

Management Response: Implementation Plan for Evaluation Recommendations

General Information

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Project Evaluation Title	Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project "Achieving Biodiversity Conservation Through Creation, Effective Management and Spatial Designation of Protected Areas and Capacity Building in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GEF Id 6990)
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Implementation Plan

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1	A Phase 2 of the project would be worthwhile building on the successes noted to date. This can especially make immediate use of the Valorisation process which has been hailed a success. Future design of transboundary PA projects is needed, especially with Montenegro (towards Tebinje and Mount Orjen area). This may benefit from including important elements of spatial planning and implementation of new approaches towards livelihood economic diversification in PAs . New	Plan to initiate a targeted Phase 2 Project	Important	Partners	Donor agencies and the Govt of BIH (Partners)	12-24 Months	Partially Accepted	Resource mobilization depends on the country's request and availability of resources.	Will be taken into consideration when developing a new project proposals both at national and regional levels (especially in terms of transboundary protected areas). Currently, UNDP is implementing a GEF 7 project on sustainability of protected areas and climate mitigation that will build upon the results of the GEF6 project. The meetings

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	<p>projects (GEF8) are being designed to this effect plus a new UNDP project on financing PAs through sustainable recreation and through this project, it is hoped that UNDP are able to build upon the good work that UNEP had started especially the possibility of mainstreaming and upscaling this projects work to better integrate activities at the State level (including potential 1 State wide information management system (Component 3). What is needed as a potential follow on "focus" is for UNEP to consider designing (in partnership with other donors) an improved Ecosystem Accounting related project that builds upon the work that is starting through UNDP (2022) but with a key focus on financial sustainability of PAs and the need to mainstream PA funding (biodiversity conservation) into national budget setting. This is needed as the country is responsible for maintaining PAs and hence more training on biodiversity and ecosystem accounting to Parliamentarians is required into the future to help sustain the work and impetus for continued PA development that has now started.</p> <p>Any future project (Phase 2) would be better focused to improve management of a few PAs as opposed to upscaling more PAs across the country. It would be better to allocated funds and time to making sure a few PAs are set up and managed properly. This would have much more impact in terms of outreach that having more partially complete PAs (all information that currently resides in the CHM/Biodiversity Monitoring System). Future protection of underground caves</p>								<p>are ongoing, at the FBiH level, to proceed with the advocacy activities to designate remaining 4 areas in FBiH as protected.</p>

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	<p>isperhaps a priority strategy as these features easier to protect that PAs that are open to damage from human access etc. Efforts to combine biodiversity conservation with climate resiliency and economic development can occur. New projects (GEF8) are being designed to this effect plus a new UNDP project on financing PAs through sustainable recreation and through this project, it is hoped that UNDP are able to build upon the good work that UNEP had started especially the possibility of mainstreaming and upscaling this projects work to better integrate activities at the State level (including potential 1 State wide information management system (Component 3).</p>								
2	<p>A Federal Spatial Plan must be updated to better inform the promotion of and the need for PAs. These are the catalyst for progress in terms of biodiversity conservation. Municipalities then must have their spatial plans in place that align with that of the Federation. Cantons also need to have their own spatial plans where biodiversity matters can be integrated within them – the importance of updating the BIM is then key here in addition to upscaling the valorisation process which has been a success. This should link to a series of State defined indicators agreed upon and monitored accordingly inline with the NBSAP). This is key as everything must be defined at the State level and not just at the FBiH and RS level. A review of Land Use in the State (RS and FBiH) is also required here as there is no common vision in place on land use change</p>	<p>Support the enhancement of a Federal Spatial Plan and supporting Cantonal / Municipality Plans to help mainstream biodiversity conservation and Protected Areas management</p>	Critical	Partners	Donor agencies and the Govt of BiH (Partners)	12-24 Months	Accepted		<p>This is the task of the Federal and State governments. The Spatial plan at the country level (the Spatial Plan of BiH) in force is the Spatial plan from 1981. Provided the spatial effects and changes from 1981 to this date, the new State level Spatial plan needs to be developed and enacted based on which the lower levels of government can develop and enact their respective plans. So far, there were no initiatives in this regard, provided the current political situation in the country. However, if the BiH governments express the willingness or initiative in this regard,</p>

