



Project Identification Form (PIF) entry – Full Sized Project – GEF - 7

## Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management (SLM) for Large-Scale Impact in the Grazing Lands of Limpopo and Northern Cape provinces in South Africa

### Part I: Project Information

**GEF ID**

10179

**Project Type**

FSP

**Type of Trust Fund**

GET

**Project Title**

Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management (SLM) for Large-Scale Impact in the Grazing Lands of Limpopo and Northern Cape provinces in South Africa

**Countries**

South Africa,

**Agency(ies)**

IUCN,

**Other Executing Partner(s)**
**Executing Partner Type**

DEA in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in South Africa

Government

**GEF Focal Area**

Land Degradation

**Taxonomy**

Focal Areas, Influencing models, Stakeholders, Private Sector, Financial intermediaries and market facilitators, Capital providers, Communications, Behavior change, Awareness Raising, Beneficiaries, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Non-Governmental Organization, Gender Equality, Gender results areas, Participation and leadership, Access and control over natural resources, Access to benefits and services, Capacity Development, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender-sensitive indicators, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Women groups, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Learning, Adaptive management, Theory of change, Indicators to measure change, Enabling Activities, Knowledge Exchange

**Rio Markers****Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 1

**Climate Change Adaptation**

Climate Change Adaptation 1

**Duration**

60 In Months

**Agency Fee(\$)**

326,683

**Submission Date**

4/5/2019

## A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
LD-1-1	GET	3,629,816	145,114,046
	<b>Total Project Cost (\$)</b>	<b>3,629,816</b>	<b>145,114,046</b>

## B. Indicative Project description summary

### Project Objective

to scale-up and mainstream sustainable land management for large-scale impact in the grazing lands of target sites in Limpopo and Northern Cape of South Africa

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 1: Informed decision making and action for SLM	Technical Assistance	Integrated SLM responses (including restoration and drought resilience actions) are implemented in targeted landscapes, based on improved assessments and diagnosis	<p>1.1: Restoration and SLM priorities, including LDN targets and associated SDG targets, are validated by functioning inter-sectoral landscape planning mechanisms in the project municipalities;</p> <p>1.2: Target municipalities develop updated land health assessments (including ecosystem health and biodiversity indicators) and cost-benefit evaluations for restoration options;</p> <p>1.3: Tools, guidelines and training materials are developed and used for SLM and landscape management;</p> <p>1.4: Stakeholders (men, women and youth) at national and sub-national levels are trained in landscape management, sustainable land management, and landscape restoration techniques</p>	GET	671,256	25,000,000

Component 2: Governance and institutions	Technical Assistance	Government and customary land management institutions, are strengthened to equitably coordinate natural resource management and improve response to recurrent drought emergencies	<p>2.1: Participatory landscape management plans are used to guide investment decisions and policy dialogue;</p> <p>2.2: Community management plans and resource use agreements are published as the basis for strengthening land rights and transparent governance;</p> <p>2.3: Organizational capacity of community institutions is strengthened to effectively govern natural resources and respond to emergencies;</p> <p>2.4: Priority community-based SLM actions are supported through community institutions</p>	GET	1,006,884	30,000,000
Component 3: Market and Finance for scale up	Investment	Communities financially benefit from investments from the private sector for sustainably produced commodities	<p>3.1: Innovative financing mechanisms are developed for restoration and SLM, including community SLM funds, microfinance, blended finance and land restoration trust funds;</p> <p>3.2: Private sector commitments extended to targeted area for sustainably produced commodities, especially livestock</p> <p>3.3: Investment partnerships are developed between small and medium sized enterprises, national finance institutions, and local men and women land users;</p> <p>3.4: Investment proposals and business plans are developed for scale up of innovative finance in SLM</p>	GET	1,258,605	79,114,046

Component 4: Learning and policy dialogue	Technical Assistance	Sustainable land Management is mainstreamed at the local, national and regional level	4.1:Policy recommendations for LDN attainment are developed based on detailed review of barriers and opportunities and dialogue with key stakeholder groups at national and local levels  4.2:Investment opportunities are disseminated through implementation of a communication and outreach strategy, targeting audiences from local to national levels  4.3:Project management is adapted according to results-based monitoring	GET	520,223	10,000,000
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**Sub Total (\$)** 3,456,968 144,114,046

**Project Management Cost (PMC) ⓘ**

GET 172,848 1,000,000

**Sub Total(\$)** 172,848 1,000,000

**Total Project Cost(\$)** 3,629,816 145,114,046

## C. Indicative sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Government	Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (through LandCare project)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	66,805,000
Government	Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,000,000
Government	Department of Environmental Affairs	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	23,117,379
GEF Agency	IUCN	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	50,000
Private Sector	Land Bank of South Africa <sup>1</sup>	Loans	Investment mobilized	44,341,667
Private Sector	Conservation South Africa (CSA) – Meat Neutrality <sup>2</sup>	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,000,000
Government	Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (through land care project)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,000,000
CSO	Conservation South Africa (CSA)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	800,000
			<b>Total Project Cost(\$)</b>	<b>145,114,046</b>

**Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified**

The project will partner with Land Bank the Meat Naturally project, which will leveraged most of the investment mobilised through the value chains involved in the project area. The links between this investment mobilised and the co-financing estimates will be further revised and confirmed during project preparation.

**D. Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Focal Area</b>	<b>Programming of Funds</b>	<b>Amount(\$)</b>	<b>Fee(\$)</b>	<b>Total(\$)</b>
IUCN	GET	South Africa	Land Degradation		3,629,816	326,683	3,956,499
<b>Total GEF Resources(\$)</b>					<b>3,629,816</b>	<b>326,683</b>	<b>3,956,499</b>

**E. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)**

PPG Amount (\$)

150,000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

13,500

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)
IUCN	GET	South Africa	Land Degradation		150,000	13,500
<b>Total Project Costs(\$)</b>					<b>150,000</b>	<b>13,500</b>

## Core Indicators

### Indicator 3 Area of land restored

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
157000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

### Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural land restored

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
157,000.00			

### Indicator 3.2 Area of Forest and Forest Land restored

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and shrublands restored **i**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (incl. estuaries, mangroves) restored **i**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas) **i**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
875000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified) ⓘ**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

**Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes that meets national or international third party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations (hectares) ⓘ**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

**Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems ⓘ**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

875,000.00

## Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided ⓘ

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

## Documents (Please upload document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title	Submitted

## Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment ⓘ

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	677,138			
Male	500,000			

<b>Total</b>	1177138	0	0	0
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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

## Part II. Project Justification

### 1a. Project Description

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

#### Land Use patterns and Land degradation in South Africa

Land degradation and desertification are among the most critical environmental issues in South Africa, and are closely linked to food security, poverty, urbanization, climate change, and biodiversity loss. Approximately six million households depend on agriculture for livelihoods and subsistence. Although the smallholder agricultural sector employs 1.3 million households, the main limiting factor in South Africa is the availability of water due to highly uneven and unreliable rainfall and relatively low levels of irrigation potential (around 1.3 million hectares). Livestock herding dominates South Africa's land use and is found on over 65 million hectares. In South Africa, 91% of the country is in drylands category, making it susceptible to desertification (DEA, 2016). Areas of severe degradations, assessed in terms soil erosion, salinization, invasive species, land cover change and drought assessment, closely match the distribution of communal rangelands.

Approximately 18% of South Africa's land mass is estimated to be affected by land degradation, including the impacts of inappropriate farming practices, mining, forestry and urban development (NAP, 2018). However, other studies indicate much higher levels of land degradation, Garland et al. (2000) estimate that 70% of South Africa is affected by varying intensities of soil erosion. Land Degradation assessments can be highly sensitive to different definitions and indicators, which explains the lack of consensus. The highest rate of vegetation loss occurs in Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal provinces and in communal areas in the Eastern Cape. Major drivers in these States are overgrazing, bush clearance for cultivation and settlement, and exploitation of wood and non-timber forest products (DEAT, 2004; Hoffman Ashwell, 2001).

Grazing lands are further affected by bush encroachment, where grasses are replaced by woody species and frequently by invasive alien non-palatable species, such as *Prosopis* spp. Grossman and Gandar (1989, cited in Hoffman et al. 1999) estimated that over 28 million hectares, out of 43 million hectares of savanna vegetation in total, are threatened by bush encroachment, representing more than half savannah area.

Land degradation and desertification in South Africa contributes to catchment degradation and deterioration of the quality and quantity of water resources, including sedimentation. It also contributes to soil degradation, through water and wind erosion, salinity, sodicity, compaction, water logging, and acidification. Together, these reduce agricultural productivity and threatens food security. Eroded soils also have very low resilience, particularly where rainfall is low and unreliable (DEAT, 2004). Northern Cape, Northwest, parts of Free State, Limpopo and Western Cape provinces experienced very high wind erosion, mainly driven by climatic factors (DLDD report, 2015). In total, soil erosion is estimated to cost South Africa an estimated US\$125 million annually in dam sedimentation and increased water treatment costs, while the loss of soil nutrients through degradation costs over US\$90 million (RSA, 2012).

