**Strengthening Protected Area System of the Komi Republic to Conserve Virgin Forest Biodiversity in the**

**Pechora River Headwaters Region**

***Russian Federation***

**GEF Agency: United Nations Development Programme**

**Executing Agency: Russian Federation Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (“Rosprirodnadzor”)**



**GEF Biodiversity Focal Area (OP 2, 3), GEF Strategic Objective BD-I**

**Full-size Project: GEF ID: 2035, UNDP PIMS: 2496**

**UNDP Atlas Project Number: 00059042**

**Mid-term Evaluation**

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**Acronyms**

APR Annual progress report

CBD Convention on Biological Diversity

EU European Union

FSP Full-sized project (of the Global Environment Facility)

GEF Global Environment Facility

ha Hectares

ICI International Climate Initiative (of the German government)

Km Kilometers

KR Komi Republic

M&E Monitoring and evaluation

METT Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool

MNR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection

N/A Not applicable

N/S Not specified

NBSAP National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

NCP Non-commercial partnership

NEX National execution

NGO Non-governmental organization

NTFPs Non-timber forest products

PA Protected area

PDF-A Project development funding block A

PDF-B Project development funding block B

PIR Project implementation report

PMU Project management unit

PoWPA Program of Work on Protected Areas (of the CBD)

PSC Project steering committee

RF Russian Federation

UA Unable to assess

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

USD United States dollars

# Executive Summary

1. The Russian Federation Komi Republic (KR) Protected Areas (PAs) project is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) Full-sized Project (FSP), with GEF support of $4.5 million United States dollars (USD) (not including project development funds (PDF)), and originally proposed co-financing of $15.9 million USD, for a total project budget of $20.4 million USD. Shortly after approval an additional component was added, with additional co-financing of $4.4 million USD from Germany’s International Climate Initiative (ICI) (nearly doubling the overall donor budget of the project), for a total planned budget of $24.8 million USD. The project is executed under the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) National Execution (NEX) modality, with the Russian Federation (RF) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection’s (MNR)Federal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service (“Rosprirodnadzor”) as the national executing partner. The project implementation period is planned for five years.
2. The KR’s PA network consists of two large federal PAs – Yugyd va National Park and Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve – and 237 republic-level PAs. The region is home to the “Komi Virgin Forests” World Heritage site, with an ecosystem comprised primarily of taiga forest and temperate peatlands. According to the project document, the overall project goal is “A comprehensive, ecologically representative and effectively managed national system of protected areas in the Russian Federation ensures conservation of globally significant and threatened ecosystems.” The project objective is “A representative and effectively managed network of protected areas ensures conservation of pristine boreal forest and taiga ecosystems in the Komi Republic.” The project strategy is to enhance and strengthen the baseline PAs network into a well-managed system that adequately protects the biodiversity of the region.
3. The project objective is planned to be achieved through three main outcomes:

**Outcome 1:The protected area system of Komi Republic is redesigned so as to better capture globally significant biodiversity**

**Outcome 2:Increased institutional capacity for management of protected areas within the Komi Republic protected area system**

**Outcome 3:Application of business planning principles result in diversified revenue streams for the Komi Republic protected area system**

1. The fourth outcome under the carbon component has been incorporated with relevant indicators and targets in the project logframe. According to the project document for the carbon component, the “overriding goal” is “To enable sustainable conservation of biodiversity at 1.63 million hectares of high nature-value boreal forests and peatlands in the Komi Republic reducing carbon emissions by 1.75 million CO2 in a 10-years perspective.” The specific goal is “To support capacity development and improvement of infrastructure at targeted protected areas in the Komi Republic, enabling them to effectively mitigate human and climate change risks, develop, implement and monitor effectively climate change adaptation measures.” This additional project component is represented as Outcome 4 in the context of the full UNDP-GEF project:

**Outcome 4: Improved protected area system in Komi Republic for better conservation of globally important biodiversity and maintenance of carbon pools**

1. According to GEF and UNDP evaluation policies, all GEF funded FSPs must have an independent mid-term evaluation. This mid-term evaluation reviews the actual performance and progress toward results of the project against the planned project activities and outputs, based on the relevant evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, results and sustainability. The evaluation methodology was based on a participatory mixed-methods approach, which included three primary elements: a) a desk review of project documentation and other relevant documents; b) interviews with key project participants and stakeholders; and c) field visits to relevant project sites in the KR. The evaluation is based on evidence from the start of project implementation (October 2008) to September 2011, and includes an assessment of issues prior to approval, such the project development process, overall design, risk assessment and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) planning. The desk review started in August 2011, and the evaluation mission was carried out from September 13 –23, 2011.
2. At the mid-point the project is on track for achievement of the expected outcomes, although there are some risks for the remaining implementation period. Based on the evaluative evidence collected during this mid-term evaluation, the project **Progress toward Overall Project Achievement and Impact** is rated ***highly satisfactory***. Although there have been some challenges in the first half of project implementation, the project has also exceeded expectations in some respects, and is applying an inclusive, transparent, and efficient implementation approach, which bodes well for the long-term results and sustainability of the project. At the same time, the project objective is a long-term goal, and achieving this objective will require the ongoing effort of many stakeholders based on the solid and significant foundation created under the project.
3. Project **relevance** is considered ***satisfactory***. At the regional level, the project is supporting the environmental protection and sustainable use policies and priorities of the Government of the KR. The project is supporting the strengthening of the KR PA system, and improving management capacity for regional and federal level PAs in the KR. This is a natural starting point for biodiversity conservation in the region, and includes activities on expanding coverage to underrepresented ecosystems, and revising the PA network to incorporate the highest value biodiversity areas. The project team is collaborating with multiple municipalities and villages within the project target area, and is supporting sustainable livelihoods in these areas. The project is relevant to and supportive of Russia’s national biodiversity conservation priorities and strategies, including the revised National Forest Code (2007), Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation (2002), and the Federal Law on Protected Areas (1995) (including its revisions in 2001, 2004, and 2005). In addition, the project supports Russia’s commitments for implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and is relevant to the GEF’s strategies and priorities in the biodiversity focal area.
4. Based on all aspects of project implementation and financial management, project **efficiency** is rated as ***satisfactory***.The project management arrangements are well designed to produce cost-effective execution of the work plan. The project is widely complemented for its inclusive and transparent operations, and numerous stakeholders emphasized their appreciation for the excellent work of the project team, noting that this is among the significant factors contributing to the project’s success. Anotherelementenhancingefficiency is that the project has secured tax exemption status, significantly increasing the leverage of project resources. However, obtaining the exemptions certificates, combined with long procurement procedures, have slowed some project activities, particularly under the carbon component; projections indicate 58% disbursement by the end of 2011 – slightly behind schedule for the currently planned mid-2013 completion. Co-financing has already exceeded 100% of the planned amount, and includes 29 different co-financing partners, compared to the originally foreseen 10.
5. Excellent implementation progress has been made under each of the project’s four outcomes, with important results to date. Based on the strong results already completed and the progress toward the final expected results, overall **effectiveness** is rated ***satisfactory***, with two of the four project outcomes rated highly satisfactory. Under Outcome 1, the PA inventory and proposal to expand the KR PA network are highlights, as well as the agreement to combat helicopter poaching. The proposal for revision and expansion of the KR PA system would increase PA coverage in the KR by more than 800,000 hectares. The establishment of a regional PA directorate is the key output under Outcome 2, and the outlook on its achievement isuncertain butoptimistic. Also under Outcome 2 the project has strengthened partnerships with the private sector, developed a private sector eco-rating system, established a civil society organization to support PA development (the non-commercial partnership (NCP) “Union of the Komi Republic Specially Protected Nature Areas”), and conducted extensive public awareness activities. The most significant result under Outcome 3 is the production of the Yugyd va and Pechora-Illych business plans, the first of their kind in Russia. Rosprirodnadzorplans to replicate this approach throughout Russia’s federal PA system. Also under this outcome the project has supported an impressive expansion of the tourism infrastructure network in the region. Outcome 4, the carbon component, is getting underway following the procurement and installation of specialized scientific equipment for carbon stock assessment and flux monitoring. This component hasalready produced interesting findings on annual emissions due to forest fires, and the temperature dependence of carbon flows in typical Komi ecosystems. For the project as a whole, following the initial excellent work thus far there remains much to be completed in the remaining implementation period. Among the recommendations of this evaluation is for a logframe revision that will better allow assessment and tracking of the full range of project results.
6. While the mid-term evaluation is not well placed to provide ratings on sustainability, this evaluation report includes a sustainability rating, as required. The **sustainability** of project results is rated ***moderately likely***, based on an assessment of the four components of sustainability. At this stage there are not significant risks to sustainability, though there are multiple issues that will require further assessment at project end. These include the progress in implementation of the PA business plans, the validity of the business plans’ assumptions and revenue projections, the long-term viability of the non-commercial partnership, and the level of institutional capacity reached by the regional PAs directorate, assuming it is established.
7. The table below provides a summary of the priority issues for the remaining implementation period, in the view of this evaluation.

Table Priority Issues for Remaining Implementation Period

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority Issue** | **Summary** | **Priority Actions or Risk Mitigation** |
| Establishment of KR PA directorate by project end | One of the key expected outcomes of the project is the establishment of a regional PA directorate that would be responsible for improving management for the KR PA network of 237 PAs, in addition to any areas established under the project’s proposal to expand the PA network in the KR. Despite initial positive political support, government turnover, budgetary questions, and institutional barriers have thus far stymied the achievement of this result, and there is no immediate prospect of reaching this goal. | There continues to be positive stakeholder support for this activity, and the project still has theresources to assist in establishing and setting up such an agency. As the project team continues to work intensively on this issue through lobbying and building public awareness, the project team and steering committee should consider a 6-12 month project extension if it appears this goal will not be reached by the end of the project but could be reached with slightly more time. |
| Implementation of business planning activities, including continuous assessment of projected revenues, and individual and institutional capacity development for the NCP to ensure its long-term utility and viability | The two business plans developed thus far (for Yugyd va and Pechora-Illych), and the business plans anticipated by the end of the project, are an important and valuable result from the project. However, the most important step is to move toward implementation of the business plans, as assisted by the newly established NCP. | As business plan implementation begins, there should be occasional re-assessment of the revenue projections, as the many assumptions in the business plans play out over time. Some revenue projections may be optimistic (for example, nearly $1 million USD in tourism revenue related to Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve within seven years), but the value of the business plans is the cost and revenue framework they have established, and it would be acceptable for specific figures in the business plans to be revised and updated over time to reflect realities on the ground, while maintaining the long-term goal of eliminating the PA funding gap.  Business plan implementation will be assisted by the NCP; as the NCP develops as an organization it will start with small-scale activities (such as leveraging revenues for the elk farm). To fully support the generation of revenues for the PA system foreseen in the business plans, within a few years the NCP will need to be operating at larger-scale, and strategizing for complex marketing operations and financial partnerships. During the next two years, while the NCP still has the foundational springboard of project support, the project should invest in individual and institutional capacity development to ensure the long-term sustainability of the NCP. With further capacity development the NCP has the potential to be the future catalyzing force for financial sustainability for the KR’s PAs once the project is complete. |
| Ensuring support for ongoing maintenance of infrastructure constructed | The project has contributed heavily to the development of various types of infrastructure, particularly for tourism and PA management. While much of the infrastructure is low-maintenance, there needs to be a clear plan about which stakeholders will take on the financial responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the new infrastructure to ensure its long-term sustainability. | By the end of the project there should be clear agreements and plans among relevant stakeholders (particularly UNDP, the national executing agency, the Yugyd va National Park administration, Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve administration, the NCP, any relevant private sector partners (such as the elk farm or tourism operators), and local government) with specific commitments and financial plans for the maintenance and upkeep of infrastructure developed. |
| Establish specific formal partnership agreement between Yugyd va National Park Administration and Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta. | A framework agreement has been established between the national park administration and Gazprom, as a result of long-standing cooperation considering the location of the pipeline in the national park. Gazprom has provided various forms of support since the national park was established, and according to Gazprom stakeholders, they are fully willing to enter into more specific partnership agreements with the national park. | The project should support and encourage Yugyd va National Park administration in establishing a specific and concrete partnership agreement with Gazprom that outlines areas for ongoing and future cooperation. |
| Confirmation of legally protected status for all republic PAs | It was determined during the PA inventory that 42 PAs (19 game parks, 15 nature monuments, 6 objects of cultural use and 2 genetic reserves) have been established by local government institutions, which do not have the legal right to establish PAs on territory managed by the Forestry Committee. According to the project team, the project is working with the KR government to confirm appropriate legal status for these PAs, but this issue remains unresolved. | Confirming the legal status for these PAs should be a key goal to be achieved before the end of the project, and would be a significant positive result if reached. This evaluation does not propose additional or different steps to be taken, but would like to highlight this issue as a key priority for the project during the remaining implementation period. |
| Full boundary demarcation and definition for republic-level PAs, in collaboration with the Forestry Committee | Although the republic-level PAs have been declared for many years, many have not been legally demarcated through official surveys and registration in the cadaster. Without officially established boundaries they are at risk for incursion from development. In an example given by one stakeholder, in an unspecified region of Russia where land is expensive, the local government argued that since there was no boundary there was no PA, and houses were built on the land. Surveying and recording boundaries accurately is a critical task, but one that is well beyond the scope of the project to accomplish, as it will require years and significant resources to complete this effort. | All stakeholders agree that legally demarcating the full network of republic level PAs will be a long-term and expensive process, and there appears to be little more that can be immediately done by the project on this critical issue, besides developing strategies in collaboration with key partners, such as the Forestry Committee and KR Ministry of Natural Resources, to plan for the long-term effort to survey and legally demarcate boundaries. It could also be helpful to identify a prioritization process so that PAs most at risk can be the first ones to have their boundaries legally demarcated. The project is working to increase the profile of republic-level PAs to increase public awareness about them at the municipal district level, thereby reducing the likelihood that threats will materialize. For example, the project has published booklets for each of the KR’s municipal districts highlighting the PAs in each area. |

1. Below are the key recommendations of this evaluation report; the specific audience for the recommendation is included in brackets. Additional recommendations are included at the end of the report.
2. ***Key Recommendation 1:***While the ideal long-term status would be for the existence of a regional PA directorate, as a risk mitigation strategy the project team and key stakeholders should strategize about specific feasible alternative options for the management of the KR PAs for the medium-term that could be catalyzed by the project if it appears that establishing a regional agency will not be a viable option. Options could include providing capacity development support on PA management for Forestry Committee staff, and putting additional emphasis on the local management committee mechanism.*[Project Team and key government institution partners]*
3. ***Key Recommendation 2:*** Capacity development for the NCP: During the next two years, while the NCP still has the foundational springboard of project support, the project should invest in individual and institutional capacity development to ensure the long-term sustainability of the NCP. With further capacity development the NCP has the potential to be the future catalyzing force for financial sustainability for the KR’s PAs once the project is complete.*[Project Team, Non-commercial partnership]*
4. ***Key Recommendation 3:*** The mid-term of a project is early to recommend a project extension, but the option of a 6-12 month extension should be opened for consideration in the final year of project implementation. In addition to the initial slower-than-anticipated project implementation rate, the question of the establishment of the regional directorate for PAs remains uncertain. If this key outcome has not been achieved at the end of the project’s planned implementation period – *and it is anticipated that it could be achieved with project support under a short extension* – it may be worthwhile for the Project Steering Committee (PSC) to consider such a move. An extension should not be considered under this rationale if the establishment of a regional PAs directorate remains an open-ended question, without achievement of the final goal clearly in sight.*[UNDP, Executing Agency, PSC]*
5. ***Key Recommendation 4:***The project team must ensure that the necessary time and resources are set aside to turn the scientific data and knowledge gained from the carbon component research into practical recommendations for effective forest and ecosystem management in response to and planning for future climate change. The project team should plan to produce forest management and PA management technical guidelines that are as specific as possible on ways to strengthen ecosystem resilience to mitigate the effects of climate change.*[Project Team, key government institution partners]*
6. ***Key Recommendation 5:***The project team, UNDP, and relevant stakeholders should work to develop a proposal for logframe revision that would improve alignment of indicators and targets with SMART criteria, and would enhance the results-focused approach. A revision should then be approved by the PSC at its next meeting in early 2012.*[Project Team, UNDP, Executing Agency, other partners as relevant]*

**Komi Protected Areas Project Mid-term Evaluation Rating Summary**

| **Project Component or Objective** | **Rating** | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Formulation** | |  |
| **Relevance** | | S |
| Conceptualization/design | | S |
| Stakeholder participation in project development | | S |
| **Project Implementation** | |  |
| **Implementation Approach (Efficiency)** | | S |
| The use of the logical framework | | S |
| Adaptive management | | HS |
| Use/establishment of information technologies | | S |
| Operational relationships between the institutions involved | | HS |
| Financial management | | S |
| **Monitoring and Evaluation** | | S |
| Monitoring and evaluation design | | MS |
| Monitoring and evaluation implementation | | S |
| Monitoring and evaluation budgeting | | S |
| **Stakeholder Participation** | | HS |
| Production and dissemination of information | | HS |
| Local resource users and NGOs participation | | HS |
| Establishment of partnerships | | HS |
| Involvement and support of governmental institutions | | S |
| **Project Results** | |  |
| **Progress Toward Achievement of Objective and Outcomes (Effectiveness)** | | S |
| **Objective:** A representative and effectively managed network of protected areas ensures conservation of pristine boreal forest and taiga ecosystems in the Komi Republic | | S |
| **Outcome 1:** The protected area system of Komi Republic is redesigned so as to better capture globally significant biodiversity | | HS |
| **Outcome 2:** Increased institutional capacity for management of protected areas within the Komi Republic protected area system | | S |
| **Outcome 3:** Application of business planning principles result in diversified revenue streams for the Komi Republic protected area system | | HS |
| **Outcome 4:** Improved protected area system in Komi Republic for better conservation of globally important biodiversity and maintenance of carbon pools | | S |
| **Sustainability** | | ML |
| Financial sustainability | | ML |
| Sociopolitical sustainability | | L |
| Institutional and governance sustainability | | ML |
| Ecological sustainability | | L |
| **Progress toward Overall Project Achievement and Impact** | | **HS** |

*Note: The ratings for the main evaluation criteria are narratively highlighted in the report; other ratings are not.*

*Ratings explanation: HS – Highly Satisfactory; S – Satisfactory; MS – Moderately Satisfactory; MU – Moderately Unsatisfactory; U – Unsatisfactory; HU – Highly Unsatisfactory; UA – Unable to Assess; N/A – Not Applicable. Sustainability ratings: L – Likely; ML – Moderately Likely; MU – Moderately Unlikely; U – Unlikely.*

# Introduction: Evaluation Scope and Methodology

1. According to GEF and UNDP evaluation policies, mid-term evaluations are standard practice for GEF funded FSPs, and a mid-term evaluation was a planned activity of the monitoring and evaluation plan of the Komi PAs project.The UNDP Russia Project Support Office initiated the mid-term evaluation near the mid-point of the project’s planned five-year implementation period. This mid-term evaluation reviews the actual performance and progress toward results of the project against the planned project activities and outputs, based on the standard evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, results and sustainability. The evaluation assesses project results based on expected outcomes and objectives, as well as any unanticipated results. The evaluation identifies relevant lessons for other similar projects in the future in the Russian Federation and elsewhere, and provides recommendations for the remaining implementation period as necessary and appropriate.
2. In addition to assessing the main GEF evaluation criteria, the evaluation provides the required ratings on key elements of project design and implementation. Further, the evaluation will, when possible and relevant, assess the project in the context of the key GEF operational principles such as country-drivenness, and stakeholder ownership, as summarized in Annex 3.
3. The evaluation methodology was based on a participatory mixed-methods approach, which included three primary elements: a) a desk review of project documentation and other relevant documents; b) interviews with key project participants and stakeholders; and c) field visits to relevant project sites in the Komi Republic. The evaluation is based on evaluative evidence from the start of project implementation (October 2008) to September 2011, and includes an assessment of issues prior to approval, such the project development process, overall design, risk assessment and monitoring and evaluation planning. The desk review was begun in August 2011, and the evaluation mission was carried out from September 13 – September 23, 2011. The list of stakeholders interviewed is included as Annex 4 to this evaluation report.
4. All evaluations face limitations in terms of the time and resources available to adequately collect andanalyze evaluative evidence. With additional time, more stakeholder viewpoints and relevant data could have been gathered for this mid-term evaluation. Also, as is understandable, some documents were available only in Russian language, although all key documents were available in English. The composition of the evaluation team, with an expert interpreter, ensured that language was not a critical barrier in collection of the evaluative evidence. Altogether the evaluation challenges were not significant, and the evaluation is believed to represent a fair and accurate assessment of the project.
5. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with UNDP and GEF monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures, and in-line with United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards.
6. The intended users of this mid-term evaluation are the project team and UNDP country and regional offices. As relevant, the mid-term evaluation report may be disseminated more widely with additional stakeholders to substantiate adaptive management decisions or share lessons and recommendations.

# Project Overview and Development Context

## Development Context

1. The KR is one of the Russian Federation’s 83 federal subjects, or administrative regions. The KR has an area of 415,900 square kilometers, and a population of approximately 900,000 people, for a population density of 2.17 persons per square kilometer. The republic is located between 59**°**12’ (equivalent to Stockholm) and 68**°**25’ north latitude (two degrees of latitude north of the Arctic Circle), and 45**°**25’ and 66**°**10’ east longitude – including the western slopes of the Ural Mountains and plains and the Timan Range to the west. Figure 1 below shows a physical map of the KR, with the region’s two major federal PAs on the eastern boundary, outlined in the thin red line. With such a large area and small population, approximately 77% of the population lives in rural areas, compared to 23% in urban areas.[[1]](#footnote-2)In line with broad regional trends, the population is currently declining due to economically drivenoutmigration from the region, and the KR had a population loss of 4,153 persons, or approximately 0.5%, in the first six months of 2011.[[2]](#footnote-3)The KR capital is Syktyvkar, which has approximately 250,000 people; other urban centers include Ukhta, Inta, Vorkuta, Pechora, Sosnogorsk, Vuktyl, Mikun’ and Usinsk. The KR has eight cities, and 20 municipal districts.
2. In 2007 the per capita monthly income was around 20,000 roubles per month (approximately $600 USD). Unemployment, particularly among women, is high – the project document notes that in 2006, female unemployment ranged from 50-70% in populated areas of the KR. Exploitation of natural resources is the primary economic driver in the region, including oil, gas, timber, and mining.The KR forests produce approximately 27 million cubic meters of timber per year. Gas, oil, and timber companies – such as Mondi, Lukoil, and Gazprom are the region’s most significant private sector employers. At the same time, these activities constitute some of the key environmental threats in the region – 2007 saw an oil spill on the Pechora river,[[3]](#footnote-4) and UNESCO has unsuccessfully petitioned the government to disallow gold-mining in Yugyd va National Park.[[4]](#footnote-5)International financial institutions,such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, have drawn criticism for investing in oil and mining development without adequate environmental considerations.[[5]](#footnote-6)In rural areas, subsistence lifestyles relying on non-timber forest products (NTFPs), hunting, and fishing are important. Another critical threat in the region is anthropogenic forest fires (which can constitute a majority of KR’s forest fires in a given year), which are frequently inadvertently ignited by forest resource users. Additional information on the socio-economic context of the project region can be found in the project document.
3. The KR has extraordinary ecological resources, as highlighted by the fact that a portion of the republic is designated a UNESCO natural World Heritage site – the “Virgin Komi Forests” – which consists of Russian and Scandinavian taiga forest. The KR’s area is 72.7% covered in forest, 9.8% in peatland, 9.5% in tundra, and 1.5% with water bodies, with 1.1% agricultural areas and 5.5% other land use types. As described by UNESCO in information about the World Heritage site, “The vegetation of the lowlands comprises marshes and floodplain islands. Boreal forest extends from the marshes to the foothills of the Urals and is superseded by subalpine scrub woodlands, meadows, tundra and bedrock. Boreal forest predominantly comprises pine and larch. Ground cover consists of cowberry, bilberry and reindeer mosses. Extensive spruce, fir and pine forests are found in the valleys. The area to the west comprises marshes and floodplain islands. Low-altitude wetter areas such as bogs support sphagnum moss with cranberry, bilberry and cloudberry.” An example of the ecosystem is shown in Figure 1, with the foothills of the pre-polar Urals in the background of the picture.At least 778 species and sub-species of vascular plants have been recorded, 410 species of mosses, 866 lichen species, more than 300 species of mushrooms, 48 mammal species, and 238 bird species. Biological diversity is high along the eastern boundary of the KR, at the Ural Mountains, due to the overlap in the ranges of European and Siberian species.

Figure Komi Taiga Forest-Peatland Ecosystem Complex



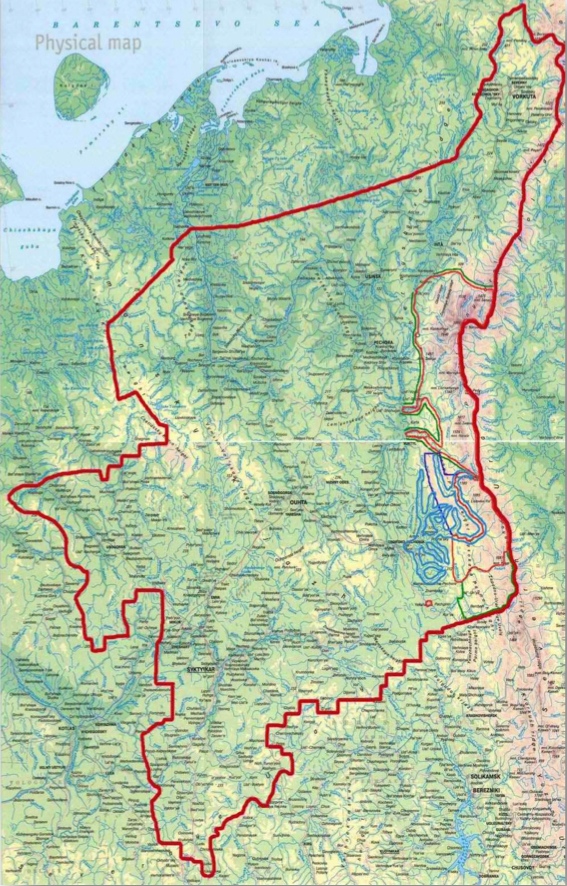
1. Prior to the commencement of the project, the KR had established a republic-level PA network covering approximately 13.5% of the territory’s area (60,000 hectares), although the majority of the system was not actively managed, and no institutional management body existed. The republic-level PAs are ostensibly managed by the Forestry Committee, which oversees management of the KR’sforest lands. There are two large federal-level PAs, Yugyd va National Park, and Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve. Comprehending the sheer size of both the KR and the two major federal PAs is critical for understanding the project objective and activities. If the KR were an independent country it would be the world’s 60th largest, following Uzbekistan, Morocco and Iraq, and just ahead of Paraguay. Yugyd va National Park, alone, is nearly the size of Slovenia, and combined with Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve the total area under federal protection is slightly larger than the entire country of Macedonia.

## Concept Developmentand Project Description

### Concept Background

1. The Komi PAs project, like many GEF projects, has a long history from concept to approval. Table 2 below gives an overview of the project timeline dates, starting with the PDF-A approval in 2003; however, the project concept background goes back even further. According to project sources, the concept originated in 2001 with a meeting between the UNDP Resident Representative in the Russian Federation and the Head of the KR, where opportunities for collaboration in the environmental sector were discussed. According to project stakeholders, the concept started as a forest management project, but there was not a clear window for GEF support with this approach. The concept then progressed to focusing on the “Komi Virgin Forest” UNESCO World Heritage site (made up of the Yugyd va National Park and Pechora-Ilyich Reserve and surrounding areas), which was a natural opening and foundation for GEF support in the region. However, as the GEF strategic priorities in the biodiversity focal area evolved in GEF-4 to increase the emphasis on systemic approaches, the project concept was then broadened to include strengthening the full PA system of the KR. There had been some previous international donor support on environmental conservation in the KR contributing to a foundation for further investment. From 2000 – 2003 the European Commission supported the0.5 million europroject “Sustainable development of the Pechora Region in a changing environment and society (SPICE)”project, with Finland’s University of Lapland andinstitutions from the EU and UK.[[6]](#footnote-7) From 2003 -2007the Netherlands government collaborated with the Institute of Biology on a project to strengthen integrated river basin management for the Pechora river through the “PRISM” project.[[7]](#footnote-8)On carbon research, the “CARBO-North” project, funded by the EU, ran from late 2006 to early 2010.[[8]](#footnote-9)In addition, regional stakeholders (government, academic, local population, and private sector) had demonstrated strong support for environmental conservation efforts as a balance to the natural resource extraction activities that are the primary economic driver in the KR.
2. Once initial agreement was reached to move forward, concept preparation documents were submitted, leading to first project development phase from 2004-2005, supported by the PDF-A. A second preparation phase from 2006-2007 was supported through the PDF-B, eventually leading to project approval in late 2008, and operational startup in early 2009. Further discussion on the project timeline and milestones is included in the following section.

