Promote diversification of rainfed farmlands through the planting of forage crops, legumes and pulse crops, oil seed crops, root crops, shrubs, and medicinal plants.
- Establish resilient and integrated crop-livestock systems at the community level in dryland areas that are better able to withstand climate shocks.
- Identify appropriate drought tolerant crops and promote their use in dryland areas. This includes, for example, the use of indigenous oil seed crops such as safflower, sesame and flax; drought-tolerant legumes including pulses, and forage crops (e.g. Atriplex spp.); cover crops such as vetches, ryegrass, red clover, yarrow, radishes; and horticulture initiatives including rainfed grapes and rainfed potatoes.
- Support land restoration through individual and community-led mechanisms that increase on-farm and community managed tree plantations such as pistachios, almonds, walnuts, olives, red dates, acacia, and selected fruit trees; reforest exposed hills; and introduce cover crops.

Policy Objective 3: Improve water capture and management across critical dryland, small-scale watersheds in targeted provinces.

- Establish and support implementation of a plan to improve water capture and management in critical dryland areas through community-led water capture and water harvesting initiatives that can deliver water for human consumption, livestock and crop production and diversification.

Policy Objective 5: Ensure the sustainable management of natural resources, including agro-forestry, through long-term planning and community-based decision making.

- In collaboration with Natural Resources Management (NRM) Associations, promote understanding among dryland farming communities on the essential role that deep-rooted perennial shrubs and trees play in soil regeneration, soil health, slope stabilization, and enhanced nutrient cycling. In collaboration with NRM Associations, promote the cultivation of perennials shrubs and trees that can provide food for humans and feed for animals, such as crops (mulberries, pistachio, and almonds) and forages (e.g. Atriplex).
- In collaboration with Forestry Associations, promote agro-forestry among dryland farming communities on contoured slopes in conjunction with the planting of perennials that can fix nitrogen and strengthen the root system.

National Natural Resource Management Strategy (2017-2021)

The proposed project directly contributes to the restoration and sustainable management targets set out in the NRM Strategy, including the conservation of forests and development of agroforestry, and the conservation and restoration of rangelands and medicinal plants.

Strategic Objective 1: Community-based forest management that includes conservation, restoration, reforestation, afforestation, sustainable utilization and local-based value addition, and watersheds improvement for resilient, climate adapted and sustainable economy of rural and pre-urban communities.

- Outcome 1: Planning and management of forest resources is done based on baselines and science-based data.
- Outcome 2: Local communities and FMAs are actively engaged in conservation, expansion, improvement, sustainably harvesting and management of Natural Forest and its resources.
    - Output 3: 800 Forest management associations established
    - Output 4: 50,000 ha of areas of forest improved, conserved and sustainability harvested
    - Output 6: 34,500 ha of forest areas reforested
- Outcome 3: Increased income of communities through engagement in agro-forestry farm-land production

Strategic Objective 2: Community based management of rangeland and medicinal plants through strengthening community-based interventions, introducing of good practices, and up-scaling indigenous knowledge, for a better livelihood of local and herder communities, desertification control and subsequently combat negative impacts of climate change.

- Outcome 1: Planning and management of rangelands and medicinal lands is done based on baselines and science-based data.
- Outcome 2: Improved rangeland ecosystems and ecosystem services for better livelihoods.
    - Output 2: 340 Rangeland Management Associations (RMA)s established and capacitated
    - Output 3: 210,000 ha rangelands conserved
    - Output 4: 205,000 ha rangelands restored through implementation of grazing principles and public awareness
    - Output 6: 50,000 m3 checkdams constructed
    - Output 8: Income generation projects awarded to RMAs.

- Outcome 3: Cultivation and sustainable utilization of medicinal and rangeland niche products.
    - Output 9: 2,500 ha area of medicinal plants restored and rehabilitated.
    - Output 10: 5000 people trained on sustainable conservation and harvesting of medicinal plants.
    - Output 11: 10 medicinal plants packaging and processing centers constructed

Strategic Objective 3: Co-management and conservation of protected areas to protect biodiversity, promote ecotourism and increase resilience to climate change.

- Outcome 1: Protected areas are expanded from 1.858% of the total geographical area of the country to 2.07% till 2020.
- Outcome 2: Planning and management of protected areas and national parks is done based on baselines and science-based data.
- Outcome 3: Establishment and development of community-based conservation management in accordance with National Protected Area System Plan (NPASP).

Strategic Objective 4: Institutional and human capacity development to build an enabling environment for meeting expected outcome of this National Natural Resource Management Strategy.

- Output 4: NRM Structures in central and provincial levels capacitated and reformed through recruiting of new contracted and civil servant staff and long term, short term and midterm workshops and training programs.

Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF, 2017-2022)

The proposed project is also aligned with the ANPDF, which accords high priority to water resources management and resilience building, as well as agriculture and rural development. In particular, the ANPDF aims to create the enabling environment for sustainable management and use of Afghanistan's natural resources, to strengthen rural livelihoods and food security, and to reduce gender disparity. The ANPDF is the overarching framework for sustainable development in Afghanistan. It recognizes the importance of equitable access to natural resources, including clean water and energy, the need for improved water management, in particular in the agriculture sector, and the importance of the natural environment for the current and future generations of Afghan people.

FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2017-2021

Additionally, the project is in line with FAO's Country Programming Framework for 2017-2021. It contributes to the following priority areas:

- Priority area 1. Better governance through improved capacity for policy planning, land reform, decentralization, management of common natural resources.

Sustainable Management of Common Resources.

- Priority area 3. Intensive Agriculture for Commercialization, Value Chains Development, and Job Creation.

Developing Value Chains through Public-Private-Partnerships.

- Priority area 4. Supporting Vulnerable Farmers for Improved Food & Nutrition Security, Resilience and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters and Climate Change.

Protection of Farmers and Pastoralists from Shocks Affecting their Food Security and Nutrition.

8. Knowledge Management.

Knowledge management and sharing will be a key element of the proposed project and is an integral part of Component 3. Under Output 3.1.4, the project will develop and implement an effective knowledge management and awareness strategy, to support maximum outreach and replication of project interventions. The strategy will be based on previous assessments (such as by the GEF-6 project), as well as additional identification of needs and gaps. The strategy will target stakeholders in the target landscapes and beyond. Outreach to smallholder farmers, pastoralists, community associations, local government, civil society and private sector will be conducted strategically and with a view for long-term sustainability of project interventions. Knowledge products will be developed and disseminated on sustainable rangeland management, restoration best practices and biodiversity conservation through the National 'Centre of Excellence' at MAIL. A National Knowledge Management, M&E and Communications Specialist in the PMU will have the overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the knowledge management and awareness strategy.

The project will also aim to share integrated landscape management, SLM and restoration best practices globally through the WOCAT SLM database.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation.

The monitoring and evaluation of progress in achieving the results and objectives of the project will be based on targets and indicators in the Project Results Framework (Annex A1). Project monitoring and evaluation activities are budgeted at USD 175,725. Monitoring and evaluation activities will follow FAO and GEF policies and guidelines for monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring and evaluation system will also facilitate learning and replication of project outcomes and lessons with regard to the incorporation and consolidation of good practices in sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation.

9.1 Oversight and monitoring responsibilities

The monitoring and evaluation roles and responsibilities specifically described in the Monitoring and Evaluation table will be undertaken through: (i) day-to-day monitoring and project progress supervision missions; (ii) technical monitoring of indicators to measure a reduction in land degradation; (iii) final evaluation; and (v) monitoring and supervision missions.

At the beginning of the implementation of the GEF project, the PMU will establish a system to monitor the project's progress. Participatory mechanisms and methodologies to support the monitoring and evaluation of performance indicators and outputs will be developed. During the project inception workshop, the tasks of monitoring and evaluation will include: (i) presentation of the project's Results Framework with all project stakeholders; (ii) review of monitoring and evaluation indicators and their baselines; and (iii) clarification of the division of monitoring and evaluation tasks among the different stakeholders in the project. Based on the results indicator matrix developed during PPG, the National KM, M&E and Communications Specialist will prepare a draft monitoring and evaluation matrix that will be discussed and agreed upon by relevant stakeholders during the project inception phase. The monitoring and evaluation matrix will be a management tool for the National Project Coordinator and the project partners to: i) six-monthly monitor the achievement of output indicators; ii) annually monitor the achievement of outcome indicators; iii) clearly define responsibilities and verification means; iv) select a method to process the indicators and data.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be prepared by the National KM, M&E and Communications Specialist in the three first months of the Project Year 1 (PY1) and validated with the Project Steering Committee. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will include: i) the updated results framework (M&E matrix), with clear indicators per year; ii) updated baseline, if needed, and selected tools for data collection (including sample definition); iii) narrative of the monitoring strategy, including roles and responsibilities for data collection and processing, reporting flows, monitoring matrix, and

brief analysis of who, when and how will each indicator be measured. Responsibility of project activities may or may not coincide with data collection responsibility; iv) updated implementation arrangements, if needed; v) inclusion of the tracking tool indicators, data collection and monitoring strategy to be included in the final evaluation; vi) calendar of evaluation workshops, including self-evaluation techniques.

The day-to-day monitoring of the project's implementation will be the responsibility of the PMU and will be driven by the preparation and implementation of an Annual Work Plan and Budget followed up through six-monthly Project Progress Reports. The preparation of the Annual Work Plan and Budget and six-monthly PPRs will represent the product of a unified planning process between main project stakeholders. As tools for results-based-management (RBM), the Annual Work Plan and Budget will identify the actions proposed for the coming project year and provide the necessary details on output and outcome targets to be achieved, and the Project Progress Report will report on the monitoring of the implementation of actions and the achievement of output and outcome targets. Specific inputs to the Annual Work Plan and Budget and the Project Progress Report will be prepared based on participatory planning and progress review with all stakeholders and coordinated and facilitated through project planning and progress review workshops. These contributions will be consolidated by the PMU in the draft Annual Work Plan and Budget and the Project Progress Reports.

An annual project progress review and planning meeting should be held with the participation of the project partners to finalize the Annual Work Plan and Budget and the Project Progress Reports. Once finalized, the Annual Work Plan and Budget and the PPRs will be submitted to the FAO Lead Technical Officer for technical clearance, and to the Project Steering Committee for revision and approval. The Annual Work Plan and Budget will be developed in a manner consistent with the Project Results Framework to ensure adequate fulfilment and monitoring of project outputs and outcomes.

Following the approval of the Project, the Project Year 1 (PY1) Annual Work Plan and Budget will be adjusted (either reduced or expanded in time) to synchronize it with the annual reporting calendar. In subsequent years, the Annual Work Plan and Budget will follow an annual preparation and reporting cycle.

9.2 Indicators and sources of information

In order to monitor project outputs and outcomes, a set of indicators have been set forth in the Results Framework (Annex A1). The indicators and means of verification of the Results Framework will be applied to the monitoring of project performance and its impact. Following the FAO monitoring procedures and progress report formats, the data collected will have a sufficient level of detail so as to allow follow-up of specific outputs and outcomes, and early detection of project risks. Output target indicators will be monitored every six months and outcome indicators will be monitored on an annual basis, if possible, or at least during mid-term and final evaluations.

The main sources of information to support the monitoring and evaluation programme will be the following: (i) participatory workshops and visits to intervention areas; (ii) project progress reports; (iii) consulting service reports; (iv) training workshop evaluations; (v) impact assessments and mid-term and final evaluations carried out by independent consultants; (vi) financial reports and budget revisions; (vii) Annual Project Implementation Reviews prepared by FAO/Lead Technical Officer, with the support of the FAO Project Task Management and MAIL; and viii) FAO supervisory mission reports.

9.3 Reporting schedule

Specific reports that will be prepared under the monitoring and evaluation program are: (i) Project inception report; (ii) Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB); (iii) Project Progress Reports (PPRs); (iv) Annual Project Implementation Review (PIR); (v) Technical reports; (vi) Co-financing reports; and (vii) Final Report.

Project Inception Report. After project approval by FAO, a project inception workshop will be held. Following the workshop, MAIL will prepare a project inception report, in consultation with the Project Task Management of the FAO Office in Afghanistan and other project actors. The report will include a description of institutional functions and responsibilities, and the coordination of project actors, progress made in setting up the project and inception activities, as well as an update on any change in the external conditions that may affect the project's execution. It will also include a detailed Annual Work Plan and Budget for the first year, a detailed monitoring plan based on the monitoring and evaluation plan presented in the following section. The draft Inception Report will be sent to FAO, MAIL and the PSC, for their review and comments before its finalization, within three months after project start-up. The report must be approved by the Budget Holder, Lead Technical Officer and FAO-GEF Coordination Unit that will enter the report into the Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).

Annual Work Plans and Budget (AWPB). MAIL will submit a draft Annual Work Plans and Budget to the PSC before January 10th every year. The Annual Work Plans and Budget should include detailed activities for implementing each project output and outcome on a monthly basis, and the dates on which output and outcome indicator milestones and goals will be achieved throughout the year. A detailed budget of the project activities throughout the year will also be included, together with all necessary monitoring and supervisory activities to be carried out during the year. The Project Task Management will send out the Annual Work Plans and Budget to the FAO multidisciplinary project team for its review and shall consolidate and send FAO's comments to MAIL that will be in charge of including the comments. The final Annual Work Plans and Budget will be forwarded to the Project Steering Committee for its approval and to FAO for the final authorization and entry by the Project Task Management into the FPMIS.

Project Progress Reports (PPRs). Every six months, and before 10 June (for the period January-June) and before 10 December (for the period July-December), MAIL shall submit Project Progress Reports to the Project Steering Committee and to the FAO Representative in Afghanistan. The first semi-annual Project Progress Reports must be submitted together with an Annual Work Plans and Budget –updated if necessary– for FAO's review and approval. Project Progress Reports will be useful for identifying limitations, problems or bottlenecks hindering the timely implementation of project activities, and for taking the appropriate corrective measures. Project Progress Reports will be prepared on the basis of the systematic monitoring of outcome and output indicators identified in the project Results Framework (Annex 1). Every six months, the Project Task Management will examine the Project Progress Reports, gather and consolidate any comments by FAO (Lead Technical Officer, FAO-GEF Coordination Unit, and Budget Holder) and send them to MAIL. Once the comments have been duly included, the Lead Technical Officer will provide the final approval and send the final Project Progress Reports to the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit for its final approval and entry into the FPMIS.

Annual Project Implementation Review reports (PIRs). The PMU (in collaboration with the BH and the LTO) will prepare an annual PIR covering the period July (the previous year) through June (current year) to be submitted to the FAO GEF Coordination Unit Funding Liaison Officer (FLO) for review and approval no later than (check each year with GEF Unit but roughly end June/early July each year). The FAO-GEF Coordination Unit will enter the Annual Project Implementation Review Report into the Field Programme Management Information System and will send it to the GEF Secretariat and Evaluation Office as part of the annual follow-up review of the FAO-GEF portfolio. Likewise, the Annual Project Implementation Review Report must be sent to the GEF Operational Focal Point within the Government of Afghanistan (NEPA). The FAO-GEF Coordination Unit will provide the Lead Technical Officer with the updated Project Implementation Review Report format when required. The Project Implementation Review Report will be uploaded to FPMIS by the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit.

Technical reports. The technical reports will be one of the project's outputs and will document and disseminate lessons learnt. Draft technical reports shall be submitted by MAIL to the Technical Consultative Committee and the FAO Representative's Office in Afghanistan that will share them with the Lead Technical Officer for their review and approval, and with the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit for its information and comments, before they are published. Copies of the

technical reports will be sent to the Project Steering Committee and other project actors, as appropriate. The Project Task Management will post these reports on FAO's FPMIS.

Co-financing Reports. The National Project Coordinator will be in charge of gathering the necessary information on co-financing in kind and in cash, provided by all project co-financers; those included in this project document as well as unforeseen future co-financing. Every year, MAIL will submit these reports to the FAO Representative's Office in Afghanistan before July 10th, covering the period of July of the previous year thru June of the year the report is issued.

Final Report. Within a term of two months before project completion, MAIL will submit to the Project Steering Committee and to the FAO Representative's Office in Afghanistan, a draft Final Report. The main purpose of the Final Report is to offer guidance to the Minister or high officials on the necessary policy decisions needed for project follow-up, and submit to the donor, information on the use of funds. Therefore, the Final Report will consist of a brief summary of the main project outputs, outcomes, conclusions and recommendations, without unnecessary background information, descriptions or technical details. The report will be addressed to people who are not necessarily technical experts and who must understand the policy implications of the technical conclusions and needs, to ensure the sustainability of project outcomes. The Final Report will assess activities, summarize lessons learned and set forth recommendations in terms of their application. This Report will specifically include final evaluation conclusions as described below. A project evaluation meeting must be held to discuss the draft Final Report with the PSC before its finalization by MAIL, and its approval by the Budget Holder, the Lead Technical Officer and the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit.

9.4 Monitoring and Evaluation summary

The following Table summarizes the main monitoring and evaluation reports, parties responsible for their publication and time frames.

M&E Activity	Responsible parties	Time frame/ Periodicity	Budget
Inception workshop	MAIL, Lead Technical Officer, and FAO-GEF Coordination Unit	Within two months of project start up	USD 5,000
Community-based planning, monitoring and evaluation meetings	National Project Coordinator; National Safeguards and Gender Specialist, project partners, local organizations	Continuous	No extra cost
Lessons learned workshops and other stakeholder meetings	MAIL, PMU, FAO	Annually	USD 3,000
Final workshop	MAIL, PMU, FAO	Year 4	USD 5,000
Implementation of M&E plan, M&E surveys	National Knowledge Management, M&E and Communications Specialist (partially covered from GEF-6 project)	Continuous	USD 30,175
NEPA monitoring missions to project sites	NEPA	Annually	USD 10,000
Project Progress Reports (PPRs)	PMU	No later than one month after each biannual reporting period (Jan-Jun and Jul-Dec)	No extra cost
Project Implementation Review (PIR)	FAO, in its role as implementation agency	1 August of each reporting year	No extra cost
Technical reports	PMU (staff or letters of agreement); reviewed by Lead Technical Officer	As needed	No extra cost
Mid-term review	PMU, FAO	During the 2nd year of the project	USD 50,000
Final evaluation (including Terminal Report)	External consultant, FAO Independent PMU, FAO Office of Evaluation	Six months prior to the actual project completion date	USD 56,550
Total budget			**USD 159,725**

9.5 Evaluation Provisions

At the end of the first 24 months, the project will undergo an independent Mid-Term Review. The purpose of the Mid-Term Review is to review project implementation progress and effectiveness in terms of achievement of objectives, outcomes and outputs. The conclusions and recommendations will be crucial for improving the overall design of the project and its implementation strategy, if necessary, during the remaining period of project execution. FAO will put in place the necessary arrangements for the Mid-Term Review, in consultation with MAIL.

The Mid-Term Review will include, the following elements:

a) An analysis of the effectiveness, efficiency and compliance with the time-frame established for the project's implementation;

b) An analysis of the project management structure's effectiveness and efficiency;

c) An analysis of the effectiveness of the collaboration mechanisms between the parties;

d) Identification of the aspects requiring corrective actions and decisions;

e) A proposal for mid-term corrections and/or adjustments to the implementation strategy, as necessary;

f) A description of technical achievements and lessons learned from project design, implementation and management.

Three months before the final project review meeting, an independent Final Evaluation will take place. This means that the evaluation should take place six months prior to the project completion. The purpose of the Final Evaluation will be to describe the project's impacts, outcome sustainability and level of achievement of long-term outcomes. Furthermore, the Final Evaluation will indicate future actions necessary to ensure project outcome sustainability, expand the impact on successive phases, integrate and enhance its outputs and practices, and disseminate the information obtained among authorities and institutions having jurisdiction over the areas linked to the project's objectives.

10. Benefits

Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the project at the national and local levels, as appropriate. How do these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of global environment benefits (GEF Trust Fund) or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF). Please also explain how the project promotes full and productive employment and decent work in rural areas, aiming at the progressive realization of their right to Decent Rural Employment[110].

First, the project will generate socio-economic benefits by maintaining and enhancing the resource base (rangelands, forests) on which the local communities in the three target provinces rely for their livelihoods.

Second, the project will support farmers and herders (women and men), including Kuchi herders, in the target districts to generate income from improved value chains, such as, for example, for pine nuts, medicinal plants or dairy products. It will also generate socio-economic benefits for women through the implementation of small-scale greenhouses (for sapling and fruit/vegetable production). Additionally, it will help herders to strengthen the health of their livestock through improved access to veterinary services and fodder. The project seeks to achieve additional income (or other socio-economic benefits as perceived by the beneficiaries) from enhanced value chains for at least 450 households.

