

# LANDSCAPE STRATEGY FOR BUILDING SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

## LANDSCAPE FAYOUM

SGP EGYPT

April 2023

### Summary:

Fayoum is one of the oldest cities in Egypt, dating back to around 3200 BC. It is home to many important archaeological sites, including the Temple of Dionysias and the ancient city of Karanis, with Coptic and Islamic details weaved into its history. The city is famous for its natural landscape, encompassing sand dunes, palm trees, lakes, and valleys. It also contains the most complete fossil records of terrestrial primates and marshlands and is of great interest to climatologists. The area is of interest to tourists and researchers.

Egypt has been recently giving more attention to the climate change and emerging needs. GOE efforts in this regard is clear from the launch of the National Climate Change Strategy – 2050 (NCCS) by the Ministry of Environment in May 2022 and Egypt hosting the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) 27 in November 2022.

In order to prepare this landscape strategy, a multiphase approach was adopted starting with reviewing relevant documents on country and landscape levels. One of the key reference documents is the OP7 Project document that was developed after a set of consultations on landscape levels concluding the key identified gaps and potential opportunities. The desk review phase was followed by a consultation meeting conducted in Fayoum in 25<sup>th</sup> of Jan 2023, under the auspices of the Governor and attended by El-Fayoum deputy governor, governor's technical office, governorate representatives from Ministry of Youth and Sports and Ministry of Social Solidarity and Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environment, local authorities concerned with Environment, electricity, and agriculture, national agencies such as the National Council for Women (NCW), CSOs/CBOs and Fayoum University, in addition to the SGP Program Management Team and National Steering Committee Chair. Input from the consultation meeting along with the data gathered from the desk review were analyzed and guided the drafting of this landscape strategy.

The baseline survey provides the material to develop strategies to improve community resilience in Fayoum Landscape. Based on the community resilience's scores assessment, in general the

participants provided high scores for the “Governance and social equity” “Ecosystem protection” and “Biodiversity (including agriculture biodiversity”.

Based on the baseline survey and consultation with the community, issues such as excessive use of chemical fertilizers, inefficient energy use, poor solid waste management mainly agriculture waste, salinization, and water pollution of Qaroun lake and lack of community members awareness of key environmental threats and alternatives have been identified. Based on the community resilience scoring and identified issues by community members, potential community-based projects may include: (1) enhancement of agriculture practices by enabling farmers to replace chemical fertilizers with organic fertilizers and biocides, (2) Adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions in irrigation and production practises, (3) The recycle of agriculture waste into other in-demand industries such as innovative handicrafts (e.g., palm fronts) and compost, (4) Use of creative tools and methods to raise the awareness of community members on different environmental issues, consequences and offered alternatives, (5) Fish-farming in lake Qaroun and treatment of municipal wastewater around the lake, (6) Promotion of sustainable transport (e.g., bike sharing), and (7) Establishment of a sustainable solid waste management system.

The four targeted landscapes showed common issues that need immediate attention such as excessive use of chemical fertilizers, lack of awareness of the community members of key environmental threats and alternatives, inefficient energy use, and agriculture waste management. Additionally, each targeted landscape showed special needs based on the nature of the landscape. Implementing partners shall capitalize on the learnings from the previous phase addressing the identified needs and linking their projects to GEF full size projects to maximize the benefits generated from the implemented interventions. Gender and youth were highlighted across the four landscapes as the two main targets to benefit from the proposed interventions and creation of livelihood opportunities is a cross cutting approach to be adopted by implementing partners.

### **Introduction:**

The Seventh Phase of the Egypt Small Grants Programme (SGP) seeks to build socio-ecological resilience in Greater Cairo, Fayoum, Delta, and Upper Egypt landscapes through community-based activities for global environmental benefits and sustainable development. As such, the project will support community-based organizations, which are the driving force in rural development strategies, to take the lead in role managing natural resources sustainably for social and ecological resilience and global environmental benefits, and in concert with other stakeholders and communities to multiply results. The landscape approach integrated into the

project strategy is predicated on strengthening socio-ecological resilience. Involving multiple stakeholders in the landscapes-seascape in identifying priority issues and developing strategies for addressing these increases the overall social capital of the local communities. SGP Egypt has used a COMDEKS driven approach to formulate its landscape strategy for OP-7.

The Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Project (COMDEKS) was launched in 2011 as the flagship of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative, and is implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Environment of Japan, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations University – Institute of Advanced Studies. The Project is designed to support local community activities to maintain and rebuild socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS) and to collect and disseminate knowledge and experiences from successful actions for replication and up-scaling in other parts of the world. The project aims to develop sound biodiversity management and sustainable livelihood activities with local communities by providing direct and flexible funding opportunities to willing communities.

The developed landscape strategy is contributing to the GEF SGP OP7 Component 2: Durable landscape resilience through participatory governance and strengthened capacities for upscaling, Outcome 2.1: Strengthened community institutions for participatory governance to enhance socio-ecological resilience, Indicator 10: Participatory landscape management, as indicated by the number of landscape strategies developed or strengthened through participatory consultation and based on the socio-ecological resilience landscape baseline assessments endorsed by multi-stakeholder landscape platforms.

A landscape-wide baseline assessment of the Socio-Ecological Production Landscape (SEPL) was conducted to assess the overall performance of SEPL. The set of indicators for resilience in SEPL developed by the Satoyama initiative was used during the assessment. The resilience indicators of the scorecard exercise were developed in line with the five major goals, namely landscape/seascape diversity and ecosystem protection, Biodiversity (including agriculture biodiversity), Knowledge and innovation, governance and social equality and livelihood and wellbeing. Participants covering a diversified group of stakeholders in targeted landscapes, including local authorities, CSOs/CBOs, academia, etc. have participated in this exercise, which was performed as per the guidelines provided by the COMDEKS project by rating (scoring) with a scale between 1 to 5.