Figure Physical Map of the Komi Republic[[9]](#footnote-10)



### Project Description

1. The project was developed to address the key threats and risks to the taiga forest ecosystem in the KR, including under-regulated timber harvesting, oil and gas infrastructure development, forest fires, unregulated harvesting of NTFPs, and under regulated tourism. According to the project threat analysis, the underlying factors contributing to an inability to address these threats were limited capacity for management and enforcement, inadequate funding for PA management, limited sustainable livelihood opportunities for local populations, an insufficient regulatory framework, and a PA system not designed to fully conserve key biodiversity resources.
2. The project is classified as a GEF FSP, since the funding received from the GEF is greater than $1 million USD. Total GEF support is $4.5 million (not including PDF funding), and originally proposed co-financing is $15.9 million USD, for a total project budget of $20.4 million USD. Shortly after approval a fourth component was added, with additional co-financing of $4.4 million USD from Germany’s ICI, for a total planned budget of $24.8 million USD.Table 5 in Section IV outlines the planned project budget breakdown, and Table 6shows expected co-financing, and actual co-financing to date. The project is executed under UNDP’s NEX modality, with the RF MNR’sFederal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service (“Rosprirodnadzor”) as the national executing partner.
3. According to the project document, the overall project goal is “A comprehensive, ecologically representative and effectively managed national system of protected areas in the Russian Federation ensures conservation of globally significant and threatened ecosystems.” The project objectiveis “A representative and effectively managed network of protected areas ensures conservation of pristine boreal forest and taiga ecosystems in the Komi Republic.” The project strategy is to enhance and strengthen the baseline PAs network into a well-managed system that adequately protects the biodiversity of the region.
4. The project objective is planned to be achieved through three main outcomes:

**Outcome 1:The protected area system of Komi Republic is redesigned so as to better capture globally significant biodiversity**

**Outcome 2:Increased institutional capacity for management of protected areas within the Komi Republic protected area system**

**Outcome 3:Application of business planning principles result in diversified revenue streams for the Komi Republic protected area system**

1. A fourth outcome related to the German government-funded carbon component was included following GEF approval, and has been incorporated with relevant indicators and targets in the current version of the project logframe. The carbon component was included as a result of the project making a successful submission to a competition announced by the German government under the ICI. The level of support provided under this component of the project nearly doubled the overall donor budget for the project.
2. According to the project document for the carbon component, the “overriding goal” is “To enable sustainable conservation of biodiversity at 1.63 million ha of high nature-value boreal forests and peatlands in the Komi Republic reducing carbon emissions by 1.75 million CO2 in a 10-years perspective.” The specific goal is “To support capacity development and improvement of infrastructure at targeted protected areas in the Komi Republic (1 federal zapovednik, 1 federal national park and 13 regional forest zakazniks) enabling them to effectively mitigate human and climate change risks, develop, implement and monitor effectively climate change adaptation measures.” This additional project component is represented as Outcome 4[[10]](#footnote-11) in the context of the full UNDP-GEF project:

**Outcome 4:Improved protected area system in Komi Republic for better conservation of globally important biodiversity and maintenance of carbon pools**

1. The geographic focus of the project includes the two federal level PAs in the KR, plus the full system of republic-level PAs, which has recently been determined to include 237 individualPAs of varying size and significance. While the project is targeting the systemic level of the KR PA network, a few of the individual republic-level PAs also have specific demonstration or pilot level activities. Table 2below presents information about the PAs where specific project activities are being carried out.

Table Protected Areas with Field-level Project Activities

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Area (hectares)** | **IUCN Category** | **Global Designation** |
| Yugyd va National Park | 1,891,701 | II | World Heritage Site; Global 200 |
| Pechoro-Ilychsky Nature Reserve | 721,322 | I | World Heritage Site; Global 200; Biosphere Reserve |
| Ilychsky Ichthyological Reserve | 532,400 | IV |  |
| Usinsky complexny Compex Reserve | 138,300 | IV | Ramsar site |
| Ocean Marsh Reserve | 178,975 | IV |  |
| Udorsky Complex Reserve | 242,000 | IV |  |

1. The project’s key milestone dates are shown in Table 3 below. The development period from PDF-A to implementation start totaled 58 months, or 4.83 years. However this doesn’t include the 2001-2003 period of concept development, and thus the total development period could be considered as six or seven years altogether. Thelength of the development period can likely be attributed to multiple factors, but there are at least two significant ones. First, fact that the project required both PDF-A and PDF-B phases, whereas most FSPs only have one PDF phase, usually a PDF-B. In addition, the project development phase bridged the GEF-3 to GEF-4 transition period in 2006, at which point GEF policies, procedures, and strategic priorities were revised. Project stakeholders noted that due to changes in the strategic priorities for the GEF biodiversity focal area the project approach had to be revised from focusing on just a few key PAs (the two federal PAs and one regional reserve and adjacent forestry area) in the KR to also addressing the full network of republic level PAs. This evolution required additional time for more extensive stakeholder consultations and project document revision.
2. The project’s planned total implementation period is 60 months (five years). The project inception workshop was held in Syktyvkar, November 12-14, 2008, following the contracting of the project team.

Table Project Key Milestone Dates[[11]](#footnote-12)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Milestone** | **Expected date [A]** | **Actual date [B]** | **Months (total)** |
| 1. PDF-A Approval | Not Applicable | November 18, 2003 |  |
| 2. Pipeline Entry | Not Specified | March 17, 2005 | 16 (16) |
| 3. PDF-B Approval | Not Applicable | May 12, 2005 | 2 (18) |
| 4. PIF Approval | Not Applicable | August 31, 2007 | 27.5 (45.5) |
| 5. GEF Council Approval | Not Specified | November 16, 2007 | 2.5 (48) |
| 6. CEO Endorsement | Not Specified | April 8, 2008 | 5 (53) |
| 7. Agency Approval | Not Specified | July 22, 2008 | 3 (56) |
| 8. Implementation Start (first disbursement) | Not Specified | October 3, 2008 | 2 (58) |
| 9. Mid-term Evaluation | March 31, 2011 | September 2011 | 35 (93) |
| 10. Project Operational Completion | July 31, 2013 | Not Applicable |  |
| 11. Terminal Evaluation Completion | March 31, 2013 | Not Applicable |  |
| 12. Project Financial Closing | December 31, 2014 | Not Applicable |  |

### Stakeholder Participation in Development

1. Since the project concept originated through discussion between the head of the KR administration and UNDP, the project has enjoyed strong regional and local stakeholder participation and support throughout the extended project development phase. Table 4below outlines the majority of relevant institutional stakeholders. According to the project document, and confirmed during the evaluation mission, the project development phase included extensive stakeholder consultations with the full range of relevant stakeholders, including numerous workshops, meetings, and individual communications.

Table Komi PAs Project Stakeholder Mandates and Roles

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder** | **Relevant Role / Mandate** | **Project Role** |
| RF MNR Federal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service(Rosprirodnadzor) | Determines federal budget allocation for federal level PAs | National Executing partner, through KR regional Branch |
| Institute of Biology, Komi Science Center, Ural Division, Russian Academy of Sciences | Scientific research on biological resources of the KR | Host institution for the project management unit; key project partner |
| KR Branch of RF Rosprirodnadzor | Implements mandate of the RF Rosprirodnadzor within the KR; responsible for oversight of federal level PAs in the KR | National Executing partner; oversees project execution |
| UNDP Russia Project Support Office | Provides technical support to development activities in the Russian Federation | Project implementing agency responsible for providing administrative and financial management support, and execution oversight |
| KR Forestry Committee | Promotion of high standards of commercial forest harvesting; and control of forest lease holders | Cooperation in identification of new PAs and cancellation of existing PAs |
| KR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection | Support to the process of Zakaznik assessment and re-design of the KR PA system; Establishment of monitoring system for use of fish and game resources of regional ichthyological Zakazniks | Institution responsible for managing republic level PAs; Institution within which a KR PA directorate would be established |
| KR Ministry of Agriculture | Contribute to the restoration of fish and game resources in project territories | Partner for management and enforcement related to fish and game resources |
| KR Ministry of Economic Development | Responsible for tourism development in the KR | Key project partner on activities related to ecotourism development to contribute to PA sustainable financing |
| KR Ministry of Education | Responsible for education in the KR | Involved in environmental education and awareness activities |
| KR State Council | Legislative body of the KR | Responsible for republic level legislation and institutional framework related to management of environmental resources in the KR |
| Komi State Teachers Training Institute | Carries out activities across the education sector | Contributes to project activities related to public education and awareness |
| KR Municipal administrative districts (20) | Local level government in municipal districts; Coordination of local actions for small business development | Representatives from key municipal districts serve on the PSC – Troitsk-Pechorsk, Inta, Pechora and Vuktyl |
| Yugyd va National Park Administration | Federal office (field based) responsible for managing Yugyd va National Park | Key project partner in all project activities related to Yugyd va National Park, including development of tourism and management infrastructure, business plan, etc. |
| Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve Administration | Federal office (field based) responsible for managing Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve | Key project partner in all project activities related to Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve, including development ofenvironmental monitoring, tourism and management infrastructure, business plan, etc. |
| Public Chamber of the KR | Civil society coordinating body | Involved with public education and awareness activities, and other key activities such as the private sector green scorecard |
| NGOs “Save the Pechora”, Silver Taiga Foundation, “Humans and Birds” | Advocate for conservation of biodiversity in project areas | Important project partners that have been involved in some activities as technical experts |
| Non-governmental organization (NGO) “The Union of Protected Areas of the Komi Republic” | Created under the project | Mandated to implement the business plans of the PAs and develop sustainable financing activities |
| Ecological and Educational Center “Snigir” (Bull Finch) | Carries out public awareness and educational activities in the Komi Republic | Key project partner for development of a KR PA visitor center |
| Private sector – Gazprom Ukhta Transgaz | Operates gas pipeline that runs through Yugyd va National Park | Provides key financial and technical support to PA administrations |
| Local communities | Resource users; PA staff | Involved in project activities related to development of local sustainable use opportunities; Contributing to strengthened local level management capacity |

### Project Design

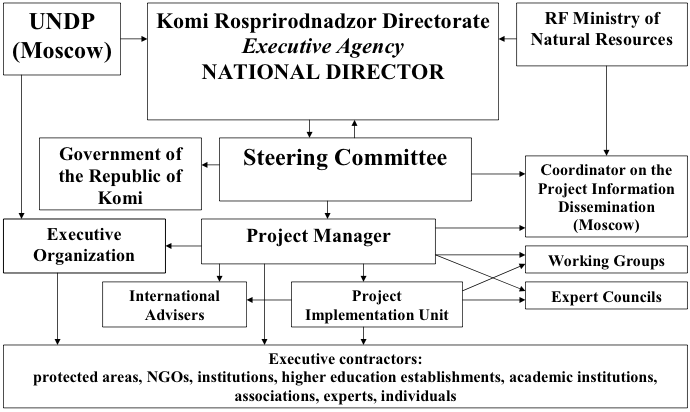
1. The project document is comprehensive, and includes all of the required components, such as stakeholder analysis and participation plan, threat analysis, risk assessment, monitoring and evaluation plan, sustainability analysis, replication plan, etc. The project’s long development timeframe no doubt contributed to a strong design that fully met UNDP and GEF requirements, as well as appropriately reflecting the input of stakeholders.
2. The project threat analysis is included as Annex 5 of the project document.The threat analysis is a key tool for understanding the logic of the project, and determining how the project is intended to address the threats to biodiversity. The threat analysis for the Komi PAs project is comprehensive, and also includes an assessment on the underlying causes of threats, which is crucial for analyzing project impact drivers and the assumption on which the project design is built. Unfortunately the threat analysis in the project document does not present a clear picture of how the project components are linked to specific threats; ideally the threat analysis table would include a column identifying the project components intended to address the threat listed, and a brief explanation of how this will occur.
3. The risk analysis in the project document is another important tool for assessing the adequacy of project preparation and design. The risk assessment for the Komi PAs project is included in section II.3 of the project document. Eight individual risks are identified, with an overall “moderate” risk rating. The risks identified cover the general relevant issues, and summaries mitigation measures to be taken. The inception report, however, provides a much more extensive and tangible update to the risk assessment, with multiple additional risks added, including the potential issue of institutional conflicts at the republic level hampering the achievement of Outcome 2, which may in fact be an issue, although there are multiple potential explanations for the delay in establishment of a KR PA directorate (further discussion in Section V.A.ii on Outcome 2).

# Project Design and Implementation

## Komi PAsProject Implementation Approach

1. A diagram of the project management arrangements is seen in Figure 3, below. The project is implemented under UNDP’s NEX approach, with the RF Ministry of Natural Resources as the National Executing Agency, represented by the Komi Division of the Federal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service(Rosprirodnadzor); the head of this regional office is the National Project Director.
2. Oversight and stakeholder input is provided through the PSC, which is “the supreme consultative and coordination deliberative body” of the project, “established to discuss the project progress in a collective and competent way as well as to make recommendations for implementing the project.” The PSC Terms of Reference were included in the project inception report, and outline PSC’s specific tasks, structure, composition, organization and authority. The PSC members are drawn from the full range of relevant stakeholder organizations and institutions, including national, regional, and local government, civil society, and the private sector. Box 1 below lists the organizations represented at the February 2011 Steering Committee meeting, which was the most recent. There has been some turnover in the PSC membership, but this appears to not have negatively affected the project, as the project team has been able to update new members and keep them informed of project activities, and the large membership of the PSC has allowed it to maintain momentum through the presence of long-standing members. The PSC formally meets once per year, at which point the project annual workplan and budget are approved, key issues discussed, and decisions taken. Although the PSC only meets once per year, the project team maintains regular communication with PSC members, and can request time-sensitive decisions be taken on an ad-hoc basis as necessary.

Figure Komi PAs Project Implementation Arrangements

**

*Source: Project Inception Report*

1. The Project Management Unit (PMU), consisting of a project manager and associated staff, undertakes everyday project management and activities. The PMU physical premises are hosted by the Institute of Biology of the Komi Science Center, a branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Under the PMU, technical specialists make upthree “working groups” responsible for executing the main components of the project, corresponding to the expected outcomes;the project manager oversees all of the working groups, as well as Outcome 1. The working group coordinators heading each of the project components are paid by the project, while other experts contribute without remuneration, but are sometimes contracted to carry out specific project activities as necessary.
2. The project also has cultivated three “expert councils” consisting of national and regional experts, who provide technical inputs to the project. There are three expert councils: a. On PAs and biodiversity; b. On procedural and institutional issues; c. On social and economic issues. In addition to contracting specific individuals, the project has also contracted key executing partner organizations to conduct project activities. The Institute of Biology has been one of the main executing partners, but others include educational organizations and NGOs. The project has also employed local community members in the project field sites, for example, to assist with constructing tourism infrastructure.
3. One interesting and notable aspect of this project is the collaboration between UNDP and the German government’s ICI, which provided funding for the carbon component. The carbon component was approved to be included under the project after the GEF’s approval of the original three-component project design. Although the carbon component budget is nearly the size of the project budget for the other three components, ICI and UNDP had the good sense to include it within the umbrella of the overall project, rather than as a separate stand-alone effort. This allows the ICI-funded activities to leverage the project management and UNDP oversight structure, including financial management and procurement, UNDP contracting procedures, project information technologyresources, etc. For example, the project document of the carbon component specifically states that the carbon component will use standard UNDP monitoring and evaluation procedures. This approach improves efficiency and reduces management costs as a percentage of the overall project budget, benefiting both the ICI and GEF funded portions of the project. This arrangement was likely foreseen from the initial discussions related to the funding of the carbon component,and ICI may have funded the carbon component on an opportunistic basis related given the already-planned GEF project efforts, but such an arrangement implies a strong and trusting partnership between ICI and UNDP. Such arrangements are also highly commendable from the point of view of international donor harmonization as outlined under the third principle of the Paris Declaration.

Box Komi PAs Project Steering Committee Meeting Participation

* RF MNR Rosprirodnadzor, Komi Republic Branch Office
* Institute of Biology, Komi Science Center, Urals Office, Russian Academy of Sciences
* KR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
* International Relations and Protocol Department, Administration of the KR Head of Government
* KR Forestry Committee
* Budget, Tax and Economic Policy Committee, KR State Council
* KR State Council
* KR Ministry of Economic Development
* UNDP Russia Project Support Office
* Yugyd va National Park Administration
* Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve Administration
* Troitsk-Pechorsk Municipal Administration
* Vuktyl Municipal Administration
* Syktyvkar Forestry Institute
* NGO Save the Pechora Committee
* Nature Reserves Ecology Center
* SONAR Foundation, Moscow
* Komi Voityr Interregional Non-government Movement
* KR Territorial Repository of Natural Resources and Environment Protection Information
* All-Russia NGO Russian Ecological Council
* KR Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs
* Fauna Farm, JSC
* Bull Finch Environmental Education Center
* Nature and Humanity Environmental Information and Education Center

## Komi PAsProject Relevance

1. Based on the assessment of project relevance to local and national priorities and policies, priorities related to relevant international conventions, and to the GEF’s strategic priorities and objectives, overall project **relevance** is considered to be ***satisfactory***.

### Relevance at Local and Regional Levels

1. At the regional level, the project is supporting the environmental protection and sustainable use policies and priorities of the Government of the KR, and in particular the KR Ministry of Natural Resources and the KR Forestry Committee.[[12]](#footnote-13)Republic level laws supported by the project include Law 14.05.2005 N.42-P3 “Regulation of Activities in the Area of Environmental Protection in the Komi Republic;” Law 28.06.2005 N.63-P3 “Regulation of Activities in the Area of Protection and Use of Fauna in the Territory of the Komi Republic;” Law 03.04.2006 N.22-P3 “ “Regulation of Aquatic Activities in the Komi Republic;” and KR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Order 12.02.2008 N.79 “Statement of the Lists of Flora and Fauna Objects Included in the Red Data Book of the Komi Republic.”
2. Considering the significant economic activities in the region involving natural resources, the strengthening of the PA system in the KR is relevant in the context of the threats and the need for environmental conservation in the region. In the KR, as around the world, the PA network is one of the main tools and foundational elements of the long-term approach to biodiversity conservation. In addition, the project’s support, through the carbon component, for fire control and suppression is relevant to the needs and priorities of the KR. The fact that the project has strong regional and local government support is a testament to the many ways in which the project is supporting regional and local environmental priorities.
3. The project’s approach of strengthening of the KR PA system, and improving management capacity for regional and federal level PAs in the KR, is a natural starting point for biodiversity conservation in the region; activities include expanding coverage to underrepresented ecosystems and revising the PA network to incorporate the highest value biodiversity areas. Considering that the region is heavily involved in natural resource extraction industries, an important priority for future international donor support for biodiversity conservation efforts in the region will be to focus on the mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations in production sectors and landscapes. Large portions of the KR are used for timber production, including virgin forests in the western portion of the republic that are not currently under protected status. At present, only a small amount of territory is under sustainable certification standards.[[13]](#footnote-14) In addition, the oil and gas industry has a direct influence on biodiversity outside of PAs, and measures could be undertaken to incorporate more biodiversity friendly practices, and improve preparation for disasters that may occur. This evaluation recommends that potential future international donor support in the KR examine opportunities for biodiversity mainstreaming in production sectors, as a complement to the current critical work on PAs.
4. At the local level, the project is relevant to local resource user populations. As noted in Section III.A above, unemployment in rural areas of the KR is relatively high. The project is supporting increased income opportunities through the sustainable use of resources, and development of tourism. There are multiple municipalities and villages within the project target area, and the project team is collaborating with and supporting sustainable livelihoods in these areas. Examples include Yaksha village, at the boundary of the Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve, where initiatives established by the project will be supporting tourism development at the elk (moose) farm and at the boundaries of the reserve. At Podcherie village, on the boundary of Yugyd va National Park, the project has also supported the development of tourism infrastructure, and is expecting to support additional income opportunities through the small-scale sustainable production of wood products.

### Relevance at the National Level

1. The Komi PAsproject has come at a particularly relevant time at the national level, as the Ministry of Finance is continuing the public sector budget reform process to improve the rationalization of government budgeting, and developing cost recommendations, norms and standards for government institutions; this includes institutions under the RFMNR, such as PA administrations. According to the finance department of the MNR, next year the MNR will start submitting budgeting information based on the specific services that the state institutions are providing, and budget requests from federal PAs will have to be broken down by the services the institutions are responsible for undertaking. The overall level of funding provided to each PA is not necessarily expected to drop (the average has been 10-12 million roubles per year per PA (approximately $300,000 - $400,000 USD), according to the finance department – for Yugyd va National Park this was 11.46 million roubles in 2009[[14]](#footnote-15) - $370,000 USD), but it is clear that the federal government will not be providing the full amount required for effective PA management. Therefore the project’s business planning approach for the PAs and overall effort to identify and leverage diversified revenue streams is particularly timely.
2. The project is relevant to and supportive of Russia’s national biodiversity conservation priorities and strategies on multiple fronts. Key national policy and legislation supported by the project is the revised National Forest Code (2007), Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation (2002), and the Federal Law on Protected Areas (1995) (including its revisions in 2001, 2004, and 2005). As noted in the project document for the carbon component, “The amendment of the National Forest Code in 2007 is an indication of the commitment of the government towards sustainable use and conservation of forest ecosystems in Russia. On the federal level, the project helps the Government to implement a Government Resolution dated 2001 which called for the expansion of the national PA system and establishment of new federal reserves and national parks during the period from 2001 to 2010.”
3. Russia’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) was submitted the secretariat of the CBD in 2001, and is one of the foundational documents that outlines national priorities and strategies for approaches to conserving biodiversity. The NBSAP specifically mentions, as priority ecosystem for federal action, “the primary forests in the North of the European part of Russia.” In addition, the use of PAs as an important approach to the conservation of biodiversity was also highlighted in the NBSAP.
4. The carbon component of the project, Outcome 4, also supports Russia’s national climate policies, such as the climate doctrine adopted in March 2009. Russia is particularly focused on climate change adaptation, given projections that Russia’s northern territories will be significantly affected by climate change. The project’s carbon component is undertaking research to assess climate changes and collect data that can be used in models to predict future impacts. In addition, the project’s support for forest fire fighting and suppression is also supporting the priorities and policies of the Russian Federation and the KR.

### Relevance to Multilateral Environmental Agreements

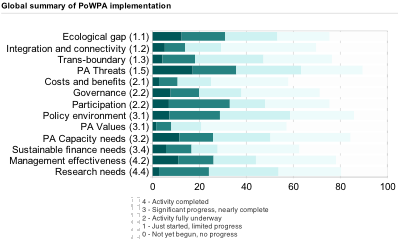
1. The GEF is a designated financial mechanism for the United Nations CBD and the UNFCCC. As such, projects funded by the GEF must be relevant to and support the implementation of these conventions. Russia is a party to the CBD, having ratified the agreement on April 5, 1995. The Komi PAs project is relevant to the CBD on multiple fronts, most notably in supporting the CBD’s protected areas program of work (PoWPA).[[15]](#footnote-16)The PoWPA has four overarching elements, with a set of sub-components summarized in Figure 4below,[[16]](#footnote-17)which is drawn from a recent assessment of the progress of implementation of the PoWPA. The Komi PAs project is directly supporting aspects of all of the sub-components highlighted, thereby furthering implementation of the PoWPA.
2. In addition, the project supports broader aspects of the CBD, such as Article 8. “In-situ Conservation”;Article 10. “Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity”; Article 11. “Incentive Measures”; Article 12. “Research and Training”; Article 13. “Public Education and Awareness”; Article 14. “Impact Assessment and Minimizing Adverse Impacts”; Article 16. “Access to and Transfer of Technology”; and Article 20. “Financial Resources”.
3. The fourth outcome of the project, the carbon component, is not funded by the GEF, but is nonetheless supporting implementation of the UNFCCC. Russia ratified the UNFCCC on December 28, 1994, and ratified the Kyoto Protocol on November 18, 2004.
4. The World Heritage Convention is another important multilateral environmental agreement supported by the project. This is confirmed by the fact that the two largest PAs addressed by the project – Yugyd va National Park and Pechora-Illych National Reserve, and their neighboring territory – are part of the “Virgin Komi Forests” natural World Heritage site. The World Heritage Convention is intended to ensure the protection and conservation of outstanding natural features. The project’s work to strengthen the management effectiveness of these key PAs is a direct contribution to the objectives of the convention.
5. An additional relevant multilateral environmental agreement supported under the project is the Convention on Migratory Species, which aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. The project is contributing to the objectives of the convention since the project area includes migration routes for multiple bird species that cross international boundaries. However, Russia is not a signatory to the convention.

Figure Global Implementation of the CBD PoWPAs

### Relevance to GEF Strategies, Priorities and Principles

1. The GEF strategic priorities for each of itsthematic focal areas (biodiversity, climate change, etc.) have evolved from one GEF phase to the next, but overall these priorities have remained roughly focused on the same broad areas of intervention. The project was approved under the strategic priorities for GEF-4 (July 2006 – June 2010),[[17]](#footnote-18) but is also being implemented under the strategic priorities for GEF-5 (July 2010 – June 2014).[[18]](#footnote-19)The project is aligned under the GEF-4 first Strategic Objective for the biodiversity focal area: “Catalyzing the Sustainability of Protected Areas”, and under this objective, it is focused on the third Strategic Program: “Strengthening Terrestrial Protected Areas Networks.” The expected outcomes under this strategic program are the improved ecosystem coverage of under-represented terrestrial ecosystem areas, and improved management of terrestrial protected areas. Indicators for these outcomes are defined as terrestrial ecosystem coverage in national protected area systems, and protected area management effectiveness as measured by individual protected area scorecards.
2. With the Komi PAs project’s overall focus on strengthening the KR system of PAs, and revising the system to improve ecosystem coverage, the project clearly supports the GEF strategic priority on terrestrial PAs. Multiple project activities are critical in this effort, such as the vegetation mapping, KR PA inventory, and the proposal to revise the PA system. The KR PA gap analysis conducted under the project confirmed that the tundra ecosystem is under-represented in the KR PA system, and the proposal for the new system is proposing new PA territories to address this gap. The project is also implementing the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scorecard approach to assessing PA effectiveness, and has specific indicator targets to improve management effectiveness with support from the project.
3. The project remains in line with the GEF-5 strategic priorities as well, particularly with Outcome 3 of the project, which focuses on business planning and revenue generation for PAs. The first GEF-5 strategic objective for biodiversity is “Improve sustainability of protected area systems,” and outcome 1.1 focuses on management effectiveness as measured by the METT, while outcome 1.2 focuses on increased revenue for PA systems to meet required management expenditures. Core outputs under this strategic objective are the number of new protected areas, and hectares of coverage of previously inadequately protected ecosystems. A third core output is the number of sustainable financing plans for protected areas. The project is expected to directly contribute to each of these three core outputs, as well as at the expected outcome level with respect to management effectiveness and sustainable financing.
4. Furthermore, as highlighted throughout this evaluation, the project is supporting and meeting the GEF’s core operational principles, as outlined in Annex 2 of this report.