The nature and severity of land degradation in South Africa differs between commercial and communal areas. A study found that communal areas have a higher combined degradation index for vegetation and soil (Hoffman et al. 1999). Communal land is also likely to be significantly more impacted by bush encroachment than commercially farmed areas, which has increased by up to 30% in the past three decades in some communal areas. This is attributed to factors such as extinction of indigenous browsing herbivores and changes in the fire regime (Hoffman et al. 1999).

Climate change (including effects of increased atmospheric carbon) may complicate the problems of desertification, bush encroachment and invasive alien species, particularly in grazing lands. Increased temperatures are likely to provide a more conducive niche for a variety of pests and pathogens that threaten agricultural and livestock activities. Increased temperatures and increased evaporation may increase the incidence of heat stress as well as livestock water requirements in extensive rangeland livestock production. South Africa is one of the driest countries in Africa and is currently suffering the effects of drought. Drought has devastating economic, environment and social impacts in terms of loss of human life, food insecurity, reduced agricultural productivity, and degradation of natural resources. In addition, drought is a major disaster in South Africa in terms of total economic loss and the number of people affected.

An important aspect of land degradation in South Africa is the differences in the forms and severity of degradation between commercial and communal agricultural systems in the country. A perception-based survey undertaken by Hoffman et al. (1999) to identify the main forms and locations of degradation in South Africa found large differences, and found that communal areas had a higher combined degradation index for vegetation and soil. Communally held land is also likely to be significantly more impacted by bush encroachment than commercially farmed areas, and may have increased by as much as 30% in the past three decades in some communally farmed areas in response to factors such as the local extinction of indigenous browsing herbivores and changes in the fire regime (Hoffman et al. 1999).

#### Land Use Patterns and Land Degradation in Limpopo and Northern Cape Provinces

Although the land degradation index map (see Figure 1 in Annex) for South Africa shows that large parts of Northern Cape, North West and Eastern Cape Province experience high degradation, the project will target communal areas in semi-arid and arid regions of the country in the Limpopo and Northern Cape Provinces, where the primary rural livelihood is livestock keeping, and where a leading driver of land degradation is weakness in the institutional arrangements for effective coordination of communal management. The picture for communal areas is more problematic: Pretorius (2008) notes that although there are many exceptions to the general rule, it appears that communal areas in South Africa are significantly more degraded than areas of commercial production if soil and veld degradation are the assessment criteria. South Africa's National Action Plan (NAP, 2016) identified that many communal areas in the Limpopo and Northern Cape Provinces are severely degraded, and that in the dry areas of the Northern Cape, extensive areas of grazing lands have seen declines in vegetation cover and resulting in encroachment of invasive alien plants. Deforestation and forest degradation caused by agricultural expansion, settlement, and the use of wood and non-wood forest products are significant problems in communal areas; approximately 1.2 million ha of woodlands have been converted to fields and settlement sites (DEAT, 2005).

Limpopo Province: Covering an area of 125,755 km<sup>2</sup>, Limpopo province is characterised by a diverse topography, ranging from eastern lowlands to the central highlands that rise up to over 2,000 m. The biogeographical diversity of the Province has resulted in a diverse array of habitat types and land uses, including dry woodlands and bushveld (an area of mixed grassland and trees) that cover most of the province, as well as moister highland grasslands, mist-belt and afro-montane forests in the higher elevation areas.

The population of Limpopo province is approximately 5.6 million (Statistics South Africa, 2014), and it is one of the poorest provinces in the country. Approximately 73% of the province remains in its natural state (much of which is used for grazing), while 27% has been transformed by other land uses, notably agricultural cultivation (Gibson 2006). The bushveld is cattle country, where extensive ranching operations are often supplemented by controlled hunting, and about 80% of South Africa's hunting industry is located in Limpopo. Commercial agriculture is scattered throughout the province, but is centralised mainly in the southern area, while subsistence agriculture is extensive throughout the communal lands. Important crops include sunflowers, cotton, maize, peanuts, table grapes, bananas, lychees, pineapples, mangoes, papaya, a variety of nuts, and extensive tea and coffee plantations. Extensive forestry plantations are also found in the region, including hardwood for furniture.

Limpopo province is one of the most degraded provinces in South Africa, particularly in the communal areas (Hoffman and Ashwell, 2001). The soils in the province are highly susceptible to erosion, and sheet and gully erosion are prevalent throughout croplands and grazing lands (National Botanical Institute, 1999). Vegetation degradation is a serious problem and the loss of plant cover and bush encroachment are problematic in the east and west of the province respectively. The Bankrupt bush (*Seriphium plumosum*) is an indigenous woody dwarf shrub that competes and replaces natural rangeland at an enormous rate and scale; in Limpopo province the plant tends to invade sandy wetland areas and drainage lines, which poses a great threat to the sensitive ecosystems of the Waterberg catchment and biosphere reserve. It is estimated that 14% of the Limpopo province is infested with alien plants (National Botanical Institute, 1999).

Proposed Site in Limpopo Province: Sekhukhune District, situated in the Southern part of Limpopo and covering approximately 13,528,000 hectares (135,280 km<sup>2</sup>). Within the district, the communal areas of the ex Lebowa and ex KwaNdebele are suffering from severe land degradation in three ways: soil erosion, vegetation cover, and bush densification (Pretorius 2008). Mphanama village in Fetakgomo municipality has been selected as one of the sites for project field activities (other sites to be selected during project preparation as appropriate). The village has been identified as a presidential poverty node (i.e. most people live with less than one dollar a day), and the community does not have knowledge and skills to address land degradation issues, which are severely impacting the livelihoods of people living in the village by reducing the productive capacity of the land and potential yields. The village has a geographical area of 37,569 km<sup>2</sup> comprising of 2,435 households. The main land uses in the area of Mphanama are grazing and crop production, as well as a few vegetable gardens in the village. All of these land uses are badly degraded in terms of soil productivity, water resource availability and vegetative cover. One of the most important causes of land degradation is serious overgrazing, which also leads to the abandonment of croplands as a result of crop damage by livestock (due in part to a lack of infrastructure such as fencing). Natural factors such as the variability and intensity of rainfall are also a major challenge to sustainable land management in the area. Weaknesses in institutional management exacerbate these trends; the area's communal land tenure system and the regulation of land use by traditional authorities is not consistent and has led to confusion and disputes among land users. Very few sustainable land management practices are currently implemented in the area, and the lack of reliable incomes from agriculture has caused many people to rely heavily on financial support from government.

Northern Cape Province: By far the largest province in the country, with a total area of 372,889 km<sup>2</sup> but sparse population of 1.16 million people, the Northern Cape Province is divided into five districts, which are further divided into 27 municipalities. These districts include John Taolo Gaetsewe, ZF Mgcawu District (known before 1 July 2013 as Siyanda), Frances Baard, Namakwa and Pixley Ka Seme. The Northern Cape Province forms part of the former Cape Province and includes a number of communal areas previously known as Coloured Reserves (Hoffman et al, 1999).

The Northern Cape has very hot summers and very cold winters, and is characterised by a landscape which is dominated by vast arid plains that fall within the Nama-Karoo biome, with a vegetation of low shrubland and grass, and trees limited to water courses. The western coastal region, which receives small

amounts of winter rain, is dominated by succulent shrubs. The interior of the Province has a mixture of low shrubs and grasses (Hoffman et al, 1999). Given the province's dry conditions and dependence on irrigation, many Northern Cape farmers are branching out into value-added activities such as game farming. The economy of a large part of the Northern Cape depends on sheep farming, although in some areas grapes and fruit are cultivated intensively.

Land degradation is an important issue to rural communities and farmers that depend on the land for their livelihood. Overgrazing is one of the main causes of land degradation in the Northern Cape. Mining is also an important activity practiced in the province, however mining has had serious negative environmental consequences in some cases where mitigation measures were not implemented (Northern Cape Provincial Government, 2002a). The Northern Cape is also one of the worst affected areas in terms of bush encroachment, resulting in the loss of large areas of pasture, reduced species diversity, and invasions of alien plant species that pose a threat to the rich flora of the region (DEAT, 2002). The area has one of the third highest provincial veld degradation indices in South Africa as a result of the spread of *Prosopis* species (Pretorius, 2008), which consumes more than 200 million m<sup>3</sup> of water per year, considerably reducing the amount of groundwater available for farmers and rural communities (Hoffman et al, 1999). Veld degradation was found to be serious but decreasing, while soil degradation is not perceived to be a serious problem. Soil salinization however, is a problem in the province, particularly in areas where irrigated agriculture is practised resulting in changes in soil structure and losses in agricultural productivity that are not easily reversible. Water used for irrigation contains trace amounts of salt, and when water evaporates from the soil surface or from the leaves of plants, it leaves the salt behind. Salinisation can also occur in the absence of irrigation where there is a naturally high salt content in the soil, which is characteristic of the Northern Cape. The Province is very susceptible to desertification; almost 93% of the Northern Cape can be classified as affected drylands, with the remaining 7.4% being hyper-arid.

