

Evaluation summary

Evaluation of Phase 3 of the Small Initiatives Program for Civil Society Organizations in North Africa (PPI OSCAN)

Countries: **Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt**

Theme: **Protection and promotion of biodiversity**

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Date of evaluation: **July 2025**

Key data on FFEM support

Project name : Small Initiatives Program for Civil Society Organizations in North Africa - Phase 3 (PPI OSCAN 3)

Project number : CZZ3230

Amount of FFEM funding: € 1,264,255

Date of grant: July 1, 2021

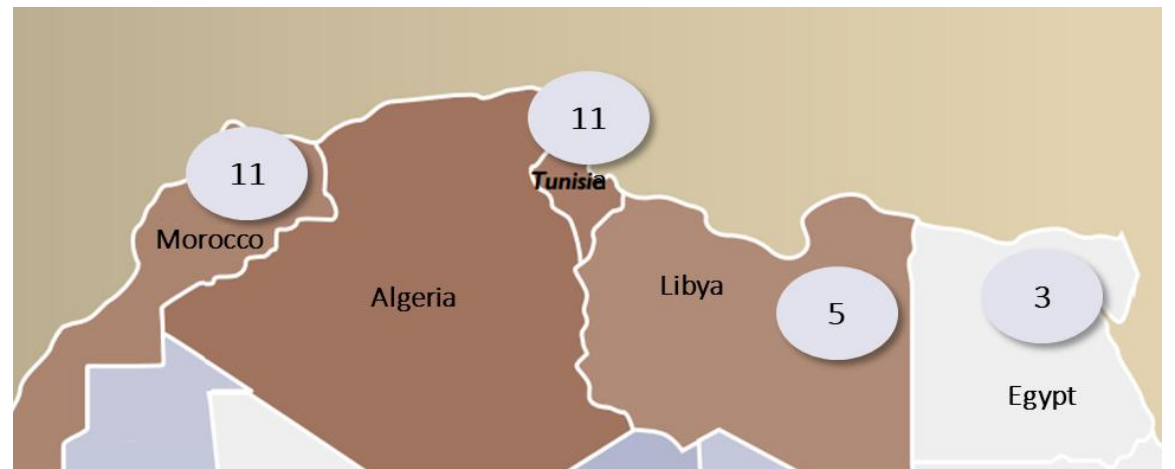
Duration : 3.5 years (September 2021 – March 2025)

Context

The Mediterranean, the world's second largest biodiversity hotspot, is home to unique ecosystems but is severely affected by climate change and human pressures. In this context of environmental fragility, the democratic transition that began in North Africa in 2011 has fostered the growth of numerous civil society organizations (CSOs), which are now key players in environmental governance and local development. However, this still-young network of associations faces major challenges: lack of capacity, difficulties in accessing funding, weak institutional coordination, and insufficient networking. To address these issues, the PPI OSCAN program was launched in 2014 and implemented in three successive phases (2014-2017; 2017-2021; 2021-2025). During this third phase, PPI OSCAN supported 30 CSOs – 20 emerging CSOs and 10 established CSOs – working in the environmental field in Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt, selected through two calls for projects.

Stakeholders and operating procedures

The PPI OSCAN 3 benefited from an institutional structure similar to that of previous phases. IUCN-Med was responsible for the overall coordination and financial management of the program, as well as the monitoring of selected projects, with the support of national coordinators in Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya. Egypt's integration into this new phase was made possible thanks to the mobilization of the Arab Network for Environment and Development as national coordinator. National administrations participated in the selection and monitoring of projects, under the supervision of a Steering Committee bringing together donors and institutional partners. This third phase was funded by the FFEM, the MAVA Foundation, and the Sigrid Rausing Trust.



Number of CSOs supported by country of intervention

Objectives

The overall objective of the program is to strengthen the influence and contribution of North African civil society in biodiversity conservation and fight against climate change.

Specific objectives :

- **S01** : Effectively and efficiently implement and manage conservation projects by CSOs
- **S02** : Improve the technical, organizational, and institutional effectiveness and sustainability of CSOs in their ability to carry out field projects
- **S03** : Promote exchanges and networking among CSOs, and continue dialogue and coordination with governments
- **S04** : Recognize the results generated



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Performance appraisal

Relevance

Thanks to the establishment of two funding windows (small and medium grants), the PPI OSCAN 3 has been able to tailor its support to CSOs according to their level of maturity, while consolidating their achievements and promoting the emergence of new structures. The diversification and relevance of the training courses have also been widely praised. The program is perceived as highly relevant but would benefit from improving access to training and technical expertise.

