



ADAPTATION FUND

AFB/B.44-45/8  
15 July 2025

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Adaptation Fund Board

**REQUEST FOR NO COST EXTENSION OF PROJECT  
COMPLETION DATE: SAHARA AND SAHEL  
OBSERVATORY (BENIN, BURKINA FASO, AND NIGER)**

## Background

1. During the intersessional period between its thirty-third and thirty-fourth meetings, the Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) approved a four-year regional project titled *"Integration of Climate Change Adaptation Measures in the Concerted Management of the WAP Transboundary Complex: ADAPT-WAP."* The project, submitted by the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS), is being implemented in Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger. The total amount approved for the project was US\$ 11,536,200 (Decision B.33-34/25).
2. The project aims to strengthen ecosystem resilience and improve the livelihoods of populations affected by climate change within the WAP Complex by establishing a Multi-Risk Early Warning System (MREWS) and implementing concrete adaptation measures. This includes: (i) integrating climate change considerations into the WAP Complex management; (ii) designing and implementing a MREWS for droughts, floods, and fires; (iii) improving resilience through adaptation actions; and (iv) raising awareness, building capacity, and promoting sustainable management of the WAP Complex.
3. As per decision B.33-34/25, an agreement was signed between the Board and OSS in October 2019, and the project began implementation on 21 April 2020. To date, the total amount of US\$ 11,536,200 has been disbursed to the project, representing 100% of the approved funding. The project has submitted three Project Performance Reports (PPR), with the third currently under review.
4. On 2 February 2024, OSS requested direct project services (DPS) for the project's executing entities (EEs) and a first 18-month no-cost extension of the project completion date, from 20 April 2024 to 20 October 2025. These requests were circulated to the Board through document AFB/B.42-43/3 and approved by decision B.42-43/3. Since then, significant progress has been made, though further challenges have led to additional delays and postponement of key activities.
5. On 8 July 2025, OSS submitted a second request for a no-cost extension of the project completion date, from 20 October 2025 to 20 July 2026. Security instability in the W-Arly-Pendjari (WAP) complex continues to disrupt operations, forcing community relocations and restricting team movements. The Adapt-WAP Green Credit initiative was also affected, with activities restricted to secure communes. Delays in engaging Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), security and regulatory issues, along with the termination of the African Parks Network (APN) agreement and changes in project management personnel, further delayed progress.
6. The Implementing Entity (IE) confirms that this request for additional nine-months no-cost extension of the project completion date has been endorsed by the Designated Authorities (DAs) of Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger.

## Secretariat's review of the request

7. After reviewing the request, the secretariat finds the nine-month no-cost extension of the project completion date justified, based on the reasons provided by OSS. The memo (Annex I) from the IE indicates that this extension will allow the project to compensate for delays and fulfill its outcomes. Finally, the secretariat acknowledges that the Designated Authorities have been notified, in accordance with the Policy for Project/Programme Delays (Amended in April 2025).

## Recommendation

8. The Board may consider and decide to approve the request for nine-month no-cost extension of the project's completion date from 20 October 2025 to 20 July 2026, for the project "Integration of Climate Change Adaptation Measures in the Concerted Management of the WAP Transboundary Complex: ADAPT-WAP" implemented by OSS.

### **Annex**

1. Request for an extension of the project completion date from OSS.



## REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF CONCRETE ADAPTATION PROJECT/PROGRAMME

### *Request for extension of project/programme completion date*

<b>Implementing Entity Name:</b> Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS)					
<b>AF Project/programme ID:</b> AF00000111					
<b>Project/programme Title:</b> Integration of climate change adaptation measures in the concerted management of the WAP transboundary complex: ADAPT-WAP					
<b>Countries:</b> Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger					
<b>Project/Programme Approval (date)</b>	7/15/2019				
<b>Expected Project/programme Completion (date)</b>	04/20/2024	<b>First Revised Completion (date)</b>	10/20/2025	<b>Proposed Revised Completion (date):</b>	07/20/2026

### *Reasons/justifications for the extension of project/programme completion:*

The "Integration of climate change adaptation measures in the concerted management of the WAP transboundary complex: ADAPT-WAP" stands as the first regional climate change project for the largest and most ecologically significant continuum of unharmed transboundary ecosystems in the West African savannah belt. The project was designed to be aligned with the sustainable development and climate change adaptation priorities of the three participating countries. It is fully consistent with the transboundary management and development plans for Block W and the national parks of the WAP complex, as well as with national and regional policies, strategies, and priorities related to sustainable development and climate resilience.

It is a project dedicated on the one hand to building the capacities of stakeholders in strategies for adapting to climate change impacts and integrating the adaptation dimension into development plans at various levels, and on the other hand to enhance the resilience of the WAP complex ecosystems and most vulnerable local communities through concrete adaptation measures to better cope with the adverse effects of climate change within a regional vision.

A first no-cost extension of 18 months was granted to OSS, shifting the project's completion date to 20 October 2025. At that stage, three main factors had driven the delays:

**COVID-19 disruptions:** Pandemic-related travel restrictions and health measures

**Administrative slowdowns and disbursement conditions:** Complex entry-into-force requirements for grant agreements, coupled with protracted review processes, held up the initial fund releases and slowed down procurement and contract implementation affecting the progress of project execution activities.

**Deteriorating security situation:** The increasing number of armed incidents and the growing instability in the intervention areas have led to intermittent suspensions of field activities. This has significantly restricted access to project sites and caused delays in conducting surveys, community consultations, and the effective implementation of concrete actions.

During the initial extension phase, overall project implementation advanced significantly thanks to the new strategies deployed to address encountered challenges. In this regard, the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) obtained a Direct Project Services (DPS) from the Adaptation Fund (Decision No B.42-43/3), following a joint request from the three Executing Entities, enabling the Implementing Entity to oversee key procurement processes tailored to the countries' needs. This arrangement has substantially enhanced the performance of the Project Management Units (PMUs), particularly in Benin and Burkina Faso. Nevertheless, the project also faced a series of additional challenges, causing further delays or the postponement of key activities. The main issues are summarized below:

#### **1. Delays related to the persistent insecurity in the WAP complex and peripheral areas:**

The security situation within the WAP complex has shown no significant improvement and, at times, has even worsened. This ongoing instability has forced some beneficiary communities to relocate internally to safer areas. As a result, the persistent insecurity has severely hampered the progress of several project activities. It has restricted the movement of project teams and implementing partners within intervention zones and, in some cases, necessitated the relocation of ongoing activities to more secure sites.

The implementation of the Adapt-WAP Green Credit initiative has been particularly impacted. Assessments conducted by partner microfinance institutions led to the decision to carry out activities only in communes where security conditions remain stable, with plans to expand to other stable areas as appropriate. Additionally, a monitoring mechanism has been established in high-risk zones to track developments and adjust intervention strategies as needed.

Consequently, these challenges have directly disrupted project operations, resulting in further delays to the overall implementation timeline.

#### **2. Delays in the Civil Society Organizations engagement process:**

Due to prevailing security conditions, an alternative approach was adopted, consisting in relying on local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) operating within the project's intervention areas to implement targeted activities directly involving vulnerable local communities. This shift in strategy required extensive consultations with national authorities, especially in Benin and Burkina Faso which are most affected. The process of identifying, selecting, and engaging CSOs was lengthy and demanding, as it was critical to ensure their organizational, technical, and financial capacities in order to guarantee the effective and standards-compliant execution of activities. Throughout this process, OSS played a central and supportive role, assisting the Executing Entities to bring the effort to completion.

In Burkina Faso, civil society organizations (CSOs) have already been selected and are actively implementing project activities on the ground. In Benin, due to national regulatory constraints that not allow the direct contracting of CSOs, the entire process was managed by OSS, in close coordination with the Executing Entity, under the DPS arrangement. The selection process was carried out in two phases: it began with a call for expressions of interest, followed by the submission and evaluation of technical and financial proposals, allowing for the selection of the most capable and well-positioned CSOs. The contracting phase is currently being finalized, and field implementation is expected to commence in July 2025.

### 3. Delays due to the termination of the agreement with APN

It is also important to note that African Parks Network (APN), which had been engaged by CENAGREF since the start of the project as an executing partner in Benin, decided to terminate the partnership in December 2024, due to internal management procedures that were incompatible with project philosophy and those of CENAGREF. This added an additional layer of complexity and further hindered the smooth execution of project activities. APN was expected to manage a significant portion of the budget allocated to activities in the Pendjari Park. However, after several years, actual spending remained below 8% of the amount agreed upon in the partnership agreement. This situation was one of the key reasons that led to the decision to engage civil society organizations (CSOs) in Benin to ensure the continuity of project implementation on the ground.

### 4. Changes within project management units

Between March and June 2024 in Burkina Faso, the PMU team experienced three key personnel changes: (i) the former Director General of OFINAP and National Project Coordinator retired and was succeeded by Mr. Tamini; (ii) the Administrative and Financial Director was replaced; and (iii) the Monitoring & Evaluation Officer departed, with his successor only coming on board in early 2025. These transitions required a considerable adjustment period as each new appointee became acquainted with the project's objectives and processes, which in turn led to further delays in implementation. Comparable challenge happened in Benin, where the Administrative and Financial Director and the project's finance officer were also replaced, leading to further delays.

### 5. Recommendation of 6<sup>th</sup> regional project steering committee

At its meeting on 3 June 2025 in Niamey (Niger), the Regional Steering Committee, after a comprehensive review of the project's progress, and upon recommendation of the three Executing Entities, endorsed a request to the Adaptation Fund for an additional nine-month no-cost extension of the project's closing date (extendable to twelve months, if necessary). This request will be underpinned by:

- strategic redeployment of resources to priority areas;
- optimized coordination by national Executing Entities, technically supported by the regional Executing Entity and all executing partners, in particular CSOs and microfinance institutions;
- flexibility to allow each country to close early the project if its activities are completed ahead of schedule.

With regard to the above, the implementing entity, OSS, formally request an additional no-cost project extension for a period of nine **(09) months**. This will allow to:

- *Ensure the full completion of activities that have been delayed due to various contingencies,*
- *Guarantee the delivery of all expected outputs, the sustainability of results, and the effective achievement of the project's original objectives.*

**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 authorities (DA) of the three countries have been notified.

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



Date: July 04<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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