A land reform process is currently underway in the Northern Cape and consists of land restitution, redistribution and tenure reform (DLA, 2003). Land restitution involves returning land (or providing monetary compensation) that was lost due to racially discriminatory laws. Land redistribution enables disadvantaged people to buy land, while land tenure reform aims to bring all people occupying land under one system of landholding. In the past, state agricultural land has been made available to emerging commercial farmers, in the form of leases, outright sales and access to grazing land (Northern Cape Provincial Government, 2002b). By the end of 2003, the Northern Cape had processed 2,606 land claims out of 2,773 (International Marketing Council, 2003), and today almost all of the land in the Northern Cape is privately owned (DWAF, 2004). In 2002, the Northern Cape Government successfully settled a land claim where 25,000 hectares situated in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park were handed over to the San and Mier communities, who entered into a contractual arrangement with the park authorities to manage the land on behalf of the San and Mier people (Northern Cape Provincial Government, 2002b). The Northern Cape recently launched the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) programme which is designed to reduce rural poverty by targeting previously disadvantaged people in rural areas to manage their own farms effectively and thereby improve their standard of living.

Proposed Site in Northern Cape Province: Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality is a Category B municipality that forms part of the ZF Mgcawu District (previously Siyanda District), which is the second-largest district in the Northern Cape. It was established by the amalgamation of the Mier and //Khara Hais Local Municipalities in August 2016. The municipality borders with Namibia in the west, the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park in the north and Botswana in the north-east. It consists of small towns and the !Khomani San community within its jurisdiction. Rietfontein, which is one of the main towns, is situated approximately 280km north-west from the nearest big town of Upington (the biggest town in Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality). Natural boundaries provide a unique aspect to the town – one is the Kalahari Desert and another is the Orange River, South Africa's largest river, which it straddles. The main Economic Sectors of the municipality include: Agriculture, business services, game farming, tourism and hospitality, manufacturing, transport, community services, social and personal services.

Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality is one of the 23 Coloured Rural Areas (CRAs) or “coloured reserves” in South Africa; under the Coloured Rural Areas Act, Act 9 of 1987, the land is held in trust by the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform (RDLR). The Transformation of Certain Rural Areas Act, Act 94 of 1998 makes provision for the transfer of the land in the remainder (“the commonage land”) to a communal property association (CPA), a municipality or legal entity approved by the Minister. The commonage of Rietfontein (including Loubos-Philandersbron) is the largest commonage area in Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality. Under Act 94 of 1998, commonages around towns will be transferred to municipalities and will be managed through a “commonage document”, but due to poor public participation and lack of engagement of farmers in the development of documents, the Framework Commonage Management Plan of 2008 has not been adopted by commonage farmers at Rietfontein and cannot therefore be implemented. The commonage management plan for Rietfontein needs to better address issues that are important to both farmers and the municipality, and needs to address emerging risks and challenges.

### Barriers

There are multiple challenges for the adoption of SLM approaches in the target areas. In South Africa, six key barriers are associated with uptake of SLM practices. These are:

1. Lack of data or limited access to data in some context
2. Low capacities, resources and awareness for SLM
3. Insufficient sectoral coordination and inadequate policies
4. Governance challenges on community land and natural resources
5. Weak land tenure and uncertain roles, rights and responsibilities for land management
6. Structural and institutional challenges to access finance and markets

#### 1. Lack of data or limited access to data in some context

Lack of data, or poor access to data, limits the effective targeting of land degradation interventions and monitoring of the impact of policies and investments. Considerable research and data is available in South Africa, including through the GEF-supported LADA (Land Degradation Assessment) project, which guides macro decision-making. However, at the local level more detail information is often required to shape appropriate investment. Particularly, the understanding of land management objectives of different stakeholders are important. Although this is reflective of the absolute availability of data, to some extent this is a challenge of how data is gathered and interpreted.

Monitoring of interventions should combine assessment of land health with ecological and socioeconomic impacts, for example on land productivity, vegetation cover, or hydrological cycles. More participatory monitoring is required to both improve the use of data by communities, and also to ensure assessments are guided by the land management objectives of the users. In addition, assessment and monitoring are often perceived to be prohibitively costly and robust but simple and cost-effective approaches are needed, using a few carefully selected indicators at a higher level with more locally specific indicators at site level. Finally, monitoring needs to be institutionalized so that outputs are used routinely in decision-making by different actors in and outside government.

#### 2. Low capacities, resources and awareness for SLM

Local actors often lack the required capacities for SLM, and extension agents are often ill-equipped with the required skills for effective extension, including participatory and negotiating skills. Training to farmers can be highly prescriptive and seldom builds on farmers’ perceptions of their problems and opportunities. There is a tendency to look for costly material solutions rather than exploring softer options, such as changes in cropping patterns and livestock management. In rural areas, there can be challenges of insufficient education, which can limit the capacity for innovation and may affect the trust between

farmers and extension agents. This barrier can be addressed through stronger emphasis on participation to foster a culture of trust and collaboration and to encourage innovation through participatory research and action.

### 3. Insufficient Sectoral Coordination and Policies

Land management has implications beyond the boundaries of the land under management, but the wider impact on ecosystems and landscapes is frequently overlooked. Sustainable land management safeguards a range of ecosystem services and functions, including food production, water supply, biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration. This confronts public institutions with a challenge, since their mandates often align with only one or other of these services. In South Africa, there are good policies, but they don't enable equitable outcomes.

South Africa has few functioning cross-sectoral mechanisms to facilitate integrated ecosystem management, particularly for adopting common goals between ministries. Mechanisms may be found at the local level, but these may lack capabilities for integrated land management. Municipalities, for example, are responsible for land planning, food markets, water supply, recreation and tourism, all of which are connected to land management. However, most municipalities lack the experience or technical capacity to integrate planning and management across these sectors.

### 4. Community Governance of Land and Resources

Traditional governance of natural resources in South Africa has come under severe strain and is weak or scarcely existing in many areas. On communal lands, such systems of governance are the key to sustainable land management and innovation is needed to establish functioning mechanisms for coordinating natural resource management and use. These mechanisms need to be respected by, and acceptable to, state institutions as well as the communities they represent.

Traditional governance systems have been eroded by external pressures from the state and also by internal pressures such as population growth and changing tenure arrangements and property rights. Women farm most communal land but only have tenure on about 1% of the land. Poverty results in large-scale out-migration of men in search of wage labor and resultant changes in management roles and responsibilities, with women playing an ever-greater role in land management (Zakwe, 2001). However, absentee men often retain decision-making power, which is a barrier to developing more sustainable land management practices. In addition, civil society structures penetrate poorly into these areas. Although there is growing awareness of these challenges, there remains a knowledge and capacity gap in securing and sustainably managing communal land, including communal herding practices and knowledge of SLM approaches and solutions (DEAT, 2004).

### 5. Land Tenure and Land Management Roles, Rights and Responsibilities

Land tenure is complex and evolving in South Africa and at least two forms of communal land management can be identified: commonage, which has relatively undefined use rights, and Land Reform, where rights are assigned to small groups of users. These combined with significant areas of private land create a mosaic of land tenure types. Commonage is important for the livelihoods of many communities in South Africa, but these areas are often poorly managed due to lack of democratically elected leaders and institution with local legitimacy. Commonage areas also lack rules or procedures to enforce collective grazing and land management, and they often lack accountability and ownership over land and natural resources. Many commonage areas are unfenced and do not have grazing management plans. As a result, they are frequently overstocked (according to Department of Agriculture recommendations) and subject to degradation.

The term land manager is commonly used to describe farmers and livestock herders who manage land, but on common land the term can become ambiguous as the rights to either use or to manage land are frequently unclear and are contested. In some cases, everyone (i.e. not only local residents) has the right to use land, while no one officially has responsibility to manage the land or the right to exclude others, even temporarily. In other cases, local users do not have the right, or explicit permission, to actively manage the land – for example to close an area to other users in order to allow regeneration. Land managers may also claim land that falls into different tenure categories, which may give them different levels of responsibility over the management of communal areas. Overall, this means that different types of users may have different management objectives, presenting a challenge to developing suitable management plans.

#### 6. Low Access to Finance and Markets

Agricultural land is mostly degraded in communally owned areas, which are predominantly under subsistence or small scale farming. In the absence of sustainable land management practices in place and with the challenge of climate change, degradation of these areas will continue unabated. The farmers in these areas largely lack technical expertise and resources to build climate resilience. Because of degradation, productivity of agricultural land, both under crop and livestock farming continues to decline, with increasing economic insecurity for households that depend on livestock and agriculture. Access to market is another challenge given the subsistence nature of production. In the Eastern Cape, a relatively dry province where livestock farming is predominantly practiced, rangelands are severely degraded with massive loss of biodiversity and ecosystems services critical for sustaining the rangelands and hence livestock production. Exclusion of small scale farmers in communally owned areas compounds the farming problem. While agricultural finance (from both commercial and development finance institutions) is available in South Africa, it is not extended to areas with structural/institutional challenges where farmers are not fully connected to urban space. In particular, financial services and markets generally have poor penetration into dryland regions, and they are poorly adapted to dryland challenges such as high levels of inter-annual variability and risk. Value chains for the major outputs of sustainably managed drylands are typically weak, often with critical challenges around the quality and predictability of supply. As a result, natural resource managers face challenges in investing in sustainable land management practices and in attaining basic livelihood goals related to income and asset growth or food security.

#### 2) Baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects,

South Africa has established the national voluntary targets for LDN to be achieved by 2030. The national LDN targets were developed in accordance with SA's specific national circumstances and development priorities, taking into account the list of options for operationalizing LDN at the national level.

