

**Stakeholder Engagement Plan**

**February, 2020**

**CEPF Grant; PAL-111713**

**Grantee: The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources,  
The Regional Office for West Asia**

**Project Title: Protected Area Network Review for the State of Palestine**

**Project Location: Palestine**

## a) Introduction:

This project aims at reviewing and updating the protected areas network in the State of Palestine using systematic conservation planning principles and CBD PA design criteria, resulting in a connected, representative, efficient and climate resilient network of protected areas.

The project will conduct an extensive situation analysis including the review of previous studies, national reports and literature accompanied by a review of the current legislative framework for Protected areas followed by gap filling assessments. The project will develop criteria for the Protected area review ensuring that the protected area design complies with the CBD criteria and IUCN's guidelines and best practices. The criteria will be adapted to the national context whenever applicable and will be developed in close consultation with national stakeholders especially the Environment Quality Authority of Palestine EQA, CEPF grantees and other key national conservation NGOs and academia

The PA system will include regional cores, connected through other types of zones, biodiversity corridors, buffer zones, and other effective area-based conservation measures **OECM's**, where applicable. The protected area network will be designed and planned to adapt to the long-term impact of climate change, and other threats like desertification and pandemic outbreaks and their impacts on key habitats. IUCN will apply tested PA design models like Marxan conservation planning model, which makes sure that efficient spatial design principles are applied to the protected area network. The application of systematic conservation planning will include the following: a. development of an Environmental Risk Surface ERS showing the overlapping PA establishment constraints, threats and limitations; b. The development of Relative Biodiversity Rareness indices RBI's showing the overlapping biodiversity values and hotspots (including KBAs identified according to CEPF Ecosystem Profile); and c. Developing PA network design scenarios by cross checking where high RBI values overlap with low ERS values according to the agreed PA design criteria. The Scenarios will be developed and applied using Marxan conservation planning software. The finalized protected area network will include defined boundaries with proposed **IUCN management categories**, in addition to a costed implementation strategy for the network.

The project will follow a participatory approach in different stages of implementation, from PA criteria drafting, to boundary delimitation and assignment of IUCN category. Different types of stakeholders will be involved where relevant, including representatives of relevant government authorities, academia, NGO's and local communities.

We will develop a **stakeholder engagement plan** at the beginning of the project to define key stakeholders and their roles in the project in more detail. The stakeholder engagement plan will be developed in close coordination with the Environment Quality Authority EQA, the main government stakeholder, who played a key role in framing the project idea. However, the following stakeholders will be key partners in the project implementation: CEPF grantees, IUCN members, Academia and national experts.

The project will consist of the following three main components:

### **Component 1: Protected area network review and design**

The following main outputs will be delivered under this component:

1. Situation analysis and ecological gap assessment.

2. Gap filling rapid assessments including proposition of new sites for declaration as PA's of the sites rich in biodiversity based on CEPF plant conservation projects, IPA's, KBAs, wetlands and IBA's.
3. PA review, design and prioritisation criteria adapted to the national context in consultation with national stakeholders.
4. PA design scenarios against the design criteria using tested PA design models like Marxan model.
5. Identification of proposed IUCN categories for each protected area.
6. Costed implementation strategy and action plan for the PA network.

### **Component 2: Overview of Legislative and institutional framework for protected areas**

The following main outputs will be delivered under this component:

1. Legislative and institutional framework overview, update and gap assessment with relevance to protected areas.
2. Policy recommendations for enhancing the process of PA designation and declaration and mainstreaming designated areas into national land use planning process.

### **Component 3: Capacity building (institutional and Personnel)**

The following main outputs will be delivered under this component:

1. Training on the principles of systematic conservation planning and Protected area network design.
2. Training on integrated management of protected areas.

#### **b) CEPF Policies and Requirements:**

During the formulation of the project concept and upon the submission of the Letter of Inquiry, the CEPF and through the regional implementation team focal point highlighted the importance of stakeholder consultation and engagement from the project development phase until the actual implementation. IUCN ROWA had already started consultation with the Environment Quality Authority on a trilateral level with the CEPF, however, wider scale consultation took place during the project proposal preparation in response to the CEPF requirement. These consultations are described in section c of this document.