### 1- Priority Area: The Landscape, Issues and Assets, Boundaries and Biodiversity

One of the targeted landscapes for the Seventh Operational Phase of the Small Grants Program is the Fayoum governorate. The rationale for the selection of this landscape is based on a number

of factors; the richness of natural and cultural assets, threats and opportunities in the area, unique and diverse biodiversity and the willingness of communities and other stakeholders for long-term engagement and to facilitate the collaborative landscape management effort. Also, important for selection is that Fayoum governorate was one of the landscapes for the sixth Operational Phase of the Small Grants Program, which shall offer opportunity to build on the work done and address lessons learned produced from OP6. The section below summarizes the landscape issues, assets and biodiversity within the landscape.

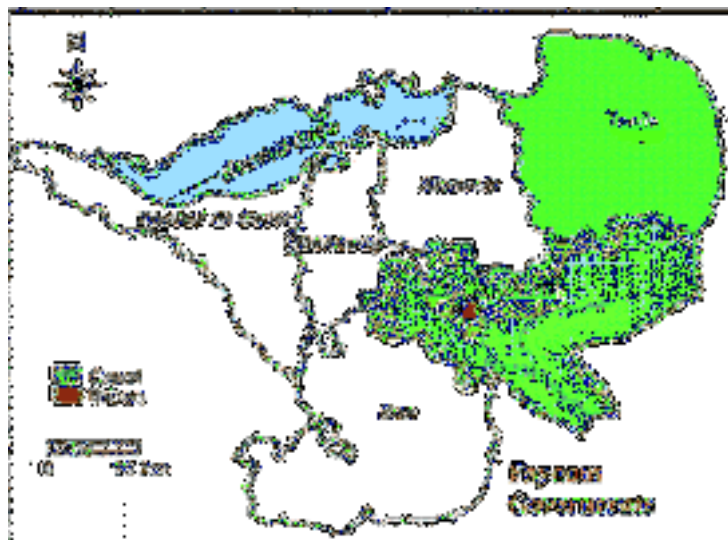


Figure (1): Map of El-Fayoum governorate

The Fayoum landscape encompasses the Fayoum Governorate, including Fayoum City, and Lake Qarun and the Wadi-El-Rayan protected areas. The Fayoum Governorate is a green natural depression covering an area of 6,068 km<sup>2</sup>, equivalent to about 0.6% of the total area of Egypt and is situated 90 km southwest of Cairo.

Fayoum Governorate has a population of approximately 3.9 million, 77% of whom live in rural areas. Population density reaches 1,51 thousand inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>. Most of the population works in agriculture and fishing, the service sector, and construction. The governorate of Fayoum is the ninth poorest in Egypt, with a poverty rate of 35.7%.<sup>1</sup> Poverty is more pronounced in rural areas, and especially in villages that are dependent on agriculture and where irrigation water is scarce. Similarly, in fisher communities because of the polluted situation of the lake to which poor infrastructure and sanitation services contributed largely. For communities living around protected areas, that situation is even more dire because they have no control over natural resources, no decision-making powers, and no assets to rely on. Having lost their source of livelihood, many, especially men have resorted to migration – internal rural urban but also irregular migration to

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.eeaa.gov.eg/en-us/topics/nature/protectorates/protectoratesdescription.aspx>

other countries- in search of economic opportunities. This change in the economic- base of communities has implications on social dynamics, which are both positive and negative. On the positive side, in the absence of men, women have started to venture in the public sphere and to engage in economic activities; hence, they have become visible. In the fisher village of Shakshouk for example, the majority of women are now selling fish and shrimp shells, and raising poultry for commercial purposes whereas most never did so in the past.<sup>2</sup> The negative aspect of such change, is that they have the sole responsibility of caring for the family and sustaining a livelihood sometimes barely and at great cost to their health and wellbeing, until their men find work in the city or manage to reach the country of destination illegally and at great peril.

Female Labor force participation in Fayoum is low at 17%.<sup>3</sup> In the meantime, and as expected, the unemployment of females in Fayoum (19.1%) is higher than that of males (6.4%).<sup>4</sup> Illiteracy rates are also higher among females at 40% compared to males at 28.5%.<sup>5</sup>

Fayoum has had an environmental action plan since 2008 and it clearly states that its owners are the people of Fayoum. Its aim is to reduce pollution, stop environmental degradation, and preserve Fayoum's rich resources so that the economic and health benefits accrue to the population.<sup>6</sup> It is not clear the extent to which this has been achieved as so far there has been no outcome evaluation. And, while the document states that the community has been consulted during its formulation, the process of engagement is not clear and there is no mention of community participation in monitoring the implementation of the plan. Accordingly, the extent to which women have had a say in setting the priorities and actions of the plan is not apparent.

Fayoum is connected to the Nile River by the Bahr Youssef Canal. Nile sediments make the soils of the depression fertile and sustain the intensive irrigated cultivation on which the population of the governorate mainly depends. The total cultivated area in Fayoum covers approximately 432,513 feddans (181,655 ha), where a variety of crops are grown including fruits such as grapes, figs, and mangoes as well as other traditional crops including wheat, cotton, rice, maize, sugar beets, and sunflowers. Fayoum's agriculture is mainly dependent on the water coming from the Nile through the Bahr Youssef Canal and is highly vulnerable to any decrease in the canal's water levels and to heat waves. The governorate hosts a rich community of non-governmental

<sup>2</sup> The Circular Relationship Between Poverty, Environment, and Economic Development: The Case of Shakshouk Village, Fayoum By Nada Tewfik(&), Marwa Abdel Latif, and Mohamed Salheen Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt CST Institute for Computer Sciences, Social Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering 2019 Published by Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2019. All Rights Reserved

<sup>3</sup> Localizing the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals at Governorate Level, January 2018 Report Prepared by Baseera, UNRCO and The United nations Population Fund (UNFPA, Egypt)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Environmental Action Plan Fayoum Governorate 2008 <http://www.eaaa.gov.eg/portals/0/eaaaReports/GovPlans/FayoumGEAPen.pdf>

agricultural entities including 35 agrarian reform cooperatives, 169 agricultural credit associations and three water resources cooperative associations.<sup>7</sup>

The cultivated land is classified based on soil fertility and crop productivity as follow: 17% of the total land area is classified as high fertile and high crop productive land in categories I and II, 55% and 23% are classified as medium to low fertility and productivity with categories of III, IV, V, VI. The recently reclaimed land is represented only 5.1% of the total area of the cultivated land. The reasonable low fertility and soil degradation characterized the agricultural land of Fayoum, is the main reason for intensive use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.<sup>8</sup>

There are approximately 128 fish farms in the Fayoum Governorate, covering a cumulative area of approximately 2,750 feddans (1,155 ha). In terms of employment, each feddan of fish farm provides 0.38 job<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, the total number of jobs provided by fish farming in the Fayoum landscape is calculated at approximately 7,237 jobs.