Coherence

The PPI OSCAN 3 is generally consistent internally. The program's organization, with regional coordination and national coordinators, allows for local support, which is appreciated by CSOs, despite some limitations related to the complexity of project monitoring tools. Externally, the program stands out for its support to young CSOs that receive little support. It plays an essential complementary role to existing mechanisms, with a flexible, inclusive, and educational approach. Its alignment with public policies on biodiversity is ensured by the participation of national authorities in the selection committees.

Effectiveness

The PPI OSCAN 3 achieved most of its objectives. Thirty projects were implemented, with good execution rates. Despite some difficulties encountered by certain CSOs, personalized support from national coordinators helped maintain effective implementation dynamic (SO1). The program has greatly contributed to the development of CSO skills. Several associations have evolved towards more professional management and are now recognized at the national level (SO2). The program has strengthened exchanges between CSOs, promoted cross-border cooperation and dialogue with local and national authorities (SO3). Active communication around the results has led to greater visibility and recognition of the program (SO4).

Efficiency

The efficiency of the PPI OSCAN 3 was affected by time-consuming financial and administrative monitoring of projects (both for CSOs and national coordinators/IUCN Med). The establishment of two separate grant windows led to higher program management costs compared to previous phases. Despite these constraints, the program demonstrated a strong ability to adapt to the contexts of each country of intervention and provided flexible and targeted support, which was essential to the success of the projects. Improvements are expected in terms of simplifying monitoring and evaluation tools and strengthening technical and financial support to CSOs.

Impact

The program had a significant impact on civil society: it has strengthened the technical, organizational, and strategic capacities of local CSOs, which often have little experience, and increased their recognition by the authorities. Strong local dynamics have emerged, mobilizing young people, women, and marginalized communities. Concrete changes are visible: adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, professional retraining, public-civil society partnerships, and pilot projects inspiring public policy. However, the measurement of impacts, particularly environmental ones, still needs to be improved.

Viability/sustainability

PPI OSCAN 3 has strengthened the professionalization of CSOs by improving their financing and project management capacities, which are essential to their sustainability. Several associations have mobilized new donors and created permanent positions, a sign of significant progress. However, dependence on external funding remains high and the continuity of projects varies depending on the context. At the same time, some CSOs have launched income-generating activities, offering prospects for economic sustainability, but these still require support to consolidate.

Beneficiaries per Added value of FFEM support

ceive the PPI OSCAN as an original program, distinguished by its ability, with the support of its donors, to take risks on inexperienced actors. Unlike other funding mechanisms that favor already established NGOs, it supports small organizations through a process of learning by doing. This approach is considered particularly valuable in national contexts where there are few mechanisms to support these emerging structures.

Recommendations & lessons learned

The final evaluation of the PPI OSCAN 3 confirms the originality and added value of the program, which stands out for its support to small, emerging associations, often with little experience and located in marginalized areas excluded from traditional funding. By strengthening their technical, organizational, and institutional capacities, promoting their networking, and consolidating their legitimacy with authorities and donors, the program plays a unique role in the development of environmental civil society in North Africa.

It is therefore recommended that the PPI OSCAN program be continued through the financing of a fourth phase, taking into account the following recommendations:

In terms of program implementation duration:

- Extend the duration of the next phases of the OSCAN PPI to 4 or 5 years.

In terms of program content and intervention methods:

- Strengthen technical support for CSOs (both established and emerging).
- Strengthen partnerships with the research community.
- Support the financial empowerment of CSOs.
- Support small associations that have not passed the selection process for the small grants call for projects by giving them access to the training modules available to emerging CSOs.
- Strengthen inter-CSO partnerships.

In terms of program management:

- Limit the number of CSOs supported in line with the support capacities of national coordinators.
- Improve the administrative and financial management of supported projects.
- Revise the PPI OSCAN monitoring and evaluation tool, in particular to better inform the program's impacts and simplify its use.