### Country-drivenness and Stakeholder Participation in Implementation

1. The Komi PAs project is characterized by high levels of **stakeholder participation** and drivenness, at both the federal and regional levels, and this aspect of the project is considered ***highly satisfactory***. It was also noted in the 2011 PSCmeeting that “The project is also unique and interesting because it enjoys more support by the regional and federal government than [other similar] projects in Russia.” Similar statements were heard from a range of stakeholders through the evaluation data collection process. According to stakeholders, the project is the largest international donor project ever in the KR, and therefore naturally has the attention and support of the regional government. The current head of the KR government, Mr. Vyacheslav Gaizer, who was the former Minister of Finance of the KR, participated in the working group on business planning and alternative livelihoods for PAs prior to his election as head of the regional government, and he continues to be informed on the project progress.
2. The strong stakeholder participation may be partially a result of the extensive stakeholder consultation during the extended project development, and the country-drivenness of the original concept. It is also, however, clearly thanks to an active, conscientious, and transparent project team that takes numerous proactive steps to engage and inform project stakeholders. For example, project partners are regularly solicited for their input on the annual workplan prior to its finalization. There are a large number of institutional partners, and a variety of stakeholder types, and the engagement of the range of stakeholders can be seen in the diversity of organizations represented on the PSC, as shown previously in Box 1. The project is working with regional and local government, academia, the civil society sector, and the private sector. One of the notable project achievements the is strong collaboration with private sector companies such as Gazprom, Severnye Magistral’nye nefteprovody (“Northern Oil Pipelines”) and Mondi as further discussed in Section V.A on project results.
3. Addressing gender equality is one of UNDP’s important areas of work, and is often reviewed in project assessments. There are few critical gender issues related to the scope of this project, with the one notable issue being potential imbalances in unemployment levels between men and women in the communities near PAs; this is not an issue the project is focusing on. There is a good gender balance in the project team, with some key technical staff positions filled by women. The project is not responsible for addressing gender balance in employment in government agencies, but there are some highlights in this regard as well, as the director of Yugyd va National Park and interim director of Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve are both women.
4. Previous GEF programmatic evaluations, such as the Third Overall Performance Study of the GEF and Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF, have indicated that among the critical elements to ensure the sustainability of project results is strong stakeholder ownership of the processes and activities supported under the project. In this light, the long-term prospects for the results of the Komi PAs project can be viewed optimistically. Sustainability is further discussed in Section VI.A below.

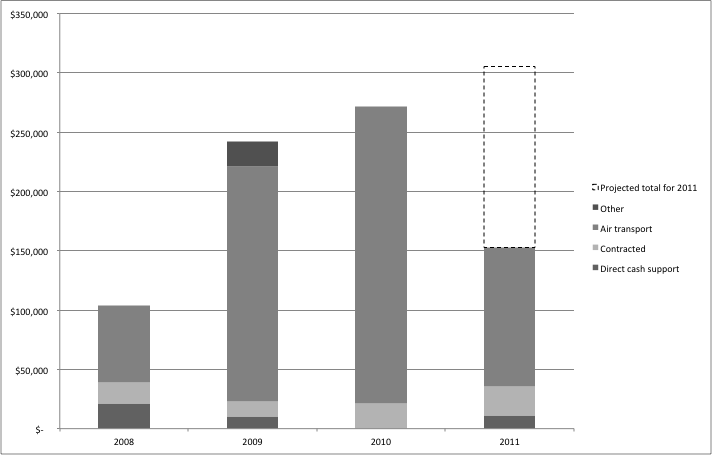
## Project Management and Cost Effectiveness (Efficiency)

1. Overall the **efficiency**of the project is rated ***satisfactory***. The project management arrangements, as discussed in Section IV.B describing the implementation approach, are well designed to produce cost-effective execution of the work plan. The project is widely complemented for its inclusive and transparent operations – an approach apparently surprising to many local and national stakeholders in Russia. One stakeholder noted that the project management arrangements were an improvement over some previous GEF projects in the country because it is managed locally instead of being managed from Moscow. Numerous stakeholders emphasized their appreciation for the excellent work of the project team, and noted that this is among the significant factors contributing to the project’s success. The project’s results-based management approach was also frequently highlighted. The project outputs are significant relative to the size of the PMU, thanks to the engagement of a large number of partners and numerous contracts and procurements. The PMU’s work thus far has included the successful arrangement of 185 tenders, contracts with 29 individuals, and signature of 106 legal entity agreements. It is easy to overlook the time and effort required in the administrative and bureaucratic functioning of such a large project; these tendering and contracting metrics, and the outputs they have generated, bely efficient project operations.
2. Another key element by which to assess the project’s cost-effectiveness is the project’s success in securing value-added tax and other tax exemptions, granted by the Committee for International Humanitarian and Technical Assistance under the RF government. Securing approval for these certificates is a time consuming and bureaucratic process that has slowed project progress, but which has saved the project literally tens of millions of roubles. According to information disclosed in the February 2011 project steering committee meeting, the two tax exemption certificates received in 2010 saved the project approximately 30 million roubles – approximately $960,000 USD. A total of four certificates have been received at the time of the mid-term evaluation. At the same time, changes in exchange rates affected project budgeting at the point of inception – the project inception report notes a 30% change in the USD-rouble exchange rate from mid-2008 to early 2009.
3. While they do save significant resources, obtaining tax exemptions can add time to already time-consuming management processes. According to the project procurement specialist, regular procurement for the Institute of Biology normally requires a maximum of five months (for large scale technical equipment), whereas procurement under the project (for example for the scientific equipment for the carbon component) has taken approximately one year, with five to six months required for approval of the tax exemption certificate. Due to the high rate of inflation in Russia the length of this process creates problems with contracts for goods – contracts are for a fixed amount and must be agreed prior to securing the tax exemption certificate, but by the time final approval has been secured, the prices for equipment have increased, which creates problems with suppliers. Inflation in Russia increased from less than 8% in 2007 to over 15% in 2008, before dropping to less than 6% in 2010 and then rising again to around 9% at present. Price levels can be unpredictable in such an environment, making procurement and financial planning challenging. Unfortunately the project is required to request a new tax-exemption certificate for each new batch of procurement, and thus the time-consuming approval process must be repeated more than once. The past 12 months have been particularly heavy for the project in terms of procurement due to the ramp-up of the carbon component, and the project staff is looking to further improve the efficiency of the process in the future. This could be achieved, for example, by requesting the tax exemption certificates prior to the bidding process, and then going through a certificate revision process to reflect actual costs once the vendor bidding process has been completed. Fortunately the project has consistently received strong support from the KR government, which must sign-off on each tax exemption request.
4. The project team has achieved efficient operations on other fronts, by securing in-kind contributions from project vendors and partners. For example, the local vendors contracted to build some of the tourism infrastructure in Yugyd va National Park and Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve provided their services for lower than market cost for the sake of their own marketing purposes, and being able to highlight that they had supported the PAs in the region. This support has been included in the co-financing figures discussed in Section IV.Ebelow.
5. Quarterly operational progress reports are submitted to UNDP, in the format of the project logframe, reporting on project activities carried out per project component. The project follows standard UNDP financial management procedures, with the project budget managed between the project accountant in Syktyvkar and UNDP staff using the ATLAS system in Moscow. The project team submits quarterly financial reports and requests for funds from UNDP, according to approved workplans. Workplans and corresponding budgets are prepared annually for approval by the PSC. Official annual or semi-annual budget revisions are completed as necessary, approved by UNDP, to reflect updates in the project workplan. In December 2009 the project budget was revised to reflect the addition of the carbon component. As some project activities originally planned for 2010 (including the carbon component) were slightly behind schedule, in December 2010 the project budget was revised to shift relevant expenditures to 2011. Audits have been conducted for 2009 and 2010. The 2010 audit report stated that the project’s record keeping system and controls, financial operations and controls, and internal control system, are in accordance with UNDP policies, requirements, rules, and financial regulations, and do not have any material weaknesses. In addition, the project management structure and internal control system were deemed to be “effective for the Project successful implementation and comply with the UNDP rules and requirements.”
6. At the outset of the project, the project team and many of the stakeholders had not worked with UNDP before, and more time than anticipated was required for project executing partners to become fully familiar with UNDP operating procedures and requirements. By the mid-point of the project the project team and UNDP have established clear and consistent working procedures in terms of covering the various approvals and requirements for normal operation. However, the early delays, including the long-time required for the approval of the tax exemption certificates, meant that the project is slightly behind schedule. The carbon component was particularly delayed due to longer-than-anticipated timeframes for procurement. In 2010 the project spent less than 73% of the planned budget for the year,[[19]](#footnote-20) and the carbon component has already received informal approval from ICI for a one-year extension to December 2012. One of the operational risks noted in the project document for the carbon component was the capacity of the team to implement the large-scale project in a short-time frame, and part of the planned risk mitigation measures were to use “standard UNDP procurement procedures and practices to speed up procurement;” in fact, this may have contributed to a slowing of implementation, although it is impossible to know what the results of alternative approaches may have been.The project team is working diligently to increase the delivery rate for the entire project, and is expected to improve delivery in 2011 relative to 2010.
7. The mid-term of a project is early to definitively recommend a project extension, but given the delays in implementation to date, this evaluation recommends that the option of a 6-12 month extension be opened for consideration in the final year of project implementation. In addition to the initial slower-than-anticipated project implementation rate, the goal of establishing the regional directorate for PAs(further discussed in Section V.A.ii) remains uncertain. If this key outcome has not been achieved at the end of the project’s planned implementation period – *and it is anticipated that it could be achieved with project support under a short extension* – it may be worthwhile for the PSC to consider such a move. An extension should not be considered under this rationale if the establishment of a regional PAs directorate remains an open-ended question, without the final goal clearly in sight.

## Financial Planning by Component and Co-financing

1. The project’s planned expenditure by outcomes is broken down in Table 5below. The following breakdown includes the GEF financing (totally $4.50 million) and the German ICI financing ($4.43 million), since these are managed jointly by UNDP. With co-financing, the total project budget is $24.83 million.As previously highlighted, the collaboration by UNDP and ICI is a noteworthy element of the project, and this is true with respect to co-financing as well. For this project UNDP and ICI have actually undertaken a budget co-sharing approach, where the cash co-financing by ICI is directly under the administration of UNDP. This type of arrangement is relatively uncommon in GEF projects – although all projects are required to demonstrate cash or in-kind co-financing, these resources are generally still managed and implemented by the partners providing the co-financing, rather than under direct management of the UNDP-GEF project. Such arrangements do occur sometimes with small amount of cash co-financing of up to a few tens of thousands of dollars, but in this case the cash co-financing provided is virtually as large as the GEF grant.
2. The project’s carbon component is the largest individual grant component of the project (49.6% of grant funding). The next largest component is Outcome 3 on business planning, with $1.91 million of GEF funding, approximately 21.3% of the grant funding. Outcome 2 is next largest, with $1.39 million in GEF funding, or 15.5% of the total. Outcome 1 is the smallest of the four project components at $0.81 of GEF funding, or 9.0% of grant funding. Project management is budgeted for $0.40 of GEF funding, or 4.5% of the total grant financing, and 8.9% of the total GEF-only funding; this is below the stated GEF threshold of 10%.Taking co-financing into account, Outcome 2 is the largest at 49.4% of the total project budget, and Outcome 3 is the smallest with 9.1% of the total project budget.
3. The planned and actual project co-financing is shown in Table 6 below. Co-financing has already reached over 100% of the planned co-financing, and includes 29 different co-financing partners, compared to the originally foreseen 10. A few of the originally planned co-financing partners have not contributed their support or have contributed less than originally committed. The co-financing also does not include some leveraged financing, such as an unplanned three million roubles ($97,000 USD) that was allocated from the RF MNR for environmental education and awareness, and tourism development based on the efforts of the project.
4. One of the significant sources of co-financing, and a highlight of this project, is the collaboration with the private sector, particularly the gas pipeline company Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta, a subsidiary of the large Russian energy company Gazprom. This subsidiary company operates the section of gas pipeline running through the southern portion of Yugyd va National Park; the gas pipeline was already constructed before the declaration of the national park. Co-financing from the private sector was expected at $1.41 million at project approval, but one of the project indicators under Outcome 2 (discussed further in Section V.A.ii below on project results) was an increase in support to the KR’s PA system through public-private partnerships, with an estimated baseline of $80,000/year, and a target of $250,000/year. While this indicator was to be applied broadly to the private sector, Figure 5below shows only the co-financing support received from Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta, the most significant private sector supporter of KR PAs, from 2008 to 2011. As can be seen in the figure, support has actually increased from a little over $100,000 in 2008 to an anticipated $300,000 in 2011.

Figure Co-financing Support Received from Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta, 2008-2011 (USD)[[20]](#footnote-21)



## Flexibility and Adaptive Management

1. Following the inception workshop, some minor changes were made in the project document, including an adjustment to the risk assessment typology, adjustments to the baseline METT scores, and other minor changes.Some minor changes to the project logframe were also made, and a revised logframe is included in the inception report (although individual changes are not highlighted). The inception report notes changes to relevant legislation that occurred in the period from project approval to project start-up, but these did not appear to significantly affect project implementation plans or change assumptions.
2. As previously discussed, regular budget revisions (appropriately approved by the PSC) are a part of ongoing project flexible and results-based management. This includes, for example, adjusting the project workplan to roll activities uncompleted in 2010 into 2011.
3. In one example of the project’s flexibility and adaptive management, a significant change to one project activity was made under outcome 2.5. The project document foresaw setting up an “Ecological Foundation” to contribute to the long-term sustainable financing of the PAs management. A legal review for establishing such a foundation was conducted, and, according to the project manager, to the team’s surprise it was determined that there were significant legislative constraints that would prohibit establishing such a foundation. Therefore this activity was modified to instead establish a non-commercial entity as a partnership of the stakeholders that would focus on developing new sources of revenue for financing PAs in the KR. This is further discussed in Section V.A.ii on project results.
4. Another example of adaptive management is the addition to the project workplan of the start-up work for a KR PAs visitor center, to be located in Syktyvkar (further discussed under Outcome 2 in Section V.A.ii). The idea of a visitor center had been discussed during the PDF phase, but was not included in the project document. Once the project had started, the PA administrations again raised the issue, and a seminar was organized to consider including the development of a “Komi Virgin Forests and Protected Areas” visitor center. Following the positive outcome of this seminar, the necessary relevant activities were added to the project workplan, and accepted by the PSC at the February 2010 meeting.

## UNDP Project Oversight

1. UNDP is the responsible GEF Agency for the project, and carries general backstopping and oversight responsibilities, as well as handling the financial accounts. As stated in the project document, “UNDP will be responsible for: 1) financial management; and 2) the final approval of payments to vendors, the procurement of goods in excess of $US 10,000, the approval of Terms of Reference, recruitment of consulting services, and sub-contracting.” In addition, “The UNDP Country Office will also monitor the project’s implementation and achievement of the project outputs and ensure the proper use of UNDP/GEF funds. Financial transactions, reporting and auditing will be carried out in compliance with the national regulations and UNDP rules and procedures for national execution.”
2. Project monitoring is carried out by the relevant individuals in the UNDP Russia Project Support Office, and by the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor for biodiversity in the Bratislava Regional Center. UNDP has conducted regular monitoring missions, visiting the project region at least once or twice per year, particularly at the time of the PSC meetings. The head of UNDP’s Russia Project Support Office has participated in the PSC meetings, and has provided strong support for successful project implementation.
3. All data collected during the evaluation mission indicates that UNDP is fulfilling its oversight and supervision responsibilities fully, with excellent communication with key project partners and the project team. UNDP has been timely in responding to any issues raised by the project team or stakeholders during implementation, supporting a results-based implementation approach. The project has not faced significant challenges, thanks to the extensive stakeholder-driven project development process, and overall strong design of the project, as discussed previously. UNDP has worked with the project team to ensure comprehensive and timely financial and progress reporting. The project supervision has also benefited from the consistent personnel presence at the country level. At the regional level there was recently turnover in the position of the responsible technical advisor, but this handover process has been appropriately managed.
4. One area for systemic improvement under UNDP supervision is the start-up process in terms of preparing project executing partners to work with the UNDP financial management bureaucracy. As in many UNDP-GEF projects, in the Komi PAs projectthe UNDP financial management procedures, particularly in contracting and procurement, have contributed to a slowdown in the execution of activities, which has had a negative influence on efficiency. Project teams that have not previously worked with UNDP as a partner often require time to learn and understand all of the necessary procedures and approvals required under UNDP projects. As previously mentioned, a significant portion of the project team’s effort is dedicated to contracting and procurement. It is well understood that comprehensive procedures are required to ensure accountability and transparency. However, greater support is needed to external project teams, particularly in the start-up phase of the project, when the project team is not yet familiar with the project management administrative requirements.

Table 5 Project Planned Budget and Actual Expenditure Anticipated Through December 31, 2011*(all amounts in millions USD)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **GEF / ICI Amount Planned** | **% of GEF Amount Planned** | **Total Planned** | **% of Total Planned** | **GEF Amount**\*\***Actual*Expected by end 2011*** | **Actual % of GEF Amount** |
| **Outcome 1: The protected area system of Komi Republic is redesigned so as to better capture globally significant biodiversity** | $0.81 | 9.0 | $4.64 | 18.7 | $0.64 | 76.2 |
| **Outcome 2: Increased institutional capacity for management of protected areas within the Komi Republic protected area system** | $1.39 | 15.5 | $12.26 | 49.4 | $0.88 | 57.3 |
| **Outcome 3: Application of business planning principles result in diversified revenue streams for the Komi Republic protected area system** | $1.91 | 21.3 | $2.26 | 9.1 | $1.16 | 67.5 |
| **Outcome 4: Improved protected area system in Komi Republic for better conservation of globally important biodiversity and maintenance of carbon pools** | $4.43 | 49.6 | $4.43 | 17.8 | $2.25 | 50.7 |
| **Monitoring and Evaluation\*** | $0.31 | 3.4 | $0.31 | 1.2 | N/S | N/S |
| **Project Management** | $0.40 | 4.5 | $1.24 | 5.0 | $0.25 | 62.9 |
| **Total** | $8.93 |  | $24.83 |  | $5.18 | 58.0 |

*Source: Planned amounts: Prodoc Section II.8 Table 6. Total Project Budget/Outcome;“GEF Amount Actual”: Presentation from project team.*

*ICI financing for Outcome 4 is also included under this column since it is grant financing under budget sharing with GEF financing.*

*\*The M&E budget is drawn from all components of the project budget, and is not additional to the amounts shown for project components and management.*

*\*\* The Outcome 4 funding is not GEF funding, but is managed directly by the project, and so is counted here under the actual expenditures to date.*

Table 6 Project Planned and Actual Co-financing Through August 31, 2011*(all amounts in millions USD)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Co-financing (Type/Source) | IA own Financing | | Bi-lateral Donors | | National Government | | State Government | | Local Government | | Private Sector | | NGOs | | Other Sources\* | | Total Co-financing | | Percent of Expected Co-financing |
| Planned/Actual | P | A | P | A | P | A | P | A | P | A | P | A | P | A | P | A | P | A | Actual share of proposed |
| Grant |  |  | 1.63 | 4.43 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1.63 | 4.43 | 271.8% |
| Credits |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Loans |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Equity |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| In-kind |  |  |  |  | 10.63 | 7.51 | 1.92 | 1.06 | 0.03 | 1.02 | 1.41 | 1.42 |  |  | 0.27 | 1.06 | 14.27 | 12.07 | 84.6% |
| Non-grant Instruments |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other Types |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL** |  |  | 1.63 | 4.43 | 10.63 | 7.51 | 1.92 | 1.06 | 0.03 | 1.02 | 1.41 | 1.42 |  |  | 0.27 | 1.06 | 15.90 | 16.50 | 103.8% |

*P=Planned; A=Actual*

*\* Other sources: Institute of Biology, Komi Scientific Center, Urals Branch, Russian Academy of Science – although the federal government provides funding for this institution.*

*Source: Planned amounts from Project Document. Actual amounts from the co-financing table prepared for the mid-term evaluation by the project team.*

# Project Performance and Results (Effectiveness)

1. Keeping in mind that this is the mid-term evaluation and the project has at least two more years of implementation, considering the progress thus far toward the achievement of expected outcomes, **effectiveness** is rated ***satisfactory***. Considering all aspects of the project, **progress toward overall project achievement and impact** is assessed as ***highly satisfactory***.

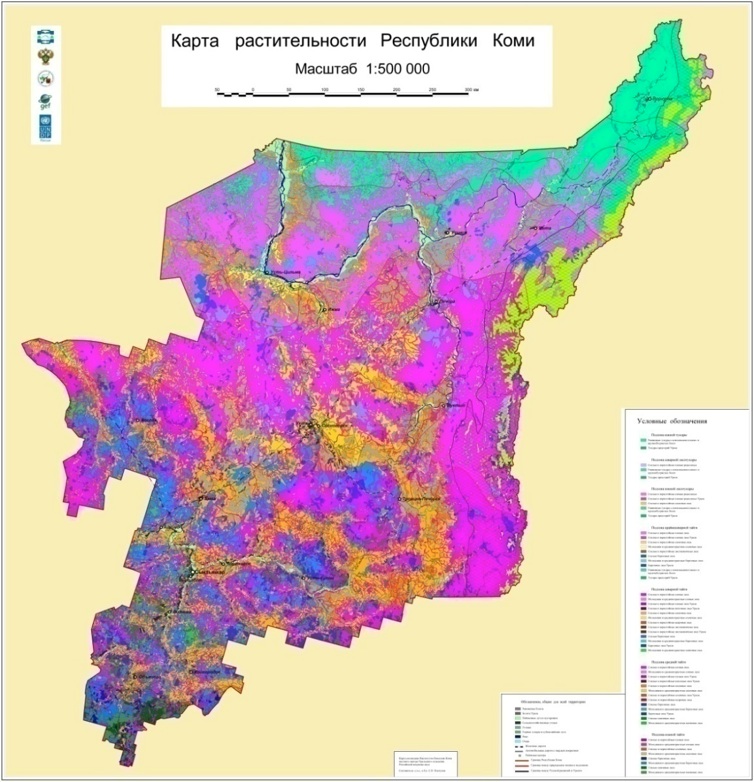
## Progress Toward Achievement of Anticipated Outcomes

1. Each of the project outcomes is implemented through a series of outputs and specific actions, as outlined in the annual project workplans. Given the scope and scale of the project, it is not possible to list all of the project’s important activities and results thus far. Under each of the outcomes below, the primary outputs are listed, and key results highlighted. The project logframe includes indicators and targets for each of the outcomes, which are assessed inAnnex 3 with a complete review of the measureable logframe indicators. While progress toward key indicators is summarized under each of the components below, this evaluation recommends revisions to the logframe indicators and targets, to improve the alignment of the logframe with SMART criteria, and enhance the results-focused approach. Suggested revisions are included in Annex 3. With revised indicators the project results can be more appropriately assessed at the end of the project.

### Outcome 1: The protected area system of Komi Republic is redesigned so as to better capture globally significant biodiversity

1. Excellent overall progress has been made under Outcome 1 up to the project’s mid-point. Key results include the technical outputs under Output 1, and the proposal for restructuring the KR PA system, which, if approved as originally proposed, would expand the PA system by over 800,000 hectares, and improve the coverage of key underrepresented ecosystems, such as the tundra ecosystem.
2. *Output 1.1 Conduct a Gap Analysis and Assess the Biodiversity Values of All Units of the KR PA System.*A range of technical studies and research efforts have been carried out under Output 1, and constitute some of the most significant results of the project up to the mid-term. An inventory and gap analysis of the republic-level PAs has been completed, confirming a figure of 237 PAs in the KR. A biodiversity inventory of the PAs is ongoing, with 32 PAs inventoried in 2011, and an inventory of 75 peatland PAs has been completed. Both of these studies represent significant contributions to the body of knowledge about the KR’s PAs. Further, the project has done an excellent job of turning this information into publicly accessible knowledge products, such as brochures for each of the KR’s districts highlighting the PAs in each location, which have been distributed to relevant municipalities and schools.Other highly useful data products such as vegetation maps (see Figure 6) and a cartographic base wereproducedat a scale of 1:500,000; the cartographic base includes hydrography, inhabited areas, roads, terrain, administrative boundaries, and PA boundaries, and has been provided free of any third party rights.

Figure Vegetation Map of the Komi Republic Produced under the Project



1. *Output 1.2 Proposal for Re-structuring of the KR PA System.*The key result of a proposal to revise and expand the KR’s PA system has been produced, and submitted to government. The proposals defines the objectives and tasks of a reorganized system, a strategy and program for the reorganization of the system, and indicators and monitoring mechanisms for KR PA system reorganization implementation. The project team went so far as to specifically include a drafted government decree that requires only the signature of the head of the KR for the proposal to be approved. The proposal is based on the PA inventory and gap analysis conducted under the project. One of the results indicators in the project logframe is the production of a proposal that would expand the PA network by at least 10,000 hectares, for a system that covers at least 14% of the KR territory. The proposal put forth under the project proposes the elimination of some KR PAs that have lost their natural values, and proposes the establishment and expansion of additional PAs; the net gain in coverage for the KR PA system would be 804,534 hectares – more than 80 times the original goal. This would bring PA coverage in the KR to 15.4%, from the current 13.5%. The proposal work included the ecological study of the proposed Koygorodsky National Park. The project team will continue working hard to achieve approval of this proposal by the end of the project, although it would then take many years before newly approved PAs are fully established and effectively managed. One minor concern is that the government will approve the proposed PA eliminations prior to or separatefrom approving the PA additions, and depending on the timing of the overall process it may appear that at the end of implementation the project has contributed to a reduction in PA coverage in the KR; the overall proposal and approval process must be appropriately analyzed in the project final evaluation.
2. *Output 1.3 Strategic Plan for the KR PA System.*Reports from international and national experts have been produced analyzing approaches to PA system planning, and providing proposals and conceptual frameworks for developing and implementing a strategic plan for the KR PA network. Recommendations have been submitted to the KR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, and the expert reports were further discussed at regional workshops involving key stakeholders.
3. *Output 1.4 Approved Regulations Governing Natural Resource Use in PA Zones.*A national expert prepared a report on draft rules relating to sustainable use of resources within PA boundaries and adjacent areas, and this output has been submitted to the KR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. The project’s effort on regulating helicopter poaching also falls under this output. There is research underway to assess the impact of hovercraft and boat engines on waterways and fish populations in Yugyd va National Park, with a view to regulating usage at sustainable levels.
4. *Output 1.5 A Federal-Regional Management Agreement Establishing a Common Management Goal, Processes and Activities for the KR PA System.*As a starting point, a trilateral framework agreement on cooperation relating to the project was signed on May 5, 2010 between the KR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, the KR Forestry Committee, and the UNDP-GEF project. In addition, the project produced a “Draft Federal-Regional Agreement Establishing Common Management Goals, Procedures and Operational Principles of the KR [Specially Protected Nature Areas] System,” though significant additional work will be required to reach the ultimate intended outcome of this activity.
5. *Output 1.6 A Monitoring System for Pristine Boreal Ecosystems of the North.*An overview assessment on all current activities related to monitoring primary ecosystems in the KR has been prepared (i.e. organizations involved, their goals, sites, parameters, coordination, practical application, etc.), and the overview was presented as a regional seminar on ecosystem monitoring in the KR on December 23, 2010. A proposal for a regional program for environmental monitoring has also been drafted, and an initiative to use remote sensing technology for broad landscape monitoring is underway. In addition, some technical equipment has been procured for the federal PAs to support environmental monitoring activities, such as communications and transportation equipment. It is anticipated that a larger investment would be made to support a centralized monitoring system under the new regional PAs agency if it is established (see Output 2.1 below). For further information on ecosystem monitoring see Section VI.C.ii.