According to the Information and Decision Support Centre in Fayoum Governorate<sup>10</sup>, there were 524 apiaries in the governorate, as of 2016. Beekeeping and honey production have garnered increased attention in the country, with market studies showing favorable economic feasibility.<sup>11</sup>

Fayoum is considered one of the most important tourist areas in the country, as it comprises tourism attraction elements, the most significant of which is the meeting between the three agricultural, coastal, and desert environments. Pre-historic civilizations, the Pharaonic, Greek, Roman, Coptic and Islamic civilizations emerged there, and the governorate offers many tourist areas such as Ein El Seleen, natural protected areas such as Lake Qarun and Wadi El Rayan, and many monuments such as the Sonsert I Obelisk Egypt, Om El Borigat City, Qaroon Palace, Madi monumental city, Coptic monuments such as Virgin Mary Church, El Naqloun Abbey, and Islamic monuments, including the suspended mosque and Qaitabai mosque.

There are two important protected areas in the Fayoum landscape: Lake Qarun and Wadi El Rayan, both Key Biodiversity Areas<sup>12</sup> (KBAs) and national protected areas. Lake Qarun is one of

<sup>7</sup> Source: Annual Bulletin of the agricultural sector cooperative activity in 2016/2017. CAPMAS (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics), 2018. <https://www.capmas.gov.eg/>

<sup>8</sup> Khalil, M.K. (2017). Environmental stress and sustainable development in the Qarun Lake region. Annual Fayoum Geographical Conference, held in the Egyptian Academy of Sciences.

<sup>9</sup> Nasr-Alla, A.; Macfadyen, G.; Dickson, M.; Al-Kenawy, D.; Mohamed Fathi, M.; El-Naggar, G. (2012). VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS OF THE EGYPTIAN AQUACULTURE SECTOR. IIFET 2012 Tanzania Proceedings: 1-12.

<sup>10</sup> Alropy, T. E.; Noha E. Desouki, N. E., & Alnafissa, M. A. (2019). Economics of technical efficiency in white honey production: Using stochastic frontier production function. *Saudi J Biol Sci.* 26(7): 1478–1484

<sup>11</sup> Sayed H.-A.A., Al-Damasi O.I. A feasibility study for the small investment project in Dakahlia governorate: a case study for the financial evaluation of the modern apiaries projects in Dakahlia. *J. Agr. Econ. Soc. Sci.*

<sup>12</sup> KBAs are sites that contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity, [www.keybiodiversityareas.org](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org)

the oldest lakes in Egypt, known to ancient Egyptians as Lake Moeris. It is the third largest lake in the country, 40 km in length, 5.7 km in width, and at 34 m below sea level with depths ranging from 5 m in the east to 12 m in the west. Lake Qarun is the only completely closed lake in Egypt, the drainage water enters the lake through two main drains (El-Wadi and El-Batts drains) holding Fayoum agricultural and domestic pollution. The lake has no outlet and loses water only by evaporation. The lake was historically a freshwater lake, but in time its regime was changed to a drainage reservoir and become a saline lake, having a salinity of approximately 35 g/l. The northern-most shore is composed of uninhabited desert. The northern shore the lake is an archaeologically sensitive area containing pristine fossils of extinct animals and a petrified forest. It also contains the most complete fossil records of terrestrial primates and marshlands and is of great interest to climatologists. The area is of interest to tourists and researchers, which also imperils its sustainability, due to visitor traffic, pollution, solid waste, and the presence of off-track vehicles. As an important refuge for migratory birds, the lake and surrounding area is a protected area and was designated as a RAMSAR wetland of international importance in 2012.

Lake Qarun was declared a national protected area in 1989. The lacustrine ecology is changing as the salinity of the lake increases, raising concerns that the salinity levels might become too high for many life forms to thrive. Moreover, largely unregulated tourist developments, particularly along the southern shores of the lake, are damaging mudflats, saltmarshes and other water bird habitats. Hunting of water birds also continues to be a threat to the biodiversity of Lake Qarun, partly by recreational hunters, but also by local fish-farmers, an example of typical human-wildlife conflicts at many of Egypt's wetland sites.

The Wadi El Rayan PA, covering more than 175,000 ha is a national protected area, a RAMSAR site, and a World Heritage Site. Wadi El Rayan was originally an arid desert depression located to the south-west of Fayoum, with an average elevation of 43 m below sea-level and a maximum depth of 64 m below sea-level. As of 1973, excess drainage water from Fayoum was diverted into the depression, flooding large parts of it. Two large lakes were formed as a result at different elevations and connected by a swampy channel, creating one of the most important habitats for bird species of national, regional and international importance. The area holds reasonable numbers of wintering birds such as the near-threatened Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*) and Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* as well as several threatened species of mammals, including the slender horned gazelle, *Gazella leptoceros*. The lakes and springs play a critical role in the life cycles of a remarkable diversity of species, including 29 fish species, 164 bird species, 24 mammal species, 14 reptile species and 38 plant species. Fishing and agriculture are the major sources of livelihoods for local communities. Potential threats to the site include agricultural and wastewater drainage as well as illegal hunting. Wadi al-Hitan ("Whale Valley"), within the Ramsar Site, was designated as a World Heritage site in

2005 because of "invaluable fossil remains of the earliest, and now extinct, suborder of whales, *Archaeoceti*."