In addition, a summary of practices aimed at reducing land degradation in South Africa (e.g. conservation agriculture, terracing, vegetation strips and gully control) have been developed and are being used to promote and improve sustainable land management as part of the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) project and the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) project (see Annex, Table 1); these efforts will help to guide the activities of this proposed project.

South Africa makes significant baseline investments in the agricultural sector and there is scope to integrate sustainable land management practices into these investments. For example, the Land Care Program is a national community-based program with the goal of optimising agricultural productivity and the sustainability of natural resource management. Launched in 1997, the program is housed in the Department of Agriculture and promotes agricultural extension through community-based approaches, with a priority on support for poor and emerging farmers to implement practices like erosion control, soil conservation, water management and invasive species control. This "grassroots" programme is supported by the Government, as well as the public and private sectors through networking partnerships, the most important of which are at the local level. The initiative's flagship program is the Area-Wide Planning

(AWP) approach (and strategies), which supports community level work on land rehabilitation, erosion control, water management and control of invasive alien plants, based on principles of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM), including promoting partnerships among communities, the private sector and the Government for the management of natural resources.

Following many years of successful implementation, the LandCare program has now established sub-programs on WaterCare, VeldCare and SoilCare. The SoilCare sub-program encourages rural farmers to adopt the concept of Conservation Agriculture and to build innovative structures to combat soil erosion. In Northern Cape Province, on-going Land Care projects have a total budget of approximately US\$365,000 in 2016-2017, and include activities such as: the Z F Mgcawu project focusing on controlling 1,000 ha of invasive *Rhigozum trichotomum* in rangeland areas; the Pixley Ka Seme Soilcare project to carry out soil rehabilitation on 600 ha of degraded land using bioengineering techniques; the John Taolo Gaetsewe Veldcare project to control 1,000 ha of *Acacia mellifera*, re-vegetate 500 ha of denuded rangeland with natural grass seeds, and control of *Gnindia burchelli* on 500 ha to improve the rangeland; and the Frances Baard Veldcare project for the eradication of *Arcacia malifera* on 1,000 ha. In Limpopo Province, on-going Land Care projects have a total budget of approximately US\$683,000 in 2016-2017, including projects for: fencing projects for the Seleka Area Wide Plan Project in Lephalale, the Niani soil conservation project in Mutale, the Dimani conservation agriculture project in Thulamela, and the Khomanani project in Thulamela; capacity building for the Bungeni soil conservation project in Makhado; eradication of alien plants in the Modimolle Land Care Committee Project; construction of 20 gabion structures in the Siloam soil conservation project in Makhado; and an awareness and capacity building project for the whole of Limpopo Province.

Under the framework of the broader Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) is engaged in the implementation of the Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programmes (EPIP), which is aimed at conserving natural assets and protecting the environment while also supporting job creation. The EPIP includes a number of targeted programmes (detailed below), with a total budget in 2014-15 of approximately US\$63 million for all of South Africa. The main goal of the programme is to alleviate poverty through a number of interventions that use labour intensive methods targeting the unemployed, youth, women, people with disabilities, and Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) and are implemented in communities to uplift households while empowering beneficiaries to participate in the mainstream economy in a manner that addresses the environmental management challenges facing the country. Several programs under the EPIP are directly relevant to the goals of this proposed project.

The Working for Water Programme is recognised as one of the most outstanding initiatives on the African Continent. The programme has been implemented for the past two decades, with the main focus on invasive species clearing, environmental conservation, water security and job creation. The working for water programme considers the development of people as an essential element of environmental conservation. Since its inception in 1995, the programme has cleared more than two million hectares of invasive alien plants species, providing jobs and training for about 26,000 people per year, from amongst the most marginalised sectors of society, of which 56% are women. It currently runs over 300 projects in all nine of South Africa's Provinces.

The Working for Land Programme aims to restore the composition, structure and function of degraded lands (ecosystems) through carbon sequestration, water regulation and purification. These programs are designed to improve the sustainability of livelihoods and the productive potential of land, promote economic empowerment in rural areas, improve natural species diversity, landscape and catchment stability and resilience, and promote development of a market for ecosystems.

The Working for Ecosystems Programme encourages and supports sustainable land use practices, raises awareness and promotes resource conservation ethics. The programme aims to: improve watershed services through the restoration of riparian zones and wetlands; contribute to climate change mitigation through the sequestration of carbon in the form of re-vegetating denuded landscapes; contribute to climate change adaptation and improving livelihoods

security by reducing the risk of natural disasters through restoration of degraded habitats; unlock investments and operational resources for the improvement of the quantity and quality of ecosystem services; and promote pro-poor economic development in rural areas. One of the most successful projects under this programme is the subtropical thicket restoration project, a partnership between farmers, communities, government, conservationists, scientists, and economists whose aim is to restore large tracts of degraded veld which, prior to overgrazing by livestock, were covered with Spekboom (*Portulacaria afra*) thickets. To date, over 3,000 hectares of degraded veld have been replanted. The project has been validated and registered through the verified Carbon Standard and the Climate Community and Biodiversity Standard, making it a blue-chip carbon market credit. Other relevant programmes include Working for Fire, Working for Wetlands and Working for Forests.

Several other projects are implementing activities relevant to the proposed project. Resilience in the Limpopo Basin focusing on Olifants is a five-year, USD 10.7 million program implemented by the Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD) to support a more resilient Olifants Catchment in South Africa and Mozambique. Initiated in 2012, the program reduces the vulnerability of people and ecosystems through improved transboundary governance and management of natural resources. The program is grounded in a grassroots approach to understanding the systemic causes of vulnerability, including climate vulnerability, and a promoting new ways of thinking and acting to promote integrated water and biodiversity management. The Resilience in the Limpopo Basin Program (RESILIM) covering the whole Limpopo basin in all the 4 basin countries is a five-year USD 14.0 million program that supports the riparian countries of the Limpopo basin in their efforts to improve shared management of water resources and equitably address the economic, environmental, and social needs of each country, thereby enhancing the resilience of the ecosystem and the people. The program reduces climate vulnerability by promoting adaptation strategies for integrated, trans-boundary water resource management. By building the capacity of local river basin organizations and communities to sustainably manage natural resources, high priority ecosystems will be preserved and resistant to climate-induced pressure.

Private sector and civil society organizations working on sustainable land management in the Northern Cape are few and far between on the ground. The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)-funded Succulent Karoo Ecosystem Programme (SKEP) was a long term, multi-stakeholder bioregional conservation and development programme started as a bi-national initiative between Namibia and South Africa, with the aim of developing the concept of conservation as a land-use, rather than being a replacement for land-use. However, few projects arose from this Programme that defined sustainable grazing management principles or took into account community-based implementation. SKEP itself no longer has CEPF funding to initiate new projects and Conservation South Africa (CSA) is currently involved with sustainable communal grazing management and thus provides baseline information on working with biodiversity stewardship in communal land practices.

Finally, in the private sector, ZZ2 is a commercial farming company based in Limpopo and a world leader in tomato production that has introduced the concept of Natuurboerdery (Nature Farming). Since 2002, ZZ2 has implemented a programme for the gradual conversion of all its farming activities from a predominantly conventional chemical to a more ecologically balanced nature farming approach, with the goal of achieving long-term improvement and stabilisation of the soil and optimum sustainable yields through the use of compost and manures, compost tea, Effective Micro-organisms (EM), bioproducts, minimum tillage, cover crops and crop rotation.

Despite strong initiatives, communal lands remain marginalized

South Africa has a number of strong initiatives, offering a wealth of experience, capacity and good practices that can be made available to communal lands and other marginal areas. Adoption of SLM good practices on communal lands has been hampered by the challenges over tenure security, local governance, and capacity among land managers. Good practices in SLM have been successfully tested, but they have not been sufficiently adapted to the unique conditions of communal lands.

The policy environment is supportive of improved SLM in these lands, but there are many social challenges that impede progress. Localized initiatives have attempted to strengthen community level planning and coordination, but they remain scattered and have not been scaled up.

On-going discussions over land reform and redistribution in South Africa indicate that the challenges of communal land may get worse in the future, and a strategy is needed to systematically transfer effective governance and land management capacities to communal land managers.

Stronger governance and land management capacity goes hand in hand with access to finance. Finance is available in South Africa, but under currently conditions communal lands do not present an attractive investment prospect. Financial services are important to enable scaling up of SLM and to strengthen value chains and incomes from natural resource management. Additionally, access to these services can be an important incentive for mobilizing communities to strengthen local governance institutions, which can act as an intermediary for accessing financial services and strengthening value chains.

3) Proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project;

In the business as usual scenario, land degradation trends will continue due to ongoing challenges of: i) weak community governance and tenure; ii) poor institutional coordination; iii) low capacities, resources and awareness for SLM; iv) inadequate policies v) weak penetration of financial services; vi) under-developed value chains for multiple ecosystem goods and services and vi) insufficient data and access to data. Under these conditions, it will be a challenge for South Africa to meet its LDN targets and instead will see continuing land degradation, contributing to biodiversity loss, loss of ecosystem functionality and climate change through the release of greenhouse gasses.