### Outcome 2: Increased institutional capacity for management of protected areas within the Komi Republic protected area system

1. There has been important progress under Outcome 2; however, the most significant intended result under this outcome, the establishment of a KR PAs directorate, is presently uncertain, or at least the timeframe for establishing such an institution is uncertain. Other outputs are well on-track.
2. *Output 2.1 A KR PA Management Agency Established.*The establishment of a regional institution to manage the republic-level PAs is a key outcome of the project, though it can be considered ambitious for a five-year project; establishing new government institutions takes significant planning, preparation, and political buy-in. At present, the latter is uncertain in the KR. As noted by the National Project Director in the 2011 PSC meeting “There are certain project activities that can be considered at risk, including the establishment of the Directorate for Regional [Specially Protected Nature Areas] Management.”
3. The proposed PA management directorate would be established within the KR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, as part of the Department for Environmental Protection. This department currently has only 27 staff members, of which only two are assigned to focus on the KR’s 237 PAs. According to the project team, at the time of project approval and start-up, the relevant minister supported the establishment of the directorate, and believed it could be done in the first half of the first year of the project. However, the financial crisis delayed the official government approval; then there were changes in the government so that there have been two new Ministers for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. Each time there is turnover at high levels of government, the project team must go through the process of building awareness and political support for the establishment of the PAs directorate. In addition, some stakeholders noted that ensuring long-term government funding was also a possible barrier, while others suggested that there remain questions about such a directorate’s legal mandate, given that many of the 237 republic-level PAs are on lands managed by the Forestry Committee. However, there are similar currently operating models in the Russian Federation, and the project’s goal is to replicate this experience rather than re-inventing the wheel. A regional seminar on PA management was held in the KR on September 14, 2010 with participationof representatives from some of themost “PA-advantaged” regions of Russia.A study tour to Krasnoyarsk Region was organized in 2011 to gain knowledge and lessons from other experiences in Russia. In October 2011, the project and the KR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection drafted regulations for the KR PA Management Agency as per request of KRgovernment. A decision from the KR government is expected by the end of 2011.
4. The project team and other stakeholders remain optimistic that the directorate will be established before the end of the project, and the project retains funds for assisting with initial start-up and capacity development. Considering the high level of political attention required to establish such an institution, some stakeholders noted that it is not likely to happen until after Russia’s presidential elections in early 2012, following which politicians will be able to focus on government business rather than election campaigns. While the ideal long-term status would be for the existence of a regional PA directorate, as a risk mitigation strategy the project team and PSC members should strategize about specific feasible alternative options for the management of the KR PAs for the medium-term that could be catalyzed by the project if it appears that establishing a regional agency will not be a viable option. Options could include providing capacity development support on PA management for Forestry Committee staff, and putting additional emphasis on the local management committee mechanism (see Output 2.2).
5. *Output 2.2 Staff Profiles, Responsibilities and Occupational Standards for Enhanced PA System Management Defined.*This output is closely tied to Output 2.1 above, and additional work on developing staff profiles, management structures, and other aspects of a management system will be carried out depending on the establishment of the PAs directorate. Initial meetings and seminars have been held to develop recommendations and share experiences from other regions of Russia. Activities have been carried out on other fronts as well, and one notable positive result is the initial steps to establish a network of local public councils in the municipal districts where PAs are located. The local councils would provide input on decision-making relating to environmental management, environmental protection, PA development and traditional land-use. The local public environmental councils would consist of local residents, fishery service inspectors, hunting service inspectors, Forestry Committee staff, KR Ministry of Natural Resources staff, students, and local resource users; the councils will provide one form of local enforcement of resource use, considering that the KR government will not be able to provide ranges for all PAs. The first local council was established in 2011 in Priluzsky District. According to the project team, the idea of the local public environmental councils has strong support from the Head of KR. Other work has been done on assessing issues related to land tenure for seven regionally significant PAs: Sebys, Sindorsky, Upper Lockchimsky, Belyu, Beloborsky, Pizhimsky, and Belaya Kedva.
6. *Output 2.3 Management Plans Developed and Implemented for New PAs in Pristine Forest Areas and Along Migration Routes.*The project completed an 18-month effort to identify and map key migration routes of large ungulates, as well as key ornithological areas in the KR outside of the federal PAs. In addition, assessment and mapping has been completed for potential recreational and non-timber forest product use in key republic-level PAs (including those listed in Table 2 in Section III.B.ii), which will inform management decisions. The project’s work to combat poaching also contributes to this output.
7. *Output 2.4: Site-specific Public-Private Partnerships.*A seminar on public-private partnerships was held October 5, 2010 with the support of an international expert contracted to provide perspectives on international experiences related to public-private partnerships. A national expert developed a five-year plan on promoting and implementing various forms of collaboration between the public and private sectors to benefit the KR PA network. This followed the adoption of a KR law on public-private partnerships on September 23, 2010. A survey with private sector business leaders was conducted to assess their potential motivation for collaboration with KR PAs.
8. In cultivating private sector involvement the project is working to build on previous good experience in Yugyd va National Park with Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta, a subsidiary of the larger company Gazprom. Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta has long been active in collaborating with the national park, as the pipeline was built before the national park was established. Under the project a framework agreement was established between Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta, the Yugyd va National Park administration, and the project. The framework agreement outlines general areas of cooperation and responsibility; for Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta these include items such as “improvement of staff environmental awareness,” “charitable…and/or financial contributions,” “prevention of environmental pollution,” and “minimization of adverse impacts.”According to GazpromTransgaz Ukhta representatives, the company has offered to put down on paper specific terms regarding the nature of their ongoing support and cooperation, but a detailed agreement remains to be completed between Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta and the National Park administration. The pipeline is certain to remain for the foreseeable future, as is the national park. Thus, concluding agreements on all specific measures of cooperation between the two entities would only strengthen the ability of both parties to be effective partners. There is scope and willingness to establish detailed Memorandums of Understanding. Under the project a framework agreement has also been established between OJSC “North Main Oil Pipelines” and Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve, and a framework agreement was established between Mondi SLPK and Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve in October 2011.Negotiations with other potential private sector partners, including Lukoil Komi, and RN-Severnaya Neft LLC are ongoing.

Box The KR PA Private Sector Eco-rating System

1. Effective partnership with the private sector has been a long-standing goal of the GEF, but has proven to be elusive particularly in the biodiversity focal area. In the experience of this evaluator, the positive situation with respect to PAs and the private sector in the KR is one of the more notable examples in the GEF portfolio of significant and meaningful private sector collaboration related to nature conservation. This appears to be partially due to progressive corporate social responsibility policies on the part of the companies involved, but the project is also further cultivating the relationship. This evaluation recommends that the project produce multiple specific case studies on collaboration with the private sector to be distributed through UNDP and the GEF’s knowledge network. It would be helpful for the project team to fully analyze and assess the context and driving factors behind the successful private sector partnerships developed.

***“Ecological Rating of Manufacturing and Business Enterprises and Organizations of the Republic of Komi on Their Attitude Towards Protected Areas”***

Goal: Clarify and maintain a favorable situation in the field of social and environmental responsibility among the enterprises regarding the issues of sustainable development of the KR PA system.

The eco-rating is intended to promote the sustainable development of the KR PA system as a whole, promote the development of target environmental programs and projects, and popularize environmentally friendly lifestyles and ways of thinking among the population of the KR.

Data for the eco-rating analysis is provided by firms on a voluntary basis, and received from official regional internet media (IA Komiinform, etc.). The eco-rating is calculated on the basis of 19 indicators, broken down across four major areas: Cooperation with PAs; Environmental education and awareness; Environmental advertising; Overall environmental attractiveness. Examples of indicators include:

* Assistance for PA activities;
* Management team visits to PAs;
* Participation of the enterprise staff in educational events dedicated to PAs and carried out by or within PAs;
* Dissemination of information about positive environmental practices;
* Environmental certifications;
* Environmental violations;
* Firms’ environmental policies.

1. An interesting output of the project related to private sector engagement is the development of an “eco-rating” system for private sector companies. Details about the eco-rating system are provided in Box 2. Developing metrics for private sector corporate social responsibility in relation to PAs is a particularly useful approach to private sector engagement, since concrete metrics along with public relations tools can be good motivators for environmentally-friendly actions from the private sector. This evaluation recommends that the project continue to develop and refine the eco-rating through testing and peer review, and take measures to ensure the sustainability of its use once the project is completed. One opportunity for sustainability would be to partner with the KR Public Chamber (a civil society umbrella body) to fully hand the eco-rating program off at the end of the project (or before), and to develop an annual award to be presented by the Public Chamber to the private sector company with the strongest eco-rating, and an associated media event.
2. While the project is effectively engaging the private sector, and increasing private sector involvement in supporting protected areas (both worthy goals), it is unclear to what extent the current arrangements constitute true “public-private partnerships” rather than simply existing as the result of charitable giving from companies with strong corporate social responsibility policies. A true public-private partnership results a “win-win” situation whereby through a contractual agreement benefits are generated for both the public and private sector parties. It could be argued that the positive publicity Gazprom receives as a result of contributing to Yugyd va National Park is a sufficient benefit, but typically “public-private partnerships” generate specific financial returns or other in-kind benefits. The expert report commissioned by the project “A General Review of International Site Specific Public-Private Partnership Approaches and Methods,” presents definitions of various forms of public-private partnerships, and gives an excellent review of examples in different contexts around the world. The second part of this report gives specific examples of private-public partnerships in the context of protected areas. These examples imply that a public-private partnership is not simply a private sector company making donations to support management of a protected area, but rather the private sector should be leveraged for investments in protected areas that generate public and private benefits. One small-scale positive example of this that actually does exist in the Yugyd va National Park is the Uschalie Camp, which was built by and is managed by Gazprom. The camp is used as a company retreat within the national park, but is also used as a research station for scientists conducting ecological research and monitoring within the park. Engaging the private sector in more true public-private partnerships, particularly related to ecotourism, could be of significant future benefit to the KR’s PAs.
3. *Output 2.5: A Re-constituted Ecological Fund.*As previously discussed, the establishment of the ecological foundation was determined to be infeasible for legislative and other variousreasons. As an alternative, the project has successfully established the NCP “Union of the Komi Republic Protected Areas,” with four founding member organizations: the two federal PA administrations, the KR Ministry of Natural Resources Protection, and the Institute of Biology (Box 3). The NCP is a legal entity registered with the government, and the organizational purpose and by-laws are outlined in the NCP’s charter, as approved by the general meeting of founding organizations, July 5, 2010. As further discussed in Table 7below, the NCP has a potentially highly valuable role to play in supporting the long-term financial sustainability of the PAs of the KR, but the project should continue providing individual and institutional capacity development support over the remaining implementation period. The KR has also recently established a specific tourism division in the ministry supporting economic development, and the project has established cooperation with this government stakeholder. Further steps could include the development of a partnership between the government and the NCP on tourism promotion and marketing for PAs. As previously highlighted and as further discussed under Outcome 3 below, the project has invested in tourism infrastructure for the federal PAs, and an ongoing priority will now need to be tourism marketing for the area. Also within this output the project has identified over 40 potential sources and instruments for funding (ecological lottery, carbon trading, ecological stocks, etc.), and work for possible implementation of these sources and instruments is ongoing within Outcomes 2 and 3. Eventual reconstitution of the Ecological Fund and/or its alternatives is supported by project partners and Komi civil society movements.

Box Founding Members of the “Union of the Komi Republic Specially Protected Nature Areas”

* Pechora-Ilych State Nature Biosphere Reserve (federal institution)
* Yugyd Va National Park (federal institution)
* KR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
* Institute of Biology, Komi Science Center, Urals Office, Russian Academy of Sciences

1. *Output 2.6: Increased Social and Environmental Responsibility Among Enterprises of the KR and Improved Environmental Awareness Among the General Public.*A large number of diverse public education and awareness activities have been undertaken, too extensive to list in this report. The project has generated 117 articles in printed media (by external authors, not paid by the project), and 151 articles in electronic media. Other innovative efforts include a series of 20 short video pieces about the regional PAs that have been shown on regional television, complete with Komi language subtitles. On the whole the project has done an excellent job producing public awareness materials based on the scientific data and information gathered through various project research efforts, such as the PA inventory. A highly successful and notable activity under this output is a series of five youth summer camps that have been conducted at PA sites, including Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve. Numerous stakeholders cited these nature camps as an excellent result of the project; additional details are highlighted inBox 4.The project maintains a well-developed website (<http://www.undp-komi.org>), and regularly creates and posts new content.[[21]](#footnote-22) The website includes the majority of key project reports and publications available for download. From January through August 2011 the project website received traffic from 71 different countries, with an average of 91 visits per day. The project team also maintains an email list of more than 300 people in the region involved in the project, which is used to regularly inform people of news and events. The project also contributed to the development of the “Green Package” environmental education curriculum materials; the KR is the third region of Russia to prepare this “Green Package” after Moscow and St. Petersburg. These materials have been circulated to all schools and libraries of the KR.
2. An additional activity not originally foreseen in the project document is the initial planning and steps for creation of a public information and visitor center related to the KR’s PA network, to be established in Syktyvkar, the capital of the KR. During the initial stages of project implementation such a facility was identified as a critical need to support overall public awareness related to PAs in the KR, as well as to provide an ongoing resource for environmental education, and information for individuals planning to visit specific PAs. A manager for creating the center has been hired; the project will not support the full cost of construction of such a facility (or of renovation of a previously existing facility), but is supporting planning and fundraising. It is hoped that at least the first stage of the visitor center will be completed before the end of the project, which would be a strong result.

Youth nature camps are one of the tools the project has used for public education, awareness and engagement for PAs. Five camps have been held in multiple PAs. In 2010 the camp in Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve brought together approximately 12 children ages 10-15 for 12 days from across the KR that had distinguished themselves in biology and environmental studies. Local children from Yaksha village (where the PA headquarters are located) also participated. The camp was run by local teachers and staff of the PA, and included three main components related to environmental education and environmental recreation. It is anticipated that future camps will include international students as well.

Box Youth Nature Camps in Komi PAs

1. *Output 2.7: Institutional Conditions for Scale-Up and Replication Established.*This output is focused primarily on the dissemination and replication of results, and will be a focus in the later stages of the project. The project is taking preliminary steps through information dissemination, and collaboration with the non-commercial organization “Association of National Parks in the North-West Russia.” Also, as discussed further below, the business plan approach is in the process of being disseminated more broadly to Russia federal PAs through the RF Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. The visitor center discussed above will also contribute to information sharing and dissemination.
2. While the project has plenty to focus on within the boundaries of the KR, an interesting opportunity exists to address transboundary PA approaches in that Yugyd va National Park and Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve make-up a large percentage of the KR’s border with the Khanty–Mansi Autonomous Okrug to the east, on the Asian side of the Ural Mountains. Detailed information about the extent and status of PAs in this neighboring territory was not immediately available for this evaluation, but it appears that there are no federal level PAs on the Khanty-Mansi side of the regional border. Although the Urals act as a partial natural boundary between the two territories, there are clearly ecosystem linkages throughout the area, as the mixing of “European” and “Asian” ecosystems is one of thereasons for the high biodiversity found in the KR. This evaluation recommends that the project team and relevant stakeholders establish linkages and open communication with the natural resource management authorities in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug to begin a dialogue on transboundary PA and natural resource management across the Urals. In the long-term, establishing coordinated environmental management in the region would likely be a significant positive outcome for biodiversity. At a minimum, the neighboring territory would be agood candidate for sharing lessons and experiences on PA management from the Komi project.
3. One key unplanned project result that would fall under Outcome 2 is an inter-departmental agreement that was established amongst relevant government institutions to reduce unauthorized helicopter flights into the PAs. One of the important threats to the biodiversity in the region is so-called “VIP poaching”, where private sector officials (CEOs, etc.) and/or high level government officials travel by helicopter into PAs to do illegal trophy hunting or fishing, sometimes of threatened species. The project supported the establishment of the agreement, the purpose of which is to “Develop and improve mechanisms of the cooperation between the state federal and regional authorities and agencies to ensure authorized helicopter flights to federal and regional protected areas.” The agreement was concluded between seven federal and republic government agencies: the two federal PA administrations, the KR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, The KR Department for Supervision in the Field of Nature Use, the Northern Urals branch of the State Corporation for Air Traffic Management, the Komi Interregional Territorial Administration of Air Transport, and the Komi Territorial State Aviation Supervision Department. The agreement outlines each of the parties’ commitments and responsibilities. Arrangements have been made so that approvals for the anti-poaching helicopter flights are not shared with private sector companies in the region so that VIPs will not be forewarned when the anti-poaching patrols will be conducted.   
   According to project stakeholders, it is anticipated that this agreement will enable a significant reduction in the problem of unregulated VIP access to PAs for illegal resource use, thereby reducing threats to biodiversity. In addition, initiated by the project, the KR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection has approved regulations, identified staff and created an annual plan of independent and interdepartmental anti-poaching, which successfully carried out four raids in the KR federal and regional PAs in 2011.

The Komi Republic and Alaska are located across similar latitude ranges, and include alike ecosystems, such as taiga forest, tundra, and temperate peatlands; there are similarities among fauna species as well, including large mammals (*Alces alces*, *Rangifer tarandus*, *Ursus sp*.), ichthyological communities, and both territories lie on significant migratory bird routes. In both states PA management authorities must operate at massive scales(in total Alaska is a little over four times the size of the Komi Republic), across territory with few roads and where air transport is the primary means of reaching most of portions of PAs. The populations of Alaska and the Komi Republic are similar at around 1 million people, and both states’ primary economic sectors are the oil and gas industry, including facing issues of the environmental effects of large-scale cross-country pipelines. The Komi Republic’s Yugyd va National Park, and Alaska’s Denali National Park are among the crown jewels in their respective countries’ national PA systems, and both PAs are notably large: Denali National Park is 24,585 square kilometers, compared to 18,917 for Yugyd va National Park, while Yugyd va takes up a larger percentage of the state territory – approximately 4.5% compared to 1.4% for Denali National Park.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of a potential Komi Republic study tour to Alaska would be for Komi PA staff to learn about the multiple ways Alaska’s PAs are deriving revenue through tourism and other financial opportunities, despite remote locations and large distances. Approximately 1.5 million tourists visited Alaska in 2010, and direct visitor spending equaled $2 billion. Tourism in Alaska is primarily nature-based, and is the sector is the second largest private sector employer, providing 1 in 8 Alaskan jobs.

Alaska also provides examples of state and federal authorities working together for joint ecosystem management (relating to Output 1.5 of the Komi PAs project). In two examples, Denali National Park is immediately adjacent to the smaller Denali State Park, and the Chugach National Forest shares boundaries with the Chugach State Park.

*(Data on Alaska’s tourism industry from* [*http://www.akrdc.org/issues/tourism/*](http://www.akrdc.org/issues/tourism/)*)*

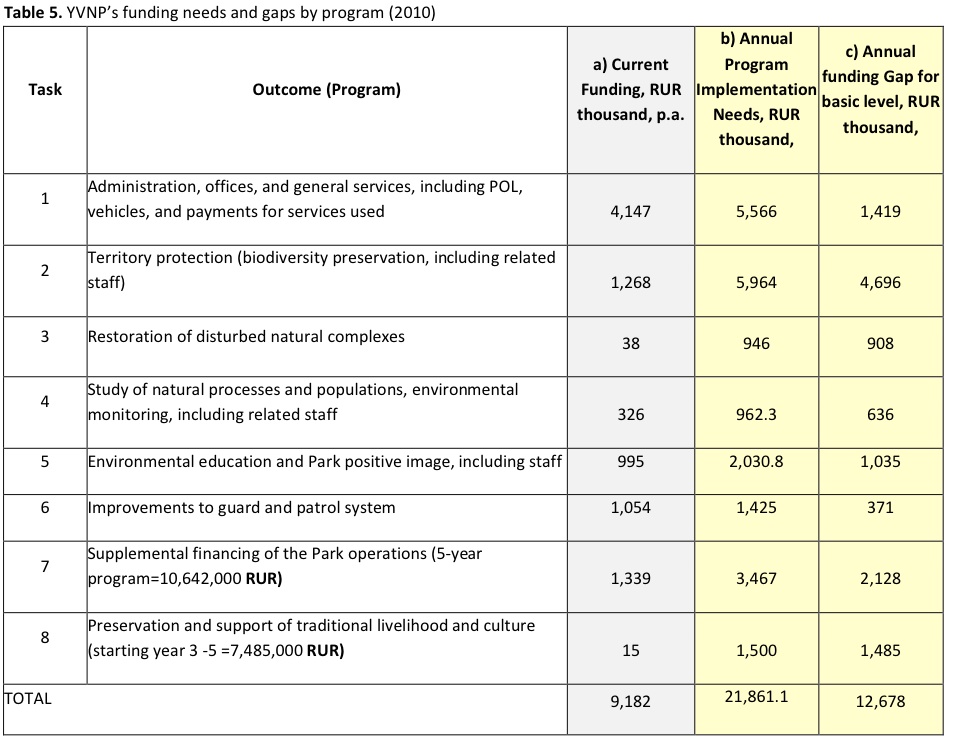
Box Comparable Issues in Protected Area Management in the Komi Republic and Alaska

1. To catalyze a vision among stakeholders of effective management and revenue generation for PAs in remote large-scale territories, this evaluation recommends that the project consider additional PA management capacity development activities through study tours to other similar regions that are facing and successfully addressing comparable PA management challenges. Study tours are consistently cited by stakeholders as among the most valuable capacity development activities, and allow participants to truly develop a vision of what the potential and possibilities are for successful biodiversity conservation through effective PA management, sustainable PA financing mechanisms, and PA-driven sustainable rural economic development. Given the characteristics of the KR and its PA system, one highly comparable context for a possible study tour could be to Alaska to gain lessons and experience about the successful management of PAs in large-scale remote landscapes, and effective protected management coordination between state and federal authorities. Previous GEF projects have in fact used Alaska as a study tour location for PA capacity development.[[22]](#footnote-23)Box 5above further highlights some of the similarities ofPA management in the KR and Alaska.

### Outcome 3: Application of business planning principles result in diversified revenue streams for the Komi Republic protected area system

1. Activities under Outcome 3 are moving ahead, while Output 3.2 is partially dependent on the establishment of the KR PA directorate (see Output 2.1). The production of the business plans for Yugyd va National Park and Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve are a key result thus far.
2. *Output 3.1: Trained PA Staff in Business Planning.*As PA business planning is a relatively new concept in Russia, it has been important to introduce and develop the approach over time with a range of stakeholders. The project has carried out a series of workshops and seminars on PA business planning concepts, supported by both national and international experts. Trainings have been held in multiple locations in the KR to reach a maximum number of stakeholders – Syktyvkar, Ukhta, Vuktyl, Troitsk-Pechorsk, and Yaksha. In addition, Yugyd va National Park administration and Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve administration gave presentations in Syktyvkar on their experiences with PA business planning, with attendance from KR government and business leaders, community members, research and education stakeholders, and presence by the media. At the local level, approximately 45 community members in Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve region and Yugyd va National Parkwere trained on tour guiding, and this type of local level capacity development is ongoing.
3. *Output 3.2: KR PA Business Plan Developed and Implemented.*The project document foresaw that once the new KR PA directorate was established that the staff would work to develop a business plan for the KR PA system as a whole. Since the directorate is yet to be established, naturally this activity is partially on hold. As noted in the 2011 PSC meeting, “the lack of a [Specially Protected Nature Areas] management body in the Komi Republic might continue be an obstacle for reaching the Outcome 3”, particularly output 3.2 of this outcome, while outputs 3.1 and 3.3 are ongoing. The project has received significant inputs from an international expert in PA business planning, including a report on approaches to develop business plans for KR PAs.As further discussed under Output 3.3 below, the Yugyd va and Pechora-Illych business plans have been initial steps in the overall PA business planning process for the KR, as well as the establishment of the NCP.
4. Positive project results are also reaching the federal level: As highlighted in Section VI.B below, the project is catalyzing PA business planning throughout Russia. Further, the RF MNR is developing a focus on the promotion of tourism within PAs, and had selected 150 federal PAs to receive specific support; the Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve was originally not on this list, but was later included based on the efforts of the project, and received an additional 8.5 million roubles ($275,000 USD) in co-financing from the RF MNR. One important factor for the implementation of the PA’s business plans will be approval of revised federal-level PA legislation, which is currently under consideration in the Russian Duma. This legislation, among other things, will give PAs the ability to manage areas through zoning, which would allow certain types of activities in specified areas, rather than the current blanket approach to PA territories.
5. *Output 3.3: PA-Specific Business Plans Development and Implementation Piloted in the Most Important PAs.*The key results under this output thus far are the production of the Yugyd va and Pechora-Illych business plans, the first comprehensive approach to business planning for PAs undertaken in Russia. The business planning process was started in 2009, and the plans were completed in early 2011, with further revision to mid-2011. It is expected that the project will now support the production of 10 additional business plans for key republic-level PAs. Anytime a business planning approach is undertaken in relation to environmental conservation there is always a need to vigilantly ensure that financial priorities do not overwhelm conservation priorities, and that potential revenue generating activities are fully compatible with ecological requirements. At this stage, this tension does not appear to be a significant concern in the case of the Komi PAs project, as there has been strong scientific input to the business plans, and, as demonstrated during discussions with stakeholders during the mid-term evaluation mission, environmental considerations are carefully analyzed for any revenue generating activity, such as the proposed tourist route to the Manpupuner site in Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve.
6. The next stage will be step-by-step implementation of the business plans, with support from the NCP.Feasibility studies were completed for two small-scale pilot projects: *Wind-Eroded Columns of the Manpupuner Plateau* and *Comprehensive Use of Natural Resources in the Adjacent Areas as a Way to Ensure Financial and Operational Sustainability of the Pechora-Ilych Reserve*.One excellent aspect of the project’s work in implementing the business plan is the consideration given to supporting local sustainable livelihoods in areas near the federal PAs. One of the priorities for support in the area around Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve is improving the sustainability of the local elk (moose) farm, which is a prime tourist attraction in the area. In Yugyd va, the project is supporting the community of Podcherie, a former timber settlement now in significant decline, through developing small-scale woodworking activities that will also help meet the needs of the PA administration.
7. The anticipated forthcoming economic valuation of ecosystem services will also provide an additional important component to the overall business planning approach by providing additional data for cost-benefit and opportunity cost analysis for policy makers, relating to long-term sustainable development relative to short-term unsustainable resource exploitation.
8. The business plans clearly outline the level of funding currently available to the PAs, identify long-term optimal levels of funding (and, in comparison to the former, the current funding gaps) (see Figure 7), and then specify a variety of revenue streams to reach the necessary funding levels.The business plan approach for Yugyd va National Parkand Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve relies heavily on generating revenuesfrom tourism. For example, the business plan for Yugyd va anticipates that tourism-based options will account for 70.7% of potential new revenues and cost savings for the park by 2016.

Figure Excerpt from Yugyd va National Park Business Plan: Funding Gaps



1. The project has included a significant investment in tourism infrastructure to support future business plan implementation. The majority of structures constructed are small cabinsand gazebos for tourist use along rivers in remote areas of Yugyd va National Park, and along the boundaries of Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve (see Figure 8). The structures have been developed in as sustainable manner as possible, using already fallen timber sourced locally. Approximately 20 local community members were employed thus far in building the cabins in Yugyd va National Park, and more than 100 volunteers have participated. It is expected that 13 cabins and 72 camping gazebos will be constructed in all.

Figure Yugyd va Tourism Infrastructure Developed with Project Support

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1. According to the project team, assumptions around tourism revenue are based on current tourism flows, and do not depend heavily on increasing tourist flows – only in maintaining current flows. However, increased tourist flows will be required over time, and it can’t be taken for granted that tourism will even remain at current levels. For example, from 2009 to 2010 there was a 14% drop in tourism in Yugyd va due to an intensive fire season that caused the closure certain areas of the national park. With fires expected to increase in coming years due to the influences of climate change, tourism may be negatively affected in the future as well. One of the notable risks to the project efforts is the possibility that implementation of the business plans will not generate the revenues foreseen.
2. Therefore an important part of business plan implementationmust be the marketing of the PAs as tourism destinations. There are plans to improve the internet presence related to tourism, but overall efforts need to broadly leverage multiple marketing options, and develop collaboration with government and private sector partners. Just because new tourism facilities for the PAs have been built doesn’t automatically mean that tourists will appear to use them – in this case the famous movie line “If you build it, they will come”, from the classic American baseball movie *Field of Dreams* may not be true, given the limited transportation infrastructure in the region (poor roads are frequently colloquially cited as one of the two main problems in Russia), and the vast distances involved. As previously mentioned, the project is working with the recently created government tourism development agency, and this partnership should continue to grow in scope and importance, particularly as the quality of tourism services in the PAs improves over time with guide training, and new tourism infrastructure.
3. One government effort likely to have a positive effect in the near term is the full-time start up the new “Northern Lights” train service from Syktyvkar to the northeast. This is a train service outfitted with luxury standards that will help increase the flow of high value tourists to the regions near the PAs. The train is expected to begin full-time operation in the summer of 2012, but has limited capacity, with fewer than 30 berths.Long-term tourism development in the region will require the establishment of high-end and mid-range hotels, and the expansion of the tourism service provider sector of the market, such as tour operators and transportation services. One example of this type of collaboration can be seen in the GEF-supported project “Conservation of the Eg-Uur Watershed” (GEF ID 1859), where one of the key project partners was a private sector fly-fishing company. According to the project final evaluation, after encountering roadblocks on developing a concession based approach to benefit local communities, the project was able to pioneer the application of a user rights cooperative approach to monetize the benefits of an eco-tourism activity based on sportive fly-fishing.[[23]](#footnote-24)
4. Additional government support will be necessary, both in marketing and catalyzing investment in the form of, for example, private sector investment incentives through loan guarantees or other mechanisms. The NCP, supported by the project, should also continue a dialogue with the KR tourism development agency on the potential for state sponsored incentives for sustainable tourism development related to PAs.The project should work to stimulate government support for such efforts, and catalyze further action to focus on the marketing of tourism to the PAs, and investment in the tourism sector. For example, the project team could produce a policy paper outlining options for government support for the tourism sector that would increase tourism to the PAs.