[110] Specific guidance on how FAO can promote the Four Pillars of Decent Work in rural areas is provided in the Quick reference for addressing decent rural employment (as well as in the full corresponding Guidance document). For more information on FAO's work on decent rural employment and related guidance materials please consult the FAO thematic website at: http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/en/.

Finally, through these interventions, the project also works towards achieving full and productive employment and decent work in rural areas, including women and men.

PART III: ANNEXES

Annex A1: Project Results Framework

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
Objective: To combat land degradation and biodiversity loss by promoting sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in vulnerable landscapes of eastern Afghanistan.							
Component 1. Strengthening capacity of national, provincial and local stakeholders for CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management.							
Outcome 1.1: National, provincial and local capacity and institutions in place supporting CBNRM[111] and integrated landscape planning and management.	(i) Number of national and provincial stakeholders (women and men) with increased knowledge and capacity to facilitate CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management. (ii) Area covered by CBNRM plans supporting restoration and sustainable use of rangelands and forests. (iii) Area covered by integrated landscape management plans. (iv) Area of critical ecosystems providing habitat for globally important wildlife species included in CBNRM and/or landscape management plans. (v) Number of resource users (women and men) who benefit from improved management of target landscapes.	(i) Zero (ii) Zero (iii) Zero (iv) Zero (v) Zero	(i) 20 national, 30 provincial (at least 25% women) (ii) 10,000 ha (expected 8,000 ha of rangelands and 2,000 ha of forests) (iii) Zero (iv) 1,000 ha (v) 5,000 (50% women)	(i) 40 national, 60 provincial (at least 25% women) (ii) 24,000 ha (expected 19,000 ha of rangelands and 5,000 ha of forests) (iii) 100,000 ha (iv) 7,200 ha (v) 50,000 (50% women)	(i) Attendance registers for trainings; survey with training participants (ii)-(iv) Review of CBNRM plans and integrated landscape management plan (v) Data from Provincial DAIL offices	Existence of CBNRM and landscape management plans will lead to enhanced management of natural resources and measurable improvements of biodiversity and ecosystem services.	PMU (in collaboration with MAIL, NEPA, FAO)
Output 1.1.1: Capacity development program on CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management developed and implemented for national and provincial stakeholders.	Number of trainings conducted.	Zero	1 national, 3 provincial	2 national, 6 provincial	Training reports	Trainings are conducted in a format that is effective in enhancing capacity.	PMU

[111] Community-based natural resource management.

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
Output 1.1.2: Creation, registration and strengthening of 24 Rangeland Management Associations (RMAs) or Forest Management Associations (FMAs).	Number or RMAs or FMAs created and registered, and technical assistance/capacity building provided.	Zero	10	24	Evidence of registration	Participation in CBNRM planning process leads to the strengthening of RMAs and FMAs.	PMU
Output 1.1.3: Participatory assessment of local natural resources, land degradation and biodiversity in the target landscapes, integrated with geospatial data and environmental resources assessment.	Number of participatory assessments conducted (integrated with technical assessments) at community level in view of preparation of CBNRM plans.	Some survey data available for selected districts of Khost and Laghman. No participatory assessments of natural resources available.	10	24	Reports of participatory assessments	Security situation allows conducting necessary community meetings for participatory assessment.	PMU
Output 1.1.4: CBNRM plans developed in an inclusive and participatory process supporting restoration and sustainable use of rangelands and forests.	Number of CBNRM plans developed through an inclusive and participatory process.	Zero	10	24 (one per RMA/FMA)	Review of CBNRM plans	Local communities are willing to participate in the development of CBNRM plans to improve current state of natural resources and biodiversity.	PMU
Output 1.1.5: Multi-stakeholder platform for integrated landscape management established in two pilot districts.	Number of multi-stakeholder platforms established.	Zero	1	2	Minutes of multi-stakeholder platform meetings		PMU
Output 1.1.6: Integrated landscape management plan developed in two pilot districts and implementation started.	Number of landscape management plans developed, endorsed by Provincial DAIL, and implementation started.	Zero	-	2	Review of landscape management plans	Landscape management plan will be used in future planning and decision-making by local, provincial and national authorities.	PMU
Component 2. Integrated management and restoration of degraded landscapes for biodiversity conservation and sustainable/regenerative rangeland management.							
Outcome 2.1: Improved management and restoration/rehabilitation of 24,000 ha of degraded landscapes to enhance biodiversity, increase productivity and restore/rehabilitate degraded land.	Area of degraded landscapes under restoration/ rehabilitation and improved management, benefiting biodiversity and local livelihoods.	Zero	5,000 ha	24,000 ha (of which 4,200 ha of forest under SFM, 800 ha of forest restored/rehabilitated, and 19,000 ha of rangelands under improved management for restoration).	Project Implementation Reports	Local communities are willing to participate in the implementation of sustainable grazing practices and forest restoration. Impacts of climate change do not cancel out the benefits gained through improved management.	PMU (in collaboration with MAIL, NEPA, FAO)

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
Output 2.1.1: Learning sites established in three target districts for the effective dissemination of best practices of regenerative grazing and rangeland management (approx. 8-10 ha/site).	Number of districts with learning sites.	Zero	2	3	Evidence of learning sites as available in project and meeting reports.	Security situation allows establishment and operation of learning sites.	PMU
Output 2.1.2: Pastoralist-centric, gender-sensitive field schools implemented on sustainable and regenerative rangeland management and biodiversity-friendly practices.	(i) Number of pastoralists having completed field school (disaggregated by gender). (ii) Number of field schools implemented.	(i) Zero (ii) Zero	(i) 100 (no specific gender target, but provide disaggregated data) (ii) At least 4	(i) 300 (no specific gender target, but provide disaggregated data) (iii) At least 8	Review of training programme for pastoralist field schools. Reports and attendance registers for pastoralist field schools. Minutes of the trainings.	Field schools will take place in learning sites, increasing the efficiency and creating multiplying impact.	PMU
Output 2.1.3: Holistic, regenerative grazing practices and restoration interventions applied in at least 19,000 ha of rangelands.	Area of rangelands under holistic, regenerative grazing practices.	Zero	8,000 ha	19,000 ha	Project Implementation Reports	Implementation of holistic, regenerative grazing practices leads to measurable improvements in biomass.	PMU
Output 2.1.4: Technical assistance and support provided to women to operate small-scale greenhouses for income generation/household food security.	Number of women supported to operate small-scale greenhouses for income generation/ household food security.	Zero	80	192	Project Implementation Reports		PMU
Output 2.1.5: Sustainable forest management (SFM) implemented in 4,200 ha of forest areas for sustainable use of forest products.	Area of forest land under SFM.	Zero	1,750 ha	4,200 ha	Project Implementation Reports	SFM principles included in CBNRM plans are effectively applied by FMAs	PMU
Output 2.1.6: Restoration/rehabilitation, reforestation and/or agroforestry implemented in 800 ha of degraded or deforested forest areas.	Area of forest land under restoration/rehabilitation, reforestation and/or agroforestry.	Zero	300 ha	800 ha	Project Implementation Reports	Restoration interventions applied are effective in restoring degraded or deforested areas. Restored areas can be effectively protected against threats from grazing or other pressures.	PMU
Output 2.1.7: Small check dams/keyline dams and water ponds established or rehabilitated	Total volume of check dams and water ponds	Zero	200 m^3	At least 1,000 m^3 (expected around 20 small check dams and	Project Implementation Reports	Local topography, hydrology and security situation	PMU

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
to support sustainable grazing and forest restoration and improved watershed management in upper catchment areas.	established or rehabilitated by the project.			20 water ponds, to be confirmed)		allows for sustainable establishment and maintenance of the check dams and ponds.	
Outcome 2.2: Enhanced local capacity for processing and value-adding of rangeland/agroforestry products, generating socio-economic benefits for women and men, to provide incentives for sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation.	(i) Number of RMAs/FMAs and/or community enterprises benefiting from capacity building to support processing and value-adding of sustainable rangeland/agroforestry products. (ii) Number of households benefiting from enhanced value chains of sustainable rangeland/agroforestry products (through increased incomes or other benefits). (iii) Number of women benefiting from value chains specifically designed to benefit women.	(i) Zero (ii) Zero (iii) Zero	-	(i) At least 10 (out of 24 project-supported RMAs/FMAs; selected based on feasibility of interventions) (ii) 450 (average 45 households per RMA/ FMA) (iii) 100	Project Implementation Reports End-of-project survey with beneficiaries.	Value chains area identified and implemented that can deliver tangible socio-economic benefits to local stakeholders.	PMU (in collaboration with MAIL, NEPA, FAO)
Output 2.2.1: Value chain analysis conducted for selected rangeland/agroforestry products and recommendations formulated on value-addition and market access.	(i) Number of value chains analyses conducted.	Preliminary survey data conducted during the PPG phase of the project show the importance of forest and rangeland products, such as medicinal plants, for local livelihoods.	1	3	Review of value chain analysis.		PMU
Output 2.2.2: Selected value chain interventions implemented for rangeland/agroforestry products, including strengthening of RMA/FMA and community enterprises' capacity to support value chains.	(i) Number of processing and/or packaging facilities established or improved. (ii) Number of women and men participating in selected value chain activities (such as, for example, for pine nuts, medicinal plants, agroforestry, honey, or dairy and other livestock products).	(i) Zero (ii) Zero	-	(i) At least 3 (ii) 450 (at least 25% women)	Project Implementation Reports	There is potential to develop value chains of sustainable forest and rangeland products as a source of income for rural livelihoods in the target areas.	PMU

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
Component 3. Systematic creation and sharing of knowledge, project coordination, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and institutional capacity development.							
Outcome 3.1: Knowledge and data on sustainable rangeland management, ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation is systematically created, shared and disseminated.							
Output 3.1.1: Data on land degradation, biodiversity and natural assets is generated, centrally stored and shared through the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL.	Number of indicators[112] for which data is generated, centrally stored and shared through the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL.	Some data collected during PPG, but additional surveys/data collection in the field is required.	-	At least 3 (selected sub-indicators for SDG 2.3.1, 15.1.1 and 15.3.1)	Review of database	Improved knowledge, data and capacity lead to enhanced planning, policy and decision making as well as future investments.	PMU
Output 3.1.2: Provision of 10 small research grants for universities to conduct research on topics relevant to the project such as biodiversity surveys, ecosystem valuation and natural capital, socio-economic surveys, Eastern Forest Complex ecosystem services, and climate change impacts.	Number of research grants provided (approx. USD 5,000 per grant) and research reports available.	Zero	5 research grants provided.	10 research grants provided and reports available.	Review of reports	There is a growing interest within the national universities in topics relevant to the project.	PMU
Output 3.1.3: Biophysical and socio-economic surveys conducted in view of the preparation of a justification document for Nuristan National Park.	Number of biophysical and socio-economic surveys conducted and report available.	Zero	-	1	Review of report	Surveys will lead to concrete recommendations that can be taken forward by MAIL after the project ends. Existence of sources of funding for implementation of recommendations after the project ends.	PMU
Output 3.1.4: Knowledge and outreach strategy developed and implemented on sustainable rangeland management, restoration ecology and biodiversity conservation through the National 'Centre of Excellence' at MAIL as well as through use of innovative	(i) Number of knowledge and outreach products developed and disseminated (such as video/TV clips, audio/radio clips, posters, flyers, brochures, publications).	(i) Zero (ii) Zero	(i) As defined in strategy. (ii) 1,000 (50% women)	(i) As defined in strategy. (ii) 5,000 (50% women)	Review of documents and reports	'Centre of Excellence' at MAIL is successfully established by GEF-6 project, staffed and operational.	PMU

[112] Such as for sub-indicators under SDG indicators 2.3.1 (Productivity of small-scale food producers), 15.1.1 (Forest area as a proportion of total land area) and 15.3.1 (Proportion of degraded land over total land area).

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
information and mobile technology.	(ii) Number of project beneficiaries and other stakeholders reached by knowledge and outreach activities.						
Outcome 3.2: Effective project coordination, M&E and NEPA and MAIL[113] institutional capacity development.							
Output 3.2.1: Effective project coordination and M&E undertaken.	(i) Number of PSC meetings and stakeholder workshops conducted. (ii) M&E deliverables (PSC meetings, reports, MTR, TE, etc. as outlined in the ProDoc) are submitted on time.	(i) Zero (ii) -	(i) 2 PSC meetings, 1 national inception workshop. (ii) Yes	(i) 5 PSC meetings, 2 national workshops (inception and final), 3 provincial stakeholder workshops. (ii) Yes	(i) Review of workshop reports (ii) Records by Knowledge Management and M&E Specialist		PMU
Output 3.2.2: NEPA's and MAIL's institutional capacity strengthened to support project implementation, monitoring, replication and scaling up.	Number of NEPA and MAIL technical staff (women and men) with increased capacity in topics related to project implementation, M&E, data collection and management, and/or planning and decision-making.	Zero	At least 25 (25% women)	At least 50 (25% women)	Training session reports and attendance registers Survey with training participants (self-assessment)	Improved knowledge, data and capacity lead to enhanced planning, policy and decision making as well as future investments.	PMU

[113] National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL).

Annex A2: Work Plan

Output	Main Activities	Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5[114]			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Component 1. Strengthening capacity of national, provincial and local stakeholders for CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management																						
Outcome 1.1: National, provincial and local capacity and institutions in place supporting CBNRM and integrated landscape planning and management.																						
Output 1.1.1: Capacity development program on CBNRM[115] and integrated landscape planning and management developed and implemented for national and provincial stakeholders.	**Activity 1.1.1.1:** Develop capacity development program for national and provincial stakeholders (MAIL, NEPA, MRRD, MEW, universities, provincial and district officials, community-based organizations), building on resource materials developed under GEF-6 and other relevant projects. Modules will include: o Sustainable rangeland and forest management, biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and restoration. o Participatory resource assessment and facilitation of inclusive and gender-sensitive community-based planning (CBNRM). o The concepts of natural capital, biodiversity and land degradation neutrality (LDN), and linkages with SDGs 2 and 15.[116] o Main international frameworks and reporting systems (UNCCD, SDGs, SEEA[117]). Land and Forest Assessment and Accounts. Notion of ecosystem services, extent and condition (e.g.: soil productivity). o Integrated landscape management.	PMU (in collaboration with MAIL, NEPA and FAO)																			
	Activity 1.1.1.2: Conduct Trainings of Trainers (TOT).																					
	Activity 1.1.1.3: Implement training sessions for national and provincial stakeholders.																					
	Activity 1.1.1.4: Conduct regular refresher courses, including through online modules, to national and provincial stakeholders.																					
Output 1.1.2: Creation, registration and strengthening of 24 Rangeland Management Associations (RMAs) or Forest Management Associations (FMAs).	**Activity 1.1.2.1:** Organize community meetings in target districts, involving local government, Community Development Councils (CDCs) and other relevant community institutions (including Kuchis and women's representatives) to discuss establishment of RMAs/FMAs and development of CBNRM plans.	PMU, local implementing partners (in collaboration with PAIL and relevant institutions, including IGDK)																				
	Activity 1.1.2.2: Provide technical assistance and capacity building to RMA and FMA members on the creation, registration and operation of the associations, including financial management, opening of bank account, etc.																					
	Activity 1.1.2.3: Support official registration of RMAs/FMAs with MAIL.																					

[114] Note: Activities are planned to be completed in 4 years. Year 5 is included for project closure and in case of unforeseen events that would lead to delay.
[115] Community-based natural resource management.
[116] And, indirectly, SDG 14 and the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).
[117] United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA).

Output	Main Activities	Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5[114]			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1.1.3: Participatory assessment of local natural resources, land degradation and biodiversity in the target landscapes, integrated with geospatial data and environmental resources assessment.	**Activity 1.1.3.1:** Conduct large-scale assessment of the target landscapes using geospatial data (including data on land and water resources, ecosystems and biodiversity, as well as impacts of climate change and land degradation), and any previous survey data, in close collaboration with MAIL, NEPA, WCS and relevant university staff.	PMU, local implementing partners (in collaboration with PAIL and relevant institutions)																				
	Activity 1.1.3.2: Organize participatory mapping and data collection in collaboration with local government, communities and community institutions. The participatory assessment will include: o Assessment of rangelands, following PRAGA[118] or similar methodology. This will include identification of current and potential (under appropriate grazing management) biomass productivity and carrying capacities. o Assessment of forest and biodiversity resources, including potential areas that could be set aside for conservation, areas for restoration, and sustainable forest management. o Evaluation of natural assets and related economic activities. o Socio-economic information.																					
Output 1.1.4: CBNRM plans developed in an inclusive and participatory process supporting restoration and sustainable use of rangelands and forests.	**Activity 1.1.4.1:** Organize inclusive, participatory and gender-sensitive community meetings to validate the findings of the assessment and prepare CBNRM plans for each RMA/FMA. This will also involve ensuring free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of local communities (including any minority groups and Kuchi herders) in line with the defined process, and establishing a process to address any conflicts or land tenure issues that may arise.	PMU, local implementing partners (in collaboration with PAIL and relevant institutions)																				
	Activity 1.1.4.2: Develop draft CBNRM plans based on participatory process. The plans will be based on traditional management systems and international best practice, and should include: o Plans for improved management and restoration of natural resources in line with the concept of LDN (avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation). o Plans for conserving ecosystems that provide critical habitat for globally important wildlife species. o Allocation of resources for the implementation of the plans and definition of roles and responsibilities. o Indicators and process for monitoring and evaluation of the plans.																					
	Activity 1.1.4.3: Organize inclusive and gender-sensitive community meetings to finalize and adopt the CBNRM plans.																					
Output 1.1.5: Multi-stakeholder platform for integrated	**Activity 1.1.5.1:** Organize inclusive and participatory meetings at district and community level to discuss establishment of multi-stakeholder platform and develop draft	PMU																				

[118] Participatory Rangeland and Grassland Assessment Methodology.