The salt-level in the lake is currently about 2.5 g/l, but it is only a matter of time before it becomes as saline as Lake Qarun. Salinity is expected to remain stable in the first lake, since it is constantly flushed. The greatest threat to the area comes from a land-claim project which aims at cultivating 15,000 feddan (6,300 ha) of desert, right in the centre of Wadi El Rayan Protected Area. Fish-farming, taking place in and around the lakes, is a potential source of water-pollution. In addition there is a possibility that water flow to the lakes will be severely reduced in the future as part of the drainage-water recycling policy the government is applying to conserve water. This would lead to a significant reduction in the size of the second lake or its complete disappearance. The salinity of the second lake is likewise increasing, and this is likely to diminish its importance for water birds. Illegal hunting and especially falcon-catching is also a continued threat. The growing number of fisherfolk and fish-farms is also causing increased disturbance to wintering water birds. The tarmac road, encircling the two lakes of Wadi El Rayan, has made the area more accessible, drastically increasing the opportunities for illegal hunting and habitat destruction.

SGP OP6 grants were awarded for projects on strengthening ecotourism improvement of the waterfall area in the Wadi El Rayan protected area and development of traditional handicrafts and assistance in marketing them to create sustainable jobs, especially for women, and awareness raising of tourists and local communities on biodiversity and the importance of the protected areas. OP6 grants have also been made to reduce GHG emissions through improved management of agricultural wastes, raise awareness regarding energy efficiency, and sustainable transport through a bicycle-sharing scheme at Fayoum University.

## 2- Situation Analysis

In order to build the landscape strategy a multiphase approach was adopted. First documents such as OP7 project doc, gender analysis action plan, stakeholder plan, Social and Environmental Screening Procedure, OP6 Fayoum landscape strategy, and the toolkit for the indicators of resilience in socioecological production landscape and seascapes were reviewed. OP7 project document is one of the key references guided the landscape strategy drafting. The landscape strategy integrates the key identified gaps and potential opportunities shared in the project document as a result of consultations conducted at a landscape level and the identified gaps and opportunities were further discussed and validated during the consultation meeting conducted in Fayoum in 2023.



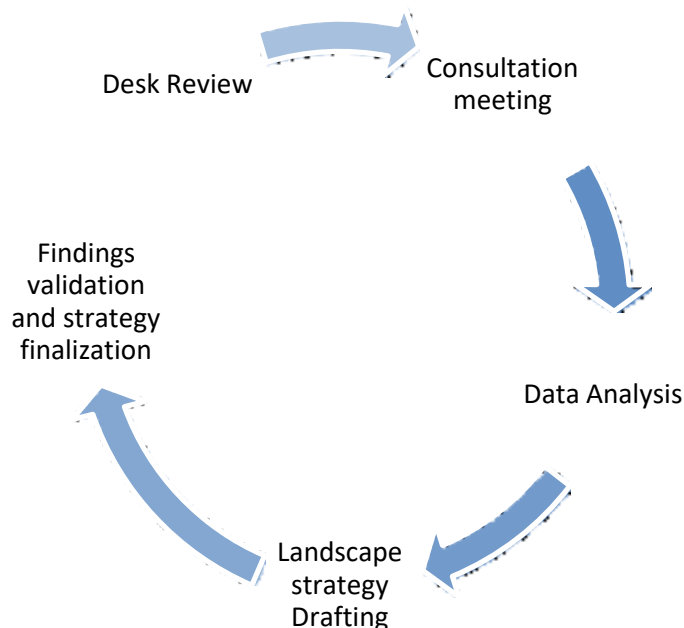


Figure (2): Strategy methodology

Second, a consultive meeting was held in Fayoum in 25<sup>th</sup> of Jan 2023. The consultation has been organized at the Governorate building under the auspices of the Governor. It was attended by 61 participants representing relevant stakeholders including El-Fayoum deputy governor, governor’s technical office, governorate representatives from Ministry of Youth and Sports and Ministry of Social Solidarity and Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environment, local authorities concerned with Environment, electricity, and agriculture, national agencies such as the National Council for Women (NCW), CSOs/CBOs and Fayoum University, in addition to the SGP Program Management Team and National Steering Committee Chair. Full details of the participants are provided in Annex II. During the consultive meeting, all participants were encouraged to share their thoughts on the actual needs and priorities of local communities within the areas of the program, the proposed practical and innovative solutions to address the challenges faced by local communities, the major projects (may be funded by other donors), local plans, or initiatives related to this matter, and the partnership opportunities that exist, whether at the governmental, civil or private sector levels, to maximize benefit. Besides the discussion that took place for 5 hours, all participants received a form to share their ideas about the four listed topics above and rate the SEPLS indicators using the Satoyama Indicators Scorecard and we received 13 responses on the scorecard.

The COMDEKS excel template was used to derive the SEPLS radar diagram. The results are given in the table below followed by the radar diagram:

## SEPL Performance

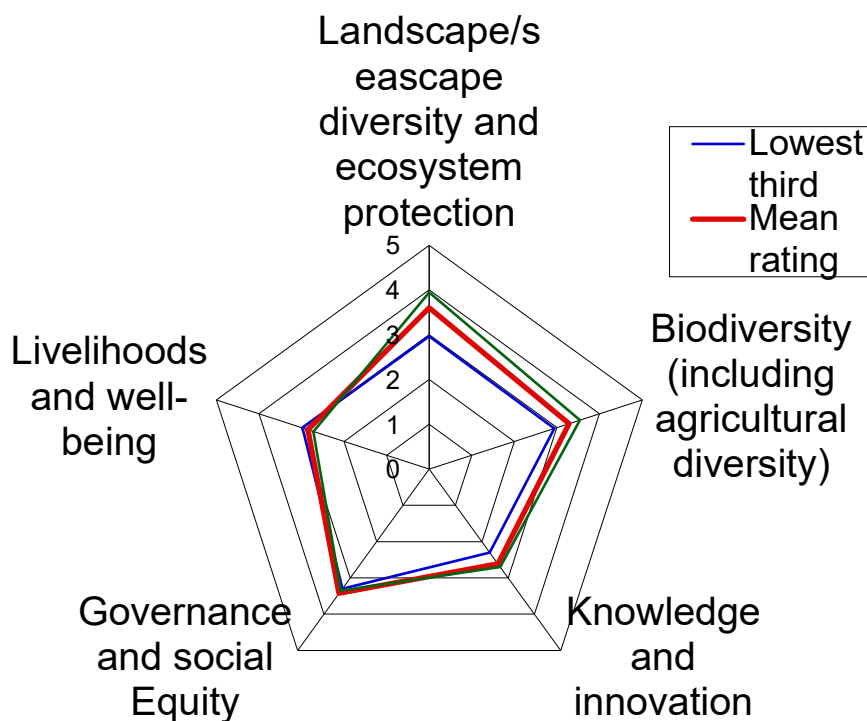


Figure (3): Fayoum Landscape SEPL performance Radar diagram

	Landscape/seascape diversity and ecosystem protection	Biodiversity (including agricultural diversity)	Knowledge and innovation	Governance and social Equity	Livelihoods and well-being
<b>Lowest third</b>	2.97	2.93	2.30	3.30	2.98
<b>Mean rating</b>	3.60	3.28	2.62	3.42	2.85
<b>Highest third</b>	3.95	3.53	2.70	3.35	2.72
<b>Standard dev.</b>	1.089329952	0.756608492	0.788031465	0.831568644	0.413552465

As shown in the radar diagram, the Fayoum stakeholders scored the Landscape/seascape diversity and ecosystem protection, Governance and social Equity and Biodiversity (including

agricultural diversity) with the highest scores, while Knowledge and innovation scored the lowest in Fayoum landscape.

During the consultation meeting the participants agreed on the following key identified problems the landscape is currently facing:



1. The excessive use of chemical fertilizers in agricultural lands which negatively affects the cultivated land, crops and pollute water. This was validated by the project document and the consultation meeting responses. It directly results in the low fertility and soil degradation characterized the agricultural land of Fayoum.
2. Water pollution in general was identified in the project document and validated during the consultation meeting as the sewerage network coverage in the governorate is fairly low and there is inadequate treatment of agricultural and municipal wastewater result in extensive pollution of drains and waterways in Fayoum. The water pollution specifically of Qaroun Lake and salinization impacting the ecology of the lake, reducing fish populations and desertification of surrounded lands.
3. Both the project document and the consultation meetings highlighted the poor solid waste management system of waste such as electronic waste starting with collection, transport, recycling, and disposal, and the unsafe disposal of agriculture waste leading to air and water pollution.
4. The project document added the salinity of the Qaroun lake increases, raising concerns that the salinity levels might become too high for many life forms to thrive, besides, hunting of water birds also continues to be a threat to the biodiversity of Lake Qaroun and agricultural and wastewater drainage. Besides, the poor management of Wadi El-Rayan area.
5. The consultation meeting responses added the inefficient energy use leading to environmental and economic burdens.

6. The consultation meeting responses added to the lack of awareness among community members (especially young generations) on environment challenges and consequences.

### 3- Landscape Strategy (Outcomes and Impact indicators)

The overall long-term objective of the SGP Egypt Landscape Strategy during its Seventh Operational Phase is to *“to build social, economic, and ecological resilience in landscapes and seascapes through community-based activities.”* The landscape strategy is recognized as a living document, which will continue being refined in view of the experiences and lessons learnt over time. This Landscape Strategy for El-Fayoum adopts the following five outcomes and defines key performance indicators for each outcome. These are consistent with and contribute towards the outcomes, indicators, and targets in the OP-7 Project Document. The targets, however, will be finalized after finalization of grantee proposals. The SGP projects selected within El-Fayoum Landscape will be expected to contribute to one or more of these outcomes along with relevant indicators.

**Outcome 1.1:** Strengthened conservation of biodiversity and protection of ecosystem services through participatory conservation, restoration, and sustainable livelihood interventions.

One measure of socio-ecological resilience in the target landscapes is the genuine involvement of local communities in collaborative conservation, restoration, and sustainable livelihood interventions. Through additional grant support and leveraging of resources and engagement from enabling partners, as well as advocating for policy reform and expanded incentive mechanisms, landscape resilience will continue to be strengthened.

**Indicator 5:** Participatory management of critical ecosystems, as indicated by the number of partnerships between CBOs and protected area administrations strengthened and/or newly established.

**Indicator 6:** Strengthened agroecological systems, as indicated by the number of households (gender disaggregated) gaining livelihood co-benefits from improved agroecological practices.

**Outcome 1.2:** Increased adoption of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies and mitigation solutions at community level

This outcome targets community projects that demonstrate and/or disseminate renewable energy or energy efficiency applications that have been solidly tested during previous phases of the SGP in Egypt (e.g. efficient lighting, bicycle transport systems, biogas) or which may benefit from demonstrations to enhance awareness or generate evidence for application.

**Indicator 8:** Livelihood co-benefits and strengthened resilience through low carbon agricultural practices, as indicated by (a) the amount of compost produced that displaces chemical fertilizer use and improves soil fertility (tons), and (b) the number of households benefitting from biogas cooking energy and digestate-sourced fertilizer (number of households, gender disaggregated)

**Indicator 9:** Strengthened resilience and increased energy security, as indicated by the number of solar PV agricultural pumping systems replacing diesel-powered units.

**Outcome 2.1:** Strengthened community institutions for participatory governance to enhance socio-ecological resilience

The landscape approach requires engagement by multiple stakeholders, with cross-sectoral representation from government, civil society, private sector, and academia-research. Multi-stakeholder collaboration will help leverage resources and facilitate impact at scale, and further strengthen mainstreaming of participatory conservation, restoration, and sustainable livelihood initiatives into local planning frameworks.

**Indicator 12:** Strengthening socioeconomic benefits for women, as indicated by the number of projects that target socioeconomic benefits and services for women.

**Outcome 2.2:** Upscaling enabled through capacity building and knowledge management.

The durability of the interventions implemented on the project will largely depend on building capacities of the CSOs/CBOs in the target landscapes, as well as generating and sharing knowledge on best practices and lessons learned.

**Indicator 14:** Knowledge shared, as indicated by the number of project and portfolio experiences and lessons systematized and codified into case studies produced and disseminated, and cumulative number of views of the case studies from the SGP website.