The proposed alternative scenario will see an improvement in the enabling conditions in communal lands that support adoption of sustainable land management. This includes better-informed decision making based on simple but reliable data on land health as well as improved decision-making structures to coordinate planning and management across ecosystem and landscapes. There will be particular emphasis on coordinating the management of land and water resources, based on improved inter-sectoral collaboration at local and national level.

Stronger gender responsive governance arrangements and more secure tenure will provide a more stable platform for investment and for developing local rules and regulations for land management, particularly to support natural and assisted regeneration of pasturelands. The project will strengthen capacities to engage men and women from communities in sustainable land management and restoration practices and will engage with policy makers to ensure that policies are supportive of identified SLM approaches.

The project will strengthen private investment, through improved access to financial services and development of stronger value chain, which will be designed to incentivize adoption of SLM practices, to reinforce local institutions for natural resource governance, and strengthen local livelihoods. The project will deliver this through four interrelated components

Component 1- Informed decision making and action for Sustainable Land Management

Component 1 will generate information required for shaping decisions on priority community-based rangeland restoration actions on the ground, targeting 157,000 hectares of landscapes to be put under sustainable land management. This component provides better tools, guidelines and skills required to enhance landscape planning and SLM action by land-users and advisors. This component set necessary indicators (gender disaggregated) against which

future changes will be monitored. Under this component livestock farmers (men and women), supporting livelihoods of over a million beneficiaries, will be capacitated in sustainable and productive livestock production methods with the support of DAFF and CSA through Meat Naturally Pty (MN), which will provide ready market for their produce. MN is a CAS for profit enterprise established in 2016 to provide livestock production support and mobile market access to farmers who have implemented planned grazing and restoration based on ecological science. To complement the rangelands sustainable management capacity, the farmers will benefit from technical support from '2030 Water Resources Group' who have expressed willingness to partner with IUCN in promoting water efficiency in the project areas.

#### Component 2 - Governance and institutions

Component 2 will establish mechanisms for landscape level planning and prioritization of actions, including identification of institutional capacity for sustainable land management and LDN targets and investment priorities. The component will strengthen governance on 875,000 hectares of rangeland landscape. This component will contribute in addressing the barriers of weak capabilities and inadequate governance institutions. Strengthened skills of women on SLM management will be necessary to improve their roles as users and managers of land. Component 2 supports participatory planning and decision-making and will generate resource use agreements to use as the basis for strengthening land rights and more transparent governance. Community action is central to Component 1 and the project will strengthen the organizational capacity of community institutions to coordinate governance of natural resources more effectively. Local-level actions on SLM will be supported under Component 2 in order to strengthen the motivation and oversight role of community governance structures.

#### Component 3: Markets and finance for scale up

Component 3 will deliver inclusive and sustainable financial investments required to address barriers related to low investments in rangelands and low access to markets in drylands regions. This will contribute to climate change resilient livelihoods for vulnerable groups, including women and men, by mapping value chains of key products (including the potential players and potential offtakers at different stages of the value chain) and channeling investment into priority value chains that have been validated and prioritized by local communities through Components 1 and 2. The project will build on the successes of the CSA's enterprise MN in which the enterprise will expand its market into the project's targeted landscapes and the farmers will have the opportunity to be shareholders of the MN. According to the MN model, livestock farmers will have access to the markets through the MN mobile auctions for sustainably produced livestock. This innovative model incentivises sustainability through market access and better premiums for livestock produced through sustainable methods. The mutual commitments between MN and the communities are solidified through conservation agreements. Tracking the implementation of these agreements, along with traceability measures, is part of the broader value chain process that is put in place. This is one of the innovative approaches to promote a sustainable value chain that has, in other degraded rangelands areas of South Africa, resulted in improved grazing management, increased annual incomes, including those for women, and has helped increase the percent of communities having better access to sustainability related markets. The project will use inclusive and innovative financing mechanisms aimed at building climate resilience and sustaining farmers' livelihoods. The blended finance currently implemented by DAFF and Land Bank to ensure inclusion of emerging farmers in agricultural finance will be extended to the project area to ensure requisite finance for restoration, production and other necessary value chains is available (refer to co-finance Table). The DBSA, which has a mandate of providing infrastructure finance in Southern Africa, has expressed interest in collaborating in the project. Together with 2030 Water Resources Group, they will provide finance and technical knowhow required for sustainable and efficient management of water resources in the project area. Other financial resources will include community SLM funds, microfinance and land restoration trust funds offered by DAFF and related government departments. The project will ensure that investment opportunities are guided by principles of inclusivity and sustainability to ensure women have equal access to investment and market opportunities. All these initiatives and funding opportunities will be crystalized during the PPG phase of the project.

#### Component 4: Learning and policy dialogue

Component 4 focuses on learning and policy discourses for scale-up and long-term sustainability. The component aims to inform SLM related national policies and processes based on the results and best practices from the implementation of the project actions under the first, second and third components. Component 4 supports dialogue with key stakeholder groups at national and local levels to develop consensus over good practices and policies. The component will also document and communicate lessons on investment opportunities and will use these lessons to convene investor groups in dialogue towards investment in sustainable land management and supply chains. Finally, Component 4 will include project monitoring and evaluation to ensure effective, adaptive management.

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

The project aligns with the overall goals of the GEF7 Land Degradation Focal Area by promoting progress towards national Land Degradation Neutrality targets under the UNCCD, and implementation of the UNCCD 2018-2030 strategy. The project contributes directly to achievement of SDG Target 15.3 and through this the project adds to improving the living conditions of populations in South Africa's rangelands and enhancing ecosystems services that benefit both local communities and the wider society. The project includes a strong emphasis on leveraging private investments in sustainable land management to scale-up tried-and-tested approaches in degraded drylands.

The project addresses all four of the focal area investments:

1. Integrated land management and restoration of degraded production landscapes
2. Sustainable management of dryland landscapes
3. Diversification of crop and livestock systems
4. Creating an enabling environment to support voluntary LDN target implementation

The project is also aligned with the Sustainable Drylands Program under the GEF7 Impact Program on Sustainable Forest Management. As a predominantly dryland country, South Africa is not strongly connected to global discourse on Forest Landscape Restoration. Through this project South Africa will demonstrate the contribution of rangeland restoration to global restoration efforts, including the restoration and sustainable management of trees outside forests. This will also serve to strengthen global recognition of the value of rangeland landscapes and their contribution to global initiatives like AFR100 and the Bonn Challenge.

In line with the LD Focal Area, the project will support improved assessment of land degradation, establishment of the landscape approach for integrated ecosystem management, and scaling up of innovative approaches. The project will build on LDN target setting work and will use the LDN indicators to guide progress. The project emphasizes among other issues, build resilience in drought-prone ecosystems and populations. The project will strengthen access to finance and technical assistance for men, women and youth smallholders and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to promote innovations in agriculture and livestock production systems, prioritizing women businesses/organizations that empower women to improve their livelihoods. This includes making connections with established funds, such as the LDN Fund and the South Africa Land Bank.

The project, potentially, contributes to both LDN objectives:

- Objective 1. Support on the ground implementation of SLM to achieve LDN
  - o Particularly, the project will strengthen governance and mobilize finance to support scaling-up of validated good practices in SLM on communal lands
- Objective 2. Enhance the implementation of the voluntary LDN target for South Africa and the National Action Plan (NAP)
  - o The project will strengthen local and government institutions to enable management of communal lands and will develop knowledge and build capacities for informed planning and action on the ground

The project will build knowledge and capacity of men and women, as well as youth for managing soil biodiversity as a key indicator of soil health (measured through the proxy of Soil Organic Carbon, which is an established LDN indicator under the UNCCD and SDGs). The project will evaluate the impact of soil biodiversity on ecosystem function, as manifested in increased productivity, rehabilitation of hydrological cycles, reduced incidence and severity of drought, and sequestration of atmospheric carbon. This will translate into benefits of improved food and water security, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and overall resilience.

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

To move from the baseline situation to the proposed alternative scenario, the project will address the main barriers outlined in Section 1: data gaps; capacity gaps; coordination and institutional weaknesses; natural resource governance failures; land tenure challenges; and access to finance and markets. These gaps will be addressed by the four project Outcomes.

- Outcome 1: Decisions on sustainable land management, landscape restoration and adaptive planning for drought resilience are informed by improved, dryland-adapted assessment data at local and national levels.
- Outcome 2: Government and customary land management institutions, are strengthened to equitably coordinate natural resource management and improve response to recurrent drought emergencies
- Outcome 3: Financial support to scale up validated SLM practices and develop markets for priority value chains provided
- Outcome 4: Sustainable land Management is mainstreamed at the local, national and regional level

Without the GEF investment, land degradation processes will continue to affect communal lands, and may accelerate if the area of communal lands expands in future. Weak governance and local institutional arrangements will continue to drive mismanagement of land, leading to reduced soil fertility and physical soil erosion. Soil degradation processes will contribute to food and water insecurity, vulnerability to drought, loss of biodiversity and emission of greenhouse gases. This will impact negatively on rural livelihoods and economic development in the target areas, as well as wider societal and global environmental benefits.