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	and where PAs fit within this overall discussion. This is linked to the political arrangements in place at Canton and Municipality level and hence a coordinated long term agreement to PA management will continue to be difficult unless dictated by State level intervention.								UNEP can provide their assistance to the governments.
3	A critical recommendation from this TE analysis is that there should continue to be meaningful engagement with all stakeholders (after the projects conclusion) to encourage for sustained monitoring and maintenance of project gains. A key finding is that although PAs were established in Outcome 1, there is now a desperate need to set up strategic financing strategies (supported by PA Management Plans) so that each PA has the opportunity to become more self-financing and hence sustainable long term. To this end, there is a need to continue to promote high-level political commitment towards implementing PAs ensuring that budgets to sustain their effectiveness are established into the medium to long term. This should include the drafting of appropriate legal documents and creation of high-level coordination mechanisms (partnership engagement agreements or similar) to help move such important commitment focused agendas. For this to be properly mainstreamed, an improved emphasis is needed to make the economic case for PAs to help to upscale PAs in the context of a financially sustainable “network” of effect sites for all. In fact, more effort was needed towards the end of the project on how the Municipalities/Cantons etc could	Support and offer advice on increasing budgetary support for biodiversity conservation and Protected Area Management in BiH	Critical	Partners	Govt of BiH and Donor agencies (Partners)	As soon as possible	Accepted		The offer and advice will be provided within the development of the NBSAP BiH, through the Early Action Grants that UNEP is implementing (project needs to start in the Western Balkan countries in 2024).

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	<p>apply the key outputs of the project (CHM, biodiversity monitoring system etc) and how future project proposals could be written to build upon the key successes of the project.</p> <p>To support this, there remains a generic need in RS and FBiH to initiate new training programmes for decision makers on PAs plus climate financing options, techniques and deliverable models. Capacity building of PA managers is deemed essential to make them more proactive in fund raising, networking with other PAs and replication of good practices, extending tourism offers, connecting with local communities, schools etc. Cluster Una Sana could be one good example of how local community develop and diversify its touristic offers to the nearby National Park at Una.</p>								
4	<p>Advocacy for the establishment of a specialized institution- Institute for nature protection in FBiH, was envisioned by the NBSAP (National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan) BiH and now within the ESAP (Environmental Strategy and Action Plan) FBiH.</p>	<p>Advocacy for the establishment of a specialized institution- Institute for nature protection in FBiH</p>	<p>Opportunity for improvement</p>	<p>Partners</p>	<p>Govt of BiH/Donor Organisations (Partners)</p>	<p>24-36 months</p>	<p>Accepted</p>		<p>This recommendation is already envisaged by the Federal Law on Nature protection (2003, a.2009, a.2016) as well as by the secondary legislation and the NBSAP (2015-2020). However, with the most recent development of the Environmental strategy and action plan of the Federation of BiH, the competency of the Institute for nature protection in FBiH is temporarily entrusted to the Environmental Protection Fund of the FBiH.</p> <p>Environmental strategy and action plan of the FBiH, pg 60: "(b) Environmental Protection Fund of the</p>