**Indicator 15:** Mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment, number of women-led projects supported.

**Indicator 16:** Upscaling initiated, as indicated by the number of instances of scaling up or replicating best project practices and/or the number of policy advances approved by local or central government entities.

**Outcome 3.1:** Sustainability of project results enhanced through participatory monitoring and evaluation.

The outcome focuses on delivering participatory and timely M&E feedback, consolidating inputs from the individual grantees and evaluating progress towards achievement of the overall project objective. The findings of the M&E activities will inform adaptive management measures, aimed at ensuring the durability of project results.

El-Fayoum landscape projects are also expected to contribute to the **GEF core indicators**:

**Core Indicator 3:** Area of land restored (hectares)

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

**Core Indicator 6:** Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated (metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e)

**Core Indicator 11:** Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment.

#### 4- Typology of potential community-based projects and criteria for project selection

- 1- Enhancing the agriculture practises to benefit biodiversity, restoring degraded agricultural land, and enhancing water conservation.
  - a. Improved agricultural practices (agriculture waste to animal feed and organic fertilizer). Increased utilization of organic fertilizers – and an associated decrease in chemical fertilizers – improve the diversity and integrity of soil biodiversity.
  - b. The myriad of organisms that make up soil biodiversity contribute to a wide range of essential ecosystem services, such as nutrient cycling, regulating soil organic matter, soil carbon sequestration, etc.
  - c. Through adoption of good agroecological practices, not only will the functioning of ecosystems be enhanced, but habitats for flora and fauna will be improved, generating biodiversity benefits.
  - d. Enhancing water conservation by clearing of irrigation canals of aquatic invasive alien species (IAS), e.g., water hyacinth will result conservation of irrigation water, improvements in irrigation processes, and enhanced soil fertility.
  - e. Restoring degraded agricultural land and boosting soil fertility through sustainable environmentally friendly practices
  - f. Introduction of modern irrigation practices that can save water and reduce economic burden on farmers.

- 2- Adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions
  - a. Solar PV systems for surface and groundwater pumping for irrigation replacing diesel-powered units.
  - b. Solar PV for lighting (residential – schools – commercial).
  - c. Biogas for cooking and digestate to replace artificial fertilizer.
  - d. Composting of agricultural residues.
  - e. Using clean energy source (e.g., gas) for pottery and coal furnaces
- 3- The recycle of agriculture waste into other in-demand industries such as innovative handicrafts (e.g., palm fronts) and compost.
- 4- Use of creative tools and methods to raise the awareness of community members on different environmental issues, consequences and offered alternatives.
- 5- Fish-farming in lake Qaroun and treatment of municipal wastewater around the lake.
- 6- Promotion of sustainable transport (e.g., bike sharing)
- 7- Strengthen Participatory conservation arrangements between local communities and protected areas (e.g., community patrol).
  - a. Participatory monitoring and management of Lake Qaroun ecosystem.
  - b. Community-supported ecotourism in the Wadi El-Rayan landscape, e.g., including, but not limited to (a) promoting citizen science initiatives connected with ecotourism activities, thus providing direct support to the monitoring of globally significant biodiversity, as well as increasing the awareness of biodiversity values; (b) reducing damage to critical habitats by tourists through increasing awareness, e.g., through training of community biodiversity guides; (c) facilitating establishment of community-level business models that involve CBOs producing handicrafts for tourists that provides alternative livelihood options for local communities and reduces pressure associated with unsustainable activities in habitats of globally significant biodiversity.
  - c. Improved agroecological practices (beekeeping). Through promotion of agroecological practices, including diversifying on-farm production, pollination by bees can help facilitate diversity and provide improved and expanded habitats for fauna and flora, thus generating biodiversity benefits.



**Table (1): Mapping of potential projects to the main outcomes:**

#	Suggested projects	SGP	Enhancing ecosystem service	Strengthening the sustainability of production systems	Developing and diversifying livelihoods and income generation	Strengthening institutions and governance	Women focused	Youth focused
1	Enhancing the agriculture practises to benefit biodiversity, restoring degraded agricultural land, and enhancing water conservation.	X	X	X	X			X
2	Adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions	X	X	X	X		X	X
3	The recycle of agriculture waste into other in-demand industries such as innovative handicrafts (e.g., palm fronts) and compost.	X	X	X	X		X	X
4	Use of creative tools and methods to raise the awareness of community members on different environmental issues, consequences and offered alternatives.				X		X	X
5	Fish-farming in lake Qaroun and treatment of municipal wastewater around the lake.	X	X	X	X			
6	Promotion of sustainable transport (e.g., bike sharing).	X		X	X		X	X
7	Strengthen Participatory conservation arrangements between local communities and	X	X	X	X			X

	protected areas (e.g., community patrol).						
<b>Total</b>		6	5	6	7	4	6

**Criteria for project selection:**

The selected projects under SGP OP7 Egypt will adhere to the defining aspects of the COMDEKS programme, i.e. the centrality of “community-based” organizations in rural development strategies and taking the lead role in project planning, landscape governance, execution and monitoring. This approach is also consistent with SGP’s historical focus, organizational mandate, and the spirit of the Small Grants Programme philosophy. There is recognition, however, that partners will need additional orientation and support on landscape management-related issues and methodologies. This requirement would be addressed through increased focus on training, orientation, and on-going mentoring of grantees.

The call for proposals will be made through the SGP Egypt website, social media platforms, the steering committee networks, the Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Social Solidarity. The document will include background information and guidelines for submitting technical and financial proposals. The local social solidarity directorate and the governor team will approve the submitted proposals before sharing the proposals for screening by the National Steering Committee. Field visits by the SGP National team may be undertaken to actual sites/offices for validation and/or additional information.

NSC meeting(s) will be held for finalization of short-listed proposals. After receipt and short-listing of proposals, potential partners may be provided additional information and/or support to refine proposals, if needed.