From the baseline, models for communal land management is problematic and is not well adapted to communal lands. This present a growing challenge in the context of South Africa's land reform. The GEF incremental financing will strengthen the capacity of local and national institutions (including government and customary institutions) to equitably coordinate natural resource management and improve response to recurrent drought emergencies.

In the absence of effective institutions and participation for landscape planning, there is a risk that investments will contribute to further land degradation and associated costs. Ecosystems risk being fragmented by poorly coordinated actions across sectors, with an overall cost to ecosystem integrity and functionality. In the absence of adequate data to guide planning, decision making cannot achieve optimal outcomes. High priority restoration opportunities will

be overlooked and the principles of Land Degradation Neutrality—including balancing like-for-like, following the response hierarchy, and ensure restoration in situ—are unlikely to be adhered to. In the absence of effective coordination, public investments will address sectoral priorities and will overlook cross-sectoral actions that respond to the complexity of the rangelands.

With the GEF investment, sustainable land management will be adopted more widely on communal lands, with capacities and institutions put in place to ensure SLM is extended to all communal land, both current and future. SLM extension in communal lands will be supported by improved monitoring of land degradation processes and their impact on other sustainable development goals. This will include, among others, improved validation of SLM approaches that are adapted to the communal lands context. Land managers and their supporters (e.g. extension agents) will have stronger capacity to implement sustainable land management and landscape management, based on access to suitable tools, guideline and other training materials. Men and women from communities will implement restoration and SLM actions to localize existing good practices and to develop experience through exposure.

Governance mechanisms will be strengthened at different levels. At municipality and province level, mechanisms will be established and strengthened for landscape planning, embedding participatory approaches into planning, ensuring equal participation of women, to improve the prioritization of actions and overcome constraints facing different stakeholders (men and women). National LDN targets and priorities will be validated locally to align with community priorities and aspirations. At community level, the capacity for natural resource governance will be built through organizational support to land management groups and through the application of appropriate governance tools, such as community resource agreements and bylaws.

Lessons from strengthening land users rights in target areas through application of appropriate governance mechanisms (including bylaws, natural resource conventions, communal land use certificates etc. – depending on legally acceptable opportunities), will be shared at regional forums and related regional policy events to exchange lessons and share transferable lessons for effective governance of common areas in a way that promote effective and equitable benefit from ecosystem services for multiple land-users. Project interventions will also result in increased recognition of the importance of sub-national planning for land and water resource management, which draws important lessons for improved coordination of land and water management which are crucial in drylands, especially in the context of rising threats of recurrent droughts.

GEF incremental funding will allow to develop and test innovative funding options including community SLM funds, microfinance and land restoration trust funds which are developed to advance multifunctional land use. This will include different approaches to financing local action, both by individuals and communities. The project will also build investment partnerships between small and medium enterprises, national finance institutions and local land users, and business plans for men and women from community will be developed to take innovative approaches to scale. To support the extension of financial services as well as strengthening of livelihood resilience, the project will strengthen priority value chains, increasing incomes for primary goods (e.g. livestock) as well as to incentivize secondary goods and environmental services (e.g. medicinal plants, protection of water cycles).

Farmers in the project areas have depressed agricultural productivity, limited access to markets and agricultural finance. Component 3 of the project will focus on (linking farmers to markets through development of clear value chains and will identify and link men, women and youth farmers to innovative funding solutions to scale up validated SLM practices and invest in priority value chains to increase opportunities for livelihood adaptations in drylands. GEF incremental funding will allow to develop and test:

(i) agricultural production under sustainable agricultural practices and development of value chains (including certification process of the produce and identifying and linking farmers to the right markets); and

(ii) innovative funding options including community SLM funds, microfinance and land restoration trust funds which are developed to advance multifunctional land use. It will also build investment partnerships between small and medium enterprises, national finance institutions and local men, women and youth land users.

Lessons from successful implementation of these activities will feed into the local, national and regional decision making processes. At the local level, the result from innovative funding of priority value chains will provide lessons that aligns different funding options in a complementary fashion.

At the regional level, through GEF incremental funding, the result from innovative funding on the ground will be fed into other regional initiative and informs other financing mechanisms such as at Southern African Development Community (SADC). Already there is already financing of programs and activities in the implementation of Sub-Regional Action Program to Combat Desertification in Southern Africa (SRAP) which will hugely benefit from lessons of the innovative financing mechanisms.

In the baseline situation, several policies already exist to promote sustainable land management in South Africa but they don't enable equitable outcomes. The GEF incremental financing will address the current gap through mainstreaming SLM at regional level based on validated national policies and practices that support attainment of LDN. GEF funding will allow the proposed project to build upon existing policies, taking into account their opportunities and challenges. The nationally validated policies and practices will be documented and policy discourse undertaken at different levels. GEF funding will also foster scaling up of good practices in sustainable land management and effective management of dryland ecosystems at the suitable geographical scale.

GEF incremental funding will see that proven approaches that deliver LDN in communal areas are supported in policy and public investment. Policy dialogue will be better-informed of the realities of land management in communal areas as a result of improved participation of land users in shaping policy discourse. Experiences will be capture and documented, and actively promoted as a means of driving national level scaling up of SLM good practices in communal areas.

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

The principle target of this project is to assist South Africa to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality by 2030, by establishing enabling conditions for scaling up SLM good practices. South Africa has a specific target of rehabilitating and sustainably managing 2,436,170 ha of grassland by 2030. This project will contribute to restoring land and ecosystem functionality, rehabilitating hydrological cycles, generating benefits to local livelihoods and strengthening community resilience to droughts. The project will target 150,000 hectares of landscapes under improved governance and other enabling conditions for restoration and SLM, with a significant impact on the wider ecosystem.

Interventions will include community rangelands management, natural and assisted regeneration of pasture, control of invasive species, and introduction of agroecology approaches, including conservation agriculture, agroforestry, small-scale irrigation, and appropriate water harvesting and water-saving techniques. The outcomes will be improved land productivity due to increase soil organic carbon and soil moisture, which will translate into increased agricultural production. Improved soil moisture and infiltration rates will increase drought resilience and contribute to climate change adaptation while increased soil organic carbon will contribute to climate change mitigation.

Important co-benefits of the project include conservation of biodiversity and mitigation of climate change. Biodiversity will be conserved and restored as part of landscape restoration activities, including rehabilitation of grasslands and woodlands/forest lands, and agro-ecology approaches will contribute to

increases in habitat and increased soil biodiversity. Soil biodiversity is measured through the proxy of Soil Organic Carbon (SOC), which largely determines both soil fertility and soil moisture content, and thereby determines land productivity. SOC is one of the three core indicators of LDN and is under discussion for adoption by the CBD for Aichi Target 15.

Increased soil biodiversity and above ground biodiversity contributes to improved infiltration of water, particularly on heavily degraded lands where a high proportion of water is lost through run off. Increasing vegetation cover is essential for ecological restoration and rehabilitation of hydrological cycles. Arresting soil erosion and siltation will reduce the risk of sedimentation in aquatic systems.

Additionally, the project also contributes to Sub-Regional Action Programme to Combat Desertification (2015-2025), to support a coordinated approach towards the implementation of the convention by facilitating joint actions at the sub-regional level. Specifically, the project intervention contributes to the reporting on the detailed commitments, strategies and measures for the implementation of the convention along the indicators contained in the UNCCD Regional Implementation Annex for Africa.

SLM should also be gender responsive, in order to address men and women coping and adaptive capacities, knowing that climate change affects women and men differently. Women are differently affected because of the socio-economic barriers that she faces in a society, which increase women's vulnerability. It is important to empower women to actively participate in their communities and families adapt to climate changes. An inclusive SLM for adaptation is a gender-responsive approach that helps to achieve most of the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals, e.g. 1, 5, 7, 14, 15, as well as the Aichi Target 14.

7) Innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up.

Communal lands are relatively neglected in South Africa and are areas of significant land degradation. This project will scale up approaches that address the underlying local governance challenges that farmers on communal lands face, including coordination of grazing management, control of bush encroachment and invasive species, reduction of other forms of land degradation. The project will deploy innovative community-based approaches to strengthen participation in public decision-making as well as collective action for sustainable management and restoration of communal resources. Project sustainability will be achieved by institutionalizing community based and participatory approaches for local planning, and establishing community-based management of communal resources, which will be enhanced through capacity building of extension agents and community members.

The project will introduce a unique approach to assessment for target setting and evaluation of actions that will combine cutting edge scientific methods and established data sets with participatory monitoring and analysis in a gender sensitive way, through use of instruments and tools that are gender-sensitive. Community participation in assessment will ensure better selection of indicators that are context-specific as well as improved understanding of local management objectives to inform monitoring and baseline assessment.

The project will provide innovative solutions in financing the scaling up of SLM, including community savings and credit facilities and connecting SLM initiatives with potential financiers. The project will evaluate the bankability of SLM interventions and will partner with private investors and financial service providers to mobilize further investments and to identify and tackle potential barriers to investment.

Continued scale-up of approaches beyond the project will be enabled through training of local and national experts, and through publication of good practices, focusing on process-oriented interventions that support sustainable land management. The project also will convene public fora to communicate project lessons and recommendations, as well as specific expert studies on policy and investment decisions, opportunities for implementing established policy, and

gaps in public support for policy implementation. Gender-responsive approaches will be used by the project to enable identification of gender gaps or biases and acting upon them, by planning actions to overcome the identified challenges and aiming to improve gender equality in the project areas.