Output	Main Activities	Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5[114]			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
landscape management established in two pilot districts.	Terms of Reference, including modality to ensure participation of women and vulnerable groups in decision-making.																					
	Activity 1.1.5.2: Organize meeting to finalize and adopt Terms of Reference and establish the multi-stakeholder platform.																					
Output 1.1.6: Integrated landscape management plan developed in two pilot districts and implementation started.	**Activity 1.1.6.1:** Based on assessments conducted under Output 1.1.3 and the multi-stakeholder platforms established under Output 1.1.5, lead participatory process to develop integrated landscape management plan in two pilot districts. Discuss potential areas that could be set aside for conservation, areas for restoration, sustainable forest and rangeland management, agriculture, etc. Identify agencies in charge of implementing the plans, such as PAIL/NRM district office, provincial/district NEPA office, in collaboration with multi-stakeholder platform.	PMU																				
	Activity 1.1.6.2: Provide technical assistance and capacity building to provincial and district stakeholders for the integrated landscape management planning process.																					
	Activity 1.1.6.3: Support finalization and initial implementation of the plans, such as through replication of CBNRM plans, capacity building, soil and water conservation and ecosystem restoration and conservation measures.																					
Component 2. Integrated management and restoration of degraded landscapes for biodiversity conservation and sustainable/regenerative rangeland management																						
Outcome 2.1: Improved management and restoration/rehabilitation of 24,000 ha of degraded landscapes to enhance biodiversity, increase productivity and restore/rehabilitate degraded land.																						
Output 2.1.1: Learning sites established in three target districts for the effective dissemination of best practices of regenerative grazing and rangeland management (approx. 8-10 ha/site).	**Activity 2.1.1.1:** Prepare physical set-up of learning sites (facilities, fencing, water points, fodder demonstration site, medicinal plant demonstration, reforestation site if relevant, etc.) in collaboration with local government and communities.	PMU, local partners																				
	Activity 2.1.1.2: Define roles and responsibilities for the operation and maintenance of the learning sites, including for after the project ends. Develop Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with clear roles and responsibilities.																					
	Activity 2.1.1.3: Operation and regular maintenance of learning sites.																					
Output 2.1.2: Pastoralist-centric, gender-sensitive field schools implemented on sustainable and regenerative rangeland management and biodiversity-friendly practices.	**Activity 2.1.2.1:** Develop curriculum and implementation schedule for pastoralist field schools in each district, adapted to different target beneficiaries (including both sedentary and nomadic herders, vulnerable groups, women and men, poorer households, etc.). The field school curriculum will be prepared by the Center of Excellence with the participation of related stakeholders, including the relevant provincial rangeland and livestock officers and will be based on a learning-by-doing approach throughout the production cycle. The curriculum will include modules on: • Holistic grazing management	PMU, local partners																				

Output	Main Activities	Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5[114]			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	• Animal health (including human-livestock-wildlife interface) • Winter feed alternatives The curriculum may also include elements on reforestation, medicinal plants and value chain development.																					
	Activity 2.1.2.2: Develop (or adapt existing) practical handbooks on the above topics.																					
	Activity 2.1.2.3: Organize Training of Trainers (TOT) in each district.																					
	Activity 2.1.2.4: Implement field schools, including follow-up activities in learning sites and reflection on lessons learned.																					
Output 2.1.3: Holistic, regenerative grazing practices and restoration interventions applied in at least 19,000 ha of rangelands.	**Activity 2.1.3.1:** Develop, and regularly update, holistic grazing plans for the areas covered by the CBNRM plans.	PMU, RMAs/ FMAs, local partners																				
	Activity 2.1.3.2: Support field implementation of holistic, regenerative grazing practices in line with the CBNRM and holistic grazing plans. Where feasible, holistic grazing should already start in Q3 of Year 1, even though the CBNRM plans are still under development, in order to take advantage of the fall grazing season.																					
	Activity 2.1.3.3: Implement direct restoration interventions on rangelands in order to multiply, facilitate and quicken the restoration process. These interventions may include small earthwork such as terracing, plantation and seeding, subsoil treatments and other soil and water conservation measures, construction and maintenance of water points for livestock, fencing for management purposes, as well as other support measures such as visual paddock markings, fodder production, etc.																					
	Activity 2.1.3.4: Provide equipment, training and demonstration to strengthen veterinary services/veterinary field units.																					
	Activity 2.1.3.5: Implement regular, community-based monitoring and evaluation of interventions, and adjustment, where required.																					
Output 2.1.4: Technical assistance and support provided to women to operate small-scale greenhouses for income generation/ household food security.	**Activity 2.1.4.1:** Provide equipment, training and demonstration for women to operate small-scale greenhouses for sapling/fruit and vegetable production for income generation and to support household food security.	PMU, RMAs/ FMAs, local partners																				
	Activity 2.1.4.2: Implement regular community-based monitoring and evaluation of greenhouses/home gardening interventions and reflection on lessons learned.																					
Output 2.1.5: Sustainable forest management (SFM) implemented in 4,200 ha of forest areas for sustainable use of forest products.	**Activity 2.1.5.1:** Support field implementation of SFM interventions in line with the CBNRM plans	PMU, RMAs/ FMAs, local partners																				
	Activity 2.1.5.2: Implement regular, community-based monitoring and evaluation of interventions, and adjustment, where required.																					

Output	Main Activities	Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5[114]			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 2.1.6: Restoration/rehabilitation, reforestation and/or agroforestry implemented in 800 hectares of degraded or deforested forest areas.	**Activity 2.1.6.1:** Support field implementation of forest restoration/rehabilitation, reforestation and/or agroforestry in line with the CBNRM plans. This may include, but is not limited to ecological restoration, establishment of community-based nurseries, seed ball and tree plantations using native species, contour planting to reduce soil erosion and stabilize slopes, and agroforestry. This will be done in close collaboration with the relevant provincial forestry and NRM officers. In districts where the lack of alternative energy sources is identified as a major threat to forests, the project may assist communities in identifying and introducing sustainable alternative energy sources. Some activities, such as nursery establishment or soil and water conservation measures, may start in Year 1 (before the CBNRM plans are finalized), to increase community engagement and foster collective action.	PMU, RMAs/ FMAs, local partners																				
	Activity 2.1.6.2: Implement regular, community-based monitoring and evaluation of interventions, and adjustment, where required.																					
Output 2.1.7: Small check dams/keyline dams and water ponds established or rehabilitated to support sustainable grazing and forest restoration and improved watershed management in upper catchment areas.	**Activity 2.1.7.1:** Conduct hydrological, topographical and environmental assessment for the establishment/rehabilitation of small check dams and water points and their contribution to sustainable water capture and management and to reduce soil erosion.	PMU, local partners (in collaboration with MAIL, NEPA and FAO)																				
	Activity 2.1.7.2: Organize participatory meetings to plan the implementation of check dams and water points, including definition of roles and responsibilities for their management and maintenance during and after the project.																					
	Activity 2.1.7.3: Establish/rehabilitate check dams and water ponds.																					
Outcome 2.2: Enhanced local capacity for processing and value-adding of rangeland/agroforestry products, generating socio-economic benefits for women and men, to provide incentives for sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation.																						
Output 2.2.1: Value chain analysis conducted for selected rangeland/agroforestry products and recommendations formulated on value-addition and market access.	**Activity 2.2.1.1:** Conduct value chain analysis for selected rangeland/livestock/agroforestry products identified and prioritized during participatory meetings. This will involve an assessment of current and potential economic benefits derived from these products, their potential for market development, their significance for women's livelihoods and poor households, and their potential to contribute to sustainable management and conservation of dryland ecosystems and biodiversity (including rangelands and forests) in the target provinces and beyond.	PMU, local partners																				
	Activity 2.2.1.2: Organize inclusive and gender-sensitive community meetings to validate findings and prioritize value chain interventions.																					
Output 2.2.2: Selected value chain interventions	**Activity 2.2.2.1:** Provide technical assistance and capacity building to local communities for the implementation of improved value chains (such as, for example, for pine nuts,	PMU, local partners																				

Output	Main Activities	Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5[114]			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
implemented for rangeland/agroforestry products, including strengthening of RMA/FMA and community enterprises' capacity to support value chains.	medicinal plants, mushrooms, agroforestry, honey, or dairy and other livestock products, as prioritized by the communities in a participatory process), including on maintaining the operations after the project ends.																					
	Activity 2.2.2.2: Establish or improve small-scale, cost-effective and innovative processing and/or packaging facilities, in collaboration with RMAs/FMAs or other community-based institutions/enterprises. This may also include replication in other districts/provinces.																					
	Activity 2.2.2.3: Support the sustainable production of medicinal plants through reseeding and natural conservation. Support the sustainable production of selected agroforestry products and/or bee keeping in coordination with Activity 2.1.4.1.																					
	Activity 2.2.2.4: Support the development of an inventory of species diversity and a community seed bank or nursery to promote *ex situ* conservation of selected agroforestry products and/or medicinal plants (pilot in at least one community).																					
Component 3. Systematic creation and sharing of knowledge, project coordination, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and institutional capacity development																						
Outcome 3.1: Knowledge and data on sustainable rangeland management, ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation is systematically created, shared and disseminated.																						
Output 3.1.1: Data on land degradation, biodiversity and natural assets is generated, centrally stored and shared through the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL.	**Activity 3.1.1.1:** Provide capacity building to MAIL, NEPA, MEW, MRRD and National Statistic and Information Authority (NSIA) staff on data collection and management, including linkages with SDGs. This will also involve further strengthening of the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL and other relevant institutions.	PMU (in collaboration with MAIL, NEPA and FAO)																				
	Activity 3.1.1.2: Organize workshop with national and provincial stakeholders to discuss lessons learned and use of data in future planning and decision-making.																					
Output 3.1.2: Provision of 10 small research grants for universities to conduct research on topics relevant to the project such as biodiversity surveys, ecosystem valuation and natural capital, socio-economic surveys, Eastern Forest Complex ecosystem services, and climate change impacts.	**Activity 3.1.1.1:** Establish criteria and selection process for the provision of research grants. At least 2-3 grants should be dedicated to an ecosystem valuation/natural capital assessment of Nuristan National Park.	PMU (in collaboration with MAIL, NEPA and FAO)																				
	Activity 3.1.1.2: Implement selection process and provide 10 grants (approx. USD 10,000 per grant).																					
	Activity 3.1.1.3: Disseminate research results through 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL and other channels.																					
Output 3.1.3: Biophysical and socio-economic surveys conducted in view of the preparation of a justification	**Activity 3.1.3.1:** Establish study team and define process to conduct biophysical and socio-economic surveys, with close involvement of MAIL, NEPA and relevant university and NGO staff.	PMU (in collaboration with MAIL, NEPA and FAO)																				
	Activity 3.1.3.2: Conduct surveys in a consultative, inclusive and science-based process. Recommendations will be																					

Output	Main Activities	Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5[114]			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
document for Nuristan National Park.	formulated for the national park planning process and future management plan/co-management structure. The surveys will also be linked with the studies on ecosystem valuation/natural capital assessment of Nuristan National Park under Output 3.1.2.																					
	Activity 3.1.3.3: Present findings to stakeholders and discuss implementation and funding mechanisms for park planning process.																					
Output 3.1.4: Knowledge and outreach strategy developed and implemented on sustainable rangeland management, restoration ecology and biodiversity conservation through the National 'Centre of Excellence' at MAIL as well as through use of innovative information and mobile technology.	**Activity 3.1.4.1:** Develop knowledge and outreach strategy on sustainable rangeland management, integrated landscape management, restoration ecology and biodiversity conservation. The strategy will be based on previous assessments (such as by the GEF-6 project), as well as additional identification of needs and gaps. The strategy will target stakeholders in the target landscapes and beyond.	PMU																				
	Activity 3.1.4.2: Implement knowledge and awareness strategy in close coordination between MAIL and NEPA.																					
Outcome 3.2: Effective project coordination, M&E and NEPA and MAIL[119] institutional capacity development.																						
Output 3.2.1: Effective project coordination and M&E undertaken.	**Activity 3.2.1.1:** Establish PMU and Provincial Coordination Units.	MAIL, FAO																				
	Activity 3.2.1.2: Hold national inception workshop. Organize annual national PSC meetings and provincial coordination meetings.	PMU																				
	Activity 3.2.1.3: Lead effective project coordination and M&E, including adaptive planning and management. Preparation and implementation of annual budgets and work plans. Involve NEPA in regular project monitoring, including monitoring missions to the project sites.																					
	Activity 3.2.1.4: Conduct social analysis and define risk mitigation measures as per the project's Environmental and Social Management Plan (including FPIC process).																					
	Activity 3.2.1.5: Support and monitor implementation of Gender Action Plan and FPIC. Organize gender and FPIC trainings for project staff and provincial/district focal points.																					
	Activity 3.2.1.6: Conduct Mid-Term Review and Final Evaluation.	External consultants																				
	Activity 3.2.1.7: Project closure	PMU, MAIL, FAO																				
Output 3.2.2: NEPA's and MAIL's institutional capacity strengthened to support project implementation,	**Activity 3.2.2.1:** Prepare comprehensive capacity development program for NEPA and MAIL staff, aiming to increase national capacity for following global best practices and effective policy development.	PMU, NEPA, MAIL																				

[119] National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL).

Output	Main Activities	Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5[114]			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
monitoring, replication and scaling up.	The capacity development program is anticipated to include (but not limited to) the following: o GEF project execution, including financial management and reporting. o Coordination of environmental data collection and management (in particular, related to LD, BD, and SDGs) among NEPA, MAIL, NSIA and other relevant agencies, including on LDN target setting and natural capital. o Use of data for decision and policy making, planning and mobilizing investments. o Assessing effectiveness and monitoring progress in achieving landscape targets, including social and environmental outcomes.																					
	Activity 3.2.2.2: Implement capacity development program in close coordination with other relevant projects including GEF-CBIT and GCF[120].																					

[120] GEF Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) and Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Annex A3: Project Budget

See separate Excel file for details.

Expense Category	Budget per Outcome (USD)							Administered by FAO	Operated by Partner
	1.1	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	M&E	PMC		
Professional Salaries	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Consultants	308,196	296,109	192,703	140,384	36,760	30,175	280,857	904,942	380,241
Contracts	-	2,814,929	234,000	438,000	-	106,550	-	278,550	3,314,929
Travel	32,300	48,800	16,500	29,175	3,125	10,000	-	129,900	10,000
Training / workshop / meeting	44,800	18,800	8,000	43,200	22,200	13,000	-	134,000	16,000
Expendable Procurement	-	287,384	192,000	-	-	-	-	383,384	96,000
Non-expendable Procurement	55,661	5,661	5,661	45,661	40,661	-	-	133,304	20,000
Technical Support Services (TSS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
General Operating Expenses (GOE)	21,120	21,120	21,120	21,120	21,120	-	-	105,600	-
Grand Total	**462,077**	**3,492,802**	**669,984**	**717,540**	**123,866**	**159,725**	**280,857**	**2,069,680**	**3,837,170**

Annex A3 Project Budget_AFG GEF-7_'

Annex B: Response to Project Reviews

STAP comment (on PIF)	**Responses**
1) STAP recommends the team adopts the LDN Conceptual Framework[121], for enhanced science- and practice-based guidance to determine LDN targets, and to track progress on the achievement of these targets through planned interventions. Furthermore, the use of the checklist on Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes is highly recommended to strengthen project design; this checklist has been prepared to aid country-level project developers and their technical and financial partners to design interventions that encourage innovation.	The project design team has applied elements of the LDN conceptual framework and checklist during the project preparation. In particular, further strengthening of the country's capacity for data collection, management and sharing in relation to LDN is needed, which is addressed under Output 3.1.1. Relevant participatory assessments for the target districts have been included in Output 1.1.3, including socio-economic and gender considerations. Elements of the response hierarchy (avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation) have been incorporated into the design of the project activities.
2) As FAO and Afghanistan develop the project, STAP recommends strengthening the focus on rangeland management. The project team may wish to draw on the methodology of GEF-funded projects such as the "Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable management in grassland and pastoral systems – PRAGA"[122]; this project focused on addressing land degradation in pastoral areas could provide valuable methodological insights for strengthening component #1. Currently, the problem analysis predominantly focuses on biodiversity conservation and less on dryland and rangeland management. In addition, STAP would like to see pastoralists' rangeland management practices, their governance and institutional arrangements as a more central part of the project. At present, pastoralists are only mentioned briefly, for example, the Kuchi. Engaging all stakeholders is essential for developing the project, scaling, transformational change and durability of outcomes beyond the lifetime of project funding.	This aspect has been duly addressed during project preparation. International best practice on rangeland management, including from previous GEF projects, has been taken into account.[123] Equally important, detailed inputs from local stakeholders, including sedentary herders/farmers and Kuchi pastoralists, have been gathered and incorporated into the project design. PRAGA and LADA tools will be used for the participatory assessments under Output 1.1.3.
3) STAP recommends for the theory of change to include the impact pathway, and the assumptions underlying each outcome. It is also important that the theory of change identifies internal and external factors (e.g. climate change risks, political factors, partnerships, and capacities) that could affect the intended outcomes so that adaptive action can be taken to ensure successful project deliverables.	The Theory of Change has been refined based on discussions with stakeholders, and assumptions have been included. Please refer to Section 1.a.3) *Proposed alternative scenario*. The risk section has also been elaborated more in detail, and mitigation measures developed. The project will apply adaptive learning and management, and will regularly revisit, and revise if needed, its intervention strategies.
4) Lastly, STAP recommends establishing a project steering committee because of the multiple partners from UN, NGOs and government sectors who will contribute to the baseline information.	The implementation arrangements have been elaborated more in detail, as described in Section 6.a. This will involve a Project Steering Committee, chaired by MAIL, and constituted by various stakeholders from different sectors.

[121] https://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/guide-scientific-conceptual-framework-ldn/tools-and-resources-land.
[122] https://www.iucn.org/theme/ecosystem-management/our-work/global-drylands-initiative/gdi-projects/participatory-assessment-land-degradation-and-sustainable-land-management-grassland-and-pastoral-systems-praga.
[123] Including some guidelines and best practices from a GEF-funded project in Turkey, the *Conservation and Sustainable Management of Turkey's Steppe Ecosystems Project*.

Annex C: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG)
Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below.

PPG Grant Approved at PIF: USD 200,000			
Project Preparation Activities Implemented	***GEF/LDCF/SCCF Amount ($)***		
	Budgeted Amount	***Amount Spent Todate***	***Amount Committed***
Salaries Professional	9,523	0	9,523
Consultants	144,500	106,121	38,379
Travel	30,977	0	30,977
Training	9,000	0	9,000
General Operating Expenses	6,000	0	6,000
Total	**200,000**	**106,121**	**93,879**

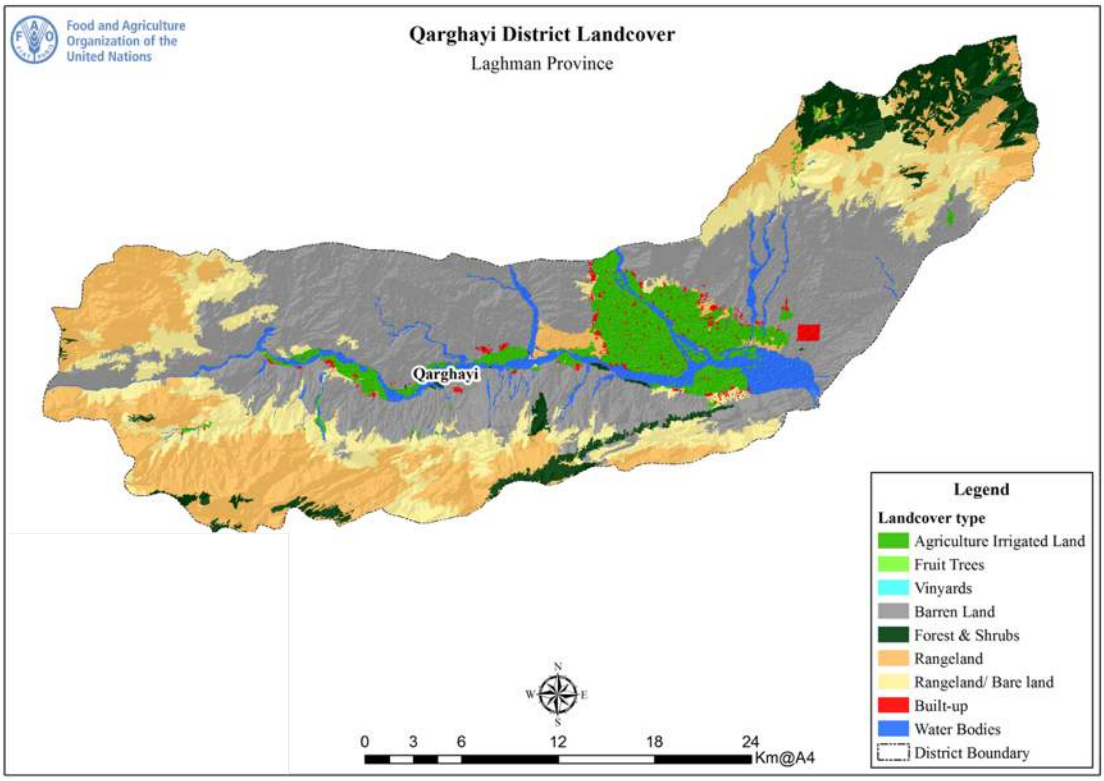
If at CEO Endorsement, the PPG activities have not been completed and there is a balance of unspent fund, Agencies can continue to undertake exclusively preparation activities (including workshops and finalization of baseline, when needed) up to one year of CEO Endorsement/approval date. No later than one year from CEO endorsement/approval date. Agencies should report closing of PPG to Trustee in its Quarterly Report.