### Outcome 4:Improved protected area system in Komi Republic for better conservation of globally important biodiversity and maintenance of carbon pools

1. Component 4 consists of the carbon-related activities funded by the German government’s ICI (see Box 6 below), as an additional and supplementary component of the UNDP-GEF Komi PAs project. This component’s overall objective is to reduce carbon emissions in the boreal forests and peatlands of the KR’s PAs through enhanced monitoring, capacity development, and infrastructure.The carbon component activities are focused in 15 PAs – the two federal PAs, and 13 regional PAs. Component 4 began in November 2009, and is now well under way. Large amounts of scientific, monitoring and fire-fighting equipment have been procured, and carbon research initiated. The carbon component was envisioned for only 25 months (November 2009 – December 2011), but following initial delays (in 2010 only 56.4% of the planned delivery rate was achieved), an extension of the component to December 2012 has been accepted. The initial delays were due to multiple issues including UNDP financial procedures, complex and extensive procurement procedures, and institutional and administrative barriers related to the technical assistance for fire prevention. Additional detailed information on the results under this component isprovided in Annex 3, the project logframe with assessed progress by indicator.
2. *Output 4.1 Carbon sequestration data and nature-based adaptation measures designed for Pechora headwaters protected areas.*Significant time and effort was put into developing the necessary specifications for high cost scientific equipment to be procured, such as gas analyzers, chromatographs, etc. An intensive procurement process was then undertaken, including international competitive bidding processes. The tax exemption discussed in Section IV.C was also particularly important for the carbon component, given the size of the funds. The initial tax exemption certificate for equipment procurement was secured in September 2010. Research contracts were completed with the Institute of Biology, and the first funds for carbon sequestration research were disbursed in August 2010. Scientific equipment was procured in the first half of 2011, and installation at various sites was underway throughout 2011, including the construction of specialized eddy-covariance towers for equipment installation at forest canopy level (see Figure 9). A detailed two-yearresearch plan for studying CO2 and CH4 fluxes was completed.

Box Overview: Germany's ICI

The German government is supporting its **International Climate Initiative** under the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). The ICI was launched in 2008, and as of the end of 2010 had supported 220 projects with funding of more than 450 million euros, with co-financing for ICI projects raising the total invested for ICI projects to 1.2 billion euros. The ICI is active in three areas:

* Promoting climate-friendly economies (60% of projects)
* Fostering measures to adapt to the effects of climate change (28% of projects)
* Ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of natural carbon reservoirs / REDD (12% of projects)

Nearly a third of ICI projects are in Brazil, South Africa, India, China and Russia, and 15% of projects are focused at the global level. The ICI is currently undergoing an independent evaluation focusing on an initial 115 projects.

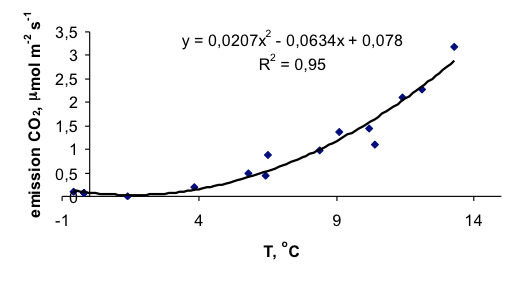
*Source:* [*http://www.bmu-klimaschutzinitiative.de/en*](http://www.bmu-klimaschutzinitiative.de/en)*, as accessed on September 16, 2011.*

1. An assessment of carbon sequestration in the project target sites was completed, based on existing studies and data from the state forest fund inventory, obtained from the Forestry Committee. Using mathematical models, detailed carbon maps were developed for each of the 15 PAs serving as project sites for this component. This assessment found that “The forested area of this territory is about 67.2 thousand hectares with 9.94 million m3 of timber. These forest PAs sequester 8.91 million tons of carbon, more than half (51-59%) is concentrated in the soil (including litter), 35-40% in phytocenoses, 2.5-4% in wood detritus (dead wood, snags, dry branches).” This data will be updated and revised as further research is completed under the project. Initial research has been undertaken to assess volumes of carbon released from above-soil and under-soil biomass during and after forest fires, and as a result of logging practices. This includes studying the impact of fires and logging on vegetation succession and tree-stand age classes. It was been found that carbon flows can vary significantly between seasons, and average air temperature is an important variable in understanding flows, with warmer temperatures leading to increased carbon emissions in spruce-blueberry sphagnum forest vegetation types on peaty soils (see Figure 10). Once steady snow cover is established, CO2 emissions drop to zero.

Figure Foundation Blocks for Climate Monitoring Eddy-Covariance Tower

1. Analysis of forest fire trends indicated that in general over the past 10 years, emissions from forest fires amounted to approximately 5,000 tonsof carbon, and in 2010 alone the figure reached 3,000 tons in the project areas. In the remainder of the project research will be conducted on impacts of fire on fauna and flora species abundance and composition.
2. This output includes a final activity on designing adaptation measures for incorporation in management plans of PAs. This is among the most critical aspects of the carbon component, and provides linkages with the rest of the project. The carbon component has a heavy focus on research and environmental monitoring, and care must be taken not to lose sight of the practical value of the data and understanding of ecosystems that will be produced. Insights on PA and forest management practices for climate change adaptation to improve biodiversity conservation would be highly valuable. Research on climate effects of flora and fauna is yet to be completed under this component, but will hopefully generate useful information about how biodiversity in the KR PAs is affected by climate change. The project team must be sure to spend adequate time during implementation, and particularly at project end, turning the scientific data and knowledge gained into practical recommendations for effective forest and

Figure 10 Temperature Dependence of CO2 Emissions from Soil Surface in Blueberry-Sphagnum Spruce Forest[[24]](#footnote-25)



ecosystem management in response to and planning for future climate change. The project team should plan to produce guidelines or recommendations that are as technically specific as possible on management measures to strengthen ecosystem resilience to the effects of climate change.

1. *Output 4.2 Protected area units have the capacity to design and implement adaptation measures.*It was initially anticipated that the project would work directly with the Forestry Committee, but this government institution was forced to withdraw from the technical assistance agreement at the final stages of project approval due to internal administrative and legal barriers. Instead the project was able to work with the Air Forest Protection subsidiary of the Forestry Committee.Fire prevention and protection measures were carried out in 2011 in collaboration with the Air Forest Protection unit and Yugyd va National Park. This included creation of fire breaks around Beloborsky PA (approximately 150 hectares), and clearing of dried ground materials. Going forward, investments will be directed into forest management activities, silviculture, setting up artificial stands, equipping beneficiary organizations with modern fire detection systems and fire fighting equipment.A training on fire fighting and fire prevention was held with participation from PA staff, foresters, the Air Forest Protection unit, and district administrations; the training will be repeated at the Komi Fire Fighting Center in the 3rd quarter of 2012.To equip PAs for fire fighting, equipment was procured for Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve, which, according to PA staff, contributed to the fact that there were no significant fires in the reserve area in 2011. In addition, the tourism infrastructure being developed with the support of the project is intended to help reduce anthropogenic forest fires, by providing the necessary infrastructure for safe fires at recreational sites. Public awareness materials for forest fire prevention were also produced.
2. This output includes the execution of four demonstration projects to pilot environmental climate management activities. The execution of such demonstration activities is included in the project logframe, and is further discussed in Annex 3. According to the project team, the rationale behind undertaking four demonstration activities was to cover four main event types: 1. The creation of carbon sequestration biomass; 2. Reforestation after a fire; and activities 3 and 4 were related to fire-fighting measures in PAs, such as the establishment of fire breaks and water reservoirs for fire-fighting. The main demonstration activity undertaken thus far are experimental forest plantations with lodgepole pine, a species native to western North America, which is faster growing (and therefore has greater carbon sequestration potential) than species native to the KR. Three research sites have been established (see Figure 11) adjacent to Beloborsky and Beliy PAs at different latitudes throughout the KR to assess the lodgepole pine’s growth (and related carbon sequestration) potential in the KR. Other experimental species are included in the plantations as well, such as larch and hybrid aspen.
3. Replication activities are also under this output of the carbon component. The project team is implementing a variety of information dissemination approaches to help catalyze further forest management activities related to climate change, based on the research and data from the project. Activities include organizing international conferences, such as the conference on “Carbon Reservoirs and Flows In Forest And Marsh Ecosystems of the Boreal Zone” held in Syktyvkar the last week of September 2011. According to the work plan in the project document, additional replication activities will be addressed in the final two quarters of the project, but it is not clear what those activities will be. This evaluation recommends the project team organize a regional workshop at the end of the project to share lessons, knowledge and experience gained through the project activities related to managing forests and biodiversity for adaptation to climate change. The carbon component is heavily focused on generating new data related to carbon cycles, while also addressing fire prevention and fire fighting. It must be ensured that the knowledge gained is disseminated to relevant regional stakeholders, particularly Forestry Committee managers beyond the targeted project areas, with the goal of improving ecosystem management in the face of climate change across the KR.

Figure Experimental Lodgepole Pine Plantation

1. According to the project team, it is not currently planned for the project to generate scientific publications in international peer-reviewed journals based on the data and findings from the project research. There will be a variety of reports produced in the Russian language under this component of the project, and these will be disseminated as widely as possible. This type of “gray literature” is valuable in its own right, and can contribute to improved environmental management in a regional or national context. At the same time, producing a peer-reviewed publication in an international scientific journal ensures that research will reach as broad of an audience as possible, have the greatest influence possible on policy and management practices, and will be documented as a concrete contribution to the global knowledge base on climate-related research. As has been noted by the project, “For the research areas, such data are scarce but much in demand as they are needed to determine strategic plans for the Komi region, Russia and the world.”As an ICI project, the carbon component of the Komi PAs project is expected to provide a contribution to the global discussion on climate change, in ways that could influence issues negotiated at UNFCCC Conferences of Parties and other forums, provide scientific foundations for policy positions, and provide insights on global instruments and mechanisms for addressing climate change. At this stage it is too early for this project to have made a significant contribution in this regard, but it should be a “big picture” goal for the project. This evaluation recommends the project team consider setting the goal of at least two to three publications in international peer-reviewed journals as a long-term results indicator for the project. Many other GEF projectshave produced international publications, even ones without extensive research components. Conducting research, data analysis, and production of publications takes time, and may not be completed before the end of the project, but should be a long-term goal. There are even online services that can assist with the production of publications in English, such as American Journal Experts ([www.journalexperts.com](http://www.journalexperts.com)), and JournalPrep ([www.journalprep.com](http://www.journalprep.com)).
2. *Output 4.3 Monitoring system for ecological and adaptation indicators, documenting the results.*This output is linked with Output 4.1, as much of the scientific equipment procured is used for the dual purpose of researching carbon flows, and establishing the long-term monitoring system for ecosystem and adaptation indicators. The project has supported the establishment of 33 monitoring points throughout the key PAs – 21 sites in pine forest, 10 sites in spruce forest, and two sites in deciduous-coniferous forest types. The installation of monitoring equipment is ongoing (see above regarding the construction of the eddy-covariance towers). Once monitoring data is being regularly collected in the project target areas, and annual monitoring report will be produced.

## Priority issues for the Remainder of Implementation

1. The table below summarizes, in the view of this evaluation, the important priorities and risk factors for the remaining project implementation period.

Table Priority Issues for the Remaining Implementation Period

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PriorityIssue** | **Summary** | **Priority Actions or Risk Mitigation** |
| Establishment of KRPA directorate by project end | One of the key expected outcomes of the project is the establishment of a regional PA directorate that would be responsible for improving management for the KR PA network of 237 PAs, in addition to any areas established under the project’s proposal to expand the PA network in the KR. Despite initial positive political support, government turnover, budgetary questions, and institutional barriers have thus far stymied the achievement of this outcome, and there is no immediate prospect of reaching this goal. | There continues to be positive stakeholder support for this outcome, and the project has retained the originally planned budget to assist in establishing and setting up such an agency. As the project team continues to work intensively on this issue through lobbying and building public awareness, the project team and steering committee should consider a 6-12 month project extension if it appears this goal will not be reached by the end of the project but could be reached with slightly more time. |
| Implementation of business planning activities, including continuous assessment of projected revenues, and individual and institutional capacity development for the NCP to ensure its long-term utility and viability | The two business plans developed thus far (for Yugyd va and Pechora-Illych), and the business plans anticipated by the end of the project, are an important and valuable result from the project. However, the most important step is to move toward implementation of the business plans, as assisted by the newly established NCP. | As business plan implementation begins, there should be occasional re-assessment of the revenue projections, as the many assumptions in the business plans play out over time. Some revenue projections may be optimistic (for example, nearly $1 million USD in tourism revenue related to Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve within seven years), but the value of the business plans is the cost and revenue framework they have established, and it would be acceptable for specific figures in the business plans to be revised and updated over time to reflect realities on the ground, while maintaining the long-term goal of eliminating the PA funding gap.  Business plan implementation will be assisted by the NCP, the establishment of which is another excellent result from the project. As the NCP develops as an organization it will start with small-scale activities (such as leveraging revenues for the elk farm), but to fully support the generation of revenues for the PA system foreseen in the business plans, within a few years the NCP will need to be operating at larger-scale, and strategizing for complex marketing operations and financial partnerships. During the next two years, while the NCP still has the foundational springboard of project support, the project should invest in individual and institutional capacity development to ensure the long-term sustainability of the NCP. With further capacity development the NCP has the potential to be the future catalyzing force for financial sustainability for the KR’s PAs once the project is complete. |
| Ensuring support for ongoing maintenance of infrastructure constructed | The project has contributed heavily to the development of various types of infrastructure, particularly for tourism and PA management. While much of the infrastructure is low-maintenance, there needs to be a clear plan about which stakeholders will take on the financial responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the new infrastructure to ensure its long-term sustainability. | By the end of the project there should be clear agreements and plans among relevant stakeholders (particularly UNDP, the national executing agency, the Yugyd va National Park administration, Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve administration, the non-commercial partnership, any relevant private sector partners (such as the elk farm or tourism operators), and local government) with specific commitments and financial plans for the maintenance and upkeep of infrastructure developed. |
| Establish specific formal partnership agreement between Yugyd va National Park Administration and Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta. | A framework agreement has been established between the national park administration and Gazprom, as a result of long-standing cooperation considering the location of the pipeline in the national park. Gazprom has provided various forms of support since the national park was established, and according to Gazprom stakeholders, they are fully willing to enter into more specific partnership agreements with the national park. | The project should support and encourage Yugyd va National Park administration in establishing a specific and concrete partnership agreement with Gazprom that outlines areas for ongoing and future cooperation. |
| Confirmation of legally protected status for all republic PAs | It was determined during the PA inventory that 42 PAs (19 game parks, 15 nature monuments, 6 objects of cultural use and 2 genetic reserves) have been established by local government institutions, which do not have the legal right to establish PAs on territory managed by the Forestry Committee. According to the project team, the project is working with the KR government to confirm appropriate legal status for these PAs, but this issue remains unresolved. | Confirming the legal status for these PAs should be a key goal to be achieved before the end of the project, and would be a significant positive result if reached. This evaluation does not propose additional or different steps to be taken, but would like to highlight this issue as a key priority for the project during the remaining implementation period. |
| Full boundary demarcation and definition for republic-level PAs, in collaboration with the Forestry Committee | Although the republic-level PAs have been declared for many years, many have not been legally demarcated through official surveys and registration in the cadaster. Without officially established boundaries they are at risk for incursion from development. In an example given by one stakeholder, in an unspecified region of Russia where land is expensive, the local government argued that since there was no boundary there was no PA, and houses were built on the land. Surveying and recording boundaries accurately is a critical task, but one that is well beyond the scope of the project to accomplish, as it will require years and significant resources to complete this effort. | All stakeholders agree that legally demarcating the full network of republic level PAs will be a long-term and expensive process, and there appears to be little more that can be immediately done by the project on this critical issue, besides developing strategies in collaboration with key partners, such as the Forestry Committee and KR Ministry of Natural Resources, to plan for the long-term effort to survey and legally demarcate boundaries. It could also be helpful to identify a prioritization process so that PAs most at risk can be the first ones to have their boundaries legally demarcated. The project is working to increase the profile of various state-level PAs, to increase public awareness about them at the level of municipal administrations, thereby reducing the likelihood that threats will materialize. For example, the project has published booklets for each of the KR’s municipal administrations that highlight the PAs in that particular area. |

# Key GEF Performance Parameters

## Sustainability

1. While a sustainability rating is provided here as required, sustainability is a temporal and dynamic state that is influenced by a broad range of constantly shifting factors. It should be kept in mind that the important aspect of sustainability of GEF projects is the sustainability of results, not necessarily the sustainability of activities that produced results. In the context of GEF projects there is no clearly defined timeframe for which results should be sustained, although it is implied that they should be sustained indefinitely.When evaluating sustainability, the greater the time horizon, the lower the degree of certainty possible.
2. In addition, by definition, mid-term evaluations are not well-positioned to provide ratings on sustainability considering that many more activities will be undertaken before project end that may positively or negatively affect the likelihood of sustainability. Based on GEF evaluation policies and procedures, the overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the lowest rating for any of the individual components. Therefore the overall **sustainability** rating for the Komi PAs project for this mid-term evaluation is ***moderately likely*.**

### Financial Risks to Sustainability

1. At present there are some small financial risks to sustainability, and sustainability in this respect is considered moderately likely;many of these issues may be clarified before the end of the project. One of the key focus areas of the project is strengthening the financial sustainability of the PAs, and various activities have been completed already under this outcome, as discussed in Section V.A.iii, such as the completion of two PA business plans, and establishment of the non-commercial organization to assist in their implementation. Key questions are to what extent will the project be able to support the implementation of these business plans, will their assumptions and projections prove accurate, and will the non-commercial organization be solidified in a long-term manner. In addition, if the project succeeds in supporting the establishment of a regional PAs management authority, dedicated sources of funding (from government and other sources) will be required for this body to be operationalized on a sustained basis.
2. One other critical issue is how the institutional and individual capacity developed under this project will be sustained, particularly for the Institute of Biology, which is the primary project partner and has received significant funding from the project for contracted staff time (in addition to equipment procured). As part of the Russian Academy of Sciences the Institute receives a base level of funding from the federal government, but additional funding must be secured to maintain the level of activity (and therefore staff employment) currently experienced during the project. Stakeholders from the Institute of Biology indicated that they have taken the positive step of already planning strategically for the end of the project, and are identifying future sources of financial support. This issue will need to be further assessed during the terminal evaluation.

### Sociopolitical Risks to Sustainability

1. There are limited sociopolitical risks to sustainability, allowing a likely rating under this component. As highlighted throughout this report (see Section IV.B.v), the project is characterized by strong stakeholder ownership at the local, regional, and federal levels.Previous GEF evaluations have concluded stakeholder ownership is a good indicator of project results sustainability; the ICI initiative also emphasizes the importance of this factor for long-term sustainable impacts. The project activities include measures to strengthen enforcement on key resource use issues, such as “VIP poaching” and other illegal activities. The project is also working to catalyze local level economic activities related to management of the PAs, and the sustainable use of resources outside PAs. There have been some isolated instances of resistance to project initiatives as illustrated by the following small example. In Yaksha village, as one of the activities to improve financial sustainability of the Pechora-IllychNature Reserve the project is working to build some small-scale infrastructure to facilitate a lower-cost supply of wood (for fuel and construction) for the PA administration (based in a “mini-village” within the boundaries of Yaksha). Originally the PA administration was buying wood from local interests for elevated prices, which were naturally resistant to and blocked the project’s efforts to secure the necessary small plot of land for the small-scale infrastructure. This resistance initially slowed the project activities, but with the appropriate local political support the project was able to move forward.

### Institutional Framework and Governance Risks to Sustainability

1. The most significant institutional framework and governance risk is the potential long-term establishment of a regional PAs authority, or at the very least the effective assignment of an institution with the mandate to manage the republic level PA system. Once such an institution is established, then it will be necessary to get it up and running, and strengthen its capacity for management. This is one of the project’s key targeted results, and the sustainability of the project’s achievements in this regard will need to be further assessed at the end of the project. In addition, there remain potential for institutional framework risks in relation to the role and mandate of the Forestry Committee, which currently has jurisdiction over the majority of the territory included in the KR PA network – the operational relationships between key government institutions will need to be clarified if a regional PA management authority is established. Overall, sustainability under this component of sustainability is considered moderately likely.

### Environmental Risks to Sustainability

1. There are no significant environmental risks to sustainability, and sustainability in this area is considered likely. The key environmental threats to the region will continue to be present (e.g. forest fires, gas pipeline explosions, oil spills, illegal hunting and fishing, etc.), but these are being actively managed, and circumstances are improving over time. As experience in Alaska and other parts of the United States (and the world) have shown, there needs to be continued vigilance particularly in the oil sector to avoid large scale accidents that could have catastrophic results – for example a large scale oil spill in one of the Komi’s vital waterways. At present the oil sector activities are generally outside of the areas specifically targeted under the project, but the project is broadly concerned with the biodiversity of the KRoverall.The previously highlighted mining concession within Yugyd va National Park remains an open issue, with continued attention from the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, but the actual environmental impacts of mining activity at this particular sight may not be significant, at least according to project stakeholders; in any case, this would be a localized impact rather than something that would affect the overall results of the project. Climate change is likely to have an impact in the region, but the extent and nature of such effects continues to be researched and modeled.

## Catalytic Role: Replication and Scaling-up

1. Output 2.7 of the project is specifically focused on disseminating information and developing replication approaches, as previously discussed in Section V.A.ii. There are a few notable activities that are already in the process of being replicated. The project’s development of the PA business planning approach will be an important activity that will be further developed and replicated in Russia’s PA system. According to project stakeholders, the PA business plans developed in the KR are the most comprehensive approach in the country to building financial sustainability for PAs. The finance department of the RF Ministry of Natural Resources indicated that the economic models developed under the project would be validated and disseminated to all PAs in Russia.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

### Project Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation

1. The project document (dated February 13, 2008) and the CEO Endorsement document (dated April 8, 2008) include sections that outline the project M&E plan, M&E budget, and specific M&E roles and responsibilities. The CEO Endorsement document includes (under Section “G”) the summary table of M&E activities, the responsible parties, the indicative budget, and timeframe. Overall the M&E plan is based on standard UNDP-GEF project M&E procedures, and conforms to UNDP and GEF standards and norms. The M&E plan includes: inception workshop and report, Annual Progress Report/Progress Implementation Report (APR/PIR), steering committee meetings and minutes, quarterly progress reports, technical reports, supervision field missions, independent mid-term and terminal evaluations, a terminal report, lessons learned, and an annual audit. The total indicative cost of planned M&E activities is $305,000, which is fully adequate for a project of this size. At the time of approval this amounted to 6.7% of the total GEF allocation, which is relatively higher than the M&E budget for many UNDP-GEF FSPs (based on the experience of the evaluator), but the project document does not indicate if the full M&E budget will be covered by GEF funds or also partly by partner co-financing. As a percentage of the total project cost, the M&E budget is approximately 1.5%. This is prior to the addition of the German ICI financing for the fourth component of the project, which is also leveraging the M&E system for the project. Overall the M&E plan is being implemented as envisioned, with the project team doing an excellent job of providing timely and comprehensive monitoring reports, holding steering committee meetings. The project team is appropriately supported by UNDP through regular informal communications for ad-hoc monitoring, and field-based oversight visits.
2. The key element of the project M&E system is the project logframe, with indicators, baseline data, and targets. There is also a separate logframe for the carbon component, as this was financed after GEF project approval, and this component is not included in the project document. The logframe for the first three components of the project has some shortcomings with respect to meeting SMART criteria[[25]](#footnote-26), particularly with respect to relevance to project results. For the scope of the project, the logframe indicators do not necessarily facilitate a full assessment of the key project results. This evaluation recommends a number of specific revisions to the logframe, as indicated in Annex 3.
3. The logframe for the carbon component is poorly developed compared to the logframe for the rest of the project. For example, the first indicator relates to fire-fighting capacity, with the baseline, mid-term target and final target indicated as “basic to none”, “moderate”, and “high”, with no clear information about how these levels are defined. The results focus of this indicator could also be significantly improved, as the actual desired result relates to a reduction in damage from fires. The logframe also provides challengingly structured mid-term targets – mid-term targets are often given as essentially 50% of the final value, implying that project results will occur in a linear manner – in other words, projects typically do not achieve 27% of expected results after 27% of implementation. For example, one mid-term indicator is for “at least 2 pilot activities under implementation”, with an end target of “4 pilot activities under implementation”; a more appropriate mid-term target might be for four pilot activities partially under implementation. Significant suggested revisions for the logframe for the project’s carbon component are also included in Annex 3.
4. As one of the logframe indicators (at the objective level), the project uses the METT. This will facilitate higher level reporting for global level GEF biodiversity focal area targets.

### Environmental Monitoring

1. Although there is room for much more work to be done, environmental monitoring data in the project areas in the KR is generally better than in many other corners of the world targeted under GEF biodiversity projects. The Russian Federation has a long history of strong scientific work, including ecological and biodiversity research and monitoring. This is demonstrated by the presence of the Institute of Biology in the KR – the primary project partner - under the Russian Academy of Sciences. However, the federal level PAs have much better monitoring data than the republic level network of PAs. The federal PA administrations conduct some environmental monitoring themselves, but also contract institutions such as the Institute of Biology to carry out environmental studies. One of the project activities is a biodiversity inventory of the republic PAs, which could provide a more comprehensive biodiversity baseline for the PA network in the KR. The project has a specific Output on “a monitoring system for pristine boreal ecosystems of the north” (Output 1.6). The project document notes that there are two shortcomings in current environmental monitoring in the region – that monitoring activities are not coordinated, and there is no mechanism for linking monitoring data with management decisions.
2. In addition, the core activity of the carbon component is environmental research and monitoring related to carbon flows in certain ecosystems in the KR, and research will be continued with the high-tech monitoring equipment procured once the project ends.

