



ADAPTATION FUND

AFB/B.42-43/4
22 April 2024

Adaptation Fund Board

**REQUEST FOR NO-COST EXTENSION OF PROJECT
COMPLETION DATE: SAHARA AND SAHEL OBSERVATORY
(DJIBOUTI, KENYA, SUDAN, UGANDA)**

Background

1. The Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) at its thirty-fourth meeting, approved a four-year project titled “Strengthening drought resilience for small holder farmers and pastoralists in the IGAD region countries”, implemented by the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) in Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda, for a requested amount of US\$ 13,079,540 (Decision B.34/24).
2. The objective of the project is to increase the resilience of smallholder farmers and pastoralists to climate change risks related to drought, through the establishment of appropriate early warning systems and implementation of drought adaptation actions in the IGAD region. This is enabled through implementing a suite of interventions that focus on: (i) Development and enhancement of a regional Drought Early Warning System; (ii) Strengthening the capacity of stakeholders to manage drought risks due to climate change effects; (iii) Supporting innovative drought and climate change adaptation actions; and (iv) Enhancing knowledge management, awareness creation and information sharing.
3. As mandated by the decision, an agreement was prepared and signed between the Board and OSS on 24 December 2019 and the project started implementation on 10 October 2020.
4. The project Implementing Entity submitted two project performance reports (PPRs), which have been cleared by the secretariat. As of April 2024, an amount of US\$ 10,200,000 including the project fees, has been disbursed by the trustee, which corresponds to 78 per cent of the approved grant.
5. On January 29, 2024, OSS submitted the first request for a regular 18-month no-cost extension of the project completion date, from 9 October 2024 to 9 April 2026.
6. As outlined in the Adaptation Fund Project/Programme Delay Policy (AFB/B.34-35/6), an implementing entity may request for a project/programme extension beyond the original completion date for up to 18 months for a concrete adaptation project/programme if (i) no additional funds are required; (ii) the project/programme’s originally approved scope will not change; and (iii) the entity provides reasons and justifications for the extension. The DA must be notified of an extension request.
7. The reasons for this request, as outlined in the memo shared by OSS, are four-fold: i) Delays related to the insecurity in Sudan and Uganda within the peripheral areas; ii) Delays in procurement; iii) Weak project management unit’s capacities; and iv) Recommendation of the mid-term evaluation to extend the project by 18 months.

Secretariat’s review of the request

8. Following a review of the request by the secretariat and considering the explanation provided by OSS, the secretariat is of the view that this eighteenth-month no-cost extension request is justified.
9. As evidenced by the memo provided by OSS (Annex I), it is noted that this request would allow sufficient time for the project to compensate for accumulated delays encountered due to different challenges and constraints faced in the project start and implementation; and ensure the fulfillment of the project outcomes to increase the resilience of smallholder farmers and pastoralists in the target area.

10. Finally, the secretariat acknowledges that this no-cost project extension request has been agreed with the executing entities and endorsed by the Designated Authorities, in accordance with the Adaptation Fund Policy for Project/Programme Delays.

Recommendation

11. The Board may consider and decide to approve the request for an eighteenth-month extension of the project completion date from 9 October 2024 to 9 April 2026, for the project “Strengthening drought resilience for small holder farmers and pastoralists in the IGAD region” as requested by OSS.

Annex 1: Request for a no-cost extension of the project completion date**REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF CONCRETE ADAPTATION PROJECT/PRORAMME****REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF CONCRETE ADAPTATION PROJECT/PROGRAMME*****Request for extension of project/programme completion date***

Implementing Entity Name: Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS)			
AF Project/programme ID: AFR/RIE/DRR/2017/1			
Project/programme Title: Regional Project DRESSEA - Strengthening drought resilience for small holder farmers and pastoralists in the IGAD region countries			
Country(ies): Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda			
Project/Programme Approval (date)	10/10/2020		
Expected Project/programme Completion (date)	10/09/2024	Proposed Revised Completion (date):	04/09/2026

Reasons/justifications for the extension of project/programme completion (IE):

The "Strengthening drought resilience for small holder farmers and pastoralists in the IGAD region countries" project was designed to be aligned with the sustainable development and climate change adaptation priorities of the four countries. It is in perfect harmony and alignment with the national and regional policies, strategies and priorities in terms of sustainable development and adaptation plans to climate change.

This a project dedicated to increasing the resilience of smallholder farmers and pastoralists to climate change risks mainly those related to drought, through the establishment of appropriate early warning systems and the implementation of drought adaptation actions in the project sites in the four countries.