Annex D: Calendar of Expected Reflows (if non-grant instrument is used)
Provide a calendar of expected reflows to the GEF/LDCF/SCCF Trust Funds or to your Agency (and/or revolving fund that will be set up)
N/A

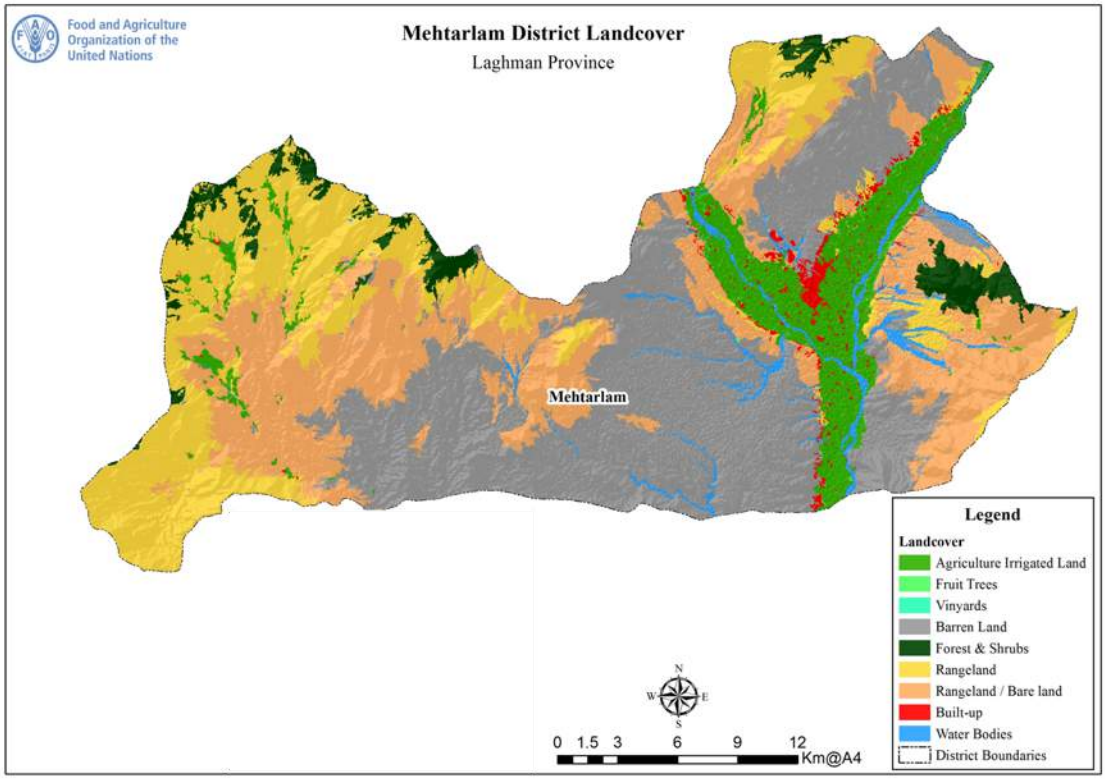
Annex E: Project Map(s) and Coordinates

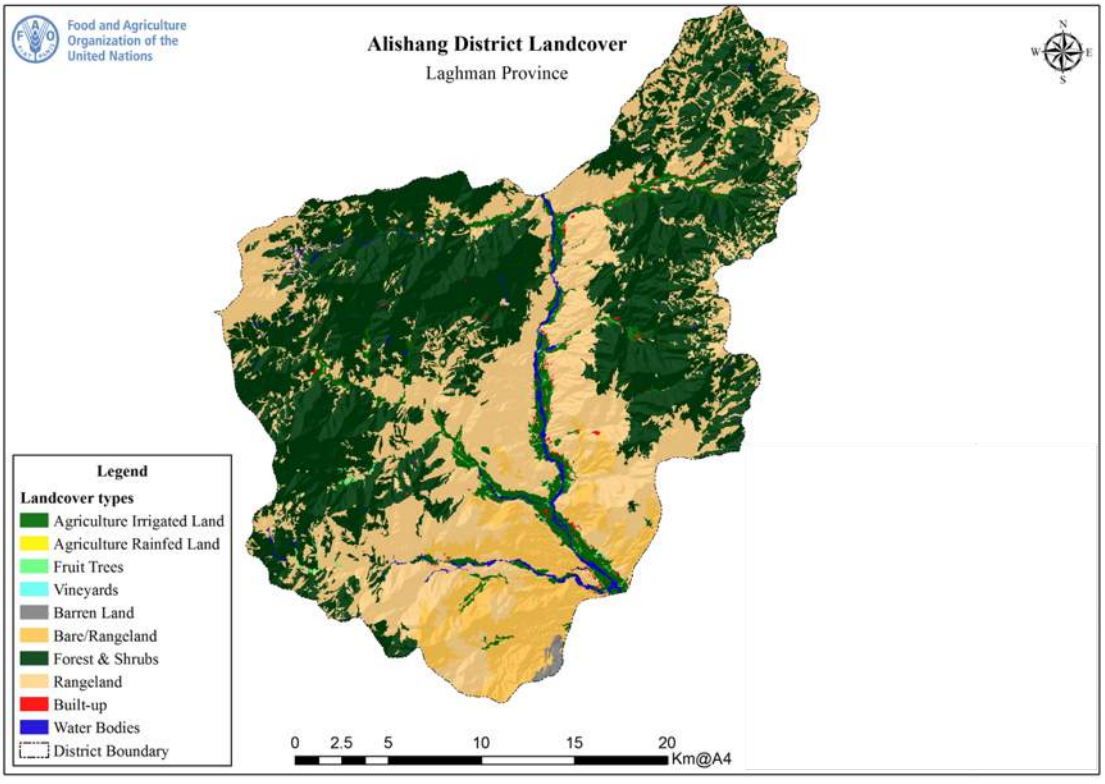
No	Province	Districts	Population (beneficiaries)		Total area (ha)	Important Resources	
			Men	Women		Forests and shrubs (ha)	Rangeland (ha)
1	Laghman	Qarghayee	52'082	49'642	88'662	6'434	41'120
		Mehtarlam	134'576[124]		71'889	2'722	35'091
		Alishang	139'000		67'009	31'813	28'245
2	Khost	Jaji Maidan	12'929	12'075	32'749	6'612	23'238
		Sabari	37'445	36'104	41'345	8'389	21'105
		Bak	92'930		17'079	3'582	9'817
3	Nuristan	Parun	7'197	6'830	142'684	16'408	117'139
		Wama	5'855	5'611	28'145	17'385	8'953
Total				**592'276**	**489'562**	**93'345**	**284'708**

Land cover maps Laghman

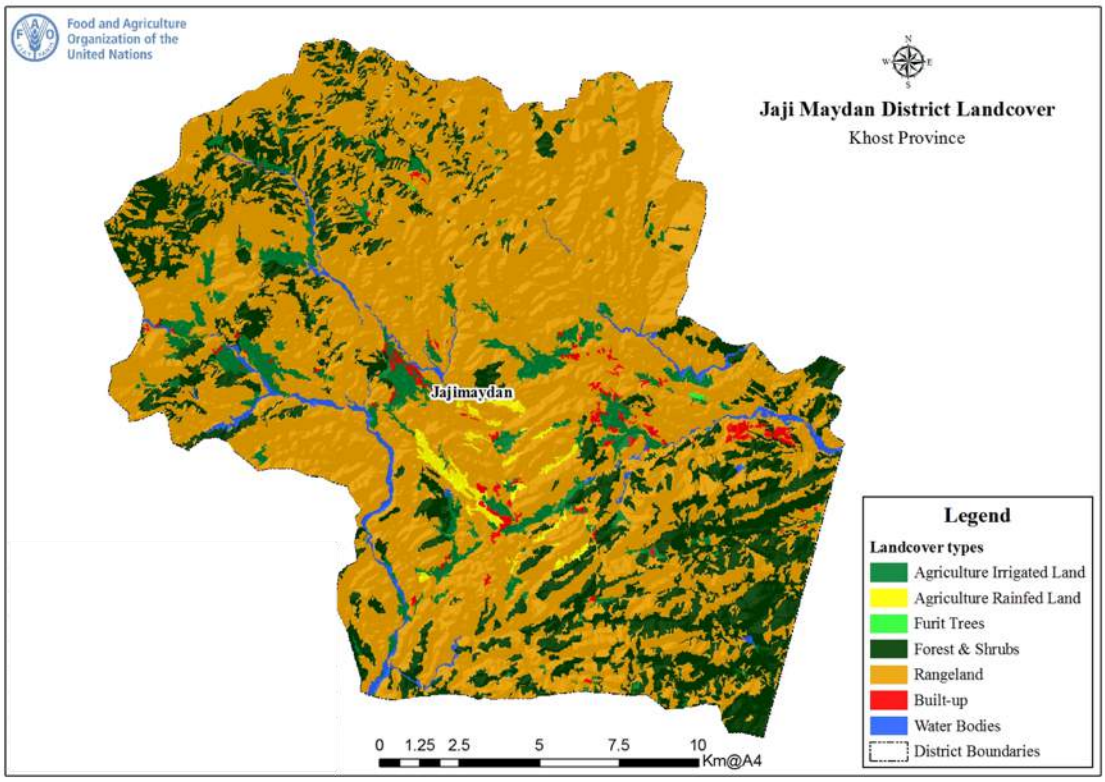


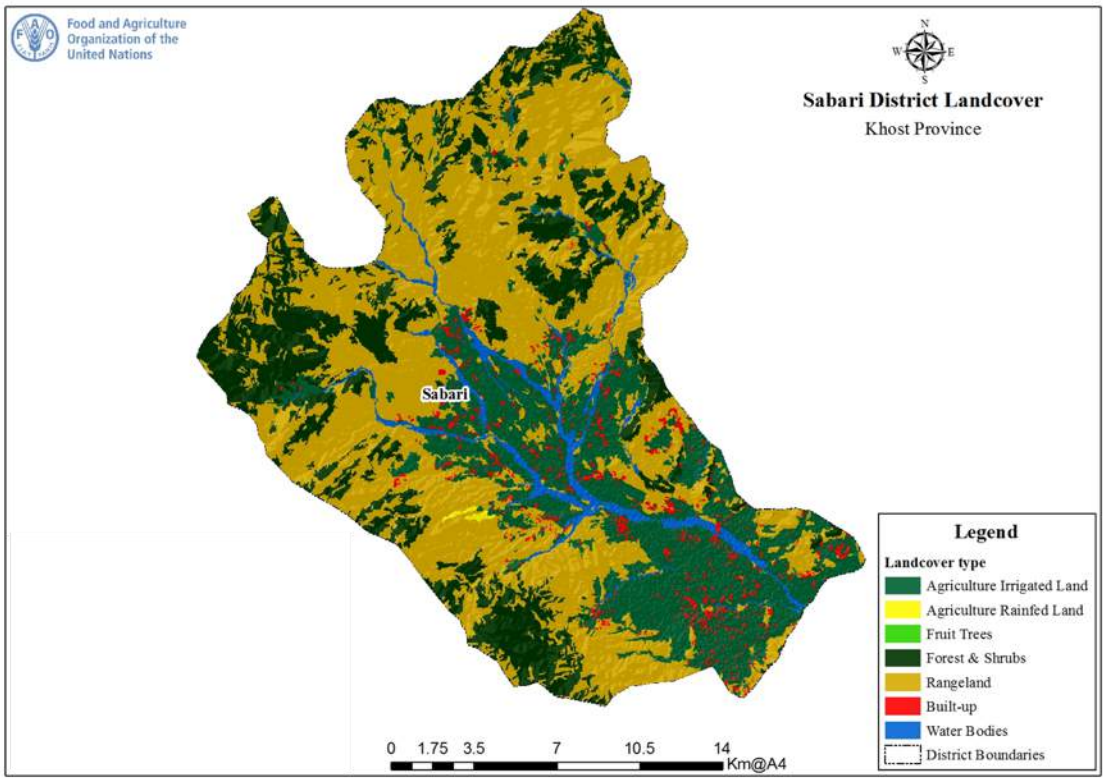
[124] Gender-disaggregated data currently unavailable.

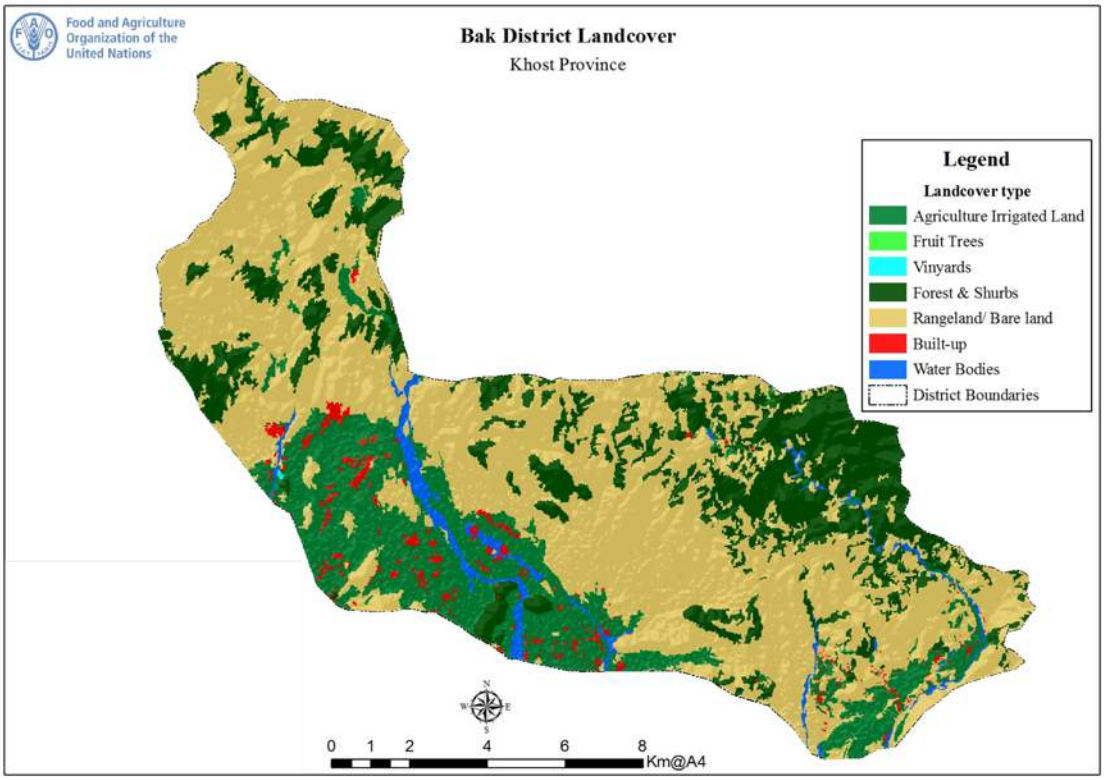

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Mehtarlam District Landcover
Laghman Province
Mehtarlam
Legend
Landcover
Agriculture Irrigated Land
Fruit Trees
Vinyards
Barren Land
Forest & Shrubs
Rangeland
Rangeland / Bare land
Built-up
Water Bodies
District Boundaries
N
W
E
S
0 1.5 3 6 9 12
Km@A4


Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Alishang District Landcover
Laghman Province
Legend
Landcover types
Agriculture Irrigated Land
Agriculture Rainfed Land
Fruit Trees
Vineyards
Barren Land
Bare/Rangeland
Forest & Shrubs
Rangeland
Built-up
Water Bodies
District Boundary
N
W
E
S
0 2.5 5 10 15 20
Km@A4

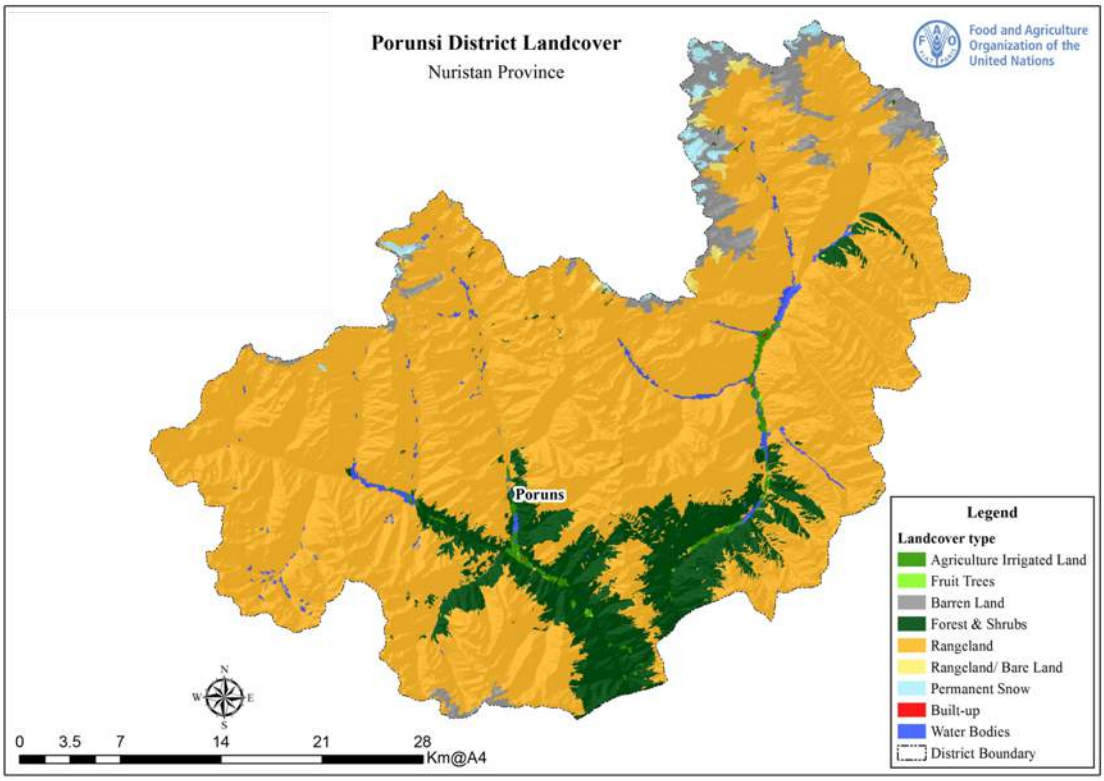
Land cover maps Khost

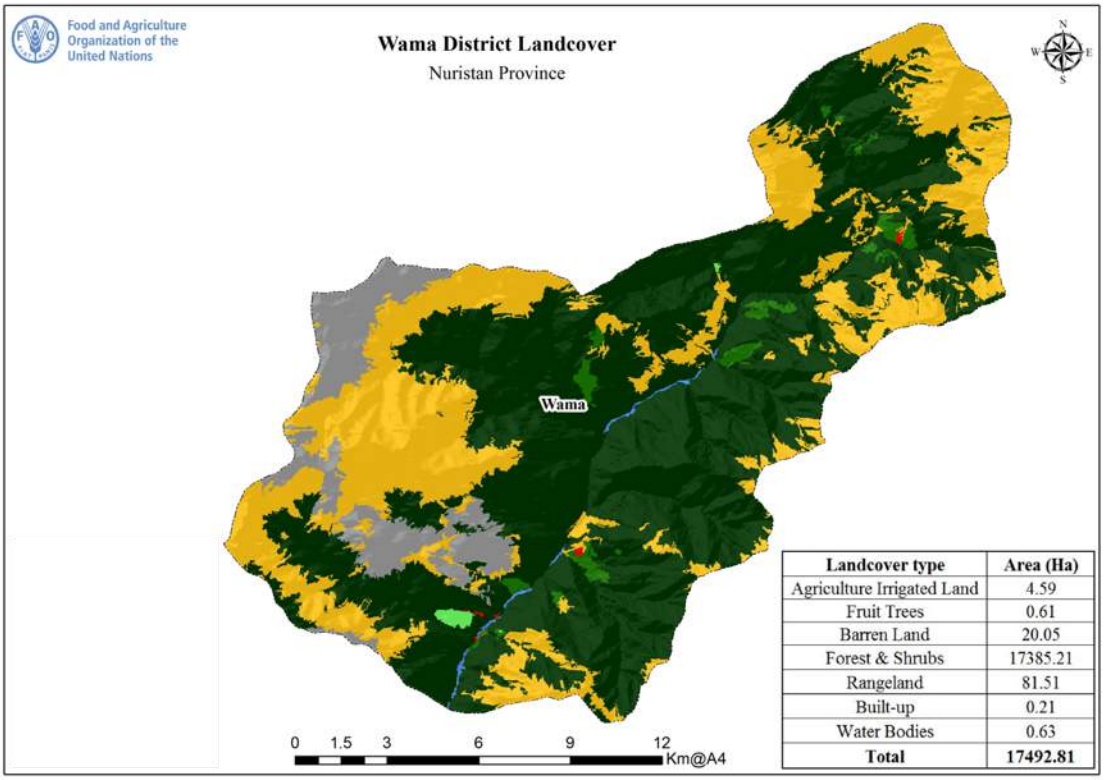






Land cover maps Nuristan





Landcover type	Area (Ha)
Agriculture Irrigated Land	4.59
Fruit Trees	0.61
Barren Land	20.05
Forest & Shrubs	17385.21
Rangeland	81.51
Built-up	0.21
Water Bodies	0.63
Total	**17492.81**