Written scoring/rating criteria for proposals will be shared amongst all members of the proposal selection committee. The following criteria will be adhered to for reviewing and appraising the organizations and proposals for implementing SGP projects in El-Fayoum landscape (which may differ from other SGP projects outside the landscape):

### **Eligibility Criteria for Partners/Organizations:**

1. The community-based organization should be registered at the Ministry of Social Solidarity with an established presence within the boundaries of the landscape.
2. A permanent location/office at the project site will be an advantage, but not mandatory.
3. The organization proposing work related to the GEF SGP priorities or themes should demonstrate a strong ability to deliver such projects, which includes organization's profile which illustrates the CSOs/CBOs capabilities and experience to deliver community projects
4. Possessing inclusive and broad-based membership/affiliation with community-based groups, youth groups/committees or indigenous groups will be an advantage.
5. The project team should include at least one technical staff proposed for implementation, who will also act as focal person and assume responsibility for reporting.
6. Adequate gender balance within the team will be desirable.

### **Criteria for project proposals:**

1. Project proposals should be aligned with the Landscape Strategy and should directly contribute to one or more of the outcomes of the Landscape Strategy. The project proposal should be aligned to the National Climate Change Strategy – 2050 (NCCS), prepared by the Ministry of Environment and launched in May 2022.
2. Project proposals that respond to additional areas will be given preference such as those addressing multiple threats/needs, innovations, replication potential, and policy inputs.
3. The proposed project site should be within the target landscape and based on a documented community needs assessment.
4. Each project should allocate at least 10 percent of the budget to knowledge management products at the landscape level, e.g. case study, audio-video documentation, best practices.
5. Project proposals should include a time-bound work-plan, M&E section, sustainability plan, partnership plan and log- frame.
6. Project proposals need to include a section showing the project's alignment to the programme's areas of work and landscape outcomes.
7. Gender considerations should be mainstreamed as appropriate e.g. collection of and reporting on gender disaggregated data, gender analysis etc.
8. Project proposals should explicitly state any capacity development inputs/gaps/requirements pertaining to implementation.

9. In-kind and in-cash contribution must be met by CSOs/CBOs, local community members and/or other partners (government, local authority, private sector, academia, national or international agency, etc.)
10. Project cost must be no more than USD 50,000
11. Project proposals should explain their partnership model and the key stakeholders identified to support the project’s implementation and sustainability.
12. Project proposals shall demonstrate a new technology/innovations support and adoption to maximize the project’s results and possesses scope of replication.
13. Project proposal should specify clearly any activities focused on women or youth (if any)

**Strategic projects grants:**

14. Resources have been allocated in the OP7 budget for strategic grants, to help facilitate durable impacts. The strategic grants are envisaged to be awarded to experienced CBOs/CSOs for delivering technical and strategic support, guiding local stakeholders in the implementation of landscape approaches and delivering advocacy for policy reform and upscaling.
15. Two to three strategic projects will be granted across the four landscapes.
16. Terms of reference will be developed for the strategic grants in consultation with the SGP National Steering Committee (NSC), Country Programme Management Unit (CPMU), the UCP Global Coordinator, and the UNDP Country Office (CO), and then awarded through competitive procurement and agreed by the NSC.

**Table (2): scoring matrix for project’s proposals.**

Criteria	Evaluation Elements	Score
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Registered local organisation with no known conflicts/risks</li> <li>- Maintains some local presence.</li> <li>- Holds required technical expertise to deliver the proposed project</li> </ul>	20
Technical Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aligned and responsive to OP-7 Prodoc and LS</li> <li>- Contributes to more than 1 outcome of the LS</li> </ul>	25
Budget/ M&E Arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Within permissible budget</li> <li>- Includes SMART KPIs</li> <li>- Includes Knowledge Management products</li> <li>- Includes co-financing (cash/in-kind)</li> </ul>	15

Scope/Innovation	- Demonstration of new technology/innovations - Possesses scope of replication	20
Team composition	- Technical focal person - Gender-balanced team	5
Partnerships	- Stakeholders mapping and analysis - Partnerships plan	15
<p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total score of 50 and above – shortlisted and recommended for NSC consideration</li> <li>- Total score below 50 points – not recommended for NSC consideration</li> </ul>		

### 5- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan at the Landscape Level

The method employed during the consultation process in the baseline survey is a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. A list of SEPLS indicators and scores for each indicator is used as a guideline.

SGP will continue such interactions in the future with the relevant key stakeholders to update partners on the landscape strategy and on M&E aspects for grantees. More specifically, at this early stage, participants were more forthcoming on discussing key issues, sectoral and thematic thrusts, and typology of projects. The section below on the M&E plan is indicative and will be refined at the stage of project proposal submission and approval.

The regular on-going M&E for SGP Egypt will be conducted in accordance with UNDP requirements as outlined in the [UNDP POPP](#) and [UNDP Evaluation Policy](#) procedures. Additional mandatory GEF-specific M&E requirements will be undertaken in accordance with the [GEF Monitoring Policy](#) and the [GEF Evaluation Policy](#) and other [relevant GEF policies](#)<sup>13</sup>.

Each SGP grantee will indicate the specific Landscape Outcome(s) that it is contributing towards, and the M&E plan will be tailored according to the outcomes and KPIs in the Strategy thereby making explicit which of the key performance indicators it is contributing towards and how in the final approved proposals.

The schedule and frequency of the individual SGP projects monitoring activities will be defined in the proposals. A key lesson learnt for SGP is that the M&E plan at the project level must adhere to the SMART standards. The applicants will require additional guidance and details for this purpose, and it is expected that short-listed partners will be coached accordingly. SGP will build the capacities and provide adequate institutional support to SGP grantees to enable them to fulfill their role in serving their local communities, assessing their needs, and successfully designing, implementing, and monitoring SGP-funded projects. Besides the SGP support to

<sup>13</sup> See [https://www.thegef.org/gef/policies\\_guidelines](https://www.thegef.org/gef/policies_guidelines)

grantees, the formal multi-stakeholder groups and partnerships established and formalized on landscape levels to provide strategic advice and policy guidance on landscape management will also ensure ongoing monitoring of projects and of their results and exchange knowledge across grantees.