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									Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (responsible for collecting earmarked funds, promoting and financing the preparation, implementation, and development of programs, projects, and similar activities in the field of conservation, sustainable use, protection, and improvement of the environment, with additional entrusted tasks as professional institutions until the establishment of the Institute)."
5	As FBiH doesn't have an Institution similar to RS and this has meant that at the national level, embracing biodiversity and PA matters (setting up PAs with ease etc) is not consistent across the country. A similar Institute that is present in RS needs to be considered for FBiH that is suitably resourced. From this, there is a need for an Inter-entity body to promote biodiversity and PA matters at the national, Municipality and Canton level. One recommended approach would be to review the institutional capacity and arrangements of the Environment Fund (in FBiH) to help replicate the responsibilities and mandates of the Institute to cover FBiH. The Environmental Fund of FBiH is responsible for collecting and distributing funds with the main goal of improving the state of the environment in the FBiH. In accordance with its legal and sub-legal obligations and documents, the Fund conducts open calls	Standardise institutional capacity needs to better manage Protected Areas across the State.	Opportunity for improvement	Partners	Govt of BiH/Donor Organisations (Partners)	24-36 months	Accepted		In Federation of BiH there is a Cantonal institution that manages 5 protected areas in the Canton of Sarajevo (and was established based on a Cantonal Law for nature protection). But the overall enhancement of the institutional capacities and action plan for this recommendation is necessary to attain the objective of the overall better management of protected areas in the Federation of BiH.

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	every year. Since its establishment in 2010, the Fund has conducted 19 open calls. Each open call has several LOTs covering the main sectors of the environment in the FBiH.								
6	<p>The CHM is in fact not being used in all Cantons/Municipalities in FBiH though it has great value to store key reports for the media to access key documents etc. There is therefore a need to mainstream the BIM for the general public benefit and from this to improve biodiversity knowledge. To be of national value, the CHM portal must be a useable portal where data at the level of BiH regarding biodiversity issues could be obtained with ease (e.g. integrated maps of PAs in BiH, institutional and legislation frameworks of entities, news on biodiversity, good practices, scientific works and etc).</p> <p>There now needs to be an agreement in place to whom should be the custodians on this (and the CHM) data. The evaluation learned that some PA managers still do not know about the location and value of the CHM system. Continued support is therefore needed to encourage the role of biodiversity outreach with education of the next generation (schools etc) being perhaps of more value than focusing on decision maker training. The fact that no single "system" was created (as originally planned) meant that it would require two separate ISABs to be created to represent each Entity. The national preference to have two separate systems was a clear mandate that UNEP needed to accept. The potential for an integrated system into the future</p>	Initiate programmes to update and utilise the Clearing House Mechanism across the country.	Opportunity for improvement	Partners	Govt of BiH/ Donor organisations (Partners)	24 months	Partially Accepted	Depends on the availability of resources	Will be considered in the future project developments and initiatives, depending on the availability of funds. Please note we don't have any project in the pipeline in the near future.

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	<p>(at State level) may need future detailed consideration. New modules (within the CHM) need to be defined to make it more meaningful to all decision makers. Such modules may include monitoring of Protected Species, Red List Species (as currently this is not being designed in line with IUCN standards) and also possibly a geo-heritage module in the future. Recommend introducing new CHM modules (via the Env Fund) on Red List species and Protected Species/habitats (caves) for the FBiH). This module may be better implemented in the first instance within RS followed by a smaller pilot module in FBiH. The design of a QR code mobile phone app that allows visitors to PAs/National Parks to access key information could be a future activity to pursue.</p>								
7	<p>UNEP needs to strengthen their position /offer to better support country level needs. For example, a GEF8 engagement strategy model is needed within UNEP (and UNDP) to help elevate the environmental agenda in the Western Balkans. Lack of clarity on this matter is impeding progress on future regional and national support to a degree. An Executing function of both UNEP and UNDP is required. This is needed as nations demand that a UN agency represents them as an Executing Entity (EE) as at the State level examples exist where moneys get lost at the State level and consultancies cannot get paid etc (Organisational level reform is needed to help better convey Implementing Entities v Executing Entities needs within the region as it is argued that UNEP should</p>	<p>Strengthen the visibility and influence of UNEP in the Western Balkans</p>	<p>Important</p>	<p>Project</p>	<p>Project Team</p>	<p>As soon as possible</p>	<p>Accepted</p>		<p>This recommendation has been received from many institutions in the Western Balkans and communicated to respective UNEP offices.</p>

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	<p>be playing a more visible and active role to better communicate this matter. Linked to Recommendation 1, the future design of transboundary PA projects would be of value, especially focusing on partnership projects with Montenegro (towards Tebinje and Mount Orjen area).</p>								