



AFB/B.45- 46/6
19 February 2026

Adaptation Fund Board

**REQUEST FOR A 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 regional project titled “*Strengthening Drought Resilience for Small Holder Farmers and Pastoralists in the IGAD Region (DRESSEA)*”, implemented by the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) in Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda, for a total grant amount of US\$ 13,079,540 (Decision B.34/24). Implementation commenced on 10 October 2020 following signature of the legal agreement

2. The project’s objective is to increase the resilience of smallholder farmers and pastoralists to climate-related drought risks through the following components: (i) development and enhancement of a regional Drought Early Warning System; (ii) capacity strengthening of stakeholders to manage drought risks; (iii) support to innovative adaptation actions; and (iv) knowledge management and information sharing across the region.

3. As of February 2026, the Trustee had disbursed US\$ 13,079,540 million (including fees), equivalent to 100 percent of the approved grant, and four Project Performance Reports (PPRs) had been cleared by the Secretariat. During the intersessional period between its forty-second and forty-third meeting, the Board approved a first (regular) no-cost extension of eighteen months, moving the project completion date from 9 October 2024 to 9 April 2026 (Decision B.42-43).

4. On 29 January 2026, OSS submitted a second request for an additional twelve-month no-cost extension, proposing to revise the project completion date from 9 April 2026 to 9 April 2027. OSS also submitted a request for a budget reallocation at the output level, which is considered non-material (below 20 per cent), in line with the Policy on Project Post-Approval Requests for Changes. The Implementing Entity further indicated that no changes to the project’s scope are required.

5. According to the OSS submission, the request reflects a combination of inter-related factors that slowed implementation and created dependencies across regional and national workplans:

- Institutional transition of the Regional Executing Entity leading to a temporary interruption of project implementation.
- Political and security challenges, notably the conflict in Sudan (since April 2023) and insecurity in parts of Uganda, restricting mobility, procurement and communications.
- Administrative and financial delays, notably a delayed first disbursement in Sudan, account-opening and procurement bottlenecks in Kenya, and leadership changes that triggered repeated administrative resets.

Secretariat’s review of the request

6. The Secretariat reviewed OSS’s request, its justification, and the proposed revised completion date. The Secretariat notes that (i) no additional funding is requested and (ii) the scope, expected outcomes and risk profile remain unchanged. The request would allow sufficient time to complete remaining outputs.

7. 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, as specified in Annex I.

Recommendation

8. Having considered document AFB/B.45-46/6 and its annexes, the Board may wish to approve OSS's request for a twelve-month no-cost extension of the project completion date from 9 April 2026 to 9 April 2027 for the regional project "*Strengthening Drought Resilience for Small Holder Farmers and Pastoralists in the IGAD Region (Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda)*".

Annex I: Request for an extension of the project completion date

Implementing Entity Name: Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS)			
AF Project/programme ID: AFR/RIE/DRR/2017/1			
Project 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 Approval (date)	10/10/2020		
Expected Project Completion (date)	10/09/2024	Proposed Revised Completion (date):	09/04/2027

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

The *Strengthening Drought Resilience for Smallholder Farmers and Pastoralists in the IGAD Region* (DRESS-EA) project has demonstrated remarkable adaptability in the face of significant regional challenges. This initiative was designed to strengthen climate resilience through early warning systems and drought adaptation measures across four countries, targeting the most vulnerable populations: smallholder farmers and pastoralists. While the first three years of implementation were hampered by compounding challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, political instability, and an institutional management transition, we have successfully transformed these obstacles into opportunities over the past 12 months of the initial extension granted

During the first 12 months of the no-cost extension, the Regional Implementing Entity (RIE) has undertaken critical institutional recovery and capacity-building measures that have fundamentally transformed the project's operational landscape. Most significantly, we have successfully restored and operationalised the Regional Executing Entity (REE), which had previously experienced disruption during the institutional management transition. This restoration has proven to be a game-changer for regional coordination, as it now provides:

- Enhanced technical backstopping to National Project Management Units (NPMUs) across all four countries.
- Streamlined communication channels that facilitate real-time problem-solving and adaptive management.
- Harmonised execution approaches that ensure consistency in quality and methodology across diverse country contexts.

The resumption of full REE operations has created a robust coordination architecture that enables easier and more effective synchronisation of activities within the region. This is particularly crucial for a multi-

country initiative where cross-border learning, harmonised monitoring frameworks, and unified reporting standards are essential for demonstrating regional impact and ensuring accountability to the AF.

Recognising the need for strategic realignment and technical harmonisation following years of disrupted implementation, the RIE organised a comprehensive technical seminar that brought together all executing entities and key focal persons across the main thematic areas of the project. This seminar, held in April/2025, represented a watershed moment in the project's trajectory.