Annex F: GEF TF / LDCF/ SCCF Core Indicator Worksheet

GEF 7 Core Indicator Worksheet

Core Indicator 3	**Area of land restored**					***(Hectares)***
			Hectares (3.1+3.2+3.3+3.4)			
			Expected		Achieved	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
			40,000	*19,800*		
Indicator 3.1	Area of degraded agricultural land restored					
			Hectares			
			Expected		Achieved	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
			20,000	-		
Indicator 3.2	Area of forest and forest land restored					
			Hectares			
			Expected		Achieved	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
				800		
Indicator 3.3	Area of natural grass and shrublands restored					
			Hectares			
			Expected		Achieved	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
			20,000	*19,000*		
Indicator 3.4	Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) restored					
			Hectares			
			Expected		Achieved	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
Core Indicator 4	**Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)**					***(Hectares)***
			Hectares (4.1+4.2+4.3+4.4)			
			Expected		Expected	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
			100,000	*104,200*		
Indicator 4.1	Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity					
			Hectares			
			Expected		Achieved	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
			40,000	*11,400*		
Indicator 4.2	Area of landscapes that meet national or international third-party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations					
Third party certification(s):			Hectares			
			Expected		Achieved	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
Indicator 4.3	Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems					
			Hectares			
			Expected		Achieved	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
			60,000	*92,800*		
Indicator 4.4	Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided					
			Hectares			
			Expected		Achieved	

			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
Core Indicator 6	**Greenhouse gas emission mitigated**					***(Tons)***
			Tons (6.1+6.2)			
			Entered		Entered	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
	Expected CO2e (direct)		*1,600,000*	*1,059,852*		
	Expected CO2e (indirect)					
Indicator 6.1	Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the AFOLU sector					
			Tons			
			Entered		Entered	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
	Expected CO2e (direct)		*1,600,000*	*1,059,852*		
	Expected CO2e (indirect)					
	Anticipated start year of accounting			*2020*		
	Duration of accounting			*5 years implementation, 15 years capitalization*		
Core Indicator 11	**Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment**					***(Number)***
			Number			
			Expected		Achieved	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
		Female	*25,000*	*25,000*		
		Male	*25,000*	*25,000*		
		Total	*50,000*	*50,000*		

Annex G: GEF Project Taxonomy Worksheet

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Influencing Models	Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making		
Stakeholders	Private Sector	SMEs	
	Beneficiaries		
	Local Communities		
Capacity, Knowledge and Research	Capacity Development		
Gender Equality	Gender Mainstreaming	Beneficiaries	
	Gender results areas	Capacity development	
Focal Area/Theme	Biodiversity	Mainstreaming	Agriculture & agrobiodiversity
			Forestry
	Land Degradation	Sustainable Land Management	Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands
			Community-Based NRM
Rio Marker	Climate Change Mitigation 1		
	Climate Change Adaptation 1		

Annex H: Environmental and Social Risk Certification

Project Risk Certification

Entity Number: 658880 / GCP /AFG/102/GFF

Project Title: "Combating land degradation and biodiversity loss by promoting sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in Afghanistan"

Recipient Country(ies): Afghanistan

Estimated total budget in USD: 5,906,850 $

Date: 27-Jun-2019

The risk classification of this proposal is endorsed: **Moderate Risk**

Annex I1: Stakeholder Engagement Plan

A. Introduction

This stakeholder engagement plan details the consultations held with stakeholders during the project preparation phase, and lays out a process to ensure that stakeholder engagement during project implementation is in line with relevant GEF and FAO policies and guidelines.

FAO is committed to ensuring meaningful, effective and informed participation of stakeholders in project formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; including government institutions, local communities, the private sector, the academic sector and civil society. As such, the formulation team has followed a consultative process and engaged stakeholders, aiming to strengthen ownership, relevance and credibility.

B. Consultations held during project identification and development

During project identification, consultations were held with government agencies and civil society organizations in Kabul. More detailed consultations were held during the project preparation phase with various stakeholders at the national, provincial and local levels, in particular with local communities (including Kuchi herders), to refine the detailed project interventions and collect relevant baseline information.

The main consultations held during PPG are summarized below.

Consultations held	Main points of discussion
1. National inception workshop 23 October 2019	A PPG inception workshop was held in Kabul with participants from NEPA, MAIL, FAO, IGDK, Kabul University, MRRD, MEW, UN Environment, and NSIA. The main topics of discussion were (i) relevant baseline projects, (ii) selection of target districts, (iii) main drivers of deforestation and degradation of rangelands in the target areas.
2. Consultations with MAIL, provincial PAIL and other government agencies including NEPA, NSIA, MRRD, IGDK	The project design team held consultations with relevant government agencies, including the provincial PAIL, via phone, email and in-person meetings, during the project formulation and baseline data collection.
3. Field missions February – March 2020	Two field missions to Laghman and Khost were organized in February and March 2020. Due to mobility restrictions and COVID-19, the project design team could not visit Nuristan. However, key informants from relevant government agencies and neighbouring provinces were consulted to gather baseline data on Nuristan. **In Laghman**, the project formulation team met with PAIL officials and the Kuchi Affairs Directorate at the province level. The team then organized meetings, focus group discussions and individual interviews in Qarghayee, Bad Pakh, Alingar, Alishang, Dawlat Shahi, and Mehtarlam districts, in which the views of PAIL, community elders, Kuchis, CDCs, farmers, and herders were noted. Participatory resource mapping was conducted in selected districts. The team also conducted site visits to nearby rangelands and herders. **In Khost**, the project team also met with PAIL at the provincial centre, to discuss the project scope and plan the field mission. The team then organized meetings, focus group discussions and individual interviews in Jaji Maidan, Sabari, Bak, Matun, Gorbaz, Tani, and Musa Kheil districts, to discuss the views of PAIL, CDCs, community elders, farmers, and herders. The participants discussed issues such as the future of forests, animal health, wildlife, food security, and rangelands. At the end of the mission, several site visits were made to the rangelands and forests of Gorbaz, Lakan, Bak, Musa Kheil, Sabari and Jaji Maidan districts.

	The main **topics of discussion**, in both Laghman and Khost, were as follows: 1. **Forests**: Current status of forest, i.e. governance, protected, non-protected, primary forests, degraded forests, regenerated forests, area, production, uses, medicinal plants abundance. The communities mentioned that chilgoza forests are protected by them because they have cash value (from the pine nuts). In addition, they highlighted the importance of mazaree/patawa leaves (used for making threads used in traditional bed making and carpets), representing about 30% of income of the households in districts of Khost. 2. **Rangelands**: Current status of rangelands, governance, protected, quarantined, grazing patterns, illegal occupation, registered/non-registered rangelands, degradation, beneficiaries, medicinal plants. 3. **Animal health**: Status of available health facilities, problems, recommendations, vaccination, people interest in livestock, dairy products and its market, dairy processing, processing facilities in the province, feed availability, buying and selling of animals and its values. 4. **Birds**: Biodiversity hotspots, hunting, governance system, rare birds, density and history of population reduction, and migratory birds. 5. **Wildlife**: Wild animal density, hunting, selling (live, dead, skin etc.), migration or animals from/to other places, reason for increase or decrease of wild animals and its effect on community and agriculture system. 6. **Crop production**: Major crops, selling or purchasing frequencies, sources of seeds, technologies in place, value chain existence, off-season availability, agriculture trade system, how PAIL supports farmers and in which areas, farmer capacity building, irrigation technologies in place, threats to agriculture. In Laghman, the team interviewed **Kuchis** and sedentary herders about the issues they encounter while grazing their animals. The main issues include lack of health facilities, summer shelter, unavailability of water points in rangelands for their animals, lack of governance, absence of RMAs and rangeland management systems. Separate discussions with **women** could not be held as a female facilitator and the Provincial Directorates of Women's Affairs were unable to join the mission. A second validation mission had to be postponed due to COVID-19. Consultations with women and women's groups will be undertaken at the beginning of project implementation. Consultations with local communities in Nuristan also still need to be undertaken, as part of the project inception phase. Some of the **issues highlighted** by the communities include: 1. Conversion of grasslands to agriculture and housing/urban development, and illegal occupation of rangelands. 2. Rangelands and forests are the habitats of wild animals and birds but deforestation, hunting and armed conflicts have reduced these species to a great extent. 3. The current agricultural production does not fulfil the basic livelihood requirements; thus, youth are either working in other countries or looking for potential work within the province. As the farmers/herders cannot rely only on agriculture, they are doing other businesses along with the farming e.g. shop keeping, selling dehydrated balls of yoghurt/curd, butter, driving etc. 4. Unavailability of water for livestock and for herder use. Lack of quality feed or its alternative sources for livestock in winter season. 5. Overgrazing; decline in vegetation/species diversity (especially in the plain, less in hilly areas); eradication of large plants to be used as fuel in winter.

	6. Potential conflicts among communities and with the Kuchis. 7. Unavailability of quality medicines and services. Unavailability of artificial insemination for animals other than cows. Veterinary field units (VFUs) had been established in some districts, but mostly in large villages or in the district centres. Initially, these VFUs were of great use for the local livestock owners because the medicines were provided at low price. However, currently the medicines are too expensive, and veterinary services are often not available in smaller or remote villages. 8. Lack of market and processing units/centres/industries. 9. Wool and skin had market in the past but due to the recent blockage of the border with Pakistan, there is no more market for these products in the province. Some **key recommendations** from the local stakeholders included: 1. Establishment and capacity building of forest and rangeland management associations. 2. Agroforestry, reforestation and forest nursery establishment. 3. Identification of quarantine locations for rangelands and forests. 4. Livelihood mapping and alternative livelihood development. 5. Community awareness programs. 6. Support (health facility) to wild animals and to community livestock and flocks. 7. Provision of alternatives for firewood i.e. gas and electricity.
4. Civil society engaged in formulation	Civil society and community-based organizations consulted during project design including Community Development Councils (CDCs) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). The main points of discussion included aspects of project design, in particular the CBNRM process and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
5. International donor-funded projects / UN agencies	The project team also consulted with UN Environment, SDC, World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the USAID SERVIR project, to discuss linkages and potential collaboration with ongoing and planned projects of these agencies.
6. Final field validation mission (postponed to project implementation due to COVID-19)	Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the planned validation with local communities of the project work plan, the Environmental and Social Management Plan, and Gender Action Plan could not be held. This will be done during the inception phase of the project.
7. National validation	Due to COVID-19, the PPG validation workshop also could not be held. Validation with key stakeholders was conducted by email and phone. Final validation by a wider range of stakeholders will be done during the inception phase of the project.

C. Stakeholder analysis / Stakeholder Engagement Matrix

The main stakeholders identified, the key issues they raised during PPG, and their envisioned role in project implementation are summarized below.

Name of Institution	Key issues raised (during PPG) and how they were addressed	Envisioned role in project implementation
1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Led project design in collaboration with MAIL and NEPA. Issues raised have been addressed in the project document.	As the GEF Implementing Agency, FAO is responsible for coordinating and ensuring quality control in the design and implementation of the project in line with FAO and GEF requirements.
2. MAIL	Main issues raised relate to the alignment with national plans and strategies, and the importance of on-the-ground interventions in support of these strategies. Addressed in project design, revised outputs and outcomes.	Lead Executing Agency. MAIL will be in charge of day-to-day management, liaising with national and local stakeholders on project implementation, knowledge and data management, and upscaling and replication. Hosts UNCCD focal point.

3. National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA)	Provided inputs, in particular for the capacity building components of the project.	In charge of policy making and protected area planning. Will be engaged in national and local level planning, knowledge and data management, as well as capacity building. Hosts UNFCCC and CBD focal points and GEF Operational Focal Point.
4. Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)	Consulted with regard to the role of MRRD and CDCs in the project implementation.	In charge of rural development. Will be closely involved in the project implementation, in particular for engagement with local communities through the Community Development Councils (CDCs).
5. Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW)	Consulted with regard to water management aspects.	In charge of energy and water infrastructure development. Will be engaged in project activities related to water management and data collection and sharing.
6. National Statistic and Information Authority (NSIA)	Consulted with regard to data management and reporting to SDGs.	Will be closely engaged in data collection and management efforts, including on natural capital accounting, SDGs and LDN.
7. Ministry of Urban Development and Land (MUDL)	Consulted with regard to ongoing land survey / land use planning process.	Will be engaged in project activities related to rangeland surveys and landscape level planning.
8. Ministry of Women's Affairs, Provincial Departments of Women's Affairs	Consulted on project design and Gender Action Plan. Inputs incorporated.	Will be closely engaged in provincial and local consultations and implementation of Gender Action Plan. Ministry of Women's Affairs will be invited to act as a PSC member.
9. Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (PAIL) and District Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Offices (DAIL)	Consulted on baseline data and project design. Priorities have been incorporated into project design, such as on the establishment of FMAs, RMAs, community nurseries, rangeland management, etc.	In charge of agricultural extension and NRM at the provincial and district level. Will be leading project interventions at the local level, jointly with the project team and local stakeholders.
10. Independent General Directorate of Kuchis (IGDK)	National level consulted during project inception workshop and provincial level during field missions. Raised issue of potential conflicts among communities and with the Kuchis in the project area.	Will continue to be engaged in the project implementation to ensure that the interests of Kuchi herders will be taken into account and that Kuchi herders are able to benefit from the project interventions.
11. Local communities (women and men) Vulnerable groups Kuchi herders	Consulted during field missions to Khost and Laghman. Please refer to the notes above under Section B. for the key issues raised. Issues were incorporated into the project design, such as on strengthening veterinary services, winter feed for livestock, securing rangelands for Kuchi and sedentary herders, and vegetable gardens as a livelihood diversification, in particular for women.	Will be closely engaged in the project implementation as the local stewards of natural resources and beneficiaries of project interventions. During implementation, the project will ensure that women's needs and interests are taken into account by organizing focus group discussions and specific activities with women, as represented in the Gender Action Plan and project work plan. The project will also ensure that the needs and interests of vulnerable groups, in particular Kuchi herders and internally displaced persons (IDPs), as well as the disabled, will be taken into account.
12. Civil society	As explained above, Community Development Councils (CDCs) and WCS were consulted during project	Civil society will be engaged as stakeholders in the project implementation, in particular for community-based and landscape-level planning, as well as implementation of restoration and sustainable

	design. Suggestions have been incorporated in the project design.	management initiatives and capacity building. Relevant civil society organizations include, among others, the Aga Khan Development Network, TLO and WCS.
13. Private sector	Farmers, herders and community-based associations were consulted during project design. Relevant private companies could not be identified during the field missions.	The project will seek to engage with private sector entities, in particular community-based enterprises and associations, in the value chain activities under Outcome 2.2. It will aim to enhance their capacity to support sustainable value chains.
14. Universities, colleges and research institutes	Representatives of Kabul University were consulted during project design.	Will be involved for knowledge sharing, generation of data, and monitoring and evaluation for LD, CC and BD impacts under Component 3. In addition, research grants under Output 3.1.2 will contribute to the generation of data and knowledge.
15. Other relevant national sectors (e.g. Energy, Industry, Transport, Health, Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority)		Will be involved for integrated landscape-level planning and sustainability of project interventions.
16. Donors, international agencies, Food Security Cluster of Afghanistan (FSAC) members	Consulted during project design.	The project will seek regular exchange and collaboration with other donor-funded initiatives and international agencies, including UN agencies, in order to maximize use of expertise and experience, and increase awareness, collaboration and replication.

D. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The table below summarizes the main methods for consultation and engagement of different stakeholder groups during project implementation, at both national and local levels. In addition, a grievance mechanism has been defined for project stakeholders (see Annex I2).

Stakeholder group	Methods for consultation and engagement	Periodicity
1. National and local government	The following methods will be the main channels for communication with government stakeholders. • Email, phone and face-to-face meetings. • Workshops. • Project knowledge products (to be developed under Output 3.1.4).	Regularly (at least monthly with provincial and local government, bi-annually with national government)
2. Local communities and community groups	Detailed consultations with local communities will be held during implementation, in particular as part of the participatory assessment and planning process under Component 1. This will be led by the Provincial Project Coordinators/Community Mobilizers in each province, with the support of the national consultants and provincial PAIL officers. The National Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist will support consultations related to FPIC, gender, and the Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan, and will ensure that the approach is socially inclusive, gender-sensitive, and participatory. The following methods will be the main channels for communication with local communities.	Continuously

	• Community meetings at the district and community levels, in particular involving the local CDCs. • Some project handouts, but mostly verbal communications to account for the low literacy rates. • Focus groups specifically organized with women and vulnerable groups. Translation into local languages will be ensured where necessary.	
3. Regional and international organizations, development partners	Regional and international organizations have been consulted during the project design phase, and will continue to be kept informed of the project activities. The project will coordinate closely with relevant initiatives, as outlined in section 6.b of the project document, through the coordinating roles of MAIL, NEPA and FAO. The following methods will be the main channels for communication with regional and international stakeholders. • Email, phone and face-to-face meetings. • Inception workshop, regular exchange meetings. • Project knowledge products.	Regularly (at least once a year)
4. Civil society	Civil society will be engaged as stakeholders in the project implementation, in particular for community-based and landscape-level planning, and knowledge sharing. The following methods will be the main channels for communication with stakeholders from civil society. • Email, phone and face-to-face meetings. • Inception workshop and lessons learned workshops. • Project knowledge products.	Regularly (at least bi-annually)
5. Private sector	As explained above, the project will seek to engage with private sector entities, in particular community-based enterprises and associations, in the value chain activities under Outcome 2.2. These will be identified during implementation. The following methods will be the main channels for communication with private sector stakeholders. • Email, phone and face-to-face meetings. • Project flyers, brochures.	Regularly (at least bi-annually)

E. Budget and responsibilities

The PMU, under the supervision of MAIL, will be responsible for implementing the stakeholder engagement as outlined in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. It will also be responsible for monitoring and reporting on stakeholder engagement through the annual project implementation reports (PIRs). Relevant tasks have been incorporated into the Terms of Reference of the project staff (Annex N). Budget for stakeholder engagement has been allocated through the meeting, training and travel budget lines as shown in Annex A3.

In the annual PIRs, the PMU will report on the following indicators:

1) Number of government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector, vulnerable groups and other stakeholder groups that have been involved in the project implementation phase.
2) Number of engagements (such as meetings, workshops, official communications) with stakeholders during the project implementation phase.
3) Number of grievances received and responded to/resolved (see Grievance Redress Mechanism described in the section below).

Annex I2: Grievance Redress Mechanism

Grievance Mechanism

Focal Point Information	Mr. Rajendra Aryal, FAO Representative in Afghanistan
Contact Details	e-mail: Tel: +93(0) 202510427/9
Explain how the grievance mechanism will be/ has been communicated to stakeholders	The grievance mechanism will be communicated verbally (in relevant local languages) to stakeholders at the beginning of the project implementation through the project inception workshop and project inception meetings at the local level. A handout will be given to the district and village leaders and will be displayed at each district and village centre. The local stakeholders will be regularly reminded of the grievance mechanism during relevant project meetings.

Disclosure (only for Moderate or High Risk)

Disclosure Means		
Disclosure information/document shared		
Disclosure dates	From: Click here to enter a date.	To: Click here to enter a date.
Location		
Language(s)		
Other Info		

FAO is committed to ensuring that its programs are implemented in accordance with the Organization's environmental and social obligations. In order to better achieve these goals, and to ensure that beneficiaries of FAO programs have access to an effective and timely mechanism to address their concerns about non-compliance with these obligations, the Organization, in order to supplement measures for receiving, reviewing and acting as appropriate on these concerns at the program management level, has entrusted the Office of the Inspector-General with the mandate to independently review the complaints that cannot be resolved at that level.

FAO will facilitate the resolution of concerns of beneficiaries of FAO programs regarding alleged or potential violations of FAO's social and environmental commitments. For this purpose, concerns may be communicated in accordance with the eligibility criteria of the Guidelines for Compliance Reviews Following Complaints Related to the Organization's Environmental and Social Standards[125], which applies to all FAO programs and projects.

Concerns must be addressed at the closest appropriate level, i.e. at the project management/technical level, and if necessary, at the Regional Office level. If a concern or grievance cannot be resolved through consultations and measures at the project management level, a complaint requesting a Compliance Review may be filed with the Office of the Inspector-General (OIG) in accordance with the Guidelines. Program and project managers will have the responsibility to address concerns brought to the attention of the focal point.

The principles to be followed during the complaint resolution process include: Impartiality, respect for human rights, including those pertaining to indigenous peoples, compliance of national norms, coherence with the norms, equality, transparency, honesty, and mutual respect.