## Project Impacts and Global Environmental Benefits

1. For the GEF biodiversity focal area project impacts are defined as documented changes in environmental status of species, ecosystems or genetic biodiversity resources. Global Environmental Benefits in the biodiversity focal area have not been explicitly defined, but are generally considered to involve sustained impact level results of a certain scale or significance. The project document specifically highlights the expected global environmental benefits of this project: “The global environmental benefits are associated with the conservation of an enormous area (amounting to over 4 million hectares) of pristine ecosystems, including forest, mountain, tundra, and freshwater systems. The only significant PAs within WWF’s Global 200 ecoregion 83 (Ural Mountains Taiga) are found within the KR. A large number of globally endangered species will be conserved, and because of the position of the eastern KR between the dramatically different flora and fauna of Europe and Siberia, it is certain that unique genetic diversity will be conserved also.”
2. As further discussed below, the project logframe does not include specific impact level indicators, although impact level results are anticipated in the long-run. The project may have already generated some localized small-scale impact level results, based on the documented reduction of threats. For example, during the evaluation mission a project supported helicopter enforcement patrol found and controlled an illegal fishing camp within the regional reserve “Ocean”. It was also stated that enforcement has been more efficient thanks to support from the project, as demonstrated by the fact that in Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve in 2010 there were only 18 illegal activities controlled, while by September 2011 there had been more than 40 cases, although the majority of these relate to illegal access by tourists rather than activities with a direct negative influence on biodiversity. The provision of fire-fighting equipment has also helped reduce impacts from fire; staff of the Pechora–IllychNature Reserve stated that the area affected by fires in 2011 was 1/10th the area (down to only 12 hectares) affected in 2010, but fire conditions in 2011 were less severe than in 2010, so it is difficult to make a year-on-year comparison. By the end of the project, additional specific impact level results may be documented, but ultimately the project’s impact will need to be assessed years in the future to appropriately consider how improved management of PAs in the KR has benefited biodiversity.
3. One valuable aspect of the project logframe is that it uses outcome level indicators to measure results at the objective level, rather than impact level indicators. For example, project indicators include the type and relative representation of certain ecosystems covered by the PA system. In theory, impact level indicators are preferred to assess results under the objective of a project, as the objective of GEF biodiversity focal area projects is to improve the status of biodiversity. Impact level indicators are those that would assess the actual status and trends of the components of biodiversity – e.g. ecosystem and habitat extent and quality, species population numbers and composition, etc., and trends in these figures. In practice however, it is extremely difficult for GEF projects to demonstrate significant impact level results by the end of the project, as ecosystems and species populations can take a significant amount of time to measurably respond to conservation measures. In addition, environmental monitoring data is often inadequate to make these assessments. Thus, outcome level indicators are more relevant for assessing the results of GEF projects, but the process of evaluating results must also consider the validity of the project’s theory of change (and therefore the relevance of the indicator). For example, in the case of this project, the theory of change is that protected status for biodiversity resources, and improved management of PAs, will lead to improvement in biodiversity status over time. There is some debate in the conservation community about the effectiveness of PAs, but academic studies to date have generally indicated a positive correlation between protected status and the condition of biodiversity resources relative to those without protected status. At the same time, it is useful for projects to specifically identify well-considered impact level indicators and include environmental monitoring baseline data, so that ex-post evaluations of project results could be carried out if desired, as long as it is clear that a project does not expect to demonstrate significant impact level results by the end of the project. A project could, however, demonstrate a reduction in threats to biodiversity,[[26]](#footnote-27) which also implies that the status of biodiversity resources will be improved over time.

# Main Lessons Learned and Recommendations

## Lessons from the Experience of the Komi PAs Project

1. The mid-term of a project is early to produce a comprehensive set of lessons, but some initial lessons from the experience of the Komi PAs project can be extracted.
2. ***Lesson:*** Procurement can always be a time-consuming process for international development assistance project, but procurement of specialized technical equipment can be even more intensive. Thus, projects that have heavy procurement components must plan appropriately to consider that a significant amount of time will be required to obtain equipment before work can actually commence.
3. ***Lesson:*** Long project development processes can produce well-designed projects with strong stakeholder ownership. The GEF Secretariat has made reforms in recent years to shorten the GEF project cycle by limiting project development timeframes to 18 months. This is generally a welcome development as many projects suffered from languorous project development processes that resulted in disenchanted stakeholders and conditions on the ground that had substantially changed since the time the project concept was first developed. However, many types of projects, especially complex projects or regional projects with multiple participating countries require development processeswith some flexibility in timing. Although it was a single-country project, the Komi PAs project presents a case study of a project where an extended development period (56 months from PDF-A to final UNDP approval) provided the necessary time to ensure a solid project design and the cultivation of strong stakeholder ownership. The project likely could have been successful with a shorter development period, but in this case the long development period was not a significant negative factor.
4. ***Lesson:*** Private sector engagement can be established and work well, when the appropriate conditions are met. Private sector engagement has been a long-standing goal of the GEF, but remains largely unfulfilled. The Komi PAs project has been successful in private sector engagement thanks to a few key factors – some of the private sector companies in the area, particularly Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta, have progressive corporate social responsibility policies, and therefore are interested in engaging, finding synergistic benefits, and providing support for management of the PAs. This is linked with the fact that that Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta has a direct interest in working with the government and PA administration, since a portion of its pipeline goes through the national park territory (as it was there before the national park was established).

## Recommendations for the Remaining Implementation Period

1. The recommendations from this mid-term evaluation are provided below, with the targeted primary audience for the recommendation in brackets immediately following.
2. ***Key Recommendation 1:***While the ideal long-term status would be for the existence of a regional PA directorate, as a risk mitigation strategy the project team and steering committee members should strategize about specific feasible alternative options for the management of the KR PAs for the medium-term that could be catalyzed by the project if it appears that establishing a regional agency will not be a viable option. Options could include providing capacity development support on PA management for Forestry Committee staff, and putting additional emphasis on the local management committee mechanism.*[Project Team and key government institution partners]*
3. ***Key Recommendation 2:***Capacity development for the NCP: During the next two years, while the NCP still has the foundational springboard of project support, the project should invest in individual and institutional capacity development to ensure the long-term sustainability of the NCP. With further capacity development the NCP has the potential to be the future catalyzing force for financial sustainability for the KR’s PAs once the project is complete.*[Project Team, Non-commercial partnership]*
4. ***Key Recommendation 3:*** The mid-term of a project is early to recommend a project extension, but the option of a 6-12 month extension should be opened for consideration in the final year of project implementation. In addition to the initial slower-than-anticipated project implementation rate, the question of the establishment of the regional directorate for PAs remains uncertain. If this key outcome has not been achieved at the end of the project’s planned implementation period – *and it is anticipated that it could be achieved with project support under a short extension* – it may be worthwhile for the PSC to consider such a move. An extension should not be considered under this rationale if the establishment of a regional PAs directorate remains an open-ended question, without achievement of the final goal clearly in sight.*[UNDP, Executing Agency, PSC]*
5. ***Key Recommendation 4:***The project team must ensure that the necessary time and resources are set aside to turn the scientific data and knowledge gained from the carbon component research into practical recommendations for effective forest and ecosystem management in response to and planning for future climate change. The project team should plan to produce forest management and PA management technical guidelines that are as specific as possible on ways to strengthen ecosystem resilience to mitigate the effects of climate change.*[Project Team, key government institution partners]*
6. ***Key Recommendation 5:*** The project team, UNDP, and relevant stakeholders should work to develop a proposal for logframe revision that would improve alignment of indicators and targets with SMART criteria, and would enhance the results-focused approach. A revision should then be approved by the project steering committee at its next meeting in early 2012. *[Project Team, UNDP, Executing Agency, other partners as relevant]*
7. ***Recommendation 6:***This evaluation recommends that the project consider additional PA management capacity development activities through study tours to other similar regions that are facing and successfully addressing comparable PA management challenges. Stakeholders consistently cite study tours as among the most valuable capacity development activities. Given the characteristics of the KR and its PA system, one highly comparable context for a possible study tour could be to Alaska to gain lessons and experience about the successful management of PAs and tourism revenue generation in large-scale remote landscapes, and effective protected management coordination between state and federal authorities.*[Project Team]*
8. ***Recommendation 7:***The eco-rating methodology should be continuously refined through testing and peer review, and the project should take measures to ensure the sustainability of its use once the project is completed. One opportunity for sustainability would be to partner with the KR Public Chamber to fully hand the eco-rating program off at the end of the project (or before), and to develop an annual award to be presented by the Public Chamber to the private sector company with the strongest eco-rating, and an associated media event.*[Project Team, KR Public Chamber]*
9. ***Recommendation 8:*** The KR provides an excellent example of successful and large-scale private sector partnership for biodiversity conservation, a long-standing objective of the GEF that has seen limited uptake. The project should produce multiple specific case studies on collaboration with the private sector for distribution through UNDP and the GEF’s knowledge network. It would be helpful for the project team to fully analyze and assess the context and driving factors behind the successful private sector partnerships in the KR.*[Project Team, private sector partnership stakeholders, UNDP]*
10. ***Recommendation 9:*** There is a history of good cooperation between Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta and Yugyd va National Park due to the transversal of the pipeline through the national park. A framework cooperation agreement has been signed by Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta and Yugyd va under the auspices of the project. The project must now support and encourage Yugyd va National Park administration in establishing a specific and concrete partnership agreement with Gazprom that outlines in detail areas for ongoing and future cooperation. Such an agreement would be an example for other PAs and private sector companies in the KR. *[Project Team, relevant partners]*
11. ***Recommendation 10:***Thelocationand size of Yugyd va and Pechora-Illych PAs present excellent opportunities to develop large-scale transboundary protected landscapes. The project team and relevant stakeholders should establish linkages and open communication with the natural resource management authorities in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug to begin a dialogue on transboundary PA and natural resource management across the Urals.*[Project Team, relevant government partners, UNDP]*
12. ***Recommendation 11:***By the end of the project there should be clear agreements and plans among relevant stakeholders (particularly UNDP, the national executing agency, the Yugyd va National Park administration, Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve administration, the non-commercial partnership, any relevant private sector partners (such as the elk farm or tourism operators), and local government) with specific commitments and financial plans for the maintenance and upkeep of infrastructure developed.*[Project Team, UNDP]*
13. ***Recommendation 12:*** Considering that the region is heavily involved in natural resource extraction industries, an important priority for future international donor support for biodiversity conservation efforts in the region will be to focus on the mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations in production sectors and landscapes, notably, oil, gas andtimber, of which there is presently little territory under sustainable certification. This evaluation recommends that potential future international donor support in the KR examine opportunities for biodiversity mainstreaming in production sectors, as a complement to the current critical work on PAs.*[UNDP, Project Team, relevant international donor partners]*
14. ***Recommendation 13:***The project team should plan to organize a regional workshop (or provide some similar mechanism) at the end of the project to share lessons, knowledge and experience gained through the project activities related to managing forests and biodiversity for adaptation to climate change. The carbon component is heavily focused on generating new data related to carbon cycles, while also addressing fire prevention and fire fighting. It must be ensured that the knowledge gained is disseminated to relevant regional stakeholders, such as Forestry Committee managers and PA managers, with the goal of improving ecosystem management in the KR in the face of climate change.*[Project Team]*
15. ***Recommendation 14:*** Even though the planned research is focused at the regional level, the carbon component of the project should be striving to provide information to and influence the international climate dialogue. A key means of achieving this would be through publications in international peer-reviewed scientific journals.This evaluation recommends the project team consider setting the goal of at least two to three international academic publications as a long-term results indicator for the project, recognizing that producing publications would likely not be achievable before the end of the project considering the time first required for research.*[Project Team]*
16. ***Recommendation 15:***The project should expand collaboration with the KR government tourism development agency in working to stimulate government support for investment in sustainable tourism, and catalyze further action to focus on the marketing of tourism to the PAs, and investment in the tourism sector. For example, the project team could produce a policy paper outlining options for government support for the tourism sector that would increase tourism to the PAs.*[Project Team]*

## Komi PAs Project Mid-term Evaluation Ratings

| **Project Component or Objective** | **Rating** | **Qualitative Summary** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Formulation** |  |  |
| **Relevance** | S | The Komi PAs project is relevant to the needs of local resource users, regional policies and priorities, and GEF strategic priorities. |
| Conceptualization/design | S | The project is well-designed to address the threats and barriers necessary to achieve the overall project objective in the long-term. |
| Stakeholder participation | S | The design and development process was participatory and included the input from stakeholders at various levels. The extended project development timeframe allowed incorporation of feedback as relevant and necessary. |
| **Project Implementation** |  |  |
| **Implementation Approach (Efficiency)** | S | The project is implemented in an efficient manner, and in-line with UNDP and Russian Federation policies and financial management requirements, which meet international norms and standards. Cost-effectiveness has been significantly enhanced by the securing of tax exemption certificates for international technical assistance, which has saved the project a large percentage of the budget. At the same time, the process of securing these certificates and other bureaucratic procedures required by UNDP and by Russian law, particularly with respect to procurement have slowed some aspects of the project, especially the carbon component. |
| The use of the logical framework | S | The project logframe has been used in an appropriate manner to guide the overall approach of the project, and ensure a results-based focus. The logframe could be improved however, to support results-based management; revisions are proposed in Annex 3 of this evaluation. |
| Adaptive management | HS | The implementation structure is supportive of adaptive management as necessary to address any changing circumstances, risks and assumptions during project implementation. There are multiple examples of effective adaptive management in project implementation, including instances where the project has taken opportunistic approaches to go beyond the results originally planned. |
| Use/establishment of information technologies | S | There is a well-developed project website, including an English translation, which is used as a key means of information dissemination. An online library of project publications and reports has been established. In addition, the research components of the project are effectively utilizing information technologies such as GIS databases. |
| Operational relationships between the institutions involved | HS | All key stakeholder organizations are directly involved in the project, and are working effectively together. |
| Financial management | S | Financial management is undertaken in an appropriate manner, with adequate planning and flexibility to ensure efficient project activities. |
| **Monitoring and Evaluation** | S | Overall M&E is considered satisfactory. |
| Monitoring and evaluation design | MS | The overall M&E plan meets GEF minimum standards, although there is room for improvement in the SMART-ness of logframe indicators, particularly for the carbon component. |
| Monitoring and evaluation implementation | S | The M&E plan is being implemented as envisioned. |
| Monitoring and evaluation budgeting | S | The budget for project M&E is fully adequate for a project of this size. |
| **Stakeholder Participation** | HS | The project is characterized by excellent stakeholder participation and collaboration, through fully transparent and inclusive processes. |
| Production and dissemination of information | HS | The project team has done an excellent job producing relevant publicly-consumable materials based on the research and technical work conducted under the project. |
| Local resource users and NGOs participation | HS | Local-level stakeholders are one of the key project stakeholder groups, and have been effectively engaged on relevant issues, such as the development of regulations for NTFP use around PAs. Multiple NGOs are also directly involved in project activities. |
| Establishment of partnerships | HS | The project has done an excellent job building partnerships with relevant government and academic institutions, and particularly the private sector. Examples from this project could serve as models for other similar contexts. |
| Involvement and support of governmental institutions | S | The relevant government institutions are involved, and are working well together to support project implementation. There appear to be some slight tensions still with the project’s objective relative to the mandate and operations of the Forestry Committee, but there are no immediate significant risks, and the Forestry Committee has been a key partner in project implementation. |
| **Project Results** |  |  |
| **Progress Toward Achievement of Objective and Outcomes (Effectiveness)** | S | Following some initial delays, the project activities are on track, and it is anticipated the project will be able to achieve the expected results by project end. There are risks to some key outcomes, such as the establishment of a regional PAs directorate, and the project team is continuing to work on addressing these issues. |
| **Objective:** A representative and effectively managed network of protected areas ensures conservation of pristine boreal forest and taiga ecosystems in the Komi Republic | S | While a fully functioning and effectively managed system of PAs in the KR will only be achieved years after project completion, the project is making a significant direct contribution toward this objective. |
| **Outcome 1:** The protected area system of Komi Republic is redesigned so as to better capture globally significant biodiversity | HS | The planned activities under this outcome are well underway, and the project is exceeding some targets. The project proposal for re-designing the republic PA system proposes to increase PA coverage by over 800,000 hectares in the KR, compared to the original project target of 10,000. A plethora of valuable research and data about the PA system has also been produced. |
| **Outcome 2:** Increased institutional capacity for management of protected areas within the Komi Republic protected area system | S | Activities under this outcome are on track, with the notable and significant exception of the establishment of the regional PAs directorate. There is still a positive outlook that this will be achieved before the end of the project. There have also been excellent results in establishing the non-commercial partnership in lieu of the ecological fund, and in creation of private sector partnerships. |
| **Outcome 3:** Application of business planning principles result in diversified revenue streams for the Komi Republic protected area system | HS | Two business plans have been produced, representing the first such PA management tools in Russia, and there are plans to replicate these tools at the national level. There have also been impressive results in terms of the tourism infrastructure constructed thus far. The key focus for the remaining implementation period will be moving toward implementation of the business plans. |
| **Outcome 4:** Improved protected area system in Komi Republic for better conservation of globally important biodiversity and maintenance of carbon pools | S | There were some significant delays in the start-up of the carbon component, but some valuable results have already been produced with respect to understanding carbon stocks and cycles in the KR boreal ecosystems, and in activities to improve fire-fighting capacity. Once the scientific equipment is fully installed, it is expected that the full results under this component will be achieved, with an already-approved extension. |
| **Sustainability** | ML | Overall sustainability cannot be higher than the lowest rating for the four parameters of sustainability below. |
| Financial sustainability | ML | There are no acute financial risks to sustainability, but there are a number of open questions to be assessed at the end of the project, including the degree to which PA business plans are being implemented, the realism of PA business plan assumptions and revenue projections, the sustainability of the non-commercial partnership, and the sustainability of the infrastructure and individual capacity developed under the project. |
| Sociopolitical sustainability | L | There are limited socio-political threats to sustainability, as there is strong stakeholder participation and ownership in all aspects of the project. |
| Institutional and governance sustainability | ML | The key issue relates to the establishment of the KR PA directorate, and the degree to which this body will become “institutionalized” within the KR government, if it is established. There are also some outstanding legal questions related to the KR PA network. |
| Ecological sustainability | L | There remain some consistent low-level environmental threats to biodiversity resources within the KR’s PAs, but these are not significant to threaten the overall results of the project. |
| **Progress toward Overall Project Achievement and Impact** | **HS** | Although there have been some delays on some specific activities, and there is uncertainty about the establishment in the long-term of the regional PA authority, the project has met and exceeded a number of mid-term metrics, and the view remains optimistic for eventual full success. Much work remains however, and a number of key results will need to be achieved before the end of the project to consider the project fully successful at completion. |

# Annexes

1. Annex 1: Evaluation Terms of Reference
2. Annex 2: GEF Operational Principles
3. Annex 3: Outcome Level Logframe
4. Annex 4: List of Persons Interviewed
5. Annex 5: Field Visit Schedule
6. Annex 6: Evaluation Documentation
7. Annex 7: Evaluator CVs
8. Annex 8: Management Response

**Annex 1: Mid-term Evaluation Terms of Reference**

*Note: For space considerations the annexes of the TORs have not been included.*

**Terms of Reference**

for the Mid-term evaluation of the UNDP/GEF Project

**“Strengthening the Protected Area System of the Komi Republic to Conserve Virgin Forest Biodiversity in the Pechora River Headwaters Region”**

00059042

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**Standard UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation requirements**

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives: i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts; ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements; iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and iv) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned. A combination of tools should be used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the lifetime of the project – e.g.periodic monitoring of indicators -, or as specific time-bound exercises such as mid-term review, audit reports and independent evaluations.

In accordance with UNDP/GEF M&E policies and procedures, all projects with long implementation period (e.g. over 5 or 6 years) are strongly encouraged to conduct mid-term evaluations. In addition to providing an independent in-depth review of implementation progress, this type of evaluation is responsive to GEF Council decisions on transparency and better access to information during implementation.

Mid-term evaluations are intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project. It is expected to serve as a mean of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. The mid-term evaluation provides the opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

This evaluation is to be undertaken taking into consideration the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy (<http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/4184>) and the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (<http://www.undp.org/gef/monitoring/policies.html>).

**Project objectives**

Russia is the largest country in the world (17 million km2) and occupies 1/8th of the global land area and most of non-tropical Eurasia. Russia is a repository of globally significant biodiversity hosting 14 Global 200 Ecoregions, eight in their entirety. Russian forests account for about 22% of the world’s forest resources and 40% of the most valuable coniferous stands. The forest estate harbors more than a quarter of the Earth’s remaining primeval forests, including 10 out of 11 of the Palearctic’s boreal forests/taiga ecoregions, three Palearactic temperate coniferous forests ecoregions and six of the Palearctic’s temperate broadleaf ecoregions. To protect its biodiversity, Russia has established an impressive System of Protected Areas, managed by federal, regional and local agencies that cover about 8.5% of country’s area. The proposed project aims to improve the representation of the Scandinavian and Russian taiga and Ural montane forest tundra in the federal, regional and local system of protected areas. The initiative is centered in the Komi Republic (KR) which is a key repository of biodiversity of these ecosystems. This geographic focus is justified for the following reasons: (i) KR shelters the only significant block of pristine forest oriented north-south; this has been included by WWF in the list of 200 global ecological regions and by UNESCO in the List of World Natural Heritage Sites; (ii) the 14 million hectares of pristine boreal ecosystems in the Komi Republic represent almost 35% of the total pristine area remaining in European Russia; and (iii) the KR has demonstrated political commitment to re-design its PA system to capture global biodiversity values more effectively. KR has established a protected area system (PAS) to safeguard its globally significant biodiversity covering 14.6% of its territory, which is almost double the Russian average. The project will support this restructuring process by seeking to enhance the systemic and institutional capacities so manage the redesigned system and to diversify income streams to ensure the PA System is more financially sustainable.

The carbon stocks of Komi forests are at risk from fires. The origin of fires in the Komi forests, many of which have patches of peatlands among forest stands, is strongly dependent on the intensity of human use. However, 77% of fires at key protected areas are anthropogenic. In some years (hot and dry) the level of anthropogenic fires is significantly higher. There are 154 – 897 forest fires in Komi happening annually, destroying 1,200 – 207,000 ha of forests per year. From 26 to 94 percent of fires (depends on a year) happen in over-mature spruce stands. Annual carbon emission from fires at the project areas are huge (currently being assessed by experts).

In early 2010, with funding from the International Climate Initiative of the German government, UNDP launched a project targeting conservation of the boreal forests of Komi. The project builds the capacity of local stakeholders and improves infrastructure at targeted protected areas in the Komi Republic (1 federal zapovednik, 1 federal national park and 13 regional forest zakazniks) enabling them to effectively mitigate human and climate change risks, develop, implement and monitor effectively climate change adaptation measures.

The Project Goal is: A comprehensive, ecologically representative and effectively managed national system of protected areas in the Russian Federation ensures conservation of globally significant and threatened ecosystems‖. The Project Objective is: A representative and effectively managed network of protected areas ensures conservation of pristine boreal forest and taiga ecosystems in the Komi Republic‖. The Outcomes identified as required to achieve the objective are the following: (i) The PA system of Komi republic is redesigned so as to better capture globally significant BD; (ii) Increased institutional capacity for management of protected areas within the PA System of Komi republic; (iii) Application of business planning principles result in diversified revenue streams for the PA system of Komi Republic, and (iv) Improved protected area system in Komi Republic for better conservation of globally important biodiversity and maintenance of carbon pools.

Project location: Komi Republic, Russian Federation

Project sites: Protected Area System of the Komi Republic

Project implementation Unit: Syktyvkar

The project is executed by the Department of Federal Service for Control in the Field of Nature Use in Komi Republic (“Rosprirodnadzor”). Project activities implemented by a Project Implementation Unit based in Syktyvkar and overall management of the project is the responsibility of Project Manager, who is a full time employee of the project.

Project website: www.undp-komi.org

**II. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION**

This Mid Term Evaluation is initiated by the UNDP Russiaand it aims to provide managers (at the Project Implementation Unit, UNDP Russia Country Office and UNDP/GEF levels) with strategy and policy options for more effectively and efficiently achieving the project’s expected results and for replicating the results. It also provides the basis for learning and accountability for managers and stakeholders.

The evaluation will play a critical role in the future implementation of the project by providing advice on: (i) how to strengthen the adaptative management and monitoring function of the project; (ii) how to ensure accountability for the achievement of the GEF objective; (iii) how to enhance organizational and development learning; and (iv) how to enable informed decision – making.

The evaluation will have to provide to the GEF Secretariat complete and convincing evidence to support its findings/ratings. The consultant should prepare specific ratings on seven aspects of the project, as described in the 'Reporting' section of this Terms of Reference. Particular emphasis should be put on the current project results and the possibility of achieving the objective and outcomes in the established timeframe, taking into consideration the speed, at which the project is proceeding.

The evaluation is intended to provide a comprehensive overall assessment of the project and provides an opportunity to critically assess administrative and technical strategies issues and constrains associated with large international and multi-partner initiatives. The evaluation should also provide recommendations for strategies, approaches and/or activities to improve the potential of the Project to achieve expected outcomes and meet the objective within the Project timeframe. Findings of this evaluation will be incorporated as recommendations for enhanced implementation of the current project phase in the future years.

The purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation is:

* To assess overall performance against the Project objective and outcomes as set out in Project Document and other related documents
* To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Project
* To analyze critically the implementation and management arrangements of the Project
* To assess the progress to date towards achievement of the outcomes;
* To review planned strategies and plans for achieving the overall objective of the Project within the timeframe;
* To assess the sustainability of the project’s interventions.
* To list and document initial lessons concerning Project design, implementation and management
* To assess Project relevance to national priorities
* To provide guidance for the future Project activities and, if necessary, for the implementation and management arrangements.

In particular, this evaluation will assess progress in establishing the information baseline, reducing threats, and identifying any difficulties in project implementation and their causes, and recommend corrective course of action. Effective action to rectify any identify issues hindering implementation will be a requirement prior to determining whether implementation should proceed.

Project performance will be measured based on Project’s Logical Framework Matrix (see Annex 2), which provides clear performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. Many of these indicators relate to the reduction/prevention of the key threats to biodiversity. Success and failure will be determined in part by monitoring changes in baseline conditions

The Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation will be stand-alone document that substantiates its recommendations and conclusions.

**3. EVALUATION**

The evaluation should assess:

Project concept and design: The evaluators will assess the project concept and design. He/she should review the problem addressed by the project and the project strategy, encompassing an assessment of the appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives. The executing modality and managerial arrangements should also be judged. The evaluator will assess the achievement of indicators and review the work plan, planned duration and budget of the project.

Implementation: The evaluation will assess the implementation of the project in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out. Also, the effectiveness of management as well as the quality and timeliness of monitoring and backstopping by all parties to the project should be evaluated. In particular, the evaluation is to assess the Project team’s use of adaptive management in project implementation.

Project outputs, outcomes and impact: The evaluation will assess the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by the project as well as the likely sustainability of project results. This should encompass an assessment of the achievement of the immediate objectives and the contribution to attaining the overall objective of the project. The evaluation should also assess the extent to which the implementation of the project has been inclusive of relevant stakeholders and to which it has been able to create collaboration between different partners. The evaluation will also examine if the project has had significant unexpected effects, whether of beneficial or detrimental character.

The Mid-term Evaluation will also cover the following aspects:

**3.1. Progress towards Results**

Changes in development conditions*.* Address the following questions, with a focus on the perception of change among stakeholders:

* Have critically endangered species been properly and adequately protected within the protected areas in the Russian portion of the Altai Sayan?
* Have there been changes in local stakeholder behavior (i.e. threats…) that have contributed to improved conservation? If not, why not?
* Is there distinct improvement in biodiversity information turnover and use in decision making among Altai Sayan stakeholders?
* Has awareness on biodiversity conservation and subsequent public participation in biodiversity monitoring and management increased as a result of the project?
* Is there adequate territorial planning in place, or in progress, ensuring long-term conservation of biodiversity and cultural values?

Measurement of change*:* Progress towards results should be based on a comparison of indicators before and after (so far) the project intervention. Progress can also be assessed by comparing conditions in the project site to conditions in similar unmanaged sites.

Project strategy: how and why outcomes (listed as outputs in the project document) and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results. Examine their relevance and whether they provide the most effective route towards results.

Sustainability: Extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after it has come to an end. Relevant factors include for example: development of a sustainability strategy, establishment of financial and economic instruments and mechanisms, mainstreaming project objectives into the local economy, etc.

**3.2. Project’s Adaptive Management Framework**

Monitoring Systems

* Assess the monitoring tools currently being used:
  + - Do they provide the necessary information?
    - Do they involve key partners?
    - Are they efficient?
    - Are additional tools required?
* Reconstruct baseline data if necessary. Reconstruction should follow participatory processes and could be achieved in conjunction with a learning exercise
* Ensure the monitoring system, including performance indicators, at least meets GEF minimum requirements. Apply SMART indicators as necessary.
* Apply the GEF Tracking Tool and provide a description of comparison with initial application of the tool.

Risk Management

* Validate whether the risks identified in the project document, PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate. If not, explain why. Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted.
* Assess the project’s risk identification and management systems:
  + Is the UNDP/GEF Risk Management System appropriately applied?
  + How can the UNDP/GEF Risk Management System be used to strengthen project management?