The seminar delivered transformative results that are already evident in improved execution quality and pace:

1. Consolidated Regional Strategy: All executing entities now operate from a harmonised strategic framework that ensures consistency in quality standards while respecting country-specific contexts and needs.
2. Technical Alignment: Standardised methodologies for community training, early warning message dissemination, and monitoring of adaptation practices have been adopted, enabling meaningful cross-country comparison and learning.
3. Strengthened Institutional Relationships: The seminar fostered trust and collaboration among national teams, breaking down silos and creating a true regional community of practice.
4. Enhanced Capacity: National focal persons received direct mentorship from regional specialists, upgrading their technical skills in areas such as participatory vulnerability assessments, climate-informed livelihood planning, and gender-responsive adaptation programming.
5. Clear Roadmap to Completion: Executing entities developed detailed action plans with realistic timelines, clear milestones, and explicit accountability for achieving remaining outputs.

Project Now Steady on Course to Achieve Objectives

As a direct result of these strategic interventions, the operationalisation of the REE, the deployment of its knowledge management expertise, and the alignment achieved through the technical seminar, the project is now firmly on course to achieve all its intended objectives. The improved operational environment, enhanced implementation capacity, and resolved institutional transitions have created a unique and crucial window of opportunity.

The RIE has established:

- Robust operational frameworks across all countries
- Significant technical capacity among national units
- Strengthened regional coordination mechanisms
- Unprecedented community trust in previously inaccessible areas
- Advanced critical infrastructure installations in zones previously compromised by political instability

Building Vibrant, Resilient Communities

With the requested 12-month extension, the project will deliver comprehensive, transformative resilience outcomes that enable communities to become more vibrant, self-reliant, and capable of withstanding future drought cycles. Specifically, the extension will ensure:

1. Complete Climate Resilience Infrastructure
 - Fully functional early warning systems with demonstrated community uptake and behavioural change
 - Established water harvesting and conservation structures that buffer communities against rainfall variability
 - Operational meteorological stations providing localised climate information for informed agricultural planning
2. Deeply Rooted Community Capacity
 - Farmers and pastoralists equipped with drought adaptation skills that they can apply, refine, and teach to others
 - Functional community-based organisations managing income-generating activities sustainably

- Women and youth empowered as climate adaptation champions within their communities
3. Institutionalised Knowledge Systems
- Documented good practices and lessons learned that inform national climate policies and regional adaptation frameworks
 - Established platforms for continuous South-South learning and peer-to-peer exchange among drought-vulnerable communities
 - Evidence-based models that can be replicated across the IGAD region and beyond
4. Sustainable Livelihood Systems
- Diversified income sources that reduce dependence on climate-sensitive rain-fed agriculture
 - Value chains for drought-resilient crops and livestock products that connect communities to markets
 - Proven income-generating activities supported by revolving fund mechanisms that ensure long-term viability

From Incomplete to Transformational

The requested 12-month extension represents the difference between:

- Incomplete adaptation infrastructure and comprehensive resilience systems that can withstand future drought cycles
- Fragmented institutional capacity and robust, sustainable management frameworks that will continue functioning beyond project completion
- Partial community engagement and deep-rooted community ownership that ensures long-term adoption of climate adaptation practices
- Isolated national efforts and a cohesive regional model that demonstrates the power of coordinated adaptation action.

Conclusion

Given the significant progress achieved during the first extension period, particularly the restoration of REE operations, the enhanced regional coordination, the strategic technical seminar that consolidated implementation approaches, and the deployment of specialised knowledge management expertise for Component 4, the DRESS-EA project is now positioned for successful completion.

The 5th Regional Steering Committee's recognition of this imperative, combined with the current strategic opportunity, makes this extension not just justified but crucial for maximising the project's impact on drought-vulnerable communities across the IGAD region. The project is now steady on course, with clear pathways to achieving all objectives and delivering the vibrant, resilient communities that the Adaptation Fund envisioned when it invested in this transformative initiative.

Therefore, the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) formally requests approval for a 12-month no-cost extension to April 9th, 2027. This will ensure the complete realisation of all project objectives and deliver the full intended climate resilience benefits to vulnerable smallholder farmers and pastoralists across Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda.