After three years of implementation, the project's effectiveness is rather low, given the poor performance recorded during the mid-term evaluation and monitoring supervision missions, hence the need for additional time to catch up and achieve the project's objectives.

The regional inception workshop was held on October 6th, 2020, under special conditions coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic experienced globally. This situation did not allow the regional project management unit to travel to the countries, resulting in delays in setting up the national project teams and capacity building them in execution procedures and project management aspects. This unprecedented situation posed problems that not only affected the initial set-up of the project and hampered the timely deployment of the necessary resources but also the establishment of the optimum conditions for starting implementation as per the anticipated schedule.

Furthermore, numerous difficulties were encountered, firstly, the delayed onboarding of the NPMU members and their subsequent understanding of the project philosophy, to allow them begin execution was prolonged and led to a slowed start. All the countries in the are have all gone through electioneering periods, which have contributed to periods of inactivity and often with organisations challenges especially in terms of procurement, with the case of Sudan more prominent and persistent to date. The regional executing entity has been in a transition from Global Water Partnership, Southern Africa Division (GWP SA) to Global Water Partnership, East Africa (GWP EA) and Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) causing coordination challenges given the regional approach employed in the project.

In summary, OSS presents the reasons and proposals for the no cost extension taking into account consultations with the executing entities as follows:

1. Delays related to the insecurity in Sudan and Uganda within the peripheral areas

The security situation in Sudan has always been precarious, but has been showing signs of stability until the last 1 year, when the civil unrest escalated, leading to very limited project activities' execution as well as financial absorption. In addition, some peripheral zones in the countries started presenting high security risks, which made installation of equipment and activities execution halted especially in the border between Kenya

and Uganda on the transhumance corridor. The shared water resources were limited and exacerbated the conflicts within the drought period forcing banditry and rustling and causing some villages to move to other safe regions. This situation has delayed and hindered the implementation of many activities.

2. Delays in procurement

Bureaucracy and slow procurement procedures leading to lengthy periods of acquisition in the countries are among the major constraints, causing delays which couldn't be easily addressed within the reporting periods. For example, the process of recruiting the consultants to carry out the studies on water points and grazing areas, which was launched in 2021, has taken more than one year to be completed in Djibouti due to lack of national capacities and unavailability of expertise. Same challenges have also been evidenced in the other countries.

3. Weak project management Unit's capacities

We noted a lack of capacity in terms of technical and management skills (poor quality of supervision, reporting and management) in the entities due to prior obligations related to their engagements at Ministry level. Furthermore, some the national project coordinators, are not fully dedicated to manage and coordinate the project and the team due to national priorities and duties. This affected the quality of work and the deadlines for executing activities.

4. Recommendation of the mid-term evaluation

The project mid-term evaluation conducted underlined also the delays occurred to the project due to the abovementioned reasons among others and therefore recommended to extend the project duration for 18 months. This will allow to compensate the delayed project start and achieve all the planned outputs to reach the project outcomes.

In addition to the above-mentioned reasons, various other challenges and barriers were faced during execution, delaying or postponing key activities at national entity levels. The main key points are highlighted below as presented by the Executing Entities.

Reasons/justifications for the extension of project/programme completion (EE):

Executing Entity	Reasons/justifications for the extension	Proposed Revised Completion date
Djibouti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A <u>problem with the institutional set-up</u> has led to an amendment to the grant agreement, amending the initially planned set-up of the DHR within the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water, Fisheries and Livestock (MAEPE-Rh). This amendment was signed in January 2022. This amendment changed the specimen signatures for the 2 project accounts, as well as the signature of administrative documents (staff contracts, etc.). The PMU also received a new office equipped with office furniture and IT equipment. • The <u>project team was understaffed</u> due to maternity leaves of 6 months each for the technical assistant and the accountant. <u>Lack of individual national consultants</u> specialized in drought early warning systems and cooperative creation. The PMU had to advertise 	04/09/2026

	<p>several times in the National newspapers to recruit consultants in these fields.</p> <p><u>Limited suppliers</u> within the context of the DRESSEA project leading the PMU to publish several times to find national suppliers.</p>	
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Lengthy operational procedures</u> within the government structures such as opening of bank accounts specific to the project. Partially and to a good extent, Covid-19 pandemic limited physical follow ups of the process of the delayed opening of the account. • <u>Unavailability of key government staff</u> and visits to the project sites for verification also delayed the launch of the project to April 2022 yet the agreement was signed in 2021. 	04/09/2026
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>National elections</u> hindered project kick-off activities supported by institutional restructuring hence a change of the signatories and management that slowed activities at the Ministry level. • <u>Limited sensitization and awareness.</u> This was required and equally there was need to get back to the project sites to introduce the project to the new management at the county governments of Kitui and Samburu after elections of new governors in the two counties. This again further slowed down the execution of project activities. • Following the <u>closure of the government financial year</u> in June 2023, again there was a total freeze of spending by the new government until November 2023. This once again affected execution of the project. • As the executing entity we have planned a rapid result initiative to fast track the implementation of the project activities and compensate the lost time. 	

Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>COVID-19 pandemic</u>: At the beginning of the project 2021 limited operations in the country. • The <u>unstable political situation with an ongoing civil war</u> caused more delays in executing the activities. This was coupled by government officials restructuring position especially at key decision maker level such as Ministers where the handing over is not done properly hence the need to undertake the explanation process and the importance of the project to the new regime especially the ministry of Finance. • <u>Intermittent communication</u> - The internet connections and the call signals are weak causing difficulty in communicating with team members and also slowing down the process of executing the activities. • <u>Electricity cuts and outage</u> - The cutting off of the Electricity that reached 12 hours during the day causing difficulty in working. • The <u>Ministry of Finance is working with limited staff</u>. The current staff is working only for funding the war resources for the military so the process of the final approvals for signing the contracts with consultancies are slowing down as well as funds disbursements to the project sites to support activities. • The two vehicles acquired but not paid for are now considered as <u>war casualties</u> because they were stolen from the free custom zone area. <p>Justifications for the extension.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The communities in Al Salam locality are suffering a lot because of the drought and this project is a survival line for them especially because of the current situation in Sudan. • Al Salam locality is a vulnerability area that experiences high rainfall variability with increasing frequency and intensity of drought occurrences and high environmental degradation. • Al Salam locality is inhabited by communities that are food insecure characterized by recurrent famine due to shortage of food and with high dependence on the rain-fed agriculture especially high dependence of farmers and pastoralists on crop and livestock farming were also selected. • Al Salam Locality has many vulnerable members among the smallholder farmers and pastoralists especially women, children, youth, disabled and elderly by gender as well as low-income levels of the population/high poverty and low-income levels known and reported were also given priority. 	04/09/2026
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Delayed start of the project</u>: Although the regional launch of the project was held on October 6th, 2020, it did not start in Uganda until 6 months later (10th March 2021) after the formal process for starting the project had been finalized. • <u>Insecurity</u>: The project area has faced challenges of insecurities throughout the project period which has led to reduced working time of 	04/09/2026

	<p>the staff based in the project area and sometimes complete halting of project activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Extensive stakeholder engagement:</u> In order to ensure successful implementation of the project, it was and is still necessary to carry out extensive stakeholder engagement. This has taken more time than expected since several meetings have been held in order to get stakeholder buy in and ensure communities participate in the project activities. • <u>Delays in execution of regional activities:</u> There has been a delay in execution of Regional project activities on which the National activities are dependent. There are some activities that require input and information from regional activities that have not yet been implemented. 	
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As the Regional Implementing Entity for the Adaptation Fund's DRESSEA project in IGAD region countries of

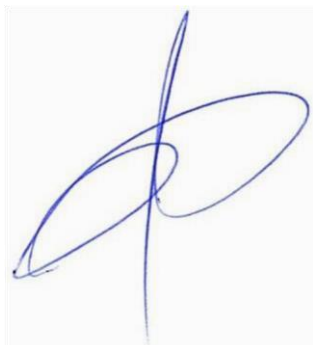
Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda, Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) wishes to inform the Adaptation Fund

Board Secretariat on the proposed changes to the project completion and its concurrent date of **October 9th, 2024**. Following the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review and the monitoring results, which were approved by the last Regional Project Steering Committee, held on November 24th, 2023 in Entebbe (Uganda), after three years of project implementation there is a need for an extension to give more time to the Entities to achieve the project expected results and objectives. The new expected date proposed for completion is **April, 9th, 2026**. With regard to the above, the implementing entity, OSS, would like to request a no-cost project extension of **18 months**. This will allow to:

- *Compensate for accumulated delays encountered due to different challenges and constraints faced in the project start and implementation;*
and
- *Ensure fulfilment of the project outputs and outcomes for enhanced sustainability.*

Implementing Entity certification

This request has been prepared in accordance with Adaptation Fund policies and procedures, has been agreed by participating executing entities, and the Designated Authority (DA) has been notified.



Mr. Nabil BEN KHATRA, Executive Secretary of the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) as the Project contact person.

Date: January 29th 2024

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