Work Planning

* Assess the use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it: (i) Ensure the logical framework meets UNDP/GEF requirements in terms of format and content; and (ii) What impact did the retro-fitting of impact indicators have on project management?
* Assess the use of routinely updated workplans.
* Assess the use of electronic information technologies to support implementation, participation and monitoring, as well as other project activities
* Are work planning processes result-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning.
* Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions. Any irregularities must be noted.

Reporting

* Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management
* Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

**3.3. Underlying Factors**

* Assess the underlying factors beyond the project’s immediate control that influence outcomes and results. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project’s management strategies for these factors.
* Re-test the assumptions made by the project management and identify new assumptions that should be made
* Assess the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project

**3.4. UNDP Contribution**

* Assess the role of UNDP against the requirements set out in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results. Consider: Field visits; Steering Committee/TOR follow-up and analysis; PIR preparation and follow-up; GEF guidance;
* Consider the new UNDP requirements outlined in the UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP)[[27]](#footnote-28), especially the Project Assurance role, and ensure they are incorporated into the project’s adaptive management framework
* Assess the contribution to the project from UNDP “soft” assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, and coordination). Suggest measures to strengthen UNDP’s soft assistance to the project management.

**3.5. Partnership Strategy**

* Assess how partners are involved in the project’s adaptive management framework: (i) Involving partners and stakeholders in the selection of indicators and other measures of performance; (ii) Using already existing data and statistics; and (iii) Analyzing progress towards results and determining project strategies.
* Identify opportunities for stronger substantive partnerships;
* Assess how local stakeholders participate in project management and decision-making. Include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project and suggestions for improvement if necessary.
* Consider the dissemination of project information to partners and stakeholders and if necessary suggest more appropriate mechanisms;
* Assessment of collaboration between governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
* Assessment of collaboration between implementation units of other related projects.
* Assessment of local partnerships
* Transfer of capacity to the national institutions;

**3.6. Project Finance:**

* Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and provide an opinion on the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions, taking into account the project activity timeframe;
* Review the effectiveness of financial coordinating mechanisms

**4. METHODOLOGY FOR EVALUATION APPROACH**

The mid-term Evaluation will be done through a combination of processes including a desk study, site visit and interviews - involving all stakeholders (but not restricted to): Rosprirodnadzor in Komi Republic, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation,Government of the Republic of Komi, Pechora-Ilych State Nature Reserve, Yugyd va National Park, local NGOs and community groups, private sector companies in the Republic of Komi.

Evaluator should seek guidance for their work in the following materials:

GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy (<http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/4184>)and the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (<http://www.undp.org/gef/monitoring/policies.html>).

The methodology for the evaluation is envisaged to cover the following areas:

* Desk study review of all relevant Project documentation
* Consultations with Rosprirodnadzor, UNDP , PIU
* Field site visit within project territories
* Interviews with stakeholders

In preparation for the evaluation mission, the project manager, with assistance from UNDP country office, will arrange for the completion of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool. The tracking tool will be completed / endorsed by the  relevant implementing agency or a qualified national research /scientific institution, and not by the international consultant or UNDP staff. The tracking tool will be submitted to the international evaluation consultant, who will need to provide his/her comments on it. Upon incorporation of the comments from the international evaluation consultant  to the tracking tool, it will be finalized and attached as a mandatory annex to the final evaluation report.

**5. PRODUCTS**

The core product of the Mid-Term Evaluation will be Mid-Term Evaluation Report.

The Mid-Term Evaluation report will include:

* Executive summary
* Introduction
* Findings and conclusions in relation to issues to be addressed identified under the *Evaluation* section of this TOR
* Recommendations
* Lessons Learned
* Annexes

The draft and final report will be written in the format outlined in ANNEX 1 of this TOR. The draft report will be submitted to UNDP/GEF and the Ministry of Natural Resources no later than October 20th 2008. Based on the feedback received from stakeholders a final report will be prepared by 1st of November 2008.

The report will be submitted both electronically and in printed version, in Russian and English.

The report will be supplemented by rate tables (ANNEX 3).

**6. EVALUATOR QUALITIES:**

The Mid-term evaluation will be carried by an individual consultant or a team of two external consultants. Evaluation team shall possess the following qualifications:

1. Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
2. Experience applying participatory monitoring approaches;
3. Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
4. Recent knowledge of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
5. Recent knowledge of UNDP’s results-based evaluation policies and procedures
6. Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to conservation or natural resource management projects;
7. Recognized expertise in the management and sustainable use of wetlands in temperate ecosystems;
8. Familiarity with protected area policies and management structures in Romania;
9. Demonstrable analytical skills;
10. Work experience in relevant areas for at least 10 years;
11. Experience with multilateral or bilateral supported conservation projects;
12. Project evaluation experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
13. Excellent English communication skills.

**7. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

**Evaluation management arrangements**

* Role of Project Manager (located in Syktyvkar)
  + Coordination of evaluation activities and logistics in the Komi Republic
  + Arrangement of field site visits
  + Organization of meetings with selected stakeholders
* Role of UNDP
  + Coordination of evaluation activities in Moscow
  + Administrative and logistical support for the evaluator in Moscow

**Tentative timeframe**

* Selection of evaluator April-May 2011
* Briefings for evaluator May-August 2011 (precise dates tbc)
* Desk review May-August 2011 (precise dates tbc)
* Debriefings in Moscow and Syktyvkar September 2011 (precise dates tbc)
* Trip to the field sites (including allocation for travel), interviews with
* local stakeholders, questionnairs Mid-End September 2011 (precise dates tbc, preliminary planned for 14-30 September)
* Validation of preliminary findings with stakeholders through circulation of initial reports for comments, meetings, and other types of feedback mechanisms

October 2011

* Preparation of final evaluation report November-December 2011

**Annex 2. GEF Operational Principles**

**http://www.gefweb.org/public/opstrat/ch1.htm**

**TEN OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT**

**AND IMPLEMENTATIONOF THE GEF'S WORK PROGRAM**

1. For purposes of the financial mechanisms for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the GEF will **function under the guidance of, and be accountable to, the Conference of the Parties** (COPs). For purposes of financing activities in the focal area of ozone layer depletion, GEF operational policies will be consistent with those of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and its amendments.

2. The GEF will provide new, and additional, grant and concessional funding to meet the agreed **incremental costs** of measures to achieve agreed global environmental benefits.

3. The GEF will ensure the **cost-effectiveness** of its activities to maximize global environmental benefits.

4. The GEF will fund projects that are **country-driven** and based on national priorities designed to support sustainable development, as identified within the context of national programs.

5. The GEF will maintain sufficient **flexibility** to respond to changing circumstances, including evolving guidance of the Conference of the Parties and experience gained from monitoring and evaluation activities.

6. GEF projects will provide for **full disclosure** of all non-confidential information.

7. GEF projects will provide for consultation with, and **participation** as appropriate of, the beneficiaries and affected groups of people.

8. GEF projects will conform to the **eligibility** requirements set forth in paragraph 9 of the GEF Instrument.

9. In seeking to maximize global environmental benefits, the GEF will emphasize its **catalytic role** and leverage additional financing from other sources.

10. The GEF will ensure that its programs and projects are **monitored and evaluated** on a regular basis.

**Annex 3: Komi PAs Project Status of Objective and Outcome Delivery as Per Measurable Indicators (from the MTE TORs)**

|  | **Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Mid-term target** | **End of project Target** | **2011 PIR Value** | **Mid-term Assessed Value** | **Comments and Suggested Revisions** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective:**  A representative and effectively managed network of protected areas ensures conservation of pristine boreal forest and taiga ecosystems in the Komi Republic | Total area of PA sites replaced by new/alternative sites with the higher BD value (hectares) | No replacement; KR PA system covers 14% of the area of the KR | Proposals for at least 10,000ha of replacement PAs with higher global BD values; KR PA system covers 14% of the area of the KR | At least 10,000 ha of replacement PAs with higher global BD values; KR PA system covers 14% of the area of the KR | No replacement; KR PA system covers the same area of the KR.  Proposals establishing of new 1 Federal and 23 Regional PAs with total area of 804,534 ha of replacement PAs with higher global BD values has been submitted to the Ministry of Nature resources and Environmental protection of the Komi Republic | Concur with the self-assessed results. The mid-term target focused on making the proposal because the project alone is not capable of establishing PAs, which must be done through a comprehensive government process. A proposal, based on the results of the project’s PA gap analysis and ongoing PA inventory, has been made to the government with a net increase of 804,534 hectares of PAs in the KR, including both federal and republic level PAs. The new federal level PA is Kygorosky National Park, which is already on the provisional list for establishment, but the project will accelerate what would otherwise happen in 2020. The proposal includes the elimination of eight current regional zakazniks and national monuments (totalling 16,085 hectares) that have lost their natural values due to human activities. For example, stand-alone cedars away from the main cedar forest were previously declared national monuments, but in some cases these trees have been lost. | The 10,000 ha target is meant as a net figure, including eliminated areas. The indicator was originally proposed as a percentage, but would not have been significant given the size of the KR. The target was developed during the PDF-B based on the estimates of experts considering potential new areas that would be identified as high biodiversity areas, since, for example, it was known even before the gap analysis that the tundra ecosystem was under represented in protection coverage. The current PA inventory has shown that the actual current coverage percentage is 13.5%. If the government accepts the full proposal for new PA coverage, PAs will cover 15.4% of the KR territory. However, the process for eliminating PAs is easier than the process for creating PAs, so if the elimination portion of the PA proposal is accepted before the end of the project but the creation portion is accepted after the project, at the end of the project it will appear as though the project has actually decreased PA coverage in the KR. The indicator is fine as it is, as long as a practical view of this issue is taken in context at the project’s final evaluation in rating project results. |
| Ecosystem coverage and representativeness in the regional PA system | Area covered by different habitat types in PAs of the Komi Republic is not defined  Area covered by various vegetation types in PAs of the Komi Republic is not defined | Coverage of habitat types identified in main geographical zones as a result of PAs inventory. Proposals for improved coverage for:  - Old-growth forests  - Mire ecosystems  - Upper reaches of rivers  - Lower reaches of rivers  - Tundra ecosystems:  - Key habitats with concentration of rare species  Coverage of vegetation types identified in main geographical zones as a result of PAs inventory. Proposals for improved coverage for:  - Dark-coniferous taiga  - Mountain boreal coniferous forests  - Birch and birch-spruce open forests  - Stony lichen tundra, with sparse mosses and lichens  - Typical tundra, with a well-developed low- shrub moss layer | Inventory of biodiversity in the regional PA system completed. Habitat types and vegetation types are identified for the whole system.  Coverage of underrepresented habitats and vegetation types increased by at least 10 % from existing PA’s areas.  A strategy for further development of regional PA system of the Komi Republic developed. | (a) According to the results of the inventory carried out in 2000-2010 for 131 out of 238 protected areas in the Republic of Komi. Coverage of habitat types identified in main geographical zones as a result of PAs inventory. Proposals with total area of 804,534 ha has been proposed for improved coverage for:  - Old-growth forests  - Mire ecosystems  - Upper reaches of rivers  - Lower reaches of rivers  - Tundra ecosystems:  - Key habitats with concentration of rare species  (b) Pechoro-Ilych Nature Reserve and the National Park “Yugyd va” are territories where types of habitats and vegetation are most represented, up to 7-8 and up to 12, respectively. They have ecosystems which are practically undisturbed by human activities and they are also characterized by the maximum concentration of types of mushrooms, plants and animals listed in the Red Book of the Republic of Komi. | Concur with the self-assessed results. The proposal for increased PA coverage is targeted around ensuring coverage and representativeness of key habitat types and vegetation types. | The indicator would benefit from some clarification. It should be stated that the representativeness goal is that at least 10% of each of the respective habitat and vegetation types is to be included in PAs. This indicator presents some challenges for the project however, because the proposal for the revision of the PA system was one of the early priorities for the project, while the PA biodiversity inventory is still ongoing, and therefore it is not possible to assess the baseline coverage percentage of each of the respective habitats and vegetation types. Taking this issue into consideration, a revised indicator could be simply the level of coverage and representation, with the target being that the project has increased coverage and representation toward the overall goal of 10% of the KR and of critical habitat types. The extent of the increase should still be documented.  Also see notes on the first indicator for Outcome 1 below. This ecosystem representativeness indicator could be shifted to serve as an outcome level indicator for Outcome 1 below, since the focus of Outcome 1 is improved coverage of biodiversity by the KR PA system. In this case, a replacement objective level indicator would help assess the extent and quality of “pristine boreal forest and taiga ecosystems” (the focus of the project objective). This could be translated into an indicator such as “percentage of the KR covered by boreal forest” with a target of “at least 10%.” A different overall percentage goal for the KR could be specified depending on the baseline, and what the desired long-term normative situation is. For example, if the KR is 50% covered by boreal forest, and stakeholders in the KR have determined that 35% coverage is a long-term adequate level to meet biodiversity conservation and socio-economic goals, then this would be the target. However, within the scope of the project the target may be just to ensure that “at least 10%” is conserved. The same indicator approach could be used for taiga ecosystems as well. A second important indicator would be the quality, or “intactness” of the boreal and taiga ecosystems. There are multiple ways to assess forest intactness; examples can be seen in the Canadian BEACONs project, which assesses the intactness of Canadian boreal forest. More info at <http://www.beaconsproject.ca/intactness>. Some level of baseline data apparently exists on forest intactness in the KR, as seen in “Figure 3” of the project document, “Pristine forest areas of the KR.” However, to be relevant for biodiversity conservation, an intactness indicator must be at a “landscape” scale (in contrast to the current first indicator for Outcome 1), or targeted at key biodiversity “corridors” or “bottlenecks” for example to benefit migratory species. |
| Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores | * Pechoro-Ilychsky Nature Reserve: 52 * National Park “Yugyd va”: 30 * Ichtyological reserve “Ilychsky”: 18.5 * Complex reserve “Usinsky complexny”: 24.2 * Marsh reserve “Ocean”: 11.5 * Complex reserve “Udorsky”: 18.5 | * Pechoro-Ilychsky Nature Reserve: 59 * National Park “Yugyd va”: 38 * Ichtyological reserve “Ilychsky”: 30 * Complex reserve “Usinsky complexny”: 32 * Marsh reserve “Ocean”: 18 * Complex reserve “Udorsky”: 23 | * Pechoro-Ilychsky Nature Reserve: 69 * National Park “Yugyd va”: 51 * Ichtyological reserve “Ilychsky”: 46.2 * Complex reserve “Usinsky complexny”: 45 * Marsh reserve “Ocean”: 33.5 * Complex reserve “Udorsky”: 41.5 | N/A  According to the Work Plan for 2009-2013, the next evaluation will be completed by August 2011. | The project team provided an updated mid-term METT assessment, conducted in August 2011. The updated mid-term values are provided below; the current assessment shows an increase against the baseline for all of the PAs. The mid-term target was met for two of the five PAs. The project team indicates they are confident that the target value will be reached by the end of the project.   * Pechoro-Ilychsky Nature Reserve: 60 * National Park “Yugyd va”: 35 * Ichtyological reserve “Ilychsky”: 23 * Complex reserve “Usinsky complexny”: 26.5 * Marsh reserve “Ocean”: 16 * Complex reserve “Udorsky”: 25.4   The baseline coverage of PA hectares in the KR has been established as 5,615,945, according to the PA gap analysis and inventory conducted under the project. | According to the project team, the target value was determined based on an expert assessment of what could be achieved relative to the baseline value for each of the PAs specified.  No revisions suggested. |
| **Outcome 1:**  The PA system of Komi republic is redesigned so as to better capture globally significant BD. | Сoverage of undisturbed / pristine forest ecosystems in selected indicative regional PAs[[28]](#footnote-29):  1. Marsh reserve “Boloto Pechorskoe”, 6392 ha  2. Complex reserve “Verkhne-Lokchimsky”. 42422 ha  3. Cedar reserve Soplessky, 883 ha  4. Cedar reserve Podchersky, 1672 ha | Baseline coverage:  1. 80%  2. 80%  3. 90%  4. 20% | Proposals for re-structuring completed, paperwork prepared.  Preliminary list of regional PAs to be re-designed developed as a result of inventory and gap analysis. | Target coverage / area of replaced sites:  1. 90% / 640 ha  2. 90% / 420 ha  3. 100% / 80 ha  4. 50% / 500 ha | Proposals for re-structuring completed, paperwork prepared.  Preliminary list of regional PAs to be re-designed developed as a result of inventory and gap analysis. Proposals for establishing of new 1 Federal and 23 Regional Pas submitted | Concur with the self-assessed results. This indicator relates to the activity of restructuring the PA system under the proposal previously discussed. | According to the project team the purpose of the indicator was to somehow quantify the elimination of significantly disturbed areas from the PA system and the incorporation of undisturbed areas. This could be done either by shifting the boundaries of a single PA, or by fully eliminating PAs with high disturbance and creating new PAs in undisturbed areas.  The level of anthropogenic disturbance within the PA network is a valuable metric for assessing the overall status of the PA network, but this specific indicator is not well-structured for assessing project results. This evaluation recommends that this indicator be de-emphasized or eliminated, as it does not add significantly to documenting project results related to the proposed redesign of the PA system beyond the previous objective-level indicators on total percentage coverage, and representation of habitats and vegetation types. The indicator on habitat and vegetation representation could be shifted to be an indicator for Outcome 1 rather than an overall objective level indicator. See further discussion under the ecosystem coverage indicator for the project objective. |
| Senior staff of the Department of Rosprirodnadzor, MNR/KR and individual protected areas consider that there is a functioning KR PA system | 0% | 20% | 70% | 93% Standard interview has been taken of 30 managers and representatives of Nature protected institutions of the Komi Republic in April 2011. | Concur with the self-assessed results. The project has a standard questionnaire that was conducted at the beginning of the project and in April 2011. The questionnaire includes a number of questions, but at least one question specifically addresses the existence of a functioning PA system in the Komi Republic. | Such surveys can be useful, particularly when targeted at a limited number of knowledgeable individuals. How a “functioning PA system” is defined should be clearly considered however – this could be defined in a basic manner as a PA system that is generating the desired biodiversity and socio-economic benefits and is sustainable, but more detailed metrics could be specified in the survey. The baseline and target values must also be rationalized – what is the ideal target? In the context of this indicator, presumably the normative situation should be that ALL senior staff consider that there is a functioning PA system, so the target would be 100%. An argument could be made for a lower threshold, but an appropriate basisneeds to be stated. The use of the survey should be continued for its utility to the project, but to be valuable as an indicator for assessing project results the survey methodology and definitions must be robust. |
| **Outcome 2:** Increased institutional capacity for management of protected areas within the KR PA system | Annual contribution to the KR PA system through public-private partnerships | Estimated $80,000 (check) | $140,000 | $250,000 | N/A The partnership agreements between Gasprom transgas Ukhta Ltd. and Severnye Magistralnye Nefteprovody Ltd. with the National Park “Yugyd va” and Pechora-Ilych Nature Reserve, respectively, were concluded. The sum of support to be assess before the mid-term evaluation. | Concur with the self-assessed results. This indicator is intended to cover the federal PAs as well, and to date the support provided by the private sector has been almost entirely for the federal PAs. The most significant is the support from Gazprom to Yugyd va National Park. Previously requests for support from the national park administration to Gazprom were on an ad-hoc basis, but now specific areas of cooperation have been determined. For example, Gazprom has agreed to allow the national park staff use of the service roads that parallel the pipeline running through the national park. Gazprom is also providing helicopter transport to address poaching and fire fighting, and providing other regular helicopter based transportation support to park rangers. According to documentation from Gazprom provided by the project, Gazprom has contributed a total of approximately $770,000 from 2008 to mid-2011, at current exchange rates. This has been in the form of a. direct charitable cash assistance for specific activities; b. contracting nature conservation organizations (i.e. national park administration and Institute of Biology) to carry out nature conservation activities related to the pipeline area; and c. in-kind air transportation service. | The level of private sector support provided as measured by actual dollars is a good indicator, but would be improved through rationalization of the target. One way to do this could be, for example, the private sector’s direct contribution as a percentage of the overall funding for PAs in the Komi Republic. How much should the private sector ideally be contributing to support the Komi Republic’s PAs on a long-term annual basis? Should this be 5%, of total required funding? 10%? 25%? This could be agreed through an ongoing dialogue with the private sector. This evaluation is not in a position to define what the optimum percentage level of private sector contribution to PAs budget should be, but recommends using a percentage figure of the total required annual budget compared to an absolute value dollar amount. |
| Annual contribution supporting PA infrastructure development through the Ecological Fund | $0 | Fund established | $60,000 | $0.  The NoncommercialPartnership «Union of Protected areas of the Komi Republic» has been established by Ministry of Nature resources and Environmental protection of KR, National park "Yugyd va", Pechora-Ilych zapovednik and Institute of Biology, Komi Science Centre UrD RAS. The goal of Partnership is Nature protection in the Komi republic and PAs support. Expected revenue from Partnership for PAs until June 30, 2012 is over $105000. | Concur with the self-assessed results. The Non-commercial partnership has been established in place of the Ecological Fund, which was determined to be logistically infeasible due to legislative restrictions. This shift in approach represents one strong example of the project’s adaptive management and results-based focus. A key priority for the project in the remaining implementation period will be to build the capacity of the non-commercial partnership to undertake initiatives for revenue generation, and ensure the long-term viability of this entity. | The $60,000 target was deemed to be a “reasonable” goal for revenue generation by the end of the project, although ultimately a much higher figure is hoped for. The non-commercial partnership has the overall much larger mission of supporting implementation of the PA business plans. |
| Financial scorecard value | $650,000 | $1,000,000 | $1,680,000 | Not measured in the reporting period. To be measured at the mid-term. | Mid-term results from financial scorecard to be compiled by UNDP and project team. | None. |
| Capacity Assessment Scorecard values | Systemic: 8  Institutional: 12  Individual: 6 | Systemic: 10  Institutional: 12  Individual: 8 | Systemic: 20  Institutional: 30  Individual: 12 | Not measured in the reporting period. To be measured at the mid-term. | Mid-term results from capacity assessment scorecard to be compiled by UNDP and project team. | None. |
| Surveys of residents of communities close to the protected areas shows increased support for the protected areas, in terms of answers to questions such as:  Question 1: Does the protected area work for future generation interest?  Question 2: Does the protected area work in the interest of the regional local population?  Question 3: Does the protected area limit the possibilities of economical development of the region?  Question 4: How do you wish to cooperate with the protected area (proportion expressing “no wish)? | Q1: 70.9%  Q2: 28.2%  Q3: 29.5%  Q4: 15.4% | No mid-term targets (too frequent surveys may lead to survey apathy) | Q1: >82%  Q2: >60%  Q3: <20%  Q4: <8% | N/A | Survey not carried out at mid-term to avoid “survey fatigue”. The project team does not anticipate issues reaching the final targets, given the number and extent of awareness raising activities undertaken. | None, although the target values need to be clearly rationalized – why is 82% or greater the goal for Q1? Targets can be rationalized by logically linking public support to the goals of the PA. What are the public support barriers to effective and sustainable PA management? What percentage of the public needs to support the PA for it to be successful? Or, alternatively, what percentage of the public can be unsupportive before the PA faces significant problems? It is acceptable for a target figure to be “what level of increase seems feasible in the time of the project” but if this is the only basis for the target value it should be explicit.  During analysis of results from survey follow-up there should to be appropriate consideration given to the potential differences in respondent groups from the baseline to final survey. |
| **Outcome 3:** Application of business planning principles result in diversified revenue streams for the KR PA system | KR PA system business plan has identified revenue sources worth at least $250,000 annually to the system | No plan | Plan under development | Plan with identification of revenue sources amounting to $250,000 annually | US $247,704 A pilot business plans based on International standards for the Pechora-Ilych Reserve as well as for the National Park "Yugyd va"were complected, corrected and their implementation was started. | Concur with the self-assessed results. Business plans for the two federal PAs have been prepared, which are the first comprehensive PA business plans produced in Russia. Eventually a total of 12 PA business plans will be produced. According to the business plans produced for the two PAs, an estimated annual budget of $580,000 is required to manage Pechora-IllychNature Reserve effectively, and a total of $890,000 annually would be required for management of Yugyd va National Park. The current funding gap for these two PAs alone is estimated at $880,000. The Yugyd va business plan identifies budget savings and revenue strategies to fully address the funding gaps by the year 2016, and the Pechora-Illych business plan identifies financing strategies to address the financing gap by 2018 (assuming immediate implementation of the plans). | The indicator could be revised and updated to reflect the goal of the business plans in fully addressing the PA financing gaps within X number of years. As currently structured the indicator is not relevant or very results-focused. The purpose of the business plans is to assist in establishing sustainable financing for effective PA management, and the indicator should reflect this. Thus a revised indicator could be along the lines of “PA business plans developed for 12 PAs that identify financial strategies to eliminate PA financing gaps within seven years, and implementation of business plans initiated.” |
| Revenue from tourism on the territory of Pechora Ilych Zapovednik (including the zone of promotion) | US $22,000 | US$45,000 | U$158,000 | US $96,271 | Concur with the self-assessed results. This revenue comes from tourism services provided by the national park, which is then returned to the management budget. This is in contract to concessionary revenue, which the PAs do not have the legal right to retain. | According to the project team, the targets for this and the Yugyd va indicator (below) are based on multiple reports and assessments from PA staff and economic experts during the PDF-B phase. As such, the targets are likely to represent “achievable” values. A logframe revision could provide more clarity on what the goal of these targets is – the business plans were only developed after the original logframe was developed, but now, for example, the Pechora-Illych business plan states that tourism-based revenue options can generate $985,893 in revenue by the seventh year of implementation. Thus the end-of-project target (which would presumably be approximately two years into business plan implementation) is approximately 16% of the long-term goal; this then requires an annual growth rate of 44% to reach the projected total in year seven. In addition, between the two PAs, the baseline vs. target value represents an approximately 64% annual tourism revenue growth rate over the four year implementation period for Pechora-Illych, vs. a 68% growth rate for Yugyd va. It would be helpful to know what the basis for the difference in these growth targets is, and what the baseline growth rate was. Examining expected growth rates can also provide more insight on whether these are realistic targets. Considering the business planning approach, private sector comparisons may be instructive: average annual nominal revenue growth in the private sector has been assessed to be less than 5%, although “start-up” companies often have higher growth rates in their initial years (similar to a PA developing its tourism infrastructure). Now that the business plans have been developed with revenue projections, the indicator targets could be revised as “20% of the expected long-term tourism revenue” or “tourism revenue grows at an annual rate of 40%”. The exact percentage figure would have to be agreed by project stakeholders based on baseline tourism revenues, and the realism of the long-term expected revenue figures. |
| Revenue from tourism on the territory of National Park “Yugyd va” (including the zone of promotion) | US $53,000 | US$146,000 | U$422,000 | US $151,433 | Concur with the self-assessed results. See above. |
| **Outcome 4:**  Improved protected area system in Komi Republic for better conservation of globally important biodiversity and maintenance of carbon pools | Level of equipment of federal and regional Pas with respect to fire-prevention and CC adaptation | Basic to none | Moderate | High | Moderate. Scientific equipment purchase for Institute Biology Carbon fluxes monitoring as well as Special fire detection and fire fighting equipment (boat engines; GPS navigators; satphones; petrol-powered saws) for hard-to-reach areas of PINR procured. | Concur with the self-assessed results. Procurement completed and in-process for various types of equipment that has been assessed as being of critical importance, and agreed with all stakeholders. Equipment will eventually allow more rapid response to fires, facilitate communication for coordination and transport, and improve on-the-ground fire fighting capacity. The equipment procured will represent a comprehensive approach to fire response for the PAs. | The first three indicators under Outcome 4 relate to the carbon component’s efforts on fire fighting to reduce carbon emissions.  The first indicator could be significantly improved through revision, in conjunction with the following two indicators. To begin with, the baseline and target values are not clearly defined.  However, the first indicator could be completely changed to a more results-focused indicator. The goal of the fire-fighting equipment is to reduce the area and intensity of fires compared to the baseline situation in any given fire season. An outcome-based indicator could focus on, for example, the average time it takes fire fighting crews to reach a reported fire, based on the logic that the more quickly crews can respond, the smaller a fire is likely to be. An even more useful impact-focused indicator could be the average size of fires in the targeted area. According to the project team data to track such an indicator is available. Theoretically, the fire-fighting equipment should allow crews to reduce the average size of fires over time, which would be a positive environmental impact from a carbon emissions perspective.  This then relates to the second fire-related indicator – carbon emissions from forest fires. As a starting point the baseline and target values could be revised based on currently available data. This is a good indicator in terms of being focused at the impact level, but because the number and extent of fires can vary naturally from year to year depending on annual climate conditions, an indicator such as a rolling average value may be more appropriate. For example, the indicator could be “average tC/y emissions over any five year period” and the target could be “an average of less than 3,000 tC/y.” The time period and emissions level would have to be rationalized based on further data analysis; for example periodicity could be calculated as the period likely to include one positive and one negative outlier year, based on the determined frequency of outlier years. The baseline figure should be available from historical data; the project team would need to assess current data to determine a reasonable target, keeping ecological requirements in mind – in combating climate change, fewer carbon emissions are generally better, but a minimum annual base level of fire may be healthy for an ecosystem, and help prevent catastrophic fires in the long-term.  Similar to the second fire-related indicator, the third indicator on area burned could be revised to reflect a rolling annual average over a three, five, or seven year period. Considering that the benefits of the project’s fire-fighting equipment procurement will mainly accrue starting in years three and four of the project, a four year rolling average calculation may allow the project to demonstrate results by the end of the project. |
| Emissions of carbon (tC/y) from forest fires at target areas | 134,484 | 94,139 | 65,964 (year 6) | 2,765; the reason for that that there are less forest fires then expected during preparing the project | Concur with the self-assessed results. When the project was prepared there was not adequate data on the specific project areas, so average values for the KR were used to calculate a baseline value. The amount of emissions varies significantly by year depending on the severity of the fire season, according to how much forest burns each year, and the type of forest burned. Therefore with improved data and a low-intensity fire season in 2011 the amount of emissions was calculated to be significantly below the baseline and target values. |
| Hectares burnt annually at targeted areas | 2,328 ha | 1,900 ha | <1,400 ha | 110,0; the reason for that that there are less forest fires then expected during preparing the project | Concur with the self-assessed results. Forestry Committee statistical reports used for calculations. 2011 proved to be a low severity fire season. Because the amount of area burned can naturally vary significantly from year to year, the indicator should be revised to be based on something other than an annual cycle. See further discussion at right. |
| Number of types of climate change adaptation activities tested at Upper Pechora forests | None | At least 2 pilot CC adaptation activities under implementation | At least 4 pilot CC adaptation activities under completion / implementation | 2 pilot CC adaptation activities in federal national park and zapovednik under implementation. | For this indicator “pilot adaptation activities” are not clearly defined. The project is supporting multiple streams of intervention related to climate change adaptation. Under Output 2 the project document indicates that the project will invest in demonstration projects not related to fires, such as reforestation using natural seed material or genetically improved seeds adapted to climate change, extending the rotation period of commercially planted species to increase sequestration, or introducing multi-species planting into current mono-species coniferous plantations. The most significant and discrete adaptation activity supported by the project are the test plantations of lodgepole pines (a non-native species) at different latitudes in the KR to assess this species’ potential carbon sequestration capacity relative to native species for potential future large-scale deployment. The project has also supported the PAs for activities such as the creation of fire breaks. The project also plans to hold workshops at both of the federal PAs on the prevention of forest fires, inviting various local stakeholders. | The original basis for planning four pilot activities was that the activities would cover 1. Pilot measures related to carbon sequestering vegetation; 2. Reforestation after a fire; and 3 and 4 relating to fire-related activities such as creation of firebreaks, creating reservoirs for fire fighting, and improving fire safety at forest recreation sites.  The value of pilot and demonstration activities is in the dissemination of the knowledge they cultivate, and their eventual upscaling and replication. Thus it may be useful to revise this indicator to focus on outcome level changes related to enhanced knowledge related to forest management and climate change. For example, a relevant indicator could be “an increased level of knowledge in the Komi Republic on managing forests and biodiversity for adaptation to climate change” as measured by before-and-after surveys of participants in an end-of-project workshop focused on sharing the lessons and knowledge gained from the project related to managing ecosystems to address climate change. Even if a baseline survey has not been conducted, participants in an end-of-project survey could make a qualitative assessment of whether or not their knowledge of this issue has increased as a result of the project, and if so, in what ways. In this sense the survey would need to be sure to include a representative sample of relevant stakeholders, and not just individuals who have been directly involved in the project. |
| Area of high nature-value boreal forests and peatlands in Upper Pechora covered by sophisticated carbon monitoring system | 0 ha | 1.58 million ha (2 federal PAs launch proper carbon monitoring) | 1.63 million ha (all project target PAs complete installation of the carbon monitoring systems) |  | The intention is not necessarily that monitoring equipment will physically cover all of the PA area in the KR, but that monitoring will be conducted in ecosystem-specific test sites, the data from which can then be applied through modelling to all ecosystems in the PA territories to improve understanding of carbon cycles.  There will be 33 points of permanent environmental observation established in project PAs, covering a total area of about 75,600 hectares. This area includes 13 republic level PAs, and the two federal level PAs. Of the republic-level PA sites, 11 of these are forest PAs and two are peatland PAs. | The goal of the monitoring activity is to improve the understanding of carbon stocks and cycles based on the different ecosystem types found in the PAs, as well as in the wider KR landscape. This generally done through modelling at the landscape level based on data from site-level monitoring. Thus, hectares covered by the monitoring system is not a highly relevant indicator, and the indicator should be revised to focus on the ecosystem coverage of the monitoring system. Examples covered by the monitoring system are spruce forest, pine forest, mixed coniferous and broadleaf forest, peatlands, and assessment of vegetation biomass, peat reserves, and other metrics relevant to the calculation of carbon reserves and carbon flows. The project monitoring is not covering tundra ecosystems, or areas affected by human activity such as drained peatlands or forest harvested areas.  The revised indicator should be able to demonstrate the results of the project monitoring system in terms of the relative increase in knowledge of the KR for understanding carbon stocks and flows. An example indicator could be something like “reduction in error bounds in carbon cycle modelling for KR ecosystems based on improved data from monitoring of 10 vegetation / ecosystem types.” The standard error of a scientific model is typically calculated based on variance that cannot be resolved through data inputs, and by cross-validation tests; theoretically, carbon cycle modelling output quality should be improved through higher quality data inputs. Improved data should result in a higher level of certainty, and the change in “certainty” before and after having improved data should be calculable. This is only one suggestion for a revised indicator – it is anticipated the project team could devise a similar indictor that would appropriately reflect the results generated from the monitoring system, and their intended use. The important element is to reflect the ecosystem and vegetation coverage of the monitoring rather than the absolute area of the monitoring. Another example indicator could be something like “carbon stock and flow monitoring system in operation covering all KR PA vegetation and ecosystem types.” |