Project-level grievance mechanism

The project will establish a grievance mechanism at field level to file complaints during project inception phase. Contact information and information on the process to file a complaint will be disclosed in all meetings, workshops and other related

[125] Compliance Reviews following complaints related to the Organization's environmental and social standards: http://www.fao.org/aud/42564-03173af392b352dc16b6cec72fa7ab27f.pdf

events throughout the life of the project. In addition, it is expected that all awareness raising material to be distributed will include the necessary information regarding the contacts and the process for filing grievances.

The project will also be responsible for documenting and reporting as part of the safeguards performance monitoring on any grievances received and how they were addressed.

The mechanism includes the following stages:

- In the instance in which the claimant has the means to directly file the claim, he/she has the right to do so, presenting it directly to the Project Management Unit (PMU). The process of filing a complaint will duly consider anonymity as well as any existing traditional or indigenous dispute resolution mechanisms and it will not interfere with the community's self-governance system.
- The complainant files a complaint through one of the channels of the grievance mechanism. This will be sent to the National Project Coordinator (NPC) to assess whether the complaint is eligible. The confidentiality of the complaint must be preserved during the process.
- The NPC will be responsible for recording the grievance and how it has been addressed if a resolution was agreed.
- If the situation is too complex, or the complainer does not accept the resolution, the complaint must be sent to a higher level, until a solution or acceptance is reached.
- For every complaint received, a written proof will be sent within ten (10) working days; afterwards, a resolution proposal will be made within thirty (30) working days.
- In compliance with the resolution, the person in charge of dealing with the complaint, may interact with the complainant, or may call for interviews and meetings, to better understand the reasons.
- All complaint received, its response and resolutions, must be duly registered.

Internal process

Level 1: Project Management Unit (PMU). The complaint could come in writing or orally to the PMU directly. At this level, received complaints will be registered, investigated and solved by the PMU.

Level 2: If the complaint has not been solved and could not be solved in level 1, then the National Project Coordinator (NPC) elevates it to the FAO Representative in Afghanistan.

Level 3: Project Steering Committee (PSC). The assistance of the PSC is requested if a resolution was not agreed in levels 1 and 2.

Level 4: FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP). If necessary, the FAO Representative will request the advice of the Regional Office to resolve a grievance, or will transfer the resolution of the grievance entirely to the regional office, if the problem is highly complex.

Level 5: Only on very specific situations or complex problems, the FAO Regional Representative will request the assistance of the FAO Office of the Inspector General, who follows its own procedures to solve the problem.

Resolution

Upon acceptance a solution by the complainer, a document with the agreement should be signed with the agreement.

Project Management Unit (PMU)	Must respond within 5 working days.
FAO Representation in Afghanistan	Anyone in the FAO Representation may receive a complaint and must request proof of receipt. If the case is accepted, the FAO Representative must respond within 5 working days in consultation with FAO's Representation and Project Team. FAO Representative: Mr. Rajendra Aryal e-mail: FAO-AF@fao.org Tel: +93(0) 202510427/9

Project Steering Committee (PSC)	If the case cannot be dealt by the FAO Representative, he/she must send the information to all PSC members and call for a meeting to find a solution. The response must be sent within 5 working days after the meeting of the PSC.
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP)	Must respond within 5 working days in consultation with FAO's Representation. FAO Regional Representative: Mr. Jong-Jin Kim, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative e-mail: Tel: (+66) 2 697 4000
Office of the Inspector General (OIG)	To report possible fraud and bad behaviour by fax, confidential: (+39) 06 570 55550 By e-mail: Investigations-hotline@fao.org By confidential hotline: (+ 39) 06 570 52333

Annex J: Local communities/vulnerable groups

As explained above, several ethnic groups are present in the project area (Pashtun, Tajik, Pashai, Nuristani, Gujar, Tajik). In addition, Kuchi nomadic herders are present in the project areas. Since such groups are living in mixed communities, a Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process will be applied for all local communities in these area.

A social risk analysis will be conducted at the beginning of project implementation to prepare a more detailed analysis and mitigation measures, and implement the FPIC process.

Annex K: Gender Analysis and Action Plan

A. Introduction

This gender analysis and action plan aims to inform the design and implementation of the project *Combating land degradation and biodiversity loss by promoting sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in Afghanistan* while enabling it to meet, or go beyond, GEF and FAO's requirements on gender mainstreaming. In order to increase the gender responsiveness of the project, the results framework reflects the integration of gender and women's concerns.

The project is composed of three main components:

1. Strengthening capacity of national, provincial and local stakeholders for integrated landscape-level planning to support sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation.
2. Integrated management and restoration of degraded landscapes for biodiversity conservation and sustainable/regenerative rangeland management.
3. Systematic creation and sharing of knowledge, project coordination, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and institutional capacity development.

B. Gender policies of FAO and GEF

FAO is strongly committed to gender equality and aims to mainstream gender into all facets of its work. Gender equality is not only an essential means by which FAO can achieve its mandate, it is also a basic human right. In pursuing its goals, FAO is mandated by the United Nations system to promote and protect human rights and gender equality and to work in ways that ensure that it contributes to their realization. FAO contributes to reducing gender inequalities through its work on norms and standards, data and information, policy dialogue, capacity development, knowledge and technologies, partnerships, advocacy and communication. FAO's Policy on Gender Equality lays out the guiding principles for achieving gender equality in all the work of the organization. The policy ensures that gender mainstreaming is standard practice in all FAO's normative work and all its regional, sub regional and country-level programmes and projects.

GEF's Policy on Gender Equality aims to ensure equal opportunities for women and men to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from GEF-financed activities in support of the GEF's efforts to achieve global environment benefits. Principles include requirements that stakeholder engagement and analysis be conducted in an inclusive and gender responsive manner, so that the rights of women and men and the different knowledge, needs, roles and interests of women and men are recognized and addressed. In addition, GEF-financed activities must be conducted, designed and implemented in an inclusive manner so that women's participation and voice are, regardless of their background, age, race, ethnicity or religion, reflected in decision-making, and that consultations with women's organizations, including indigenous women and local women's groups, are supported at all scales. Furthermore, a gender-responsive approach must be applied throughout the identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.[126]

C. Gender aspects of the project

General context

Equality between men and women in Afghanistan is emphasised in the Afghan Constitution and in its national plans and

[126] Furthermore, in June 2018, GEF adopted a Gender Implementation Strategy and related Guidance to Advance Gender Equality in GEF Projects and Programs. These documents further define GEF's commitment to gender equality throughout its programming. This gender analysis aims to take into account the key action areas identified in the Strategy by identifying gender-responsive approaches, strategic entry points, knowledge generation opportunities, and tracking methodologies for gender actions. According to GEF's Policy, at or prior to project endorsement, a gender analysis or equivalent socio-economic assessment should be conducted and an action plan prepared to address differences, identified impacts and risks, and opportunities. Finally, the project results framework or logical framework shall include actions, gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated targets.

strategies. Article 22 of the Constitution outlaws discrimination and declares that women and men are equal in rights and duties. In addition, the Constitution contains provisions that explicitly recognize the right of women without caretakers and seek to correct severe gender disadvantage in the areas of education, family, and policy and decision making.[127] Afghanistan signed the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS)[128] and the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA)[129] emphasise the importance of gender-sensitivity in planning and implementing project activities. The NAPWA serves as the government's main instrument for implementing policies and commitments on women's empowerment and gender equality. It is a multi-sectorial plan emphasizing access to education and healthcare services, economic security, political participation, as well as the elimination of violence against women. NAPWA also commits the Afghan Government to increase women's representation in the civil service to 30%.[130] Within the Citizens' Charter, there is a requirement that at least two out of every five Community Development Council (CDC) members is a woman.

The National Strategy on Women in Agriculture of MAIL (2015-2020) acknowledges women's valuable contribution and supports their access to resources to become full agents of economic change. The Strategy includes the three strategic objectives of (i) institutional strengthening and individual capacity development of MAIL and concerned stakeholders, (ii) deepening technical support by MAIL through its different initiatives/programmes/projects for strengthening women's role in agriculture, and (iii) assessment of impact of the different interventions of MAIL for knowledge management and documentation of best practices and lessons learned.

Some activities highlighted in the National Strategy on Women in Agriculture of MAIL[131]

- Strengthen women's involvement in agricultural and livestock production in the form of access to and control of resources, extension and training and expanding marketing opportunities through targeted activities in collaboration with Directorates engaged in extending technical support to women farmers for increasing their productivity.
- Familiarize women with effective prevention and control of major animal diseases (easily transmitted diseases) including to safeguard animal and public health.
- Form producers' groups/associations among women farmers and producers to improve their bargaining skills and market access.
- Develop special targeted interventions for female-headed households to access resources for improved income.
- Use culturally appropriate ways to increase female participation in marketing and other latter stages of value chains.
- Expand the outreach of kitchen and school gardens to women to reduce food insecurity and low nutritional level in households.
- Collect sex-disaggregated data to reflect women's contribution in agriculture and livestock production.
- Strengthen female community-based organizations to help women articulate their needs and identify solutions through linkages with women-owned cooperatives (MAIL) as well as with women's sections of Community Development Councils (MRRD) and women's *shuras* (MOWA).
- Increase the number of female staff of Implementation Partners especially in MAIL's large-scale progammes/projects.
- Inform women farmers and producers about updated market information and knowledge, increase the diversification of products manufactured and increase competitiveness through entrepreneurship development skills (focusing on business plans, etc.) for improved quality and increased income.

Nationally, there have been significant achievements for women's rights, including the 2003 National Solidarity Programme (NSP), increased political representation of women, the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW), and the 2010 National Priority Programmes. The Ministry of Women's Affairs was established in 2001

[127] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2008). *National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (2007-2017).*
[128] https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/afg_e/WTACCAFG18_CD_1.pdf.
[129] Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2015). *Afghanistan's National Action Plan on UNSCR (United Nations Security Council Resolution) 1325 – Women, Peace and Security.*
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Afghanistans%20National%20Action%20Plan.pdf.
[130] http://www.ccnpp.org/Default.aspx.
[131] MAIL/FAO (2015). *National Strategy on Women in Agriculture of MAIL (2015-2020).*

as the lead agency promoting gender equality and the advancement of women's rights. There have also been significant improvements in infant and maternal mortality rates: the rate of children dying before age five has dropped from one in five to about one in ten while the lifetime risk of maternal mortality has dropped from one in 11 to one in 50. Access to education has risen and the number of women teachers in schools has increased. Nevertheless, the Gender Inequality Index for Afghanistan is 0.712, ranking the country 147 out of 186, according to UNDP.

Women's political participation, although it has improved, remains low, especially at district and provincial levels and women are absent in most national decision-making bodies. Strong discouragement by religious conservatives and lack of support from male colleagues are reported to be contributory factors. Female literacy rates lag behind those of men; 87% of females over 15 are illiterate as compared with 61% of men.[132] Primary school enrolment rate for girls (6-9) is around 21% while higher for boys (28%). Female-headed households are closely correlated with the high poverty due to a lack of education and employment opportunities.[133] Female-headed households represent slightly less than 2% of the households in Afghanistan (1.8% of the households in rural and nomadic areas). In the project provinces, the percentage of female-headed households is 4%, 2% and 3% for Khost, Laghman and Nuristan, respectively.[134]

Against a background of high unemployment generally, the capacity of Afghan women to become economically active by engaging in monetized activities and income generation is severely constrained by sharply delineated gender roles that tend to confine women to domestic and subsistence activities. Obstacles to women's eco- nomic engagement in the wider economy include low levels of literacy, a lack of employment and income-generating opportunities and, an important factor, sociocultural norms that discourage women risking contact with men who are not family members. Some women do engage in income-generating activities, but these women must match social and cultural expectations. Opportunities for skills development and access to sources of financing are generally more limited for women. Moreover, there is a scarcity of gender-disaggregated data in many sectors, especially sectors such as agriculture, labour and employment.[135]

The combined effects of poverty, dire state of health, and limited education seriously impair women's access to the paid economy. Afghan women's productive contributions in agriculture and livestock management are underestimated and underpaid, and limited access to economic resources such as capital, market, information, and technology hinders women's entry to the paid economy. Gender-based wage discriminations were also found to be prevalent, particularly in harvesting, construction, commerce, and weaving, and control over income by women is generally frowned upon in the country.[136]

Gender mainstreaming in MAIL's CBNRM Operational Manual

MAIL's CBNRM Operational Manual[137] explicitly refers to gender mainstreaming in the CBNRM process. In particular, under Step 2 (Forming and formalizing community groups), it sets an explicit target of 30% women participation. This may be in the form of all women groups, or may be mixed. The Manual also states that wherever possible women should be encouraged to stand for official positions within the membership.

According to the Manual, the following steps will be taken to ensure this target is achieved:

1. When registration of CBNRM groups takes place, DG-NRM will only approve groups with less than 33% women members in exceptional circumstances;

[132] FAO (2015). *Empowering women in Afghanistan – Reducing gender gaps through Integrated Dairy Schemes.*
[133] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2008). *Afghan National Development Strategy (2008-2013).*
[134] https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4a7959272.pdf and https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/afghanistan_emergency_food_security_assessment_-_december_2018.pdf (accessed May 2020).
[135] FAO (2015).
[136] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2008). National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (2007-2017).
[137] Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). 2018. Operational Manual (OM) for Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). http://nrm.mail.gov.af:1080/Library/BookDetails/4026.

2. When forming community groups, the users of natural resources in question will be included, and this is very often women;
3. When prioritizing the goals of CBNRM Management Plans, natural resources will be selected which women have access to;
4. When allocating responsibilities within Management Plans, women must be included wherever possible;
5. When deciding on office-bearers within the CBNRM group, at least one position will be given to a woman.

In addition, the Manual provides the following guidance on gender mainstreaming:

- In Afghanistan, transect walks need to be adjusted to adequately integrate the perspectives of women. A way forward is to send male groups for transect walks, and female groups to visit the women in their homes on a so-called "courtyard visit". The female group does a short transect walk in the courtyard and discusses with the women about their work in the garden, with backyard poultry, dairy, etc.
- To ensure that both men and women can equally benefit from CBNRM, careful and sensitive activities are necessary. A gender analysis at the beginning helps to define the roles women and men can play and how access and benefits can be ensured for both gender. Normally, the gender analysis will reveal that women are still disadvantaged and face particular difficulties. Women provide agricultural labor including cultivating crops and fruit, help in rearing livestock and also have responsibility for child-rearing, and collecting water and wood. Women do not have equal rights or access to land and other natural resources and their economic contribution is neglected and overseen. Women have a deep understanding of local ecosystems and how to sustainably manage them. In addition, climate change will have significant impact on women, with scarcity of water, reduction in forest biomass, change in cropping patterns and increased risk to human health. With relatively limited access to financial and other assets such as education, employment prospects and restricted movement, women will be highly vulnerable to impacts of climate change.
- Thus, CBNRM has to implement approaches that address both men and women and help to overcome these difficulties women face. Two distinct approaches to gender can be distinguished, 1) approaches that address practical needs, and 2) approaches that address strategic needs. Practical gender needs are the needs of women or men that relate to responsibilities and tasks associated with their traditional gender roles or to immediate perceived necessity. Responding to practical needs can improve quality of life but does not challenge gender divisions or men's and women's position in society. Strategic gender needs concern the position of women and men in relation to each other in a given society. Strategic needs may involve decision-making power or control over resources such as land, livestock, housing and agricultural equipment for example. Addressing strategic gender needs assists women and men to achieve greater equality and to change existing gender roles and stereotypes, it generally involves issues of position, control, and power.
- There are already a number of good practices for the integration of gender into NRM in Afghanistan. It has been proven that forcing women to speak publicly or to participate in workshops together with men causes discomfort on both sides. However, activities which women can carry out within their own homesteads such as nurseries for women, are much more successful. Women are given the tree seeds and are trained in raising saplings for afforestation while they are being paid a fixed salary. Through this, women get more knowledge and more economic power and then, in turn, are more accepted within the whole society and might then even become members of the local shuras. Hence, this serves both addressing practical and strategic gender needs.
- GD-NRM[138] is committed to take practical steps to increase women's and men's participation in implementation of its National Natural Resource Management Strategy and through that ensure the meaningful involvement in management of the natural resources of Afghanistan. Awareness raising, and capacity development are the first steps towards preparing fertile ground for participation of women and men (see Step 1, CBNRM process). The Gender Department of MAIL and gender units of partner agencies can play an important role in raising awareness of communities on the importance of women's participation in resource management and building capacity to ensure ideas are translated into actions. Each CBNRM Management Plan should include a specific section on gender prior to approval (see Management Plan template, Annex 9).
- MAIL, through its field extension staff, will need to build on the strengths of any women's self-help groups that have been developed in the past, and working with civil society build new ones where these do not.

[138] General Directorate of Natural Resources Management (in MAIL).

Access to land and resources

Land rights for Afghan citizens in both urban and rural areas remain insecure, in particular for women, especially regarding inheritance and more formalized land rights. The structural issues underpinning women's lack of land access and land tenure insecurity include illiteracy; low female employment; a weak and ineffective judicial system to enforce land laws; absence of awareness of laws; lack of physical access to legal documents; and prohibitive law enforcement mechanisms.[139] Women rarely own land and, if they do, they tend not to sell or mortgage it since mainly men in the family deal with land-related matters.[140] Loss of women's inheritance entitlements to male relatives and denial of property rights (mostly as a result of their limited control over individual/household income) make women and their children more vulnerable to poverty, especially in the event of a husband's death.[141]

Gender-differentiated roles

Men and women in Afghanistan play different roles in natural resource management; both play important roles as managers and users of natural resources. In Afghanistan, the roles of men and women in natural resources management (as in the whole society) are more distinct than in many other countries in the world. Depending on the region and ethnic group, most rural women are confined to their houses and have much less access to public resources, though the situation has improved considerably since 2003.[142] Women and men also have differentiated roles in ensuring livelihoods and family well-being. Generally, women carry out tasks that take place inside the homestead, while men are responsible for tasks outside. This gender division of labour is largely a reflection of social and cultural norms, which do not allow women to interact with men, travel by themselves, or own land.

Women are key players in agricultural production and natural resources management in Afghanistan. They are the primary caretakers of the country's livestock, and are therefore highly impacted when natural resources are depleted, and land is degraded. Women account for one third (32.8%) of the agricultural workforce; the percentage is as high as 58.6% in the livestock production sub-sector.[143] 70% of rural women are involved in farming, processing or livestock care.

The nature of women's participation is affected by a range of factors, including the region, community, ethnicity, age and class, and the number and age of other women in the household, as well as the presence of government and non-government development organizations encouraging women's participation. Women from better-off farming families tend to work more within the household, while women in sharecropping families tend to work alongside men on the land. Women heads of household, widows, or those with a handicapped husband have more freedom to engage in income-generation activities as breadwinners of the family. The horticulture sector in Afghanistan generally involves women more than field crops and food grains production.

Women have traditionally had major responsibilities in livestock management, including milk processing, and are entitled to earnings generated from farm animals such as poultry and cattle kept in the household. Women bear the bulk of responsibility for feeding, watering and milking livestock, tending young cattle, as well as for selling milk, while men are responsible for grazing livestock.[144] The two most prevalent priorities for women in livestock management were identified as: i) greater quantity and quality of feed; and ii) improved animal healthcare.[145]

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[139] MAIL (2018). Operational Manual (OM) for Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM).
[140] FAO (2015).
[141] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2008). National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (2007-2017).
[142] MAIL (2018). Operational Manual (OM) for Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM).
[143] Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey 2016-2017. Central Statistics Organization, Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (p. 77).
[144] FAO (2008), Afghan National Livestock Census 2002-2003.
[145] FAO (2015). *Empowering women in Afghanistan – Reducing gender gaps through Integrated Dairy Schemes*.
The study was based on a field assessment of integrated dairy schemes in the four provinces of Kabul, Balkh, Kunduz and Herat. Women indicated lack of sufficient feed as being the most significant problem in cattle production.

The collection of forest products is also differentiated by gender. Men are mostly responsible for the collection of wood and plants used as energy source, and hunting; women may, in some cases, go to the forest to collect mushrooms, medicinal plants and firewood in the periphery of forests.