#### **c) Summary of Previous Stakeholder Engagement Activities**

IUCN ROWA has made extensive consultation meetings with the Environment Quality Authority, and CEPF during the drafting of the LOI. Consultations with a wider group of stakeholders were carried out to during the project proposal development phase to understand the needs of the national institutions and their potential contribution to the project. A virtual stakeholder consultation meeting was held on the 1st of February, 2021 where IUCN ROWA made a brief presentation on the project concept. Below is a brief on each stakeholder group that attended the meeting:

**1- Environment Quality Authority of Palestine EQA:** .EQA is the central authority for all issues related to Environment in Palestine. EQA are the main partners for this project, and they were highly involved during the drafting of the project concept. IUCN ROWA discussed the idea of the project with

the EQA, and EQA ensured their support and acceptance of the preliminary project concept. The preliminary concept for this project was shared with EQA and their preliminary feedback was integrated in the project concept. The EQA are the key government authority assigned to identify protected areas and special landscapes and providing them to the Ministry of Local Government to be integrated in the national land use plans.

**2- Palestine Museum of Natural History:** The Palestine Museum of Natural History was established by Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability of Beithlehem University. They will be one of the main partners who will have a key in n providing data regarding the distribution of biodiversity elements in PAlestine. Their expertise will be utilosed during the different stages of the project and especially in the identification of gaps in teh current PAs network, and recommendations for additional sites. We have consulted them during the preparation of the project proposal regarding their role and willingness to support the project with data and expertise.

**3- Ministry of Agriculture: MoA** MOA are one of the key istakeholders of the project. They were consulted during the project preparation phase regarding their role in supporting the implementation of the project and their willingness to be part of the consulted stakeholders. They were also consulted regarding their willingness to adopt the finding and results of the project. MOA's role is key since they are responsible for forestry lands in Pslestine, and their input and advise will be key regarding forest reserves during the implementation of the project.

**4- Ministry of Local Government MoLG:** MoLG will have a key role in the projecr since they are responsile for the national landuse planning. They were consulted during the project preparation phase to make sure that they will provide data on existing plans and current landuse status. These plans will also be important to identify areas that could be eligible for protection through other effective means or what can be called as "Other effective area based conservation measures OECM's". The role of MoLG will also be important after the project results and findings are finalized since the MoLG will adopt the finding of the project and integrate them within the landuse plans.

**5- Biodiversity and Environmental Research Center BERC:** BERC is one of the key partners or stakeholders of the project as hey are a research insitute with a wealth of data from previous research. They are a previous CEPF guarantee and theor previous work will feed in the current project. During the stakeholder consultation meeting, they emphasized on the importance of effective management planning as a second step after developing a protected area network design.

**6- Nature Palestine:** Nature Palestine are an active NGO in the field of biodiversity in Palestine. They aim to research, protect, conserve, and educate about nature, biodiversity and environment in Palestine. Their work covers several thematic areas including researching and monitoring biodiversity, educating and building capacities of national institutions and collaborating with government, non-government national partners and with international organizations. Nature Palestine participated in the national stakeholder meeting and expressed their support to the project idea as a national priority.