SGP grantees are requested to submit semi-annual progress reports (including KPIs progress) along with a financial report as a requirement for disbursement of next installment, besides, periodic monitoring visits will be carried out by the SGP Egypt National Programme Manager and members of the NSC, as needed. SGP grantees will also submit a final report summarizing global benefits and other results achieved, outputs produced, and lessons learned. The final report should also include a final financial statement. Partner submitted progress reports will be used to track progress against overall outcomes and identify gaps. Partners will also be required to document best practices, case studies and lessons learnt as relevant, which will be compiled at the end for the entire SGP portfolio.

SGP will also build on and promote innovations in monitoring and effective reporting through use of new technologies (e.g., tablets and online surveys). The overall M&E report of SGP will aggregate results at the level of the overall outcomes and indicators specified in the Prodoc.

**Table (3): M&E plan at the individual project level:**

Activity	Responsible party	Timeframe
Proposed M&E plan indicating outcomes, activities and KPIs	Grantee	At time of proposal submission
Project work-plan	Grantees, CPM, NSC	Project duration (quarterly)
Baseline data collection	Grantees, CPM	At project's proposal/ early stage
On-site monitoring visits	CPM, NSC	At-least once per year and as-needed
Participatory project monitoring/review and capacity building	Grantees, CPM, NSC and other stakeholders	At least once per year (can include partners' meetings, network exchanges)
Project progress reports (technical and financial)	Grantees, CPM	As per the project proposal and with each disbursement request
Project final report	Grantees, CPM	At project completion
Project evaluation report	CPM, NSC, External party	One Month prior to project completion
Lessons learnt and knowledge Generated	CPM, NSC, External party	Mid-term and end-term of the project life.

Moreover, a multi-stakeholder landscape platform will be formed to provide guidance and support to all grantees. The multi-stakeholder landscape platform will include local government

units, CBOs/CSOs received grants, MoSS representative and MoE representative, NCW among other relevant stakeholders at local level. The multi-stakeholder landscape platforms will provide direct linkages with local government development planning mechanisms and opportunities for funding upscaling and replication. Involving multiple stakeholders in the landscape platforms will enhance the likelihood that project results will be sustained after GEF funding ceases. Representatives of local government entities are important members of the multi-stakeholder landscape platforms, helping to foster linkages with complementary government programmes and to identify incentives for upscaling project interventions.

The plan above provides a basis for continuous improvement and refinement of the planning and management of individual projects as well as helping communities to assess and adapt their approaches for rebuilding SEPLS, and in identifying gaps and collecting and disseminating experiences in target areas through periodic reviews. In line with COMDEKS guidelines, it is also proposed that at least two partner organizations – who are identified as “lead” partners for capacity building on COMDEKS – can be given a proactive role in mentoring and steering the M&E and knowledge management processes.

#### 6- Knowledge Management Plan at the Landscape level

In Egypt OP6, a stand-alone Capacity Development project supported the production of case studies and disseminated them at national and local levels through different knowledge channels. It produced factsheets, newsletters, knowledge management and audio-visual materials. These knowledge products along with the individual case studies make up a “living” knowledge platform, which can be further strengthened and expanded during Egypt OP7.

At the broader landscape level, the SGP Egypt Country Programme has been producing case studies of the landscape planning and management experience. These case studies highlight the processes of stakeholder participation, as well as the progress toward the targets selected during landscape planning. The results of these studies are planned to be published and disseminated throughout landscapes through print and digital media and SGP’s institutional partners, CSOs/CBOs, SGP-supported CSO networks, universities and others.

The project will implement an inclusive knowledge management strategy across the four landscapes as a standalone project that is also linked with the Upgraded Country Programme (UCP) and Small Grants Programme (SGP) knowledge management priorities, facilitating collaborative interactions across local, national, regional, and global levels. The receptiveness of stakeholders to knowledge inputs is an important impact driver in this regard. The coordination, collaboration, and knowledge management strengthened by the project will foster systemic change and replication, thus maximising the effectiveness, durability, and scale of socio-ecological resilience.

Building on the OP6 efforts to document and share good practices and lessons learned, each grant project has as a primary product a case study, and each grant a summary of lessons learned based on evaluation of implementation results and their contributions to GEB, local development objectives and landscape level outcomes, including the development of social capital. The knowledge products will be disseminated using print media, social media, radio, or other communication approaches. At least one of the knowledge products is envisaged to highlight women's role in ensuring social and ecological resilience. This knowledge is being systematized and codified for dissemination at the landscape level through policy dialogue platforms, community landscape management networks and multi-stakeholder partnerships, and knowledge fairs and other exchanges. The individual grant project case studies are anticipated at project design and based on a participatory methodology, so that the production of the case studies strengthens the community organization's capacities for reflection and action through learning-by-doing.

To record and disseminate the knowledge gained through the implementation of the community small grants, the CBOs will be trained on collecting, recording and documenting knowledge and experiences on community development initiatives. The increased capacity of community-level stakeholders to generate, access and use information and knowledge is expected to increase the sustainability of project activities beyond the life of the grant funding. Knowledge sharing and replication will help ensure that the impacts of the project are sustained and expanded, generating additional environmental benefits over the longer-term. Another channel for knowledge sharing and dissemination is the multi-stakeholder landscape platform to be formed after the CBOs/CSOs proposals are approved. SGP team will put efforts to influence the multi-stakeholder landscape platform activeness and encourage participants to meet frequently and provide support whenever needed.

The knowledge obtained from project experiences and lessons learned will be socialized through SGP's well-established national network of stakeholders and SGP's global platform, and it will be used in upscaling successful initiatives. The project will facilitate dissemination through global ongoing South-South and global platforms, such as the UN South-South Galaxy knowledge sharing platform and PANORAMA<sup>14</sup>. Considering the mature UNDP country programme in Egypt and the long-standing experience of SGP in the country, Egypt is in a unique position to share experiences and lessons to younger, less experienced programmes in the region. The project will furthermore provide opportunities for regional cooperation with countries that are implementing initiatives on conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity and

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<sup>14</sup> <https://panorama.solutions/en>



community-level clean energy solutions in geopolitical, social and environmental contexts relevant to the proposed project in Egypt.

## Annex

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Data of consultive meeting

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**Fayoum Landscape Consultation Meeting**  
**Wednesday 25 January 2023**

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