Labour distribution in livestock management
The women respondents in the 2002-2003 Livestock Census identified the following labour distribution within the family in cattle management.[146] Women are mostly responsible for milking cattle (84%), tending young cattle (82%), and feeding (70%) and watering animals (63%). Men's main responsibility is to treat cattle (75%), while children (50%) mainly graze cattle. Men are the main decision-makers for cattle management when it comes to purchasing feed (70%), animals (66%), treating (65%) and selling cattle (62%), while women are the most important decision-makers when it comes to selling milk. It is worth pointing out that large variations exist among regions between women's and men's decision-making capacity in certain areas of cattle management. In Badakhshan, for instance, women mainly make the decisions on treating animals (87%), whereas in Balkh only 6% of women do so.

Gender roles in the project areas
The three target provinces are among the provinces in Afghanistan where traditional gender roles are most pronounced. Hence, the project will have to pay attention to cultural and social norms and adopt realistic targets with regard to women's participation. From the consultations held during the project design missions, women in the project areas are primarily in charge of tasks around the household, such as household chores, caring for livestock, and other tasks such as kitchen/ home gardening. It is estimated that over 40% of households in Khost and 80% of households in Laghman own kitchen gardens to meet their daily nutrition requirements.

The main sources of income in all target districts are crop production and livestock, followed by daily wage labour. The female share in active population in Laghman is 35.7%.[147] Literacy rates among women are significantly lower than for men (44.2%, 27%, 36.7% for men, and 6.2%, 2.7% and 5.3% for women, in Laghman, Khost and Nuristan, respectively).[148] The proportion of women among civil servants is also low. In Khost, while almost a quarter of students are female (24%), only 2% of government employees are women. In Laghman, the difference is even more striking: 44% of students are female, but only 5% of government employees are women. This suggests that factors other than the prevalence of educated women determine the proportion of female civil servants at the provincial level.[149]

Project gender strategies
The project will contribute to the following strategic entry points of the GEF Gender Implementation Strategy.
☐ Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;
☒ Improving women's participation and decision making; and or
☒ Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

This will be achieved through the following strategies.

5. ***Gender mainstreaming in project structure.*** The project will ensure adequate representation of women in the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and among project staff and consultants. In addition, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has been invited to be a member of the PSC. The project should aim to achieve at least 30% women within the

[146] FAO (2008), Afghan National Livestock Census 2002-2003. Cited in FAO (2015).
The women livestock survey was conducted across seven provinces (Nangarhar, Kabul, Logar, Parwan, Badakhshan, Balkh, Kandahar), not including the GEF-7 target provinces of Khost, Laghman and Nuristan.
[147] For Khost and Nuristan, there is no recent data available.
[148] UNESCO (2017).
[149] Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). 2013. Country Gender Profile: Afghanistan.
https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/thematic_issues/gender/background/c8h0vm0000anjqj6-att/afghanistan_2013.pdf

coordination and technical team.[150] It will ensure sufficient female facilitators among the project staff to enable active engagement and interaction with women at the local level. The project also incorporates gender-disaggregated indicators in its results framework. Furthermore, it will develop capacity and awareness among project implementers and partners on gender mainstreaming.

6. ***Consultations and engagement with women.*** Women will be engaged during the planning and implementation of activities to ensure that project priorities are gender-sensitive, take into account the differentiated roles of women and men, and respond to both women's and men's needs and priorities. The project will actively seek input from women for the development of CBNRM plans while respecting the cultural context and taking gender roles into account. It will also aim to identify and address the strategic and specific needs of Kuchi women. The relevant Provincial Departments of Women's Affairs will be continuously engaged and involved in planning of project activities at the local level, as well as the FAO Gender Focal Point in Afghanistan and the Gender Department of MAIL.
7. ***Addressing women's priorities.*** Sustainable land management practices focused on increasing rangeland productivity will increase the availability and quality of feed for livestock. Concurrently, improved access to veterinary services will contribute to better animal health, thus addressing some of the women's priorities highlighted above. The project will also involve activities that are specifically in the domain of women, such as home gardening/small-scale greenhouses, and related value chains.
8. ***Sensitization and capacity development.*** Through the capacity development activities of the project, government officials and other stakeholders will be sensitized on gender issues and their capacity for gender mainstreaming will be enhanced.

Through these strategies, the project aims to achieve the following outcomes:

1. ***Women's participation and decision-making.*** The project will seek to achieve at least 30% women participation in the community groups/FMAs/RMAs supported by the project to enhance women's participation and decision-making. However, as noted above, the project will pay attention to cultural and social norms in the target districts. Where appropriate, this target can be achieved through separate community sub-groups or other identified means. It is expected that the proposed project will provide opportunities for women to actively and meaningfully contribute to natural resource management activities, particularly the management of rangeland and forest resources.
2. ***Socio-economic benefits for women.*** The project will pay attention to the socio-economic benefits from the project activities for women and women-led households.

Implementation and monitoring of the Gender Action Plan

The PMU, under the overall responsibility of MAIL, will be responsible for the implementation of the gender-specific actions outlined in the Gender Action Plan. Relevant tasks have been included in the terms of reference of the National Project Coordinator, National Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist, and other project staff and consultants. The National Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist, with support from the Knowledge Management and M&E Specialist, will be responsible for periodically monitoring its implementation. Monitoring of the Gender Action Plan will be conducted semi-annually as part of the Project Progress Reports (PPRs) and Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs).

Budget

The total budget for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan is as follows:

- National Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist: USD 60,000 over five years.

[150] This proportion could be achieved by targeting qualified women or providing additional mentoring/training to female candidates who are close to meeting the criteria.

- Gender and FPIC trainings for project staff and provincial/district focal points: USD 3,000.
- Other local meetings and trainings: ca. USD 10,640 (40% of USD 26,600 local meeting/training budget), for gender-specific consultations and trainings.
- Implementation of small-scale greenhouses (for sapling and fruit/vegetable production) for women, including technical assistance and small-scale equipment and inputs: USD 153,600
- Value chain activities (25% of total value chain budget of USD 192,000): USD 48,000.
- Research grants to female researchers: USD 40,000 (40% of USD 100,000)

Total: USD 315,240

Gender Action Plan

The project's Gender Action Plan is described in the table below. Please refer to Annex A2 for a detailed description of project outputs and activities.

No.	Project Output	Gender Specific Action / Indicator	Responsible	Baseline and Targets	Budget
Component 1					
1	Output 1.1.1	Ensure adequate participation of women in the capacity development program. Indicator: Proportion of women among stakeholders with increased knowledge and capacity to facilitate integrated landscape planning and CBNRM.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: n/a Target: At least 25% women (mid-term and end-of-project). Means of verification: Attendance registers for trainings; survey with training participants.	No extra cost
2	Output 1.1.1	Include module on participatory resource assessment and facilitation of inclusive and gender-sensitive community-based planning (CBNRM) in the capacity development program. Indicator: Module with gender aspects included in training program.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: n/a Target: Module included (mid-term). Verification: Review of training modules/reports.	As above
3	Output 1.1.2	Organize consultations and focus group discussions with women as part of the community meetings on the establishment of RMAs/FMAs, to understand gender-differentiated roles, needs and priorities. The project will also aim to identify and strengthen existing women's self-help groups, if any. Indicator: Number of focus group discussions held with women during establishment of RMAs/FMAs.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: 0 Target: At least 24 (end-of-project). Verification: Reports of focus group discussions.	USD 2,660 (meetings)
4	Output 1.1.2	Ensure adequate representation of women in the RMAs/FMAs. Indicator: Proportion of women members in the RMAs/FMAs. Proportion of women among office-bearers.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: n/a Target: At least 30% (mid-term and end-of-project). Verification: Review of RMA/FMA documents.	USD 2,660 (meetings)
5	Output 1.1.3	Ensure incorporation of women's views during participatory assessment. Indicator: Number of consultations held with women during participatory assessment. Number of consultations held with Kuchi women.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: 0 Target: At least 8 (one per district) and an additional 2 with Kuchi women (end-of-project). Verification: Reports of consultations.	USD 2,660 (meetings)

No.	Project Output	Gender Specific Action / Indicator	Responsible	Baseline and Targets	Budget
6	Output 1.1.4	Ensure gender-sensitive consultations during development of CBNRM plans. Indicator: Number of consultations held with women during CBNRM planning. Number of consultations held with Kuchi women.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: 0 Target: At least 8 (one per district) and an additional 2 with Kuchi women. Verification: Reports of consultations and review of CBNRM plans.	USD 2,660 (meetings)
7	Output 1.1.4	Ensure incorporation of specific needs and priorities of women in the CBNRM plans. Indicator: Number of CBNRM plans that include women's priorities.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: 0 Target: 24 (of which at least 8). Verification: Review of CBNRM plans.	As above
8	Outputs 1.1.5 and 1.1.6	Ensure participation of women in the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms and development of integrated landscape management plans. Indicator: Number of participatory meetings held with women during integrated landscape management planning process.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: 0 Target: At least 4 (2 per ILM pilot district) Verification: Reports of consultations.	No extra cost
Component 2					
9	Output 2.1.3	Ensure incorporation of specific needs and priorities of women in the development and implementation of pastoralist field schools, such as by involving women in the provision of equipment, training and demonstration to strengthen veterinary services/veterinary field units. Indicator: Number of women involved in training and demonstration of veterinary services.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: 0 Target: At least 10 (end-of-project). Verification: Review of project reports.	No specific gender budget
10	Output 2.1.4	Provide equipment, training and demonstration for women to implement small-scale greenhouses (for sapling and fruit/vegetable production). Indicator: Number of women benefiting from equipment, training and demonstration for small-scale greenhouses.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: 0 Target: At least 40 (mid-term), at least 120 (end-of-project). Verification: Review of project reports.	USD 153,600
11	Outputs 2.1.6	Enable participation of women in forest nurseries. Indicator: Number of women benefiting from forest/agroforestry nurseries through direct employment or by receiving saplings/seedlings.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: 0 Target: At least 40 (end-of-project). Verification: Review of project reports.	No specific gender budget
12	Outcome 2.2	Ensure that women, in particular of female-headed households, including Kuchi women, are able to benefit from value chain interventions under the project. Indicator: Number of women benefiting from value chains specifically designed to benefit women (of which women of female-headed households; and of which Kuchi women). Indicator: Proportion of women participating in selected value chain activities/community enterprises supported by the project (such as for pine nuts, medicinal plants or dairy products).	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: 0 Target: At least 100 (end-of-project), of which at least 10 women of female-headed households and 5 Kuchi women). Target: At least 25% (mid-term and end-of-project). Verification: Review of project reports.	USD 48,000 (25% of value chain budget)

No.	Project Output	Gender Specific Action / Indicator	Responsible	Baseline and Targets	Budget
Component 3					
13	Output 3.1.2	Ensure that an adequate portion of the research grants is given to female researchers/students. Indicator: Proportion of grants given to female researchers/students.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: n/a Target: At least 40% (end-of-project). Verification: Review of project reports.	USD 40,000
14	Output 3.1.4	Ensure that knowledge and awareness strategy is gender-sensitive. Indicator: Knowledge and awareness strategy of the project makes explicit reference to gender-sensitive actions (such as, documenting and analyzing interventions to improve gender equality).	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: n/a Target: Gender-sensitive actions included in strategy (mid-term). Verification: Review of strategy document.	No specific gender budget
15	Output 3.2.1	Ensure adequate representation of women in PSC and PMU. Organize gender trainings for project staff and provincial/district focal points. Invite Ministry of Women's Affairs to act as a PSC member. Indicator: Proportion of women among members of PSC. Proportion of women among PMU staff and consultants. Indicator: Number of trainings conducted on gender mainstreaming for project staff and partners.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: n/a Target: At least 30% (mid-term and end-of-project). Target: At least 5 (2 national and 3 provincial). Verification: Review of project reports.	USD 60,000 (Safeguards and Gender Specialist) USD 3,000 (trainings)
16	Output 3.2.2	Ensure adequate participation of women in the capacity development activities of Output 3.2.2. Indicator: Proportion of women among training participants.	PMU, MAIL	Baseline: n/a Target: At least 25% (mid-term and end-of-project). Verification: Review of training reports.	No extra cost

Annex L: GHG Emissions Calculation

See separate EX-ACT file.

Annex M: Terms of Reference

The draft Terms of Reference of PMU staff and technical consultants are summarized below.

Position Title	Summary of responsibilities	No. days /months	Unit cost	Total budget
International consultants				
1. International Rangeland/ Livestock Management Expert	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • Support the development of training program under Output 1.1.1. • Provide technical guidance for the implementation of the participatory assessments under Output 1.1.3 and the CBNRM and holistic grazing plans under Outputs 1.1.4 and 2.1.3. • Provide technical inputs for the establishment of the learning sites under Output 2.1.1 • Support the development of curriculum and implementation of pastoralist field schools under Output 2.1.2. • Provide technical guidance for the implementation of holistic grazing and rangeland management, including community-based monitoring, under Output 2.1.3. Minimal requirements: 1. Advanced university degree in environmental sciences, agriculture, or related field. 2. At least ten years of experience working on sustainable rangeland and livestock management. 3. Working knowledge of English.	100 days, of which an estimated 40 days in-country missions	USD 500	USD 50,000
2. International Environmental Statistics Expert	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • Support the development and implementation of training modules on the concepts of natural capital, biodiversity and land degradation neutrality (LDN), linkages with SDGs 2 and 15, and main international frameworks and reporting systems (UNCCD, SDGs, SEEA) under Output 1.1.1. • Provide technical guidance for the implementation of the participatory assessments under Output 1.1.3, in particular with regard to the evaluation of natural assets and related economic activities. • Provide capacity building to MAIL, NEPA, MEW, MRRD and NSIA staff on data collection and management, including linkages with SDGs, under Outputs 3.1.1 and 3.2.2. • In collaboration with MAIL, NEPA, MRRD, MEW, NSIA, assess data availability for accounts compilation. Identify priority SEEA AFF accounts to be applied for relevant natural capital activities, as well provide guidance for their compilation through specific online courses, video-conference sessions, and explanatory material as needed. (Output 3.1.1) • Follow up activities with the country for SEEA AFF accounts selection and to set methodology for accounts compilation (definitions, analysis of national and international data sources, methodology of gap fillings). In collaboration with MAIL, NEPA, MRRD, MEW and technical GIS expert compilation of the selected accounts and derivation of agro-environmental indicators. (Output 3.1.1)	80 days, of which an estimated 20 days in-country missions	USD 300	USD 24,000

Position Title	Summary of responsibilities	No. days /months	Unit cost	Total budget
	• Elaboration of main findings from accounts compilation to be presented in the national lessons learned workshops. • Provide guidance to the National GIS Expert in terms of land use and land cover classification to integrate statistical and survey data. Minimal requirements: 1. University degree in agricultural economics, international political sciences, environmental economics, or related fields. 2. At least ten years of experience working in international environmental statistics or related field. 3. Working knowledge of English.			
National consultants				
1. National Project Coordinator & Technical Lead	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • Overall technical lead for the implementation of all project outputs and activities and ensure technical soundness of project implementation. • Manage PMU staff and consultants. • Prepare annual and quarterly work plans and annual budgets for submission to the PSC, in line with the principles of adaptive learning and management. • Supervise preparation of various technical outputs, e.g. knowledge products, reports and case studies. • Ensure that all project staff and consultants fully understand their role and their tasks, and support them in their work, including close involvement and capacity building of national partners. • Oversee day-to-day implementation of the project in line with the work plans. • Assure quality of project activities and project outputs. • Organise regular planning and communication events, starting with inception mission and inception workshop. • Oversee preparation and implementation of M&E framework. • Oversee preparation and implementation of project communication and knowledge management frameworks. • Prepare progress reports and all monitoring reports. • Regularly review project risks and ensure implementation of mitigation measures. • Lead Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) planning process in coordination with relevant technical consultants and partners. • Lead interactions with and engagement of stakeholders in line with the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. • Ensure implementation of the Gender Action Plan and Environmental and Social Management Plan in collaboration with the Safeguards and Gender Expert. • Liaise with government agencies and regularly advocate on behalf of the project. • Coordinate project interventions with other ongoing activities, especially those of co-financers and other GEF projects. • Facilitate and strengthen collaboration between national project's stakeholders and regional/international partners to ensure smooth implementation and delivery of project's activities.	48 months	USD 3,592	USD 172,427

Position Title	Summary of responsibilities	No. days /months	Unit cost	Total budget
	• Regularly promote the project and its outputs and findings on a national, and where appropriate, regional stage. Minimal requirements: 1. Advanced university degree in forest management, natural resources management or related fields. 2. At least ten years of experience in the natural resources management sector in Afghanistan. 3. Demonstrated commitment to participatory and bottom-up approaches. 4. Demonstrated ability to communicate, including advocating to government agencies. 5. Demonstrated ability to manage, including project/office management. 6. Working knowledge of English.			
2. National NRM Specialist	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • Lead the development of training program under Output 1.1.1 (building on existing training programs and modules from previous initiatives). • Lead the implementation of the participatory assessments under Output 1.1.3 and the CBNRM and holistic grazing plans under Output 1.1.4, including technical inputs on forests and biodiversity. • Work closely with MAIL, NEPA, other agency staff and local stakeholders to develop their capacity with regard to natural resources, forests and biodiversity and build ownership. • Provide guidance and support for the development and implementation of training modules on agroforestry under Output 2.1.2, and implementation of agroforestry value chains under Output 2.2.2. • Provide technical guidance for the implementation of forest restoration and management, agroforestry and small-scale greenhouses under Outputs 2.1.4-6. • Support ILM planning process. Minimal requirements: 1. Advanced university degree in natural resources management, forestry, or related fields. 2. At least five years of experience in the natural resources management or forestry sector in Afghanistan. 3. Demonstrated commitment to participatory and bottom-up approaches. 4. Working knowledge of English.	36 months	USD 2,515	USD 90,524
3. National Rangeland Management Specialist	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks, in close collaboration with the National Project Coordinator, the International Rangeland/Livestock Management Expert and other relevant technical consultants: • Support the development of training program under Output 1.1.1 (building on existing training programs and modules from previous initiatives). • Support the implementation of the participatory assessments under Output 1.1.3 and the CBNRM and holistic grazing plans under Outputs 1.1.4 and 2.1.3. • Work closely with MAIL, NEPA, other agency staff and local stakeholders to develop their capacity with regard to sustainable rangeland management and build ownership.	36 months	USD 2,515	USD 90,524

Position Title	Summary of responsibilities	No. days /months	Unit cost	Total budget
	• Lead the establishment of the learning sites under Output 2.1.1 • Lead the development and implementation of pastoralist field schools under Output 2.1.2. • Provide guidance and support for the implementation of holistic grazing and rangeland management under Output 2.1.3 and forest restoration and management under Output 2.1.4, in line with the CBNRM plans. • Support capacity building efforts under Outputs 3.1.1 and 3.2.2. • Support knowledge management and M&E. • In consultation with FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) livestock experts and WCS, provide technical guidance on animal health and the human-livestock-wildlife interface for the activities implemented under Components 1 and 2. Minimal requirements: 1. Advanced university degree in natural resources management, livestock management, agriculture, or related fields. 2. At least five years of experience in the natural resources management or livestock sector in Afghanistan. 3. Demonstrated commitment to participatory and bottom-up approaches. 4. Working knowledge of English.			
4. National GIS Expert	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • Lead geospatial analysis and environmental and biodiversity resources assessment of target districts to be used in participatory assessments under Output 1.1.3. • Work closely with MAIL and other agency staff to develop their capacity and build ownership. • Support capacity building on data collection, storage and management under Output 3.1.1, including strengthening of the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL. • Conduct soil carbon, productivity and land cover analysis for selected districts of Khost, Nuristan and Laghman and contribute to the compilation of SDG indicator 15.3.1. Contribute to community-based monitoring process under Outputs 2.1.3, 2.1.5 and 2.1.6. • Assess geospatial data available for selected provinces at national and international level. • Provide input data to accomplish land cover and land use compilation or, when data are available through national sources, quality assurance/ quality control (QA/QC) analysis. • Provide inputs for derivation of relevant agro-environmental indicators. (Output 3.1.1) Minimal requirements: 1. University degree in geography, environmental economics, or related fields. 2. At least five years' experience working as geospatial expert in government or UN system. 3. Working knowledge of English.	16 months	USD 2,515	USD 40,233