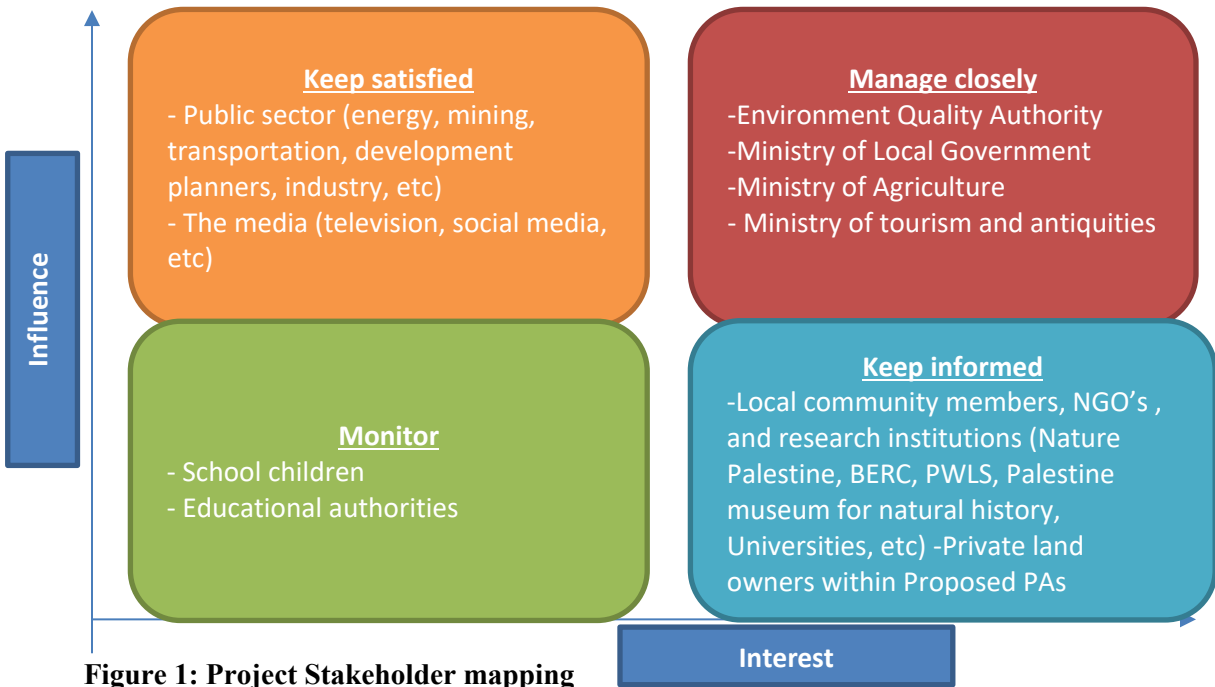
**7- Palestine Wildlife Society PWLS:** PWLS is an active NGO and BirdLife Partner in Palestine. The NGO mission is "Conservation and enhancement of Palestine Wildlife and biodiversity". Their contribution could be importnat to the project since they have information on a lot of areas in Palestine, and because of their invovlement in different awareness and local commmunity capacity development activities. They have expressed their interest and support to the project idea during the stakeholder consultation meeting. They also emphasized on the importance of having unified databases on biodiversity in Palestine.

**8- Al Najah National University:** Al Najaah University is one of the important stakeholders for having important expertise in the field of biodiversity conservation and protected areas. They can play an

advisory role and provide data that is important for the implementation of the project. They have stressed that the special political conditions in Palestine should be taken into consideration when reviewing and updating the protected areas network.

**d) Project Stakeholders:**

The project has a wide range of stakeholder groups because protected areas may overlap or occur in the proximity of a wide range of land use activities or types. The different stakeholder groups identified for the project during the project development phase were categorized according to their influence on the success of the project and according to their interest in the project (Figure 1). Stakeholder holder groups having high influence and high interest like the Environment Quality Authority will be closely managed and kept involved in the project during the course of the project. Stakeholder having high influence on the project but potentially low interest like the mining industry will be targeted to enhance their awareness on the project and kept satisfied. Stakeholder groups having high interest in the project but with potentially low interest in the project will be kept informed of the project and its activities. Stakeholder groups with low influence and low interest in the project will only be monitored and targeted to enhance their awareness.