**1b. Project Map and Coordinates** ⓘ

**Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.**

Maps have been attached in Annex

## 2. Stakeholders

Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:

**Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities** Yes

**Civil Society Organizations** Yes

**Private Sector Entities** Yes

If none of the above, please explain why:

Stakeholder	Role in Project Preparation
Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA)	DEA, which is the GEF Operational Focal Point for the Government of South Africa, provides leadership in environmental management, conservation and protection towards sustainability for the benefit of South Africans and the global community. DEA is responsible for environmental policy, legislation and developing and implementing South Africa's UNCCD programme of work, including the implementation and the piloting of the LDN target setting process in the country. DEA will provide the primary oversight for the project, and will coordinate the participating institutions to implement their components.
Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)	DAFF has the primary responsibility for researching and promoting sustainable agricultural techniques and restoring degraded agricultural lands. The department's mandate includes facilitating the adoption of community-based natural resource management approaches, and it is a key partner for the implementation of CBNRM in South Africa. DAFF's role in the development of this project is to provide technical input with regard to issues that align with national priorities related to its mandate, to guide project design and site selection based on current baseline projects and initiatives, and to ensure that relevant stakeholders are consulted during project design and that relevant partners are identified to implement the project.
Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS)	DWS is the custodian of South Africa's water resources and has the primary responsibility for formulating and implementing policies governing this sector. While striving to ensure that all South Africans gain access to clean water and dignified sanitation, the department also promotes effective and efficient water resources management to ensure sustainable economic and social development. DWA's role in the development of this project is to provide technical input with regard to issues that align with national priorities related to its mandate, to guide project design and site selection based on current baseline projects and initiatives, and to ensure that relevant stakeholders are consulted during project design and that relevant partners are identified to implement the project.
Local and Provincial government	Local and Provincial government departments are responsible for planning, budgeting, service delivery and economic development in the target districts and municipalities and will be key impl

Local government	Environment and economic development in the target districts and municipalities and will be key implementation partners for all components and co-leaders of the project. Municipalities and relevant provincial departments will be involved at all stages of project development, implementation and capacity building.
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	IUCN provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together. IUCN is a global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. IUCN is the implementing agency for the project. IUCN will work in close collaboration with DEA and other stakeholders on the development of the project document and execution of the project.
Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)	CSOs operating in the project areas will be engaged during project design and project implementation as appropriate. CSOs also will ensure that the interests of different stakeholders are considered during the project design and implementation.
Private sector	Relevant private sector operators in the project area include commercial farmers, mining companies and others. The private sector will be engaged to participate in both the development of the project document and the implementation of project interventions. Engagement of Private sector will be important during implementation of all three project components and particularly component 3 on Public and private investments support to community institutions for communal management of the multiple benefits of healthy rangelands. Private sector has a role to play in the imparting of skills and providing the market needs on the value addition and marketing of rangeland ecosystem services. Private sector will also play a key role in the development of investment plans.
Local communities, community institutions, indigenous people and vulnerable groups	Men, women and youth in targeted local communities, community institutions, indigenous people and vulnerable groups will be consulted during project development and actively engaged during project implementation particularly during the rangeland assessment and community environmental action planning. Knowledge generated through the project will be packaged to meet the needs of the different stakeholder information needs. Local communities (men, women and youth), community institutions, indigenous people will be active participants during project implementation and the key beneficiaries of all the project interventions.

**In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.**

### 3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

**Briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis).**

One of the barriers to the adoption of SLM in South Africa is the changing role of men and women in relation to land management. An increasing number of women are the principle land managers in their households, yet in many cases men retain decision-making power over land use and management even if they have migrated elsewhere to work (e.g. in Sekhukhune district in Limpopo Province, there are only 88 men for every 100 women). This challenge to coordinated will be addressed through the participatory CEAP approach, which is designed to target both women and men land managers and will be informed by a preliminary stakeholder analysis that identifies household dynamics and ensures that women are equitably represented in participatory planning fora. In most communities, depending on gender dynamics, men and women will produce separate CEAPs, and the prioritisation process will ensure that the different priorities of each group are taken into account. This will lead to investment in actions that are specifically of interest to women, as well as ensuring that women are supported in activities that might be traditionally considered the role of men. During the project preparation phase, the project will identify suitable gender indicators, possibly including monitoring the number of women engaged in SLM actions, the participation of women in different markets for land-related goods and services, and the extent of women's inputs into public planning.

To guide the Principle on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in the project sites, the strategic approach and methodologies of the project will prioritize gender-responsive measures throughout to ensure full and active participation of women and men on implementation of planned activities, in a participatory process. With this approach, women and men's concerns and experiences become an integral dimension from the implementation to monitoring and evaluation of project. This will ensure that gender inequalities and inequities are not perpetuated or exacerbated.

**Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes**

**closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; Yes**

**improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or Yes**

**generating socio-economic benefits or services for women. Yes**

**Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?**

Yes

#### 4. Private sector engagement

##### Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

##### Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.

Relevant private sector players such as the Land Bank of South Africa (LB), Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), Conservation South Africa (CSA) through its private company Meat Naturally Pty and other role players will be engaged in both project development and Provision of financial support to scale up validated SLM practices and develop markets for priority value chains. Private sector engagement is important during implementation of project components, particularly to improve access to financial support for scale up of validated practices, investments in priority value chains are for increased opportunities for livelihood adaptation. Private sector also play role in the imparting requisite marketing skills and providing the market solutions related to value chain development for selected goods.

LB have government mandate to provide sustainable and inclusive (men, women and youth) land and agricultural finance to all farmers. DBSA has a mandate of providing infrastructure finance in Southern Africa. Both institutions are mandated to support low carbon and green economy of South Africa and as such this project perfectly fits within this mandate. LB has a specific mandate of building climate resilience among emerging farmers and including them into agricultural finance. The Bank is already partnering with DAFF in providing blended finance to this category of farmers to provide innovative finance that enables easy access to finance, improved productivity, enhanced climate resilience and improved livelihoods. The blended finance is in the pilot phase and the long term plan is to include other commercial banks in South Africa to improve farmer coverage with the LB managing the fund on behalf of government. This will ensure sustainability of the project even beyond GEF funding.

CSA, thorough Meat Naturally Pty, is already working with stakeholders in the project areas through biodiversity conservation initiatives and meat value chains development as well as market access. As such, the organisation will bring requisite experience on LSM, value chain development and market access to the project. The farmers will also have the opportunity of being shareholders of the enterprise, thus ensuring sustainability of the project beyond GEF funding.

2030 is a global partnership that supports country-level collaboration by government, business and civil society to achieve water security. It operates through three broad areas of (i) zero municipality water losses, (ii) water waste management and (iii) efficient agricultural water use. Several municipalities and mining areas are already benefiting from the support of the organisation in South Africa through the first and second streams of support, respectively. This project will benefit through the third stream of support. During the PPG stage other private role players will be analysed and approached where necessary to strengthen private sector participation.

## 5. Risks

Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the Project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the Project design (table format acceptable)

Risks	Mitigation measures to address the risks
Inadequate baseline data on land degradation/state of rangelands	The project activity relating to institutional support, policy environment, state of the rangelands and related socio-economic background situations will bridge data gaps that might hinder addressing specific problems.
Politicization of, and resistance to, strengthening rights over communal land	Emphasize governance and rights throughout the project, with high level training of key stakeholders and resources allocated to thorough stakeholder dialogue and engagement. Also emphasize strong participatory approaches, which will be embedded in local government institutions.
Lack of established good practices for scaling up in communal lands	Good practices have been demonstrated in South Africa, but not necessarily in the target areas. For this reason the project will link with experiences throughout the country and may bring in partners who have demonstrated good practices in different areas – including on private lands, but which are considered to be suitable for scaling-up in communal areas.
Investments/attention will continue to be biased towards other ecosystems e.g. forest, farming etc.	The project will build a strong case for investments in drylands and generate data on rangeland related ecosystem goods and services and a related analysis of SLM practices. This will be used as a case to demonstrate the value of investing in SLM measures at local and national levels.
Project activities are not well integrated in government planning and lessons are poorly adopted	The project will establish a multi-stakeholder platform to ensure that key stakeholders and sectors can influence and benefit from project lessons through structured dialogue on mainstreaming of outcome.
Continuity of project staff and key champion(s) of LDN cannot be fully guaranteed	Enough flexibility to mitigate and respond to such changes will be built into the project design

## 6. Coordination

**Outline the institutional structure of the project including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level. Describe possible coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.**

The institutional structure of the project is described below:

Executing agency: As the GEF Operational Focal Point for the Government of South Africa, Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) in collaboration with DAFF will be the executing agency which provides leadership in project implementation on the ground. DEA through the associated provincial administration is responsible for:

- The implementation of project activities;
- The day to day management and coordination of the project;
- Preparing and submitting regular Project Progress Reports (PPR), financial reports, Annual Work Plan and Budget, and other necessary documentation for the Project Implementation Review (PIR).

Implementing agency: IUCN will be the GEF Agency responsible for project oversight, supervision and the provision of technical guidance.

Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be set up and will include representatives of DEA, IUCN, and other related GEF projects in South Africa. Detailed membership PSC will be well-defined during project inception. Among other responsibilities, the PSC will monitor and coordinate the planning of the implementation of the project. The key responsibilities of PSC are:

- Provide guidance to ensure project implementation is in accordance with the project document;
- Review and approve any proposed revisions to the project results framework and implementation arrangements;
- Review, amend and endorse all Annual Work Plans and Budgets;
- Ensure that co-financing support will be available on time;
- Advise on issues and problems arising during project implementation;
- Approve ToR for midterm and final evaluations

The project will be implemented in close collaboration with other relevant initiatives. These initiatives include the following amongst others:

- GEF/FAO Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) project with the aim of strengthening South Africa's land degradation assessment processes to inform decision-making for implementing sustainable land management practices. LADA has developed important baseline data that will inform the development of the proposed project, including the prioritisation of the target sites.
- South Africa was a pilot country in the GEF/FAO Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) initiative, which strengthened the country's land degradation assessment processes to inform decision-making for implementing sustainable land management practices. LADA developed significant baseline data that will inform the development of the proposed project, including the prioritisation of the three targeted provinces.

- The UNEP-GEF Kalahari Namib Project supports communities and policy makers in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa to effectively implement and upscale SLM in the Molopo-Nossob catchment area and thereby contribute to restoration of the integrity and functioning of the entire Kalahari-Namib ecosystem. The Kalahari-Namib Project is a transboundary initiative aimed at promoting the joint management of the Kalahari-Namib ecosystem in Southern Africa, essentially focusing on combating land degradation and desertification while enhancing the livelihoods of communities dependent on these marginal dryland areas. Working with a variety of stakeholders, the KNP is implemented in South Africa by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) in partnership with DEA and executed by the International Union on Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Lessons from the KNP Project and outputs such as the recommendations from the Meir Institutional strengthening will be used to inform this project.
- The UNEP-GEF project Stimulating Community Initiatives in Sustainable Land Management (SCI-SLM) was an innovative three-year programme completed in 2013 that aimed at identifying local innovation in Sustainable Land Management by communities in four African countries namely; Ghana, Morocco, South Africa and Uganda. The SCI-SLM project was executed in South Africa by the University of KwaZulu-Natal with technical support from Vreij University. The initiative embraces both the principles of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) and the National Action Programme (NAP). Lessons from this project will be used to inform the proposed project.
- The UNDP-GEF project Securing multiple ecosystems benefit through SLM in the productive but degraded landscapes of South Africa was approved in 2015 with the primary objective of providing incentives (capacity, financial, governance) for the adoption of knowledge-based Sustainable Land Management (SLM) models for land management and land/ecosystem rehabilitation in support of the green economy and resilient livelihoods in the Karoo, Olifants and Eastern Cape. The long-term preferred solution of the UNDP-GEF project is to reduce the costs of ecological restoration in South Africa and increase the productivity of the land. This is being achieved through i) enhancing the capacity of government, institutions and local communities to mainstream SLM into policies, plans and programmes; and ii) implementing climate-smart ecosystem rehabilitation and management measures. The project is also building capacity for the integration of SLM into development planning by developing tools for the analysis of vulnerability and the development of innovative SLM interventions. The identified activities will be demonstrated at the local level and will build on existing knowledge and best available technologies. These activities will address soil erosion and land degradation. Consequently, the ecological functioning and resilience in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and the Olifants landscapes will increase. The project will also develop a simplified methodology for calculation of certified emissions reductions/carbon credits from spekboomveld restoration. The proposed project differs with the UNDP GEF project due to its focus on developing knowledge through assessment and evidence-based land use planning through Participatory Rangeland Assessment implemented by communities and local government to evaluate rangeland health and prioritise areas for action to inform the project interventions and actions on the ground. The rangeland assessment will be further enhanced by economic valuation of ecosystem goods and services and cost benefit analysis of restoration and SLM actions. Another difference is the focus of the proposed project on communal level governance and mobilisation of public and private investments to support community institutions for communal management of the multiple benefits of healthy rangelands. The projects are complimentary in their capacity building efforts of communal land managers and extension agents in identified SLM options and implementation of actions on the ground. There will therefore be a need to establish knowledge and experience sharing mechanisms. This can be achieved by engaging with the project at the Project Steering Committee level to ensure that complimentary activities are aligned and opportunities for knowledge and experience sharing are identified and planned for. The projects will be working in different sites thus providing an opportunity to develop comparative data sets that can feed into national level reporting.
- The UNDP-GEF National Grasslands Biodiversity Programme, which ran from 2008-2013, was a partnership between government, non-governmental organisations and the private sector to mainstream biodiversity into the major production sectors (agriculture, forestry, coal mining, and urban economies) that operate in the Grassland Biome, with the intention of balancing biodiversity conservation and development imperatives in a production landscape. The Programme was implemented by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and approximately 26 partner organisations. Lessons from this programme will be used to inform the proposed project.

## 7. Consistency with National Priorities

### Is the Project consistent with the National Strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions

Yes

**If yes, which ones and how: NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc**

The project will be aligned with South Africa's Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2014-2019, which provides a road map for the next 20 years in South Africa's development. The MTSF has eight priorities, including "Rural development, land and agrarian reform and food security". Actions to combat Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) will, in practice, contribute to the rural development priority, but also to other priorities in the MTSF. DLDD responses can create employment opportunities, overcome spatial imbalances in those opportunities, boost education and skills development, and create opportunities for vulnerable and excluded groups. Land Degradation (LD) interventions will contribute to "Vibrant, equitable, sustainable rural communities contributing towards food security for all" (MTSF 6.7) by supporting a transformation of the rural economy through investment in "infrastructure, services, skills and productivity". Specifically LD interventions could contribute to increasing the percentage of productive land owned by previously disadvantaged individuals, reducing the percentage of households who are vulnerable to hunger and who live below the poverty line, and reducing rural unemployment (or under-employment).

The project further supports the implementation of the second National Action Programme for South Africa to Combat Desertification, Land Degradation and the Effects of Drought (2018-2030), the goal of which is to "contribute towards the conservation and sustainable utilization of land and other natural resources through rehabilitation and restoration of degraded landscapes". The proposed actions under the revised NAP relevant to the proposed project include: i) effective mobilization, generation and delivery of the knowledge and information required to support achievement of sustainable land management, land degradation neutrality (LDN) and land degradation-related sustainable development goals (SDGs), ii) effective implementation and strengthening of policies and institutional frameworks to minimize desertification, reverse land degradation and mitigate effects of drought through mainstreaming DLDD in other relevant sector policies, iii) strengthening local governance structures linked to sustainable land management, iv) support relevant research on sustainable land management, including diagnosis of the extent of desertification and land degradation, iv) capacity building of communities, land managers, farmers and implementers on sustainable land management and vi) establish funding mechanisms to support land owners, communities and conservation entities to implement sustainable land management.

The project will also respond to the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets as set by the Country. The LDN target responds to the immediate challenge of how we can sustainably intensify production of food, fuel and fibre to meet future demand without further degradation of our finite land resource base. The objective of LDN is to maintain the amount of healthy and productive land resources over time in line with national sustainable development priorities through sustainable land management (SLM) practices and ecosystem restoration. The SLM enhances the resilience of land resources and communities that are directly dependent thereon while avoiding further degradation.

National Action Plan for Adaptation (NAPA) under LDCF/UNFCCC

The project supports national priorities in ecosystem management and climate change adaptation. This includes the Climate Change Adaptation Plans for South African Biomes, developed by the Department of Environment Affairs (DEA), as well as the Ecosystem Base Adaptation Strategies which includes a review and prioritization of the most significant potential climate change risks and vulnerabilities for each of the 9 major biomes in the country, as well as an identification of

potential adaptation response measures.

## 8. Knowledge Management

**Outline the Knowledge management approach for the Project, including, if any, plans for the Project to learn from other relevant Projects and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.**

As stated in component 1 of the project, the project will generate and distribute knowledge. This knowledge is exchanged in different ways including through training of Stakeholders on the multiple benefits of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN as an SDG accelerator), restoration and sustainable management of dryland landscapes; through stakeholder dialogues, through peer to peer knowledge exchange and through organization of stakeholder fora to present lessons and SLM practices to decision makers in government decision-makers, community leaders, civil society groups and other stakeholders. Under Component 4, the project will design appropriate learning and policy dialogue forum to raise awareness among stakeholders on policies and practices that foster LDN attainment, and documentation, exchange visits, policy discourse and outreach at different levels in South Africa. Other related documentation at global level, including global rangeland assessment by IUCN as well as good practices in communal management from the World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism and rangeland management practices identified by other partners will be shared at different fora. Under this component, the project it will convene public fora to communicate project lessons and recommendations, with the goal of influencing national and local policy implementation in order to sustain project actions that are well aligned to LDN.

**Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And Gef Agency(ies)**

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter with this template).

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Date</b>
Zaheer Fakir	Chief Policy Advisor, International Governance and Relations – GEF Focal Point	DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, SOUTH AFRICA	4/4/2019

**ANNEX A: Project Map and Geographic Coordinates**

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project intervention takes place

Please refer to the Annex A attached to this submission