Position Title	Summary of responsibilities	No. days /months	Unit cost	Total budget
5. 3 x Provincial Project Coordinators	The incumbents will be responsible for the following tasks, in close collaboration with the National Project Coordinator and relevant technical consultants: • Lead the implementation of the project activities at the district and local levels, in close collaboration with local stakeholders, including coordination of CBNRM and landscape planning process. • Support implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Action Plan, and Environmental and Social Management Plan in close collaboration with the National Safeguards and Gender Expert. • Provide and channel guidance to local governments and to local communities at learning sites and in the field. • Provide capacity development to natural resources/agricultural/forestry units in the target districts. • Provide capacity development to RMAs/FMAs/CDCs and community enterprises. • Provide training and awareness raising to local stakeholders on sustainable rangeland management, forest restoration and management, and biodiversity conservation. • Lead field-based M&E, together with local communities, of project environmental and socio-economic impacts. • Support socio-economic survey of Nuristan NP under the lead of the National Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist. • Liaise regularly with provincial government and with PMU and national government. • Provide regular feedback and advance warning on conflicts, and assist with conflict resolution. Minimal requirements: 1. University degree in natural resources management, livestock management, agriculture, development or related fields. 2. Demonstrated experience in participatory natural resources management at the local level. 3. Excellent communication skills, with local governments, national and international experts and local communities. 4. Demonstrated ability to open up to new approaches and new practices.	3 x 44 months	USD 1,367	USD 180,454
6. 3 x Community Mobilizers	The incumbents will be responsible for the following tasks, in close collaboration with the Provincial Project Coordinators and relevant technical consultants: • Support the implementation of the project activities at the district and local levels, in close collaboration with local stakeholders, including coordination of CBNRM and landscape planning process. • Support implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Action Plan, and Environmental and Social Management Plan in close collaboration with the National Safeguards and Gender Expert. • Provide and channel guidance to local governments and to local communities at learning sites and in the field. • Provide capacity development to RMAs/FMAs. • Support socio-economic survey of Nuristan NP under the lead of the National Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist.	3 x 44 months	USD 1,062	USD 140,171

Position Title	Summary of responsibilities	No. days /months	Unit cost	Total budget
	• Provide training and awareness raising to local stakeholders on sustainable rangeland management, forest restoration and management, and biodiversity conservation. • Support field-based M&E, together with local communities, of project environmental and socio-economic impacts. • Provide regular feedback and advance warning on conflicts, and assist with conflict resolution. Minimal requirements: 1. Demonstrated experience in participatory natural resources management at the local level. 2. Excellent communication skills, with local governments, national and international experts and local communities. 3. Demonstrated ability to open up to new approaches and new practices.			
7. National Social Safeguards and Gender Specialist	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • Refine the gender and socio-economic analyses from the project design phase, including through local consultations. • Conduct social risk analysis at the beginning of project implementation and define mitigation measures as per the Environmental and Social Management Plan (including FPIC process) (Output 3.2.1; see separate Terms of Reference for social risk analysis). • Lead the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and Environmental and Social Management Plan in close collaboration with the National Project Coordinator and relevant technical consultants. • Ensure implementation of FPIC and socially inclusive community consultations. • Lead the development and implementation of a process to address any conflicts or land tenure issues that may arise. (Output 1.1.4). • Build capacity of the project staff, consultants and partners in inclusive and gender-sensitive community consultations, and relevant social safeguards issues. • Conduct socio-economic survey for Nuristan National Park in close consultation with/under close guidance from WCS. • Support capacity building efforts under Outputs 3.1.1 and 3.2.2. • Identify key gender issues in the project and key gender entry points. • Identify awareness and training needs regarding gender and livelihoods. • On a regular basis, monitor the effectiveness of the project with regards to addressing gender ad livelihood issues. • Contribute to the mobilization and engagement of women in project activities, including the identification and provision of all necessary measures to address gender-specific needs. • Prepare regular lessons learnt and best practices material. Minimal requirements: 1. Advanced university degree related to social issues or gender. 2. At least five years of experience working on gender and livelihoods in Afghanistan.	24 months	USD 2,515	USD 60,349

Position Title	Summary of responsibilities	No. days /months	Unit cost	Total budget
	3. Demonstrated experience successfully working with international partners on natural resource management, safeguards and/or gender issues. 4. Working knowledge of English.			
8. National Knowledge Management, M&E and Communications Specialist (50%)	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • In close collaboration and consultation with national and local stakeholders, lead the development and implementation of a knowledge and awareness strategy under Output 3.1.4. • Lead implementation of the project monitoring and evaluation, including adaptive learning and management. • Work closely with MAIL, NEPA and other agency staff to develop their capacity and build ownership, including strengthening of the 'Centre of Excellence for NRM' at MAIL. Minimal requirements: 1. Advanced university degree in natural resources management, communications, or related fields. 2. At least five years of experience working on knowledge management and M&E in international projects. 3. Good knowledge of English, analytical and writing skills.	12 months (partially covered from GEF-6 project)	USD 2,515	USD 30,175
9. National Value Chain Expert	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • Conduct value chain analysis for selected rangeland/livestock/ agroforestry products, including validation with local stakeholders, under Output 2.2.1. • Support implementation of selected value chain interventions under Output 2.2.2, including establishment or improvement of facilities, technical assistance and capacity building, sustainable production and conservation of medicinal plants and agroforestry products. Minimal requirements: 1. Advanced university degree in economics, business administration, or related fields. 2. At least five years of experience in developing community livelihoods and/or value chains. 3. Working knowledge of English.	32 months (50%)	USD 1,062	USD 33,981
10. Senior Finance Officer (50%)	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • Assist the National Project Coordinator in financial management of the project, including preparation of budgets, expense reports and audits. • Be responsible for and prepare the project's financial reports such as quarterly expense reports, progress reports and implementation reports. • Assist the National Project Coordinator in drafting proposed budget reallocations or revisions, and obtaining approval by the PSC as well as FAO to formalise these annually as part of the GEF budget reconciliation. • Assist the National Project Coordinator in preparing and monitoring consultancy contracts and sub-agreements. • Coordinate reporting on co-finance contributions for the project. • Operational capacity building of MAIL to strengthen national execution capacity and address recommendations from HACT assessment.	48 months (50%)	USD 1,629	USD 78,198

Position Title	Summary of responsibilities	No. days /months	Unit cost	Total budget
	Minimal requirements: 1. Advanced university degree in finance, accounting, or related fields. 2. At least five years of experience in financial management of international donor projects. 3. Working knowledge of English.			
10. Operations/ Procurement Officer (50%)	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • Ensure the timely provision of project inputs (personnel, technical support services, sub-contracts, training, equipment and supplies) directly by the Organization or, when appropriate, through contractors; • Assist in day-to-day activities related to the logistics and procurement component of the project; • Ensure preparation of analytical reports on project performance, as required; • Observing the threshold as established by FAO, collect quotations from local vendors in Afghanistan, prepare summary and control and monitor delivery and payment for supplied items, simple works or services; • Assist in preparation of Purchase Orders and ensure that the established procurement procedures are strictly adhered to at all times; • Maintain up to date accurate logistics records i.e. database of all items purchased and keep track of them on regular basis; • Contribute to operational capacity building of MAIL to strengthen national execution capacity and address recommendations from HACT assessment.	48 months (50%)	USD 1,629	USD 78,198
12. Young Professionals	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • Provide assistance to the PMU and the Centre of Excellence for smooth project implementation.	3 x 48 months	USD 414	USD 59,616
13. Veterinarian(s)	Provide training to PAIL/DAIL staff and Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) as part of Output 2.1.3.	100 days	USD 150	USD 15,000
14. Admin/ Finance Assistant	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • Act as focal point of administrative and financial matters of the project in close collaboration with the project and be responsible for ensuring the smooth administration. • Project Financial and Management Accounting System: Ensure that accounting records are kept up to date, are reliable and are maintained according to FAO accounting practices. • Prepare request for FRO (fund release orders), ensure all the supporting documents are available and in accordance with FAO rules. • Supervise all admin/finance related matters of project set-up and daily management of project activities, personnel, assets, inputs, and contacts. • Monitor validity of received Field Authorizations and ceiling of authorized amounts to ensure that expenditures remain within authorized levels; provide preliminary clearances for other Field Authorizations. • Liaise with the FAO Representation in the country with regards to security clearance of individual who are travelling inside or out country. • Liaise closely with the FAO Representation in the country with regards to the procurement of supplies and equipment, assist in custom clearance procedures and maintain inventory records at project level. • Provide administrative support to ensure compliance with regulations for management of store and office supplies, travel related matters, travel	48 months	USD 1,768	USD 84,862

Position Title	Summary of responsibilities	No. days /months	Unit cost	Total budget
	authorizations, management of personnel & transport, logistic for missions, workshops, seminars, study tours and other capacity building. • Help maintain a record keeping system for project correspondence, documents, reports, etc., in accordance with established classification system. • Assist in human resources related issues of project, follow-up on contract extension/preparation and other subject related issues. • Contribute to operational capacity building of MAIL to strengthen national execution capacity and address recommendations from HACT assessment. Minimal requirements: 1. University degree in Business Administration, Finance, Accounting, Economics or equivalent. 2. At least five years of relevant and professional experience in the performance of the tasks described above. 3. Working knowledge of English.			
15. National Driver	The incumbent will be responsible for the following tasks: • Drive the project staff and consultants and their official visitors on official trips, in armored/soft skin vehicles in the duty station and other locations inside the country, as required. • Meet staff and official visitors at the airport, hotel check-in, pick and drop and other local formalities. • Log official trips, daily mileage, fuel consumption, transportation / vehicle related expenditures, vehicle servicing, repairs, etc. and report regularly to Admin/Finance of project on servicing or maintenance needs. • Ensure day-to-day maintenance of the assigned vehicle(s). • Collect and inform the office on security and road conditions, as necessary and ensure safe travel on different sites. • When needed, assist the staff/ project personnel in performing simple clerical duties such as making and answering telephone calls, making photocopies, keeping records, etc. Minimal requirements: 1. Completion of secondary school education. Formal drivers training with a valid driver's license/certification to operate assigned vehicle following local rules and regulations. 2. At least five years of work experience as a driver and relevant experience in the performance of the tasks described above.	48 months	USD 1062	USD 50,971

Annex N: FAO's Roles in Internal Organization

Financial Records. FAO shall maintain a separate account in United States dollars for the project's GEF resources showing all income and expenditures. Expenditures incurred in a currency other than United States dollars shall be converted into United States dollars at the United Nations operational rate of exchange on the date of the transaction. FAO shall administer the project in accordance with its regulations, rules and directives.

Financial Reports. The Budget Holder (BH) shall prepare six-monthly project expenditure accounts and final accounts for the project, showing amount budgeted for the year, amount expended since the beginning of the year, and separately, the un-liquidated obligations as follows:

Details of project expenditures on a component-by-component and output-by-output basis, reported in line with project budget codes as set out in the project document, as at 30 June and 31 December each year.

Final accounts on completion of the project on a component-by-component and output-by-output basis, reported in line with project budget codes as set out in the project document.

A final statement of account in line with FAO Oracle project budget codes, reflecting actual final expenditures under the project, when all obligations have been liquidated.

The BH will submit the above financial reports for review and monitoring by the Lead Technical Officer (LTO) and the FAO GEF Coordination Unit. Financial reports for submission to the donor (GEF) will be prepared in accordance with the provisions in the GEF Financial Procedures Agreement and submitted by the FAO Finance Division.

Budget Revisions. Semi-annual budget revisions will be prepared by the BH in accordance with FAO standard guidelines and procedures.

Responsibility for Cost Overruns. The BH is authorized to enter into commitments or incur expenditures up to a maximum of 20 percent over and above the annual amount foreseen in the project budget under any budget sub-line provided the total cost of the annual budget is not exceeded.

Any cost overrun (expenditure in excess of the budgeted amount) on a specific budget sub-line over and above the 20 percent flexibility should be discussed with the GEF Coordination Unit with a view to ascertaining whether it will involve a major change in project scope or design. If it is deemed to be a minor change, the BH shall prepare a budget revision in accordance with FAO standard procedures. If it involves a major change in the project's objectives or scope, a budget revision and justification should be prepared by the BH for discussion with the GEF Secretariat.

Savings in one budget sub-line may not be applied to overruns of more than 20 percent in other sub-lines even if the total cost remains unchanged, unless this is specifically authorized by the GEF Coordination Unit upon presentation of the request. In such a case, a revision to the project document amending the budget will be prepared by the BH.

Under no circumstances can expenditures exceed the approved total project budget or be approved beyond the not-to exceed (NTE) date of the project. Any over-expenditure is the responsibility of the BH.

Audit. The project shall be subject to the internal and external auditing procedures provided for in FAO financial regulations, rules and directives and in keeping with the Financial Procedures Agreement between the GEF Trustee and FAO.

The audit regime at FAO consists of an external audit provided by the Auditor-General (or persons exercising an equivalent function) of a member nation appointed by the Governing Bodies of the Organization and reporting directly to

them, and an internal audit function headed by the FAO Inspector-General who reports directly to the Director-General. This function operates as an integral part of the Organization under policies established by senior management, and furthermore has a reporting line to the governing bodies. Both functions are required under the Basic Texts of FAO which establish a framework for the terms of reference of each.

Internal audits of imprest accounts, records, bank reconciliation and asset verification take place at FAO field and liaison offices on a cyclical basis.

Procurement. Careful procurement planning is necessary for securing goods, services and works in a timely manner, on a "Best Value for Money" basis. It requires analysis of needs and constraints, including forecast of the reasonable timeframe required to execute the procurement process. Procurement and delivery of inputs in technical cooperation projects will follow FAO's rules and regulations for the procurement of supplies, equipment and services (i.e. Manual Sections 502 and 507). Manual Section 502: "Procurement of Goods, Works and Services" establishes the principles and procedures that apply to procurement of all goods, works and services on behalf of the Organization, in all offices and in all locations, with the exception of the procurement actions described in Procurement Not Governed by Manual Section 502. Manual Section 507 establishes the principles and rules that govern the use of Letters of Agreement (LoA) by FAO for the timely acquisition of services from eligible entities in a transparent and impartial manner, taking into consideration economy and efficiency to achieve an optimum combination of expected whole life costs and benefits.

As per the guidance in FAO's Project Cycle Guide, the BH will draw up an annual procurement plan for major items, which will be the basis of requests for procurement actions during implementation. The first procurement plan will be prepared at the time of project start-up, if not sooner, in close consultation with the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), National Project Coordinator (NPC) and Lead Technical Unit (LTU). The plan will include a description of the goods, works, or services to be procured, estimated budget and source of funding, schedule of procurement activities and proposed method of procurement. In situations where exact information is not yet available, the procurement plan should at least contain reasonable projections that will be corrected as information becomes available.

The procurement plan shall be updated every 12 months and submitted to FAO BH and LTO for clearance, together with the AWP/B and annual financial statement of expenditures report for the next instalment of funds.

The BH, in close collaboration with the NPC, the LTO and the Budget and Operations Officer will procure the equipment and services provided for in the detailed budget in Appendix 3, in line with the Annual Work Plan and Budget and in accordance with FAO's rules and regulations.

Annex O: FAO and government obligations

(a) This Annex sets out the basic conditions under which FAO will assist the Government in the implementation of the Project described in the attached Project Document.

(b)The achievement of the objectives set by the Project shall be the joint responsibility of the Government and FAO.

FAO OBLIGATIONS

1. FAO will be responsible for the provision, with due diligence and efficiency, of assistance as provided in the Project Document. FAO and the Government will consult closely with respect to all aspects of the project.

2. Assistance under the project will be made available to the Government, or to such entity as provided in the Project Document, and will be furnished and received: (i) in accordance with relevant decisions of the Governing Bodies of FAO, and with its constitutional and budgetary provisions; and (ii) subject to the receipt by FAO of the necessary contribution from the Resource Partner. FAO will disburse the funds received from the Resource Partner in accordance with its regulations, rules and policies. All financial accounts and statements will be expressed in United States Dollars and will be subject exclusively to the internal and external auditing procedures laid down in the financial regulations, rules and directives of FAO.

3. FAO's responsibilities regarding financial management and execution of the project will be as stipulated in the Project Document. FAO may, in consultation with the Government, implement project components through partners identified in accordance with FAO procedures. These partners will have primary responsibility for delivering specific project outputs and activities to the project in accordance with the partner's rules and regulations, and subject to monitoring and oversight, including audit, by FAO.

4. Assistance under the project provided directly by FAO, including technical assistance, oversight and monitoring services, will be carried out in accordance with FAO regulations, rules and policies, including on recruitment, travel, salaries and emoluments of national and international personnel recruited by FAO, procurement of services, supplies and equipment, and subcontracting. The candidacies of senior international technical staff for recruitment by FAO will be submitted to the Government for clearance following FAO procedures.

5. Equipment procured by FAO will remain the property of FAO for the duration of the project. The Government will provide safe custody of such equipment, which is entrusted to it prior to the end of the project. The ultimate destination of equipment procured for the project will be decided by FAO in consultation with the Government and the Resource Partner.

GOVERNMENT OBLIGATIONS

6. With a view to the rapid and efficient execution of the project, the Government shall grant to FAO, its staff and all other persons performing services on behalf of FAO, the necessary facilities including:

(i) The prompt issuance, free of charge, of any visas or permits required;

(ii) Any permits necessary for the importation and, where appropriate, the subsequent exportation, of equipment, materials and supplies required for use in connection with the project and exemption from the payment of all customs duties or other levies or charges relating to such importation or exportation;

(iii) Exemption from the payment of any sales or other tax on local purchases of equipment, materials and supplies for use in connection with the project;

(iv) Any permits necessary for the importation of property belonging to and intended for the personal use of FAO staff or of other persons performing services on behalf of FAO, and for the subsequent exportation of such property; and

(v) Prompt customs clearance of the equipment, materials, supplies and property referred to in subparagraphs (ii) and (iv) above.

7. The Government will apply to FAO, its property, funds and assets, its officials and all the persons performing services on its behalf in connection with the project: (i) the provisions of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies; and (ii) the United Nations currency exchange rate. The persons performing services on behalf of FAO will include any organization, firm or other entity that FAO may designate to take part in the execution of the project.

8. The Government will be responsible for dealing with any claims which may be brought by third parties against FAO, its personnel or other persons performing services on its behalf in connection with the project, and will hold them harmless in respect to any claim or liability arising in connection with the project, except when it is agreed by FAO and the Government that such claims arise from gross negligence or willful misconduct of such persons.

9. The Government will be responsible for the recruitment, salaries, emoluments and social security measures of its own national staff assigned to the project. The Government will also provide, as and when required for the project, the facilities and supplies indicated in the Project Document. The Government will grant FAO staff, the Resource Partner and persons acting on this partner's behalf, access to the project offices and sites, and to any material or documentation relating to the project, and will provide any relevant information to such staff or persons.

REPORTING AND EVALUATION

10. FAO will report to the Government (and to the Resource Partner) as scheduled in the Project Document.

11. The Government will agree to the dissemination by FAO of information such as Project descriptions and objectives and results, for the purpose of informing or educating the public. Patent rights, copyright, and any other intellectual property rights over any material or discoveries resulting from FAO assistance under this project will belong to FAO. FAO hereby grants to the Government a non-exclusive royalty-free license to use, publish, translate and distribute, privately or publicly, any such material or discoveries within the country for non-commercial purposes. In accordance with requirements of some Resource Partners, FAO reserves the right to place information and reports in the public domain.

12. The project will be subject to independent evaluation according to the arrangements agreed between the Government, the Resource Partner and FAO. The evaluation report will be publicly accessible, in accordance with the applicable policies, along with the management response. FAO is authorized to prepare a brief summary of the report for the purpose of broad dissemination of its main findings, issues, lessons and recommendations, as well as to make judicious use of the report as an input to evaluation synthesis studies.

FINAL PROVISIONS

13. Any dispute or controversy arising out of or in connection with the project or this agreement will be amicably settled through consultations, or through such other means as agreed between the Government and FAO.

14. Nothing in or related to any provision in this Agreement or document or activity of the Project shall be deemed (i) a waiver of the privileges and immunities of FAO; (ii) the acceptance by FAO of the applicability of the laws of any country to FAO, and: (iii) the acceptance by FAO of the jurisdiction of the courts of any country over disputes arising from assistance activities under the Project.

15. This agreement may be amended or terminated by mutual written consent. Termination will take effect 60 days after receipt by either party of written notice from the other party. In the event of termination, the obligations assumed by the parties under this agreement will survive its termination to the extent necessary to permit the orderly conclusion of activities, and the withdrawal of personnel, funds and property of FAO.

16. This agreement will enter into force upon signature by the duly authorized representatives of both parties.