**Figure 1: Project Stakeholder mapping**

**e) Stakeholder Engagement Program, (f) Consultation methods, (g) other engagements and (h)time table:**

Stakeholder Engagement Programme	
<b>Stakeholder Group 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment Quality Authority</li> <li>• Ministry of Local Government</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture</li> <li>• Ministry of tourism and antiquities</li> </ul>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To keep the stakeholder group actively engaged in the implementation of the project</li> <li>- To get their support, feedback and adoption of project deliverables.</li> </ul>
<b>Methods used to target the group</b>	

Meeting	workshops	Technical reports
Presentations	Webinars	Trainings
<b>Consultation methods</b>		
Interviews	Meetings	Workshops
<b>Time Frame</b>		
Start date: March 2021	End date: August 2022	
<b>Stakeholder Group 2</b>	Local community members, NGO's, and research institutions (Nature Palestine, BEREC, PWLS, Palestine museum for natural history, Universities, etc) -Private land owners within Proposed PAs	
<b>Goals</b>	To keep the stakeholder group informed of the project activities To keep this stakeholder group interested, supportive and providing feedback and data necessary to the implementation of the project	
<b>Methods used to target the group</b>		
Meetings	Workshops	Social media briefs
<b>Consultation methods</b>		
Focus groups	Surveys	
<b>Time Frame</b>		
Start date: May 2021	End date: August:2022	
<b>Stakeholder Group 3</b>	- Public sector (energy, mining, transportation, development planners, industry, etc) - The media (television, social media, etc)	
<b>Goals</b>	To enhance the awareness of the stakeholder group on the project	
<b>Methods used to target the group</b>		
Meetings	Social media briefs	Emails
Webinars		
<b>Consultation methods</b>		
Meetings	Workshops	Interviews
<b>Time Frame</b>		
Start date: August 2021	End date: April 2022	
<b>Stakeholder Group 4</b>	- School children - Educational authorities	
<b>Goals</b>	To keep the stakeholder group monitored and targeted to enhance their awareness.	
<b>Methods used to target the group</b>		
Social media awareness material	Posters	Non-technical simplified briefs
<b>Consultation methods</b>		
N/A		
<b>Time Frame</b>		
Start date: January 2022	End date: August 2022	

**i) Resources and Responsibilities:**

The implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan will be the responsibility of the project management team at IUCN ROWA, namely, the project manager and the technical and

administrative assistant. Support will be received from other units at IUCN ROWA like the communication team and the Regional Director for high level support when needed.

**j) Grievance Mechanism:** Describe the process by which people affected by the project can bring their grievances to the grantee for consideration and redress. Who will receive public grievances? How and by whom will they be resolved? How will the response be communicated back to the complainant? Please note that all grievance mechanisms must make available the contact details of the RIT and/or CEPF Secretariat, in case people affected by the project have concerns that they do not wish to raise directly with the grantee.

IUCN ROWA will create a page for the project through their website like all other projects managed by the regional office. This page will include a link inviting individuals and other stakeholders to submit their grievances regarding the project to the email of the focal point of the regional implementation team. The grievance link will be available in both Arabic and English, and will contain the following statement:

*“We will share all grievances – and a proposed response – with the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days. If the claimant is not satisfied following the response, they may submit the grievance directly to the CEPF Executive Director at [cepfexecutive@conservation.org](mailto:cepfexecutive@conservation.org) or by surface mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Executive Director, they may submit the grievance to the World Bank at the local World Bank office.”*

The following contact information will also be included and made available through the grievance link:

- Email and telephone contact information for the grantee organization, IUCN ROWA, including the email and contact information of the regional director, and the email and contact information of the project manager. The project manager will be the main focal point for receiving grievances.
- Email and telephone contact information for the CEPF Regional Implementation Team.
- Email and telephone contact information for the local World Bank office.
- The email of the CEPF Executive Director: [cepfexecutive@conservation.org](mailto:cepfexecutive@conservation.org)

The regional implementation team RIT focal point will receive the grievances and will be able to judge depending on the scale of the complaint to either discuss the complaint to the project manager from IUCN ROWA, and try to solve the problem immediately with the person/entity who submitted the complaint, otherwise and upon the RIT focal point’s judgment, grievances could be forwarded to the project steering committee for wider scale discussion and action.

**k) Monitoring and Reporting:**

The project structure proposed by IUCN ROWA involves the establishment of a steering committee which will include representatives from key institutions and who will play an advisory and general monitoring role during the project implementation. IUCN ROWA will report on the progress in the implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan as part of the progress reporting on project implementation which will be submitted to the RIT, the EQA and the project steering committee.