**Annex 4. List of Persons Met and Interviewed During Mid-term Evaluation Mission**

1. Margarita Afanasieva, Lead Specialist of Ministry of Education of the Republic of Komi
2. Elena Armand, Head of the UNDP Country Office in the Russian Federation
3. Ivan Azarkiv, Deputy Head of Vuktyl local administration
4. Vladimir Beryushev, Head of the Department of Fauna and Fauna Habitats Protection, Control and Management, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Komi
5. Roman Biryukov, Director of Finance Division, the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation, Economics and Finance Department
6. Alexey Blagovidov, Non-Commercial Partnership “Men and Birds
7. Yulia Gorelova, Non-Commercial Partnership “Men and Birds”
8. Alexander Borovinskikh, Expert of the All-Russian Non-Governmental Organization “Russian Ecological Union”
9. Natalia Butorina, Ecological Centre “Nature Reserves”
10. Ivan Bystran, Deputy Director for General Issues of the National Park “Yugyd va”
11. Ivan Chadin, Deputy Director of the Institute of Biology, Komi Science Centre, Ural Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences
12. Lyubov Chalysheva, Head of the Educational Centre for Sustainable Development, Komi State Teachers Training Institute
13. Tamara Dmitrieva, Chief of Laboratory, Institute of Social, Economic and Energy Problems of the North, Komi Science Centre, Ural Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences
14. Alexey Fedorkov, UNDP/GEF KR PA Project Climate Change Adaptation Expert
15. Vyacheslav Fedorovich, Deputy of the State Council of the Republic of Komi of the 4th Convocation
16. Yevgeny Fefilov, Senior State Inspector of the National Park “Yugyd va”
17. Marina Fomenko, Deputy Director of Institute “Cadaster”
18. Georgy Fomenko, Head of Institute “Cadaster”
19. Tatiana Fomicheva, Director of the National Park “Yugyd va”
20. Sergey Gabov, Head of the Interregional Social Movement “Komi voityr”
21. Sergei Geraimovich, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Komi
22. Alexander Gibezh, First Deputy Minister of Industrial Development, Transport and Communications of the Republic of Komi
23. Vladilena Gimadieva, Chairperson of the Commission for Ecology and Nature Management Issues, Public Chamber of the Republic of Komi, Leader of the Komi Environmentalists Movement
24. Vladimir Gogin, Expert of OJSC “Komi Republic Investment Project Support Fund”
25. Anastasia Gubanova, Specialist of the Environment Unit, UNDP Country Office in the Russian Federation
26. Nikolay Gubinov, Head of the Land Use and Projects Appraisal Unit, OJSC “Mondi Syktyvkar Pulp and Paper Mill”
27. Vladimir Gulitskiy, Head of the Forest Exploitation Management Department, Forestry Committee of the Republic of Komi
28. Evgeny Iz’yurov, Head of Division of the Ecology and Nature Management Committee of the State Council of the Republic of Komi
29. Vladimir Kabantsev, Head of Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Komi
30. Lyudmila Kabantseva, Head of the External Relations Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Komi
31. Pyotr Khlestunov, UNDP/GEF KR PA Project Legal Consultant
32. Sergey Kochanov, Ornithologist, Head of Laboratory of the Institute of Biology, Komi Science Centre, Ural Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences
33. Alexander Kochmak, Head of the Tourism Development Department, Ministry of Economic Development of the Republic of Komi
34. Sergey Kokovkin, UNDP/GEF KR PA Project Purchasing Expert
35. Sergei Korol’kov, Deputy Director of the Komi Department of Rosprirodnadzor, National Project Director
36. Ekaterina Kovaleva, Accountant of the National Park “Yugyd va”
37. Dominika Kudryavtseva, Acting Director of the Pechora-Ilych Nature Reserve
38. Inna Kupriyanova, Senior Scientist of the Pechora-Ilych Nature Reserve
39. Alexander Kuratov, Deputy Director of the Forestry Committee of the Republic of Komi
40. Andrey Melnichuk, UNDP/GEF KR PA Project Administrator of the Economic Component
41. Oleg Mikhailov, postgraduate student of the Institute of Biology, Komi Science Centre, Ural Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences
42. Margarita Moiseeva, UNDP/GEF KR PA Project Community Awareness and Media Relations Specialist
43. Alexei Mosin, Methods Expert of the Pechora-Ilych Nature Reserve
44. Lyudmila Ogrodovaya, Head of the Protected Areas Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Komi
45. Natalia Olofinskaya, Head of the Environment Unit, UNDP Country Office in the Russian Federation
46. Alexander Oshis, Interpreter
47. Svetlana Plyusnina, Director of the Ecological and Educational Centre “Snegir”
48. Roman Polshvedkin, Deputy Director of the Territorial Databank on Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Komi
49. Vasily Ponomarev, UNDP/GEF KR PA Project Manager
50. Alexander Popov, National Project Director
51. Tatiana Pystina, Senior Research Scientist, Division of Flora and Fauna of the North, Institute of Biology, Komi Science Centre, Ural Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences
52. Andrei Satsuk, Director of the Elk Farm of the Pechora-Ilych Nature Reserve
53. Konstantin Satsyuk, Director of the Non-Commercial Partnership “The Union of Protected Areas of the Republic of Komi”
54. Valentina Semyashkina, Member of the Social Pechora Rescue Committee and Komi Izhma People’s Social Movement “Izhvatas”, and Komi Regional Non-Commercial Foundation “Silver Taiga”
55. Natalia Shalagina, Senior State Inspector of the National Park “Yugyd va”
56. Valentina Sheveleva, UNDP/GEF KR PA Project Accountant
57. Yury Shubin, Head of Department of Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Komi
58. Ilya Sidorin, Head of Troitsko-Pechorsk Region Administration
59. Tatiana Sidorova, Head of System of Additional Education of Ministry of Education of the Republic of Komi
60. Fedor Smirnov, Deputy Director for Protection of the Pechora-Ilych Nature Reserve
61. Natalia Studigrad, Deputy Minister of Education of the Republic of Komi
62. Andrey Tentyukov, UNDP/GEF KR PA Project Administrator of the Institutional Component
63. Anastasia Tentyukova, UNDP/GEF KR PA Project Assistant
64. Alexey Troitsky, Director of Protected Area Office, the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation, Department of National Policy and Control in the Field of Environmental Protection and Ecological Safety
65. Sergey Tsogoev, Deputy Head of the Fishery Department for the Komi Republic Syktyvkar
66. Tatiana Tyupenko, Head of the International Programmes Implementation Division
67. Alexey Umrilov, Deputy Director for Protection of the National Park “Yugyd va”
68. Maxim Vergeichik, Regional Technical Advisor, UNDP Bratislava Regional Center
69. Tatyana Vityazeva, Deputy Director of the State Educational Institution for Children’s Extended Education “Komi Republic Ecological and Biological Centre”
70. Irina Viznichenko, All-Russian Institute for Advanced Training of Forest Sector Workers and Specialists
71. Alexei Yakushev, Deputy Director for Forestry Activities of the Pechora-Ilych Nature Reserve
72. Sergey Yuretsky, Head of the Environmental Protection Unit, Gasprom transgas Ukhta Ltd.
73. Svetlana Zagirova, UNDP/GEF KR PA Project Administrator of the Carbon Component
74. Vladimir Zainullin, Head of Department, Syktyvkar State University
75. Valentina Zhideleva, Director of Syktyvkar Forest Institute

**Annex 5. Evaluation Field Visit Schedule**

*Note: The actual mid-term evaluation itinerary undertaken varied slightly from the below official version prepared beforehand by the project team.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Tuesday, 13.09.2011** |
| Arrival in Moscow |
| **Wednesday, 14.09.2011** |
| **9:30 am:** Meeting at UNDP Country Office  **11:00 am:** Meeting at the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation, Department of National Policy and Control in the Field of Environmental Protection and Ecological Safety  **12:30 pm:** Meeting at the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation, Economics and Finance Department  **3:00 pm:** Meeting at UNDP Country Office  Arrival in Syktyvkar from Moscow by air |
| **Thursday, 15.09.2011** |
| **9:00 am:** Meeting with the Project Team  **2:00 pm:** Meeting at the Komi Department of Rosprirodnadzor |
| **Friday, 16.09.2011** |
| **9:00 am:** Meeting at the External Relations Department, Administration of the Head of the Republic of Komi and the Government of the Republic of Komi  **10:30 am:** Meeting at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Komi  **2:00 pm:** Meeting at the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Komi  **4:30 pm:** Meeting at the Public Chamber of the Republic of Komi |
| **Saturday, 17.09.2011** |
| **9:00 am – 6:00 pm:** Field trip to the monitoring site for marsh (Sludka Village area) and forest (Lyali Village area) ecosystems carbon flows |
| **Sunday, 18.09.2011** |
| **7:00 am:** Transfer by car to Yaksha Village (the central estate of Pechora-Ilych Nature Reserve)  Meeting at the Troitsko-Pechorsk local administration |
| **Monday, 19.09.2011** |
| **8:30 am:** Meeting at the director’s office of Pechora-Ilych Nature Reserve and visit to the production site and elk farm  **12:30 pm:** Helicopter tour to Pechora- Ilych Nature Reserve with landing at the Plateau of Manpupuner to show objects of demoproject in the frames of UNDP/GEF project. Flight to the Village of Podcherie |
| **Tuesday, 20.09.2011** |
| **9:30 am:** Meeting at the director’s office of the National Park “Yugyd va”  **12:30 pm:** Helicopter tour to the National Park “Yugyd va” with landing at the Podcherem and Shchugor Rivers to demonstrate created in the frames of UNDP/GEF project tourist infrastructure objects. Arrival to the camp “Ushchelie” |
| **Wednesday, 21.09.2011** |
| **8:00 am - 4:00 pm:** Monitoring mission |
| **Thursday, 22.09.2011** |
| **10:00 am:** Flight to Ukhta  **1:00 pm:** Meeting at Gazprom transgas Ukhta Ltd.  **2:30 pm:** Closing meeting with the Project Team |
| **Friday, 23.09.2011** |
| Flight to Moscow from Ukhta  Closing meeting at the UNDP Country Office in the Russian Federation |

**Annex 6. Evaluation Documentation**

Photo 1From Left to Right: Project Outcome 3 coordinator, project Outcome 4 coordinator, head of Troitsk-Pechorsk Administration, Evaluator, Project Manager, Interpreter



**Annex 7. Evaluator CV**

Please see PDF version of this report.

**Annex 8. Management Response**

**PIMS 2496: Strengthening Protected Area System of the Komi Republic to Conserve Virgin Forest Biodiversity in the Pechora River Headwaters Region**

UNDP Management Response Template

Mid-term Evaluation Date:**September 2011**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Prepared by: | Position: | Unit/Bureau: |
| Cleared by: | Position: | Unit/Bureau: |
| Input into and update in ERC: | Position: | Unit/Bureau: |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 1.** | | | | |
| ***Key Recommendation 1:*** While the ideal long-term status would be for the existence of a regional PA directorate, as a risk mitigation strategy the project team and steering committee members should strategize about specific feasible alternative options for the management of the KR PAs for the medium-term that could be catalyzed by the project if it appears that establishing a regional agency will not be a viable option. Options could include providing capacity development support on PA management for Forestry Committee staff, and putting additional emphasis on the local management committee mechanism. *[Project Team and key government institution partners]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 2.** | | | | |
| ***Key Recommendation 2:*** Capacity development for the NCP: During the next two years, while the NCP still has the foundational springboard of project support, the project should invest in individual and institutional capacity development to ensure the long-term sustainability of the NCP. With further capacity development the NCP has the potential to be the future catalyzing force for financial sustainability for the KR’s PAs once the project is complete. *[Project Team, Non-commercial partnership]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 3.** | | | | |
| ***Key Recommendation 3:*** The mid-term of a project is early to recommend a project extension, but the option of a 6-12 month extension should be opened for consideration in the final year of project implementation. In addition to the initial slower-than-anticipated project implementation rate, the question of the establishment of the regional directorate for PAs remains uncertain. If this key outcome has not been achieved at the end of the project’s planned implementation period – and it is anticipated that it could be achieved with project support under a short extension – it may be worthwhile for the PSC to consider such a move. An extension should not be considered under this rationale if the establishment of a regional PAs directorate remains an open-ended question, without achievement of the final goal clearly in sight. *[UNDP, Executing Agency, PSC]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 4.** | | | | |
| ***Key Recommendation 4:*** The project team must ensure that the necessary time and resources are set aside to turn the scientific data and knowledge gained from the carbon component research into practical recommendations for effective forest and ecosystem management in response to and planning for future climate change. The project team should plan to produce forest management and PA management technical guidelines that are as specific as possible on ways to strengthen ecosystem resilience to mitigate the effects of climate change. *[Project Team, key government institution partners]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 5.** | | | | |
| ***Key Recommendation 5:*** The project team, UNDP, and relevant stakeholders should work to develop a proposal for logframe revision that would improve alignment of indicators and targets with SMART criteria, and would enhance the results-focused approach. A revision should then be approved by the project steering committee at its next meeting in early 2012. *[Project Team, UNDP, Executing Agency, other partners as relevant]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 6.** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 6:*** This evaluation recommends that the project consider additional PA management capacity development activities through study tours to other similar regions that are facing and successfully addressing comparable PA management challenges. Stakeholders consistently cite study tours as among the most valuable capacity development activities. Given the characteristics of the KR and its PA system, one highly comparable context for a possible study tour could be to Alaska to gain lessons and experience about the successful management of PAs and tourism revenue generation in large-scale remote landscapes, and effective protected management coordination between state and federal authorities. *[Project Team]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 7.** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 7:*** The eco-rating methodology should be continuously refined through testing and peer review, and the project should take measures to ensure the sustainability of its use once the project is completed. One opportunity for sustainability would be to partner with the KR Public Chamber to fully hand the eco-rating program off at the end of the project (or before), and to develop an annual award to be presented by the Public Chamber to the private sector company with the strongest eco-rating, and an associated media event. *[Project Team, KR Public Chamber]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 8.** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 8:*** The KR provides an excellent example of successful and large-scale private sector partnership for biodiversity conservation, a long-standing objective of the GEF that has seen limited uptake. The project should produce multiple specific case studies on collaboration with the private sector for distribution through UNDP and the GEF’s knowledge network. It would be helpful for the project team to fully analyze and assess the context and driving factors behind the successful private sector partnerships in the KR. *[Project Team, private sector partnership stakeholders, UNDP]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 9.** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 9:*** There is a history of good cooperation between Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta and Yugyd va National Park due to the transversal of the pipeline through the national park. A framework cooperation agreement has been signed by Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta and Yugyd va under the auspices of the project. The project must now support and encourage Yugyd va National Park administration in establishing a specific and concrete partnership agreement with Gazprom that outlines in detail areas for ongoing and future cooperation. Such an agreement would be an example for other PAs and private sector companies in the KR. *[Project Team, relevant partners]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 10.** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 10:*** The location and size of Yugyd va and Pechora-Illych PAs present excellent opportunities to develop large-scale transboundary protected landscapes. The project team and relevant stakeholders should establish linkages and open communication with the natural resource management authorities in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug to begin a dialogue on transboundary PA and natural resource management across the Urals. *[Project Team, relevant government partners, UNDP]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 11.** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 11:*** By the end of the project there should be clear agreements and plans among relevant stakeholders (particularly UNDP, the national executing agency, the Yugyd va National Park administration, Pechora-Illych Nature Reserve administration, the non-commercial partnership, any relevant private sector partners (such as the elk farm or tourism operators), and local government) with specific commitments and financial plans for the maintenance and upkeep of infrastructure developed. *[Project Team, UNDP]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 12.** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 12:*** Considering that the region is heavily involved in natural resource extraction industries, an important priority for future international donor support for biodiversity conservation efforts in the region will be to focus on the mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations in production sectors and landscapes, notably, oil, gas and timber, of which there is presently little territory under sustainable certification. This evaluation recommends that potential future international donor support in the KR examine opportunities for biodiversity mainstreaming in production sectors, as a complement to the current critical work on PAs. *[UNDP, Project Team, relevant international donor partners]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 13.** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 13:*** The project team should plan to organize a regional workshop (or provide some similar mechanism) at the end of the project to share lessons, knowledge and experience gained through the project activities related to managing forests and biodiversity for adaptation to climate change. The carbon component is heavily focused on generating new data related to carbon cycles, while also addressing fire prevention and fire fighting. It must be ensured that the knowledge gained is disseminated to relevant regional stakeholders, such as Forestry Committee managers and PA managers, with the goal of improving ecosystem management in the KR in the face of climate change. *[Project Team]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 14.** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 14:*** Even though the planned research is focused at the regional level, the carbon component of the project should be striving to provide information to and influence the international climate dialogue. A key means of achieving this would be through publications in international peer-reviewed scientific journals. This evaluation recommends the project team consider setting the goal of at least two to three international academic publications as a long-term results indicator for the project, recognizing that producing publications would likely not be achievable before the end of the project considering the time first required for research. *[Project Team]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 15.** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 15:*** The project should expand collaboration with the KR government tourism development agency in working to stimulate government support for investment in sustainable tourism, and catalyze further action to focus on the marketing of tourism to the PAs, and investment in the tourism sector. For example, the project team could produce a policy paper outlining options for government support for the tourism sector that would increase tourism to the PAs. *[Project Team]* | | | | |
| **Management Response:** | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
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1. Russia Federal State Statistics Service, 2010.“Preliminary Results of the National Population Census, 2010,” <http://www.perepis-2010.ru/results_of_the_census/results-inform.php>, as accessed on April 25, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Barents Observer, “Barents Russia Still Losing Population,” August 24, 2011, <http://www.barentsobserver.com/index.php?id=4951524&cat=16180&printable=1>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Barents Observer, “Oil blowout to Pechora River,” January 10, 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. World Heritage Committee, Decision 34COM 7B.25 – Virgin Komi Forests (Russian Federation) (N719). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Bank Information Center, “Banks active in extractive projects in Russia’s Komi Republic,” August 20, 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. For further details, see <http://ec.europa.eu/research/water-initiative/details_en.cfm?id_project=1173>. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. For further details, see <http://ib.komisc.ru/international-co-operation>. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. For further details, see <http://www.carbonorth.net/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Source: Project documents. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. In some project documents, particularly related to ATLAS budget documents, the carbon component is considered as “activity 5” (with corresponding outputs 5.1, 5.2, etc.), with project management as “activity 4.” [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Sources: 1.A. N/A; 1.B. GEF online database; 2.A. N/A; 2.B. GEF online database; 3.A. N/S; 3.B. GEF online database; 4.A. ; 4.B. GEF online database; 5.A. ; 5.B. GEF online database; 6A. ; 6.B. GEF online database; 7.A. ; 7.B. GEF online database; 8.A. 2010 PIR; 8.B. GEF online database; 9.A. 2010 PIR; 9.B. ; 10.A.2010 PIR; 11.A. 2010 PIR; 12.A. 2010 PIR. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. There are known to be multiple regional level policies relevant to the project objective and approach. These are naturally only in Russian language, and thus are not specifically cited here, but have been previously referenced in the project document, and other project sources. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. The exact amount of certified forest was not able to be determined for this evaluation (based on information available from the Forestry Stewardship Council website), but forestry experts noted that only a small amount of forest used by the firm Mondi is certified, which would equate to a tiny fraction of the overall production forest in the region, as Mondi is only one wood-product end user. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Yugyd va National Park Business Plan. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. CBD COP decision VII/28 on protected areas (Articles 8 (a) to (e)), <http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=7765>. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Source: <http://www.cbd.int/protected/implementation/>, as accessed on October 4, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. For the focal area strategic approach for GEF-4, see GEF Council document GEF/C.31/1, “Focal Area Strategic and Strategic Programming for GEF-4,” July 16, 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. For the focal area strategic priorities for GEF-5, see GEF Council document GEF/R.5/31, “GEF-5 Programming Document,” May 3, 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Information in the 2011 Steering Committee minutes indicates a 60% delivery rate including the ICI co-financing for component 4, while the 2010 audit report gives a figure of 72.33% delivery rate for only GEF financing (components 1-3, M&E, and project management). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Source: Documentation from Gazprom Transgaz Ukhta, provided by the project team. Original data in roubles, chart calculated in USD using USD-rouble exchange rate as of November 11, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. For example, a short article about the mid-term evaluation was posted to the website within days of completion of the evaluation mission. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. This was done under the project “Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management” in Turkey (GEF ID #458). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Further information about the project can be found at <http://www.gefonline.org/projectDetailsSQL.cfm?projID=1859>; and <http://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/preserving-the-eg-uur-watershed-in-mongolia-useful-tips-from-a-successful-collaboration>. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Source: Project team. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. The GEF Evaluation Office defines SMART indicators as those that are: Specific, Measureable, Achievable and Attributable, Relevant and Realistic, Timebound, Timely, Trackable and Targeted. See <http://www.gefcountrysupport.org/report_detail.cfm?projectId=232> for additional information. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. One possible methodology is the Threat Reduction Assessment, as documented in Salafsky, N. and Richard Margoluis, “Threat Reduction Assessment: A Practical and Cost-Effective Approach to Evaluating Conservation and Development Projects,” Conservation Biology, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Aug., 1999), pp. 830-841. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. The UNDP POPP is currently only available on UNDP’s intranet. However UNDP can provide the necessary section on roles and responsibility from http://content.undp.org/go/userguide/ [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. A complete list of regional PAs with a justification for re-design (replacement/inclusion of sites of higher BD value) will be prepared by the end of the project in the course of PA system inventoryand gap analysis. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)