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"> • Support the Sudan PMU in completing the implementation of the project, which has been affected and paralyzed by the civil war, by sharing with them technical documents such as concept notes and terms of reference for activities. 	09/04/2027

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Assist in changing the behaviour of beneficiaries</u> (farmers and herders) in the three project sites (Behidleh, Oued Gobaad, and Hanleh Plain) regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of and familiarization with early drought warning messages transmitted to their mobile phones; • <u>The adoption of innovative drought adaptation</u> practices in agriculture, livestock feeding (hay silage), and water and soil conservation measures (Zai practice, etc.), through the organization of local training sessions. • <u>Support the best practice</u> of using funds allocated to income-generating activities as well as the revolving of funds among beneficiaries. • Support the drought early warning centre in disseminating data at the national level. 	
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Lengthy operational procedures</u> within the government structures, such as the opening of bank accounts specific to the project. Partially and to a good extent, the Covid-19 pandemic limited physical follow-ups of the process of the delayed opening of the account. • <u>Coordination and execution</u> at the sites was challenging from the central government, but now with structures in place and focal persons in the County dedicated to oversight and coordination of the project, this has been solved, and execution of activities has been enhanced. • <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 sensitisation and awareness.</u> This was required, and equally, there was a 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 the elections of new governors in the two counties. This again further slowed down the execution of project activities. • <u>Closure of the government financial year</u> in June, which places a total freeze on spending until September, with the consequence of halting the execution of the project activities. • As the executing entity, we have planned a rapid result initiative to fast-track the execution of the project activities and compensate the lost time. 	09/04/2027
Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts</u> at the beginning of the project in 2021 disrupted planning, coordination, and physical implementation activities. • <u>Financial and Administrative Delays:</u> The first disbursement of funds was delayed by nearly one year, arriving only on 27 September 2022. • <u>Frequent changes in ministerial leadership in Sudan led to repeated disruptions.</u> Each transition lacked proper handover, requiring re-explanation of the project's importance, especially to the Ministry of Finance, which is currently operating with limited staff, most of whom are focused on war-related expenditures. This has slowed final approvals and contract signings with consultants. • <u>Ongoing Conflict and War-Related Disruptions,</u> which began on 15 April 2023, is now in the third year and continue to severely impact project execution. 	09/04/2027

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Internet and mobile signal disruptions</u> have made communication with team members difficult, slowing down coordination and implementation. Electricity outages lasting up to 12 hours per day have hindered productivity and field operations. • Two project vehicles purchased for implementation were stolen from the free customs zone and are now considered war casualties. • <u>Local Context and Vulnerability of Al Salam.</u> The project area has severe shortages in basic resources and services, while experiencing high rainfall variability, frequent droughts, and significant environmental degradation, making the communities, which are made up mainly of women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and the elderly highly food insecure, facing recurrent famine and relying heavily on rain-fed agriculture and livestock farming, even more vulnerable. • Given the compounded delays from health crises, financial bottlenecks, political instability, and ongoing conflict, a project extension is essential. • The proposed extension will allow sufficient time to reach the intended beneficiaries and deliver meaningful climate resilience outcomes, especially in highly vulnerable areas like Al Salam locality. 											
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 insecurity throughout the project period, which has led to reduced working time of the staff based in the project area and sometimes complete halting of project activities. • <u>Extensive stakeholder engagement:</u> To ensure the 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 the execution of Regional project activities on which the National activities are dependent. Some activities require input and information from regional activities that have not yet been implemented. • The following outputs will not be completed fully by the time the extension period runs out, and they are vital to achieving the overall success of the project. <table border="1" data-bbox="358 1583 1179 1831"> <thead> <tr> <th>Output</th> <th>Amount (US\$)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3.1.4: Adaptive Livestock and rangeland practices enhanced</td> <td>161,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.1.6: Environmentally friendly IGA promoted</td> <td>365,070</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.1.1: Good Practices and lessons on DM, EWS, and CC impacts documented and disseminated</td> <td>57,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>583,070</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Output	Amount (US\$)	3.1.4: Adaptive Livestock and rangeland practices enhanced	161,000	3.1.6: Environmentally friendly IGA promoted	365,070	4.1.1: Good Practices and lessons on DM, EWS, and CC impacts documented and disseminated	57,000	Total	583,070	09/04/2027
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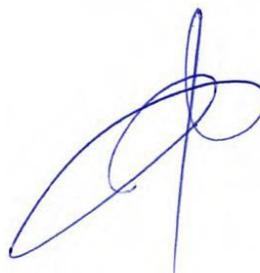
As the Regional Implementing Entity for the Adaptation Fund's DRESS-EA project in the IGAD region, covering Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda, the OSS wishes to formally notify the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat of proposed changes to the project's completion timeline. The current completion date is set for **April 9, 2026**.

Following recommendations from the 5th Regional Steering Committee meeting held on April 21, 2025, in Tunis, and based on insights from four years of monitoring and implementation, it has become clear that additional time is needed for executing entities to achieve the project's expected results and objectives fully. Accordingly, OSS proposes a revised completion date of **April 9, 2027**.

In light of this, OSS respectfully requests a **12-month no-cost extension**. This extension will enable the full realisation of project objectives and ensure the delivery of meaningful climate resilience benefits to vulnerable smallholder farmers and pastoralists across the